



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

**TO:** P-12 Education Committee

**FROM:** Cosimo Tangorra, Jr. 

**SUBJECT:** Charter Schools: Initial Applications and Charters  
Authorized by the Board of Regents

**DATE:** November 10, 2014

**AUTHORIZATION(S):**   
SUMMARY

**Issue for Decision**

The Commissioner and Department staff recommend that the Board of Regents consider, approve and issue initial charters and provisional charters for the following four new charter schools:

New York City School District

- Capital Preparatory Harlem Charter School (proposed to locate in CSD 5)
- New Ventures Charter School (proposed to locate in CSD 31)
- South Bronx Classical Charter School III (proposed to locate in Bronx)

Rochester City School District

- Greater Works Charter School

**Reason(s) for Consideration**

Required by State statute, Article 56, the NYS Charter Schools Act.

**Proposed Handling**

This item will come before the P-12 Education Committee and the Full Board for action at the November 2014 meeting.

## **Background Information**

The Commissioner and Department staff recommend that the Board of Regents issue the initial charters and provisional charters for the above listed four new charter schools.

Together, these four new schools will add 1,560 high quality seats for families in New York City and Rochester.

- In New York City, Capital Preparatory Harlem Charter School, proposed as a replication of an effective magnet school in Connecticut, will partner with the Boys and Girls Club of Harlem to provide middle- and high-school students with a rigorous, year-round college preparatory curriculum.
- South Bronx Classical Charter School III will replicate the effective classical curriculum and instruction provided by South Bronx Classical Charter School to elementary level students in the Bronx since 2006.
- New Ventures Charter School will offer a supportive learning community and individualized pathway to earn a Regents diploma in 26 months for over-age under-credited students in Staten Island.
- In Rochester, Greater Works Charter School will create an option for a high quality high school education in a small, supported and individualized environment.

Additional details about the four proposed charter schools and how Department staff reviewed the applications is included in the attached *Summary, Findings and Recommendation* for each proposed school (Attachment A).

The applications for these four schools are available electronically on the Department's website at the following: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/startcharter.html>.

Chapter 101 of the Laws of 2010 increased the cap on the number of charters that can be issued in New York State from 200 to 460. The statute also designates the Board of Regents and the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (SUNY) as the authorizers for the additional 260 charters (130 charters to be issued by each, with no more than 57 in New York City) and requires that the two chartering entities create competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) processes for applications for the additional 260 charters. The statute dictated the timetable for the RFPs that were issued in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 and left to the discretion of the two Boards when subsequent years' RFPs would be issued. The Board of Regents RFP was issued in January 2014, and applications were accepted and reviewed in two rounds (March and August).

The Board of Regents application and review process is designed to award charters to applicants that demonstrate the greatest probability of creating high quality public schools. The Department revised the Board of Regents charter school application process in the summer of 2010 to align with the criteria that is outlined in Chapter 101 of the Laws of 2010. The Regents approved and issued charters to seven new charter

schools in 2010; to nine new charter schools in 2011, thirteen new charter schools in 2012, eight new schools in 2013 and six new schools in 2014, for a total of 43 new schools under the new process.

The application and review process consists of a series of phases in which applicants are invited to advance on the basis of the successful evaluation of each submission. The steps in the review process include:

- Submission and review of a Letter of Intent providing a brief description of the school mission and design; the proposed student population (including plans to meet enrollment and retention goals for target populations); initial evidence of community outreach efforts and community support; a proposed location and/or proposed facility; information about the founding group and anticipated members of the initial board of trustees. In 2014 (Round 2), a total of 51 letters of intent were submitted, and 18 applicants were invited to submit full applications.
- Submission and review of a written Full Application providing 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 educational priorities of the Charter School Act. Fifteen full applications were submitted and reviewed in 2014 Round 2. Each accepted application was rigorously evaluated by a four-member expert panel including qualified consultants, volunteer peer reviewers who are current active educators in public schools or universities, and experienced Department staff.
- Review of public comment 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 Director and staff of the Charter School Office.
- Capacity interviews with founding groups to discuss application details and to evaluate the skill and knowledge of the initial board of trustees to launch and operate the proposed school. The Department conducted capacity interviews with eight applicant groups in 2014 Round 2.
- Recommendations are made the Board of Regents by the Commissioner to award new charters to applicant groups with the strongest plan and presentation to launch and operate a highly effective public school. These recommendations are based on a synthesis of information gathered throughout all stages of the process.

After full evaluation of the information provided through capacity interviews and public comments, staff recommends four new school applications for consideration by the Regents. The Department found that the remaining 2014 Round 2 applications were lacking in the presentation of a complete, comprehensive and viable school design plan or capacity to implement that plan. Department staff informed applicants of the option to withdraw the applications and consider resubmitting in future RFP rounds and eleven applicants did so.

An up-to-date summary of the RFP application cycles conducted by the Department on behalf of the Regents, the number of charters issued during each cycle, and the number of charters remaining to be issued is presented below:

RFP Cycle	Letters of Intent Submitted	Full Applications Submitted	Charters issued (# in NYC)	Charters remaining to be issued under cap (# in NYC)
2010	39	35 prospectuses were submitted; 16 applicants were invited to submit full applications; <b>15 full applications were submitted</b>	7 (5)	123 (52)
2011	100	80 prospectuses were submitted; 37 applicants were invited to submit full applications; <b>36 full applications were submitted</b>	9 (7)	114 (45)
2012 Round 1	30	20 applicants were invited to submit full applications; <b>14 full applications were submitted</b>	3 (3)	111 (42)
2012 Round 2	54	37 applicants were invited to submit full applications; <b>25 full applications were submitted</b>	10 (8)	101 (34)
2013	99	60 applicants were invited to submit full applications; <b>55 full applications were submitted</b>	8 (6)	93 (28)
2014 Round 1	31	15 applicants were invited to submit full applications in either Round 1 or Round 2; <b>11 full applications were submitted in Round 1</b>	2 (1)	91 (27)
2014 Round 2	51	18 applicants were invited to submit full applications <b>15 full applications were submitted</b>	4 (3) <sup>1</sup>	87 (24)

<sup>1</sup> Pending Regents approval at November 2014 Regents meeting.

## **Recommendation**

VOTED: That the Regents find that the proposed charter school: (1) meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) will operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; (3) 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) will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school, and the Board of Regents therefore approves and issues a charter and provisional charter to the **Capital Preparatory Harlem Charter School** for a term of five years in accordance with §2851(2)(p) of the Education Law.

VOTED: That the Regents find that the proposed charter school: (1) meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) will operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; (3) 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) will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school, and the Board of Regents therefore approves and issues a charter and provisional charter to the **New Ventures Charter School** for a term of five years in accordance with §2851(2)(p) of the Education Law.

VOTED: That the Regents find that the proposed charter school: (1) meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) will operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; (3) 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) will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school, and the Board of Regents therefore approves and issues a charter and provisional charter to the **South Bronx Classical Charter School III** for a term of five years in accordance with §2851(2)(p) of the Education Law.

VOTED: That the Regents find that the proposed charter school: (1) meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) will operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; (3) 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) will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school, and the Board of Regents therefore approves and issues a charter and provisional charter to the **Greater Works Charter School** 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



# 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 2014 Request for Proposals to  
Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents  
to establish the proposed:

### **Capital Preparatory Harlem Charter School**

November 2014

**Table 1: Summary of the Proposed Capital Preparatory Harlem Charter School**

Name of Charter School	Capital Preparatory Harlem Charter School
Lead Applicant(s)	Dr. Stephen D. Perry and Mr. Vincent S. Morgan
District of Location	Manhattan, District 5
Opening Date	September, 2015
Projected Charter Term	November 18, 2014 – June 30, 2020
Management Company	Capital Preparatory Schools
Partners	Boys and Girls Club of Harlem
Facility	Private or public co-location space
Projected Enrollment and Grade Span during Charter Term	Opening with 160 students in Grades 6 and 7; growing to 600 students in Grades 6 through 11 during the charter term
Planned Grade Span (beyond Initial Charter Term)	700 students, in Grades 6 through 12
Mission Statement	<i>“The Capital Preparatory Harlem Charter School (“Capital Prep Harlem”) will provide historically disadvantaged students from Harlem with the college and career readiness skills needed to become responsible and engaged citizens for social justice. Capital Prep Harlem will accomplish this by providing students with a rigorous year-round, college-preparatory curriculum in a nurturing and loving environment that fosters strong student-teacher relationships. Capital Prep Harlem will give special attention to ensuring that the curriculum is relevant through applied teaching methods that relate curricular objectives to authentic tasks thereby allowing students to actively explore real world problems and challenges and acquire deeper knowledge.”</i>

Capital Preparatory Harlem Charter School (“Capital Prep Harlem”) will replicate Capital Preparatory Magnet School, the founder’s flagship school located in Hartford, Connecticut (“Capital Prep”), in New York City’s Community School District 5. Capital Prep Harlem is designed to provide some of New York’s most underserved children access to a world-class

college preparatory education. The model has produced the *US News & World Report's* designation of Capital Prep as “one of America’s Top High Schools.”

To accomplish its mission, the School plans to meet the following objectives:

1. Assure every student achieves a maximum degree of success by providing a curriculum based on an understanding of students’ unique developmental experience and individualizing their affective and academic supports;
2. Ensure student attainment of New York State Common Core Learning Standards (NYS CCLS) skills and knowledge necessary for academic and personal success;
3. Prepare all students for acceptance to a four-year college or university;
4. Support all students to become agents of change by understanding themselves as unique individuals/learners with personal needs and shared social responsibilities; and (5)
5. Build positive relationships between faculty, children and their families to increase self-efficacy and create an inclusive climate conducive to learning.

### **Key Design Elements**

The overarching goal of the Capital Prep model is for students to achieve mastery of NYS CCLS knowledge and skills in preparation for acceptance to a four-year college. The essential elements of the pedagogical approach are categorized in four domains: College and Career Readiness, Affective Development, Student Support Services, and Professional Development.

- **College and Career Readiness:**

College-preparatory curriculum combines with a 201-day school year and rigorous scholastic requirements to provide the academic background needed for students to succeed in a four-year college.

Accelerated programming connects accelerated students to challenging courses, engaging faculty, and other students around the world by embedding accelerated programming into the academic experience as an enrichment program.

College courses allow students to experience the actual rigor of college through a full-scale academic and interpersonal immersion into a college experience through a partnership with a local community college.

Project Based Learning (PBL) provides opportunities for students to apply curricular objectives to authentic tasks.

Standards-Based Grading (SBG) focuses on mastery whereby students are assessed on a set of skills with the goal of identifying areas of mastery that allows them to move forward at a pace that is managed by their teachers and relevant to their own academic needs.

Seminar is a 50-minute block during the school day when students receive intervention supports, opportunities to work on implementing their social justice action plans, access to the internet for research and collaboration, or time to work with community members.

Capstone graduation requirement is a capstone action-research project, referred to as the Senior Social Justice Project (SJP).

Individualized College Interest Plan is a student college readiness plan that guides and provides support to students with college selections, applications and interview

preparations, and attainment of financial aid. In addition to supporting the college application process, the school will provide SAT preparation, fee waivers, and financial aid workshops.

- **Extracurricular Activities:**

Two-sport requirement for High school students, unless medically unable.

Public service course all students as part of the core curriculum. Students are required to participate in at least three hours of public service per semester.

Student government model is based upon the traditional English prep school with a head boy and girl, prefects and house captains.

National Honor Society (NHS) recognizes outstanding high school students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of scholarship, leadership, service, and character.

Enrichment activities are designed to enhance students' daily activities. Activities are selected using a form of the Renzulli Enrichment Cluster Model developed by the National Research Center of the Gifted and Talented.

- **Affective Development:**

Advisory Program is designed to foster personalization, strengthen the relationship between each student and his/her learning environment. Teachers, in their role as advisors, monitor both social and academic development of each of their advisees.

Individualized Learner Plan is developed via advisor and student collaboration. The ILP is developed in the 6th grade and evolves through high school to provide the student continuous support and assistance in setting goals for social, emotional, and academic growth, meeting rigorous high school expectations, and exploring postsecondary education and career interests.

Bi-weekly parent/guardian communication is required of advisors at least once every other week to discuss student progress and strategies for improvement.

Student-Led Conferences (SLCs) allows advisors to monitor and support the creation and maintenance of electronic portfolios designed to showcase student learning and growth with respect to Learner Expectations and the Essential Question for the grade.

- **Student Support Services:**

Response to Intervention and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports are designed to ensure student mastery of NYS CCLS skills and knowledge through the development of key academic competencies among at-risk students, students with disabilities (SWD) and English Language Learners (ELLs). The school plans to implement a Response to Intervention (RTI) framework and academic behavioral plans, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), facilitated by the Student Assistance Team (SAT).

Academic support from advisors will promote the monitoring of individual student process and provide affective support.

- **Professional Development:**

Colleagues are encouraged to collaborate to develop a compelling academic, social and professional climate and culture through the school's Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), as well as subject-area department meetings focused on curricular development. Simultaneously, each faculty member receives opportunities for growth and mentoring through the use of Individualized Teacher Plans as well as the school's Creativity Symposium in which teachers present data from an action-research project they have undertaken that year.

## **Education Plan**

The Capital Prep Harlem Charter School's academic calendar provides for 201 days of instruction. The school day will begin at 7:45 a.m. with breakfast and end at 3:50 p.m. The school day includes instructional blocks of 50 minutes and 100 minutes in duration, in an extended school day of 485 minutes in length, inclusive of a 30-minute arrival/breakfast period and a 27-minute lunch period. Students are engaged in 7.13 hours of daily instruction (with the exception of Fridays when there is an early student dismissal for teacher professional development).

The curriculum for Capital Prep Harlem CS was developed by the founders of Capital Prep Magnet School in Hartford (many of whom have now joined the school's management company), using the Understanding by Design (UbD) framework developed by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe. At the school, the curriculum will be implemented, monitored and measured with support from the management company.

Units of instruction are created centered on the theme of social justice, as described in the school's mission statement.

CPS will work to train department chairs to monitor and evaluate lesson plans using a rubric for lesson plan development. Within the school, each department chair will be responsible for working with staff to adjust the scope and sequence of instruction based on the needs of all students, monitor and review data as it relates to the curriculum, and work with teachers to create and review lesson plans. Lesson plans will be completed by staff and assessed against the CPS rubric for lesson plan development. This will occur at least one week prior to instruction to ensure fidelity to the curriculum, adherence to standards, and the implementation of necessary supports and accommodations so that all students can achieve at the highest level of mastery.

## **Instructional Format and Pedagogy**

Throughout a 100 minute block, teachers will implement three to five separate planned "Do Now," "Activity" and "Closure" learning triads, designed and implemented to meet stated daily measurable objectives related to the class' relevant content standards. Daily instruction is adaptable and flexible, relying on the expertise of the subject-area and grade-level teams to meet the diverse learning needs, abilities, and interest of students currently in their classrooms. Teachers modify planned instruction for future classes based on formal and informal data collected through "Closure" activities.

As an extension of the classroom-based instructional methods used at Capital Prep Harlem Charter School, instruction will be available via online courses as part of a distance learning program, as well as offline in alternative campus settings. Programs of study provided by the Center of Talented Youth, Educere Virtual Education for Grades K-12, and local community colleges will be used to enhance a student's academic experience. In addition, extracurricular activities, such as sports and students clubs, as well as community activities, such as internships and service projects, further enhance the school's academic program by providing a balanced, well-rounded educational experience.

### English Language Arts

Students in Grades 9-12 are required to earn at least 4 units of credit in English language arts (ELA) to graduate. The ELA curriculum designed by Capital Prep focuses on literacy instruction through careful examination of texts. The major shifts in ELA, as outlined in the NYS CCLS, require students to apply the close reading strategy to draw evidence and knowledge from the text. The ELA curriculum exposes students to a wide variety of texts, fiction and non-fiction, classic and contemporary, to help students uncover a host of social justice themes and concepts.

The ELA curriculum for grades 6-8 adopts resources and protocols aligned with Capital Prep Harlem's social justice framework and from Engage New York's Expeditionary Learning curriculum. Research and writing are also key components of the ELA curriculum. Students practice the research process beginning with writing essential and sub-questions, locating relevant and credible sources, and finally citing sources correctly. Students work through the writing process of prewriting, drafting, revision, and editing to produce polished narrative, informative, and argumentative essays. The culminating experience of students enrolled at Capital Prep Harlem is the Senior Social Justice Project.

### Mathematics

CPHCS high school students are required to earn at least 3 units of credit in mathematics to graduate. All students will work towards and demonstrate mastery in all NYS CCLS for Mathematics. Instruction will prepare them to pass the NYS Regents Exams in Algebra 1, Geometry and Algebra 2/Trigonometry.

The school's mathematics curriculum is driven by NYS CCLS and the school's Learner Expectations. The math curriculum prioritizes depth of knowledge over breadth of topics, with an emphasis on the mastery of skills rather than their repetition. The school's description of the habits of an effective learner directly corresponds with the Common Core Standards Mathematical Practices.

### Science

Capital Prep Harlem Charter School students are required to earn at least 3 units of credit in science to graduate. The science curriculum is connected to NYS CCLS, New York State Learning Standards for Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST) and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The NGSS has allowed for cross-curricular connections between science, mathematics and social studies content. Capital Prep Harlem believes that

interdisciplinary units and PBL experiences engage students in the application of inquiry, problem solving and research.

The intermediate science curriculum for students enrolled in grades 6–8 prepares students for the science examination, which assesses student achievement of Standards 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7 of the MST. The curriculum prepares students for the expectations of the exam including content knowledge, student’s ability to apply, analyze and evaluate material, and the application of scientific concepts to formulate hypotheses, use scientific inquiry techniques and address real-world situations. The high school science core curriculum for Capital Prep Harlem will include Earth Science, The Living Environment, Chemistry and Physics.

### Social Studies

Students are required to earn at least 4 units of credit in high school social studies to graduate. Skills taught by teachers in the department are based on the National Council for the Social Studies C3 Frameworks of College, Career, and Civic Life. These frameworks are directly aligned with the school’s Learner Expectations and social justice foundation. The purpose of social studies and history at Capital Prep Harlem is to create skilled, informed, college-ready, and responsible agents of change.

### Languages Other than English

High school students are required to earn at least 1 unit of credit in Languages other than English (LOTE) to graduate. The LOTE curriculum designed by Capital Prep focuses on oral and written communication in Spanish and supports the ELA curriculum based on the alignment of the NYS CCLS with the National Standards for Learning Languages.

When academically capable, or by the beginning of the second semester of their junior year, students enter into learning communities. These communities enlist the coordinated efforts of the community college’s faculty and school staff, who together plan and implement a strategy to effectively expose students to and prepare them for the rigors of college. Students take courses with college students and professors. Each student is advised on selecting a “concentration” within the field of social justice, similar to selecting a major. Capital Prep Harlem students take a significant number of courses with most earning as many as 15 credits before they graduate from high school, which position them well for acceptance and scholarships to competitive colleges and universities.

The Capital Prep model requires a capstone action-research project, the Social Justice Project (SJP), as a school graduation requirement. Beginning in students’ junior year, the SJP requires students to identify a social justice problem; research the problem; write a literature review that provides background information and synthesizes the research; and create an action plan to address the problem. Through an advocacy approach, students reach out to the community for resources including connecting with community members and organizations. In addition, students gather data on the impact of their plan on the social justice issue in order to present their results. At the end of implementing their action plan, they measure their project’s success using qualitative and quantitative data, write a final paper reflecting on the effectiveness of their social

justice action project, create a series of presentations to a wide variety of audiences throughout the process and defend their final project before a panel of staff.

The Capital Prep model includes a wellness mission. They believe students need to gain a life-long health consciousness to realize their physical, emotional, as well as mental potential. As students develop plans of actions to increase their levels of CPREP skills they also create a Wellness Plan describing their path toward a healthier lifestyle; setting in motion better habits of health. In addition, rooted in the expectations of traditional preparatory schools, high school students are expected to participate in at least two sports per year for the duration of the project and/or season.

Public Service is a class period students use to learn about their community and work with their teacher to find ways in which to interact in positive ways. Interactions can include but are not restricted to Red Cross blood donation organization, community clean up, volunteerism at local shelters and retirement facilities.

The purpose of assessment at Capital Prep Harlem Charter School is to gather accurate and timely information so that informed decisions and actions may be taken to maximize student learning and ensure the School's success in preparing all students for the demands of four-year colleges and universities. The planned assessment system includes the administration of diagnostic, formative, benchmark and summative assessments, protocols to ensure rigorous analysis of data and valid and reliable results, and procedures for using results to inform instructional planning, program evaluation and accountability.

The Capital Prep model builds capacity at the school level by fostering the development of strong leadership skills in its teachers, many of whom become experts in various areas of instruction. Staff development has three components: explicit training, coaching and mentoring. For teacher evaluation, the Principal will use the CPS teacher performance rubric, which describes four levels of practice—beginning, developing, proficient, advanced—and addresses the following domains: planning, instructional delivery, assessment, classroom management, school-wide contributions, and professionalism. Similar to the Danielson Framework for Effective Teaching, Marshal Teacher Evaluation Rubric and Marzano Teacher Practice Rubric, the CPS teacher performance rubric sets clear expectations in areas such as instructional rigor, student engagement and classroom management, and will also address the school theme of Social Justice, as well as the Learner Expectations and Essential Questions. Staff development sessions are designed and coordinated by CPS and may include external resources.

Prior to the opening of school, staff participates in a two-week professional learning period for training and planning. In year one of operation, training topics for instructional staff will include: the school mission and vision; Core Knowledge, curriculum programs and unit and lesson design; Advisory; school culture, routines, procedures and discipline; assessment and data analysis protocols; Response to Intervention (RTI) program; differentiation; and co-teaching and mentoring.

All staff members at Capital Prep Harlem will participate in collaborative Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) centered on school improvement goals. Groups are comprised of all staff and focus on topic areas essential to the culture and climate of the school: Standards Based

Grading, CORE/PBIS, Differentiation, Advisory, Innovative Instruction, Data/Testing and New Teacher Orientation.

The School will implement strategies to promote a safe and orderly learning environment. The educational approach and teaching methods are designed to produce a “high-touch” experience to reinforce with each student that multiple adults in the school care about them and believe in them. Examples of these multiple “touches” are the Advisory System, regular communication between parents, student and school, the Student Assistance Team, the mandatory two sport requirement in the Sports Education Model, and consistently high expectations for every student. Establishing positive, supportive, caring relationships, and creating a loving, nurturing learning environment for students and staff, are foundational elements of the Capital Prep model.

Also adopted will be the CORE Plan which stands for Culture of Respect and Empathy. This plan represents a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber bullying and sets forth the school’s goals for creating a positive school climate and thus preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying. In conjunction with the CORE Plan, Capital Prep Harlem Charter School will institute School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) programs that seek to reduce bullying or prevent it altogether.

The vision of the Capital Prep model is to function as a hub through which existing community resources are coordinated to create a wrap-around network of services to support the educational program and meet the needs of students and families. In support of this vision, the priority is to cultivate deep roots in the community through parent and community outreach efforts, community mapping and the development of meaningful relationships with service providers, academic supports and enrichment partners in the area. In addition, because of the social justice theme, the School will invest substantial effort into establishing relationships with a range of organizations that will serve as potential SJP placements for students, including non-profit organizations, for-profit corporations and government.

The Capital Prep model is designed to promote and facilitate a high level of parent engagement both at the individual student level and in the governance and operation of the school. Structures to promote parental involvement and communication to further student achievement include the Advisory system that promotes bi-weekly communication with parents about student progress, parent participation in Student-Led Conferences, and engagement of parents in SAT meetings.

Parents will be encouraged to participate in the governance of the school. The By-Laws indicate that the Board of Trustees shall include at least one parent or guardian of a current or former student. In addition, parents will be invited to participate in ad-hoc committees established by the Board of Trustees. Parents and community members will be recruited to participate in the Title I School-wide Program planning committee and school-based planning and advisory teams. Parents and community members will be surveyed each year to provide opportunities for input and recommendations for ongoing school improvement.

### **Community Outreach**

Since 2010, the Capital Prep Harlem applicant group has engaged in multiple meetings with educators and community leaders in Harlem with an interest in replicating the Capital Prep

model. The applicant group has also had multiple meetings with community-based organizations, such as the Boys and Girls Club of Harlem, the Police Athletic League, the Harlem YMCA, and local business owners, such as Musa Jackson Productions, Practice Makes Perfect, Harlem Jazz Enterprises and the Harlem Haberdashery, and charter operators, such as the Harlem Children's Zone and Achievement First, not only to learn from their experience but also to foster collaborations.

The group made connections to leaders of higher education institutions, such as the City College School of Education, met with religious leaders in the Harlem community and met with elected officials, the local community board and the community school district. Manhattan Community Board 9, which has submitted a letter of support, invited the group to participate in a board meeting to present their proposal and solicit feedback.

Outreach efforts led to the formation of a partnership with the Boys & Girls Club of Harlem. A letter of support and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the terms of the partnership was submitted with the application.

### **School Governance and Leadership**

Including the co-lead applicants, Dr. Stephen D. Perry, and Mr. Vincent S. Morgan, the founding team consists of six individuals, five of whom will serve as members of the School's initial Board of Trustees. A School Trustee Background Information form, Statement of Assurance and resume or curriculum vitae was provided for each of the five individuals who will comprise the school's initial Board of Trustees. As required, the applicant group has provided a set of draft by-laws and a draft code of ethics.

The Board represents a diverse group of professionals with teaching/administrative experience as well as expertise in curriculum development, school start-up, finance and risk control, fund-raising, facilities planning, real estate, strategic planning, technology, communications & media, community organizing and board governance.

The initial members of the proposed Board of Trustees are:

- **Dr. Stephen D. Perry**, lead applicant, is the founder and Principal of Capital Prep Magnet School in Hartford, Connecticut. He is also an education contributor for various media sources. Dr. Perry will step off the founding board to lead Capital Prep Schools, Inc., a recently formed charter management organization.
- **Vincent S. Morgan** is a consultant working in upper Manhattan. He has managed the Community Reinvestment Act compliance for eight evaluation areas in New York State as well as business, community and government outreach programs in Harlem and Bronx Communities. He has had experience developing another New York Charter school. .
- **Maurice Coleman** is a Senior Vice President at Bank of America Merrill Lynch. He has expertise in real estate financing and development as well as school administration. He is active in the Harlem community.

- **Derek Ferguson** is the Chief Growth Officer of Combs Enterprises. His expertise is in fiscal and business management, strategic planning and business development. He is an active member of the Harlem community.
- **Iyanla Vanzant** is a spiritual leader, author and television performer. She brings to the board her communication skills and connections to the African American community in New York City.

The number of members and skill set of the founding Board was created purposefully in order to begin the process of launching a new charter school. The board is currently in the process of recruiting additional members with community ties and expertise in law and education.

The School's staffing plan is aligned with its mission, objectives, key design elements, educational program, budget, and planned enrollment. The School will begin recruiting a founding Principal immediately upon authorization, which will enable the individual to be involved during the pre-opening phase. Other members of the year one administrative team include an Academic Dean, Operations Manager, and Special Education Coordinator. These positions will provide the necessary leadership and oversight for and the implementation of curriculum and instruction, student support services, and business and financial operations.

To attract and retain high-quality teaching staff, the School will offer compensation and benefits commensurate with that offered by other similarly situated charter schools in New York City, and, to the extent allowable by the school's budget, the UFT salary schedule (aligned with years of experience and educational credentials). Contract renewal and subsequent increases in individual teacher's compensation will be based upon performance evaluation.

### **Facility**

The founding board has requested NYCDOE co-location space (incubation or permanent) and is also considering various opportunities to lease a private facility.

### **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 New York, indicating that the fiscal impact of the Capital Preparatory Harlem Charter School on the New York City School District public schools is expected to be nominal.

The New York State Education Department also conducted additional analysis on the projected fiscal impact of the School on its district of residence, the New York City School District, which is summarized below.

**Table 2: Projected Fiscal Impact upon District of Location, 2016-17 to 2020-21<sup>1</sup>**

Year	Number of Students Enrolled in Charter School Per Year <sup>2</sup>	Charter School Basic Tuition Rate <sup>3</sup>	Total Charter School Basic Tuition Only	Estimated District Special Education Payment <sup>4</sup>	Total District General Fund Budget <sup>5</sup>	Percent of District Budget
2016-17	160	\$15,686	\$2,509,760	\$338,818	\$20,623,441,377	0.014%
2020-21	600	\$18,490	\$11,094,000	\$1,497,690		0.061%

The calculations above assume charter school basic tuition rates in the charter period (2016-17 through 2020-21) based on a trend analysis calculated by the Charter School Office and approved by the Department’s State Aid Office. In order to conservatively avoid underestimating the fiscal impact that the charter school will have on the district going forward, the Department is assuming no growth in the New York City School District budget during the duration of the school’s charter.<sup>6</sup>

It should be noted that, given the nature of district-based per-pupil funding, the estimates made by the Department in conducting this analysis are subject to unpredictable financial fluctuations. 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.

The specifics of the school’s enrollment composition are still unavailable; however, the Department acknowledges that the programmatic and fiscal impact of the proposed charter school on other public and private schools in the same area will also be influenced by the proportion of charter school enrollees that would have attended a same-district public or private school had it not been for the presence of this charter school.

<sup>1</sup> In order to conservatively estimate the fiscal impact upon the district of location, maximum enrollment figures for each year were used. For additional information, please refer to Table 2

<sup>2</sup> Source: Capital Preparatory Harlem Charter School Application

<sup>3</sup> Source: Education Law §2856(1)(a)(iii) and NYS Education Department Office of State Aid Charter School Basic Tuition Rate Analysis, Spring 2014

<sup>4</sup> Based on 2011-12 calculated special education classification rate for the district of location, as collected by NYSED Information and Report Services

<sup>5</sup> Source: The City of New York 2015 Executive Budget, [http://www.nyc.gov/html/omb/downloads/pdf/erc5\\_14.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/omb/downloads/pdf/erc5_14.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Additional notes: While the school has included other federal grants and/or funds that may flow through the district to be received by the school in its proposed budget, this analysis does not account for these sources of potential revenue, nor does it include the value of certain services (e.g. transportation) that the district is required to provide the charter school. However, the analysis also does not account for district per-pupil expense and overall resource savings that are likely to result from a reduction in the number of students attending district public schools as a result of students attending nonpublic schools located in the school district.

**Table 3: 2013-14 Demographic Detail for Proposed District of Location:  
NYC District #5 - Manhattan<sup>7</sup>**

	Total District Enrollment	
All Students	13,062	
<i>American Indian/Alaska Native</i>	82	1%
<i>Asian/Pacific Islander</i>	393	3%
<i>Black</i>	6,883	53%
<i>Hispanic</i>	5,120	39%
<i>Multiracial</i>	114	1%
<i>White</i>	470	4%
Economically Disadvantaged	10,972	84%
Limited English Proficient	1,283	10%
Students with Disabilities	2,609	20%

**Table 4: 2013-14 Elementary/Middle School Academic Proficiency Rates on NYS  
Assessments Based on Grade Configurations for Proposed School<sup>8</sup>**

Assessments	NYC #5 Proficiency	NYS Proficiency
<i>ELA Grades 6-8 Aggregate</i>	15%	30%
<i>Grade 6 ELA</i>	15%	28%
<i>Grade 7 ELA</i>	15%	28%
<i>Grade 8 ELA</i>	15%	35%
<i>Math Grades 6-8 Aggregate</i>	12%	30%
<i>Grade 6 Math</i>	18%	37%
<i>Grade 7 Math</i>	12%	32%
<i>Grade 8 Math</i>	6%	22%

### Public Hearing and Public Comment

As required by the Charter Schools Act, the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) conducted a public hearing on October 8, 2014 to solicit comments from the

<sup>7</sup> Source: Student Information Repository System (SIRS) 2013-14 Report 303 BEDS Day Enrollment Verification Report by Location of Enrollment & Student Subgroup

<sup>8</sup> Source: Student Information Repository System (SIRS) 2012-13 Report 101 High School Accountability Data Verification Report; 2013-14 Report 102 Elementary/Middle-Level Accountability Data Verification Report

community concerning the proposed Capital Prep Harlem Charter School. The hearing was attended by 40 individuals, including NYCDOE staff. After a presentation by the School, 10 individuals spoke and all expressed support for the proposed charter school. One individual provided written testimony in which he also expressed support for the proposed charter school. Only one supporter expressed a concern: specifically, the speaker was concerned about the extent to which her foster children who have disabilities would receive with the attention and supports they need to be successful. No one spoke or offered testimony in opposition to the proposed charter school.

The Department directly notified the Chancellor of the NYCDOE, as well as public and private schools in the region, of the charter school application and issued an open call for written public comment via the State Education Department Charter School Office website.

### **Application Review Process**

On January 2, 2014, in accordance with the New York State Charter Schools Act, the New York State Education Department (the “Department”) released the 2014 Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents. The charter school application process used by the Board of Regents and the Department is multi-staged and designed to ensure that any charter school applicant presented to the Board of Regents for possible approval demonstrates a detailed and complete school design proposal that:

- includes a clear plan to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, students who are English language learners, and students who are eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced-price lunch program;
- provides evidence of public outreach that conforms to the process prescribed by the Regents for the purpose of soliciting and incorporating community input regarding the proposed charter school;
- meets all requirements set forth in the Charter Schools Act as well as all other applicable laws, rules, regulations;
- demonstrates the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner;
- is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes of the Act; and
- would have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the proposed charter school.

In addition, the applicant group and founding board of trustees must demonstrate appropriate knowledge, capacity, and abilities to effectively create, maintain, and oversee a high-quality charter school.

During 2014 Round 2, the Department received a total of 51 letters of intent. After an initial review process, 17 applicants were invited to submit full applications in Round 2. A total of 15 full applications were submitted and evaluated in Round 2, including the application for the Capital Preparatory Harlem Charter School.

To assess whether to recommend approval or denial of the charter application to the Board of Regents, the Department established review panels to thoroughly evaluate each full application. Each panel was made up of professional expert consultants, peer reviewers who are school leaders and educators active in charter and public schools in New York, as well as qualified Department staff members. The review panel members reviewed, rated, and commented on each section of the application according to the criteria published in the Application Kit.

On Thursday, October 2, 2014, Department staff conducted a three-hour capacity interview with the four of the five initial board members proposed for the Capital Preparatory Harlem Charter School. Questions were posed to the proposed initial trustees and founding group members, including general questions around New York State Charter School Law, the roles and responsibilities of various members in the proposed school community, and accountability to stakeholder groups as well to as the Board of Regents as authorizer. To fully understand the proposed academic program, governance role, Charter Management Company role, and fiscal viability of the proposed School, staff asked targeted questions of the applicant group.

The responses demonstrated adequate knowledge and grasp of key areas. Members of the applicant group as a whole and individually demonstrated knowledge of the charter school application and the proposed School. Structures, systems, protocols and procedures are in place to permit the board to effectively govern the School. The applicants addressed questions posed with specific and detailed information that presented a clear, realistic picture of how the School expects to operate.

## **Findings**

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.<sup>9</sup> This finding is based on the following, among other things:
  - the applicant has included in the application the information required by §2851(2)
  - the proposed charter school would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as prescribed by the NYS Board of Regents,<sup>10</sup> 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 subdivision 2852(9-a)(b)(i)
  - the applicant has conducted public outreach to solicit community input regarding the proposed charter school and to address comments received from the impacted

---

<sup>9</sup> Education Law §2852(2)(a).

<sup>10</sup> Note, the data upon which to base the enrollment and retention targets mandated by the amendments to the Act was not available at the time the statute mandated the RFP be issued. As a result, the Department evaluated the plans for student enrollment, recruitment, and retention plans of each class of student referenced in the amendments to the Act such that the Department could make the determination that the applicant would meet or exceed the enrollment and retention targets when developed. During the first year of the charter term, the Department will develop such targets and incorporate these targets into the school's charter agreement performance expectations.

community concerning the educational and programmatic needs of students in conformity with Education Law subdivision 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.<sup>11</sup> 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 Act<sup>12</sup> and will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school.<sup>13</sup> 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, Commissioner John B. King, Jr. recommends that the New York State Board of Regents approve the proposal to establish the Capital Preparatory Harlem Charter School to open in 2015 in New York City.

---

<sup>11</sup> Education Law §2852(2)(b).

<sup>12</sup> Education Law §2852(2)(c).

<sup>13</sup> As applicable pursuant to §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 2014 Request for Proposals to  
Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents  
to establish the proposed:

**New Ventures Charter School**

November 2014

**Table 1: Summary of the Proposed New Ventures Charter School**

Name of Charter School	New Ventures Charter School
Lead Applicant(s)	Kenneth Byalin, Ph.D.
District of Location	CSD 31
Opening Date	July 6, 2015
Projected Charter Term	November 18, 2014 – June 30, 2020
Management Company	None
Partners	None
Facility	Private or public co-location space
Projected Enrollment and Grade Span during Charter Term	The school will opening with 54-60 over-aged, under-credited students in Grades 10 through 12. (Thirty-three Grade 10 students with 16 to 21 high school credits; 16 Grade 11 students with 22-32 credits; and five Grade 12 students with 33+ high school credits).
Planned Grade Span (beyond Initial Charter Term)	Grades 10-12 for maximum enrollment of 216
Mission Statement	<i>“The mission of NVCS is to create a learning community in which all students, Including those living in challenging economic circumstances and those living with emotional challenges and other disabilities, develop the skills and social fluency to lead fulfilling and contributive lives In their communities.”</i>

New Ventures Charter School (NVCS) will promote college and career readiness for over-age and under-credited, disconnected and at-risk youth aged 16-21 living on Staten Island, enabling them to graduate from high school prepared to excel in their academic, professional, and personal lives.

## **Key Design Elements**

Using an internally developed Educational Continuum of Care Model focused on the entire student, New Ventures Charter School incorporates the following key design elements:

- Small classes with a maximum of 18 students in a small-school environment;
- Macro-scheduling of traditional academic courses (primarily around Regents examinations courses) and an intensive, alternative schedule (afternoons, evenings, summers) with field learning opportunities and internships;
- Field learning experiences for small groups of students participating at community businesses, government, and not-for-profit organizations. Students will engage in projects and be provided with opportunities to gain and demonstrate mastery in core academic subjects while simultaneously contribute to organizational effectiveness;
- Individualized Pathway to a Regents diploma within 26 months of enrollment (two years plus three summers);
- Wellness Curriculum to provide all students with the tools needed to overcome obstacles and realize their full potential;
- Full integration of students with disabilities: all students will receive instruction in a core subject from a teacher certified in both the content area and in special education and supported by a second teacher or teaching assistant (paraprofessional) for at least 20% of the regular school week;
- Assessment of student needs for support services, which includes working with students and their families to identify areas requiring immediate/intensive action as well as those areas, which, if not addressed, will likely disrupt schooling. The school will link students to appropriate community social service agencies (many of which are participating in the planning and development of the school) where students will receive expedited access to needed services; and
- Boot Camp where students will begin their school experiences and which will lay the ground work for field learning.

## **School Day**

The New Ventures Charter School's academic calendar consists of a year round academic program divided into a fall, winter, and spring term of 12 weeks each and a six week summer term. During the fall, winter, and spring terms, the school day will begin at 12:00 noon and generally end at 7:45 p.m., with an optional extension to 8:30 for students participating in online enrichment or remedial learning opportunities (students will have a one hour break in the afternoon to allow for travel from field learning sites to classroom setting and a half hour dinner break). On Friday, the school day extends from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Summer sessions extend from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM on Monday through Thursday.

Full-time teachers will be hired on a ten month basis with the option of teaching summer session. Additional teachers will be hired if necessary for summer session and to meet student course requirements and interests. The normal teacher work day is eight hours, with a half hour break for lunch. A typical instructional load for teachers includes 20 periods of instruction, five

preparation periods, and five administrative periods. One afternoon a month is devoted to professional development.

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

All students will develop their own “Individualized Pathway” or learning plan in collaboration with a faculty advisor and with input from the student’s parents or guardians. The Individualized Pathway is a personalized roadmap to earning a Regents Diploma within 26 months, whereby the students understand what they must know and be able to do in the classroom and in the field as well as on the Regents examinations to graduate from high school and to achieve their individual career and college objectives. The Individualized Pathway is a plan for success designed to build student confidence through their accomplishments.

A School planning team composed of the School Leader, teachers, partner teachers from John W. LaVelle Preparatory Charter School, and a member or two of the Board of Trustees who are also highly experienced educators will work collaboratively to develop the School’s curriculum and instructional program. Aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, the curriculum will emphasize experimental and interdisciplinary learning with traditional classroom instruction designed to prepare over-aged and under-credited students for success according to their respective Individualized Pathway or learning plan.

### English Language Arts

In English, students must earn eight credits and pass the English Regents to earn a Regents Diploma. English courses have a focus on critical reading, particularly of non-fiction texts, and on effective written and oral communication. Students are expected to demonstrate the capacity to understand a broad range of literary and non-fiction texts through analysis, interpretation and evaluation. The School will employ the "Writer's Workshop" approach to the writing process, which includes identification of thesis statements, outline of paragraphs with supporting details, self-evaluation and peer evaluation of first drafts using a rubric, and final revisions based on feedback. Students have opportunities to read, respond, and reflect in both small homogenous groups with students on the same reading level and in large heterogeneous discussions. Comprehension and writing skills are emphasized throughout the curriculum, and are embedded in field learning experiences, social studies and science. A writing laboratory is generally a part of each student's Boot Camp experience. Individualized skill development in reading and writing are provided in a blended-learning laboratory setting for students who need extra time and effort to "catch up" to academic standards. A traditional reading and writing seminar prepares students for the English Regents.

### Mathematics

In Mathematics, students must earn six credits to earn a Regents Diploma. Most students will meet their Regents examination requirement through Integrated Algebra. Other students with greater spatial aptitude will satisfy the requirement by taking the Geometry Regents examination. Students have opportunities to do part of their preparation for these examinations as well as to acquire additional credits in mathematics through field learning and other experiential opportunities. For example, students will take a course entitled “Financial Analysis” and students

are grouped in investment clubs where they are introduced to a variety of mathematical techniques to assess risk and to estimate potential return. While students pool research results, each student will make his/her own investment decisions and track their progress using such programs as <http://www.stockmarketgame.org>. Students who lag behind in basic skills will use a variety of computer and web-based applications in a math lab setting to improve their skills and accelerate learning. Students who need extra time and effort are provided with individualized skill development in mathematics to "catch up" to academic standards.

## Science

In Science, students will develop the capacity to employ the scientific method across curricula to form hypotheses, gather and interpret data, and draw conclusions from the results. Through these skills and practice, students will be able to further develop their critical thinking skills as they make connections between course content and real-world application. Concepts within each curriculum are taught through an inquiry approach where students are encouraged to form questions about what they learn and develop answers based on hands on activities and experiments. Additionally, the science curriculum is designed to take advantage of Staten Island's rich opportunities for field learning. Students will have the opportunity to prepare for the physical sciences (Regents Earth Science examinations) through field experiences at the Greenbelt Native Plant Center and Gateway National Recreation Area and for biological sciences (Regents Living Environment examinations) at the Staten Island Zoo and the Snug Harbor Botanical Garden. Field learning will complement the traditional classroom and laboratory experiences.

## Social Studies

In Social Studies, the curriculum focuses developing student understanding of how the modern world was shaped by the events of the past. Teachers create units of study from the curricula centered on big ideas and themes, which give students "a hook" around which they can organize specific facts important to understanding historical periods and movements. Projects by individual and small groups of students require them to make inquiries, to pose questions and find information in response, and to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts. In U.S. History, students are immersed in field learning experiences at Richmond Town or at another of Staten Island's many historical sites.

In Global History, students will participate in multiple field learning experiences reflecting the diversity and complexity of global development. Students will have opportunities for long term field learning at Staten Island's Tibetan Museum, the Holocaust Center in development at Wagner College, in video history projects documenting the experience of Staten Island's communities of New Americans, or as interns with UN-based non-governmental organizations on Staten Island. A traditional, classroom seminar will insure that students connect their field learning to the common core curriculum and Regents examinations. Participation in Government will be approached through a field learning experience, while in Economics, students work in small teams participating in a management game *Foundation24* which provides them with a simulated hands-on experience of working as a member of a management team. Through this

simulation, students are introduced to the basic concepts of economics and business in a real world context.

### Languages Other than English (LOTE)

The School will offer a six-week summer, language immersion program in which students can earn the two credits required to satisfy Regents Diploma requirements. Students who have not completed the LOTE diploma requirement prior to admission will generally take this immersion course during their second summer at the school.

### Wellness

The Wellness Curriculum focuses on strategies that enable students to succeed in a rigorous high school academic program, in college, and in life. For many students, lack of school success is rooted not only in academic deficits but in an inability to overcome social and emotional issues which interfere with academic performance. The Wellness Curriculum provides the tools to achieve this objective by equipping students with the tools including attitudes, knowledge, and skills, that enable students to effectively manage the challenges in their lives, and to live, work, learn and participate fully in their communities.

The School will also offer courses in the arts and physical education which will enable all students to meet requirements for a Regents diploma. New Ventures will utilize visual and performing arts both as methodologies for enriching learning in core curricular areas and as a vehicle through which students can achieve self-expression, build self-esteem, and develop their talents. In the visual arts, students learn to construct meanings about the world through art making, to build upon their own experiences to express a personal vision while developing a global perspective and to recognize the power of art to communicate beliefs and values. In music, students learn, practice, and master a repertoire of vocal and/or instrumental pieces, representative of the diverse cultures of our community, and focus on the skills of good musicianship.

Through theater activities that foster creative expression, discipline, collaboration, self-awareness and personal transformation, students learn to express themselves and to develop empathy for their own and other's situations, to channel their energies into inspiring artistic endeavors, and to appreciate diverse cultural traditions. Dance and creative movement are integrated in the physical education program. In creative movement, students build their technical and expressive skills and develop their artistry while enriching their understanding through an exploration of the historical, social and cultural contexts of dance. In creative movement students participate in units on the elements of dance, Zumba, capoeira, elements of fitness and other collaborative fitness activities. Life-long physical activities such as yoga and Tai Chi are introduced. Additionally, New Ventures will explore opportunities for students to pursue a variety of fitness activities in collaboration with local recreation agencies.

## Field Learning

New Ventures will utilize three different field learning formats which are designed to simultaneously provide rigorous learning opportunities for students while helping to address the needs of community institutions. The best field learning opportunities are genuine "win-win" situations where students engage in deep learning, develop crucial pre-vocational and vocational skills, and make a meaningful contribution to the work of the host institution.

New Ventures will work with a variety of community institutions to create rich learning opportunities rooted in the core curriculum where instructional responsibility is shared by two teachers with field setting staff serving as liaisons and support. In the fall, winter, and spring terms, students will spend three hours a day, four days a week excluding Friday in a field learning experience for which they can earn two credits each term in core curriculum subjects. An additional one credit classroom seminar will be linked to this experience. For example, one field learning experience in the Humanities will occur on-site at Historic Richmond Town, New York City's living history and museum complex, where visitors explore the diversity of the American experience through the lives of ordinary people from the colonial period to the 20th Century. Historic Richmond Town needs well trained, historic "re-enactors," prepared to engage visitors and to answer their questions and is seeking young people and people from diverse backgrounds to take on these roles. Richmond Town will gain an energetic cadre of students who will prepare for and undertake these roles as they explore U.S. History. Through this process students will be immersed in first hand experiences of a typical American community as it evolved from the 18th to the 20th century. The field work will address three modules of the U.S. History curriculum: Time, Continuity, and Change; Conflict and Resolution; and Inquiry through the study of three seminal moments in U.S. History.

As a complementary component of the field learning experience at Richmond Town, students will participate in an English course in Historical Fiction. For each unit, students will complete readings associated with the period of history in which they are immersed. Works of historical fiction to be studied include *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe; *The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane; and *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque. Students will comment daily in their journals on the relationship between these texts and the work which they are doing at Richmond Town, reflecting both on historical themes and on the creative process of creating historical fiction as they craft their reenactment personae, exploring such concepts as "literary license." This integrated approach to English and history exemplifies fundamental principles of Common Core instruction and learning, challenging students to examine and understand the uses of non-fiction sources in the development of argument and narrative. The English Teacher and the U.S. History teacher will meet regularly for joint planning. During a 12-week field immersion, students will be eligible to earn one credit in U.S. History and one credit in English.

Supplementing the field learning in U.S. History, students will participate in a seminar, which will meet for an hour and a half each day in a more traditional, classroom learning environment and a field learning experience in American literature for which they will earn one English credit. The traditional classroom seminar will address the remaining four modules of the U.S. History curriculum: Geography, Economics Interdependence, and Civil Liberties and Justice.

Using primary and secondary sources, including the Federalists Papers and Thomas Paine's Common Sense, the Constitution and the Articles of Confederation, students will engage directly with challenging texts. As a culminating activity, students will be expected to create an informative, as well as explanatory essay to determine how America grew in to a world power before World War I. Through this seminar students can earn a second credit in U.S. History and qualify to take the U.S. History Regents examination.

During the fall, winter, and spring terms, all students participate in a second learning experience, spending one day per week in an Internship experience through which they can earn one credit a term. The internship setting, student learning tasks, and supervising faculty member will be chosen on the basis of student's career aspirations as well as academic and credit needs of the student. In the internship, the students work will be directly supervised by host-setting staff member and closely monitored by an appropriate member of the faculty who is responsible for assigning grades and credits based on performance using an evaluation rubric. Students will maintain logs of their field learning experience and will meet regularly as a group with supervising faculty.

### Boot Camp

A unique component of the NVCS design is the four day/week, six week Boot Camp which will initiate all incoming students into the School's academic program. The six hour day will be divided into two major components. The first component focuses on immediate academic achievement. Although most students are expected to enter NVCS with a history marked by academic failure, all have some achievements behind them. All will have passed at least one of five Regents examinations required for graduation. In the Boot Camp, all students will prepare to pass a second Regents examination, focused on the course for which they are most prepared. Students will spend three hours a day throughout the Boot Camp, shoring up their content knowledge and preparing to take the Regents examination. By the end of the Summer, students will have passed at least two of the required five Regents and their confidence in their ability to succeed will have received a significant boost.

The second component lays the groundwork for the variety of new learning experiences students will face in the coming year. Through the Wellness course, students will prepare for their initial field learning experiences. Students will acquire critical knowledge and skills in personal hygiene, health, appropriate dress, workplace manners, orientation, and preparation for the independent travel. Students will also work with academic advisors to complete their "pathway to graduation".

### **Assessment System**

Assessment data will be used to guide instruction and identify learning needs of students (formative and diagnostic assessments), evaluate academic progress (interim, and summative assessments), and assess teacher and school leader performance. Teachers will use data from assessments given at the conclusion of curriculum units, formative assessments given at various points during the year, and year-end assessments as feedback about their instruction through analysis of the percentage of students who have mastered key concepts and skills from the curriculum. Where necessary, curriculum content will be re-taught. In other cases, teachers will

note the need for revised instructional strategies or changes in curricula. These considerations will be reviewed with teachers by administrators during their annual evaluations of teacher performance. Teachers will use the above assessment data in preparing "progress reports" on individual students.

The Principal is responsible for insuring that assessments are administered in accordance with appropriate protocols, used effectively to guide instruction and data are shared in a timely way to all relevant stakeholders.

### **Culture and Climate**

The School is founded on the premise that students deserve the opportunity to attend a school which responds holistically to their learning needs, a school which nurtures their emotional and psychological growth as well as their cognitive and educational growth. To facilitate the culture of the learning community, the School will provide an environment of positive rewards and encouragement. Through in-class supports provided by teachers and assistants and a curriculum that explicitly identifies and teaches self-management strategies, students learn to manage their own behaviors. In the event that a student's behavior is not responsive to positive supports and interventions, and his or her behavior is disruptive to the educational environment and/or poses a danger to the student or others, such behavior will be addressed in accordance with the School's discipline policy.

### **English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities**

New Ventures will run a full-inclusion program for its English language learners (ELL) and for students with disabilities.

The School will use the research-based Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) program model to develop English language and academic skills among English language learners and is a means for making grade-level academic content more accessible while also promoting English language development. Teachers will also utilize special instructional strategies, sometimes referred to nationally as Sheltered English Techniques (SET) or Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE), for delivering content to English language learner students in English. All teachers will receive SEI training. A certified ESL teacher will be employed to provide ELL instruction and services in the academic classroom as "push in" support in selected sections of English Language Arts.

All classrooms will be staffed to meet the needs of students who have an Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) and/or 504 Plan. Students requiring adapted curriculum work and speech-language therapy and occupational therapy, will receive these services within the classroom when appropriate, and according to their IEP in compliance with applicable governing law and regulations. Students with disabilities will have the opportunity to participate and progress in the general education curriculum and will participate in the State and District-wide assessments according to their Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs). Teachers and related service personnel who have the responsibility for implementing students' IEPs will have access to records and will be informed of specific responsibilities for implementing the IEP. Under the

supervision of a Special Education Coordinator, IEPs of incoming students will be reviewed by a teacher certified in Special Education to ensure compliance. All IEPs will be reviewed annually.

New Ventures seeks to transform parent-school relationships into positive resources for all students by creating opportunities for parents to visit the school to observe student successes performances, art shows, holiday parties, trips; and utilize a variety of media to share student successes with parents unable to participate directly. From the admission/registration process on, parents will be engaged in development of the student's pathway to graduation and in identifying possible external obstacles to school success. Throughout the school year, parents of students at NVCS will have multiple opportunities to communicate with teachers including parent/teacher conferences held to review progress each term.

### **School Governance and Leadership**

Four of the 11 members of the proposed governing board currently serve on the Board of Trustees of the John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School. This mix allows the School's governing board to benefit rapidly from the knowledge and experience of the Lavelle Prep Charter School Board of Trustees and shorten the learning curve for the New Ventures Charter School Board of Trustees. At the same, the New Ventures Board of Trustees will have a sufficient number of independent trustees to protect it from potential conflicts of interest that may arise. The School's Board of Trustees will be comprised of five to 25 members. The initial members of the Board of Trustees are:

- **Kenneth Byalin, Ph.D.** is the founder and President of Lavelle Prep Charter Schools. He is the lead applicant and proposed President or Executive Director of New Ventures Charter School.
- **John Strand, Ed.D.** is a Senior Program Officer with New Visions for Public Schools. He is a former School Principal and Superintendent having extensive small high school experience, educational leadership, and school design.
- **Joe Carroll** is a District Manager with Community Board I, Staten Island. He has extensive experience and knowledge of Staten Island.
- **William Henri** is the Executive Director of South Beach Psychiatric Center. He is an experienced administrator who has charter school board experience.
- **Anne Bennett** is the owner of A.F. Bennett Salon on Staten Island and the Academy of New York City, a Paul Mitchell cosmetology training school. She has extensive business and career education.
- **Jonathan B. Lipschitz, CPA** is a Principal Accounting Officer and Vice President and Controller financial management at VSB Bancorp, Inc. He is has extensive business and financial management experience.
- **Martin Krongold** is the Staten Island Representative on the Citywide Council on High Schools. He has extensive experience in public administration and education policy.
- **Dr. Aurelia L Curtis** is the Principal of Curtis High School on Staten Island. She has extensive education leadership experience.
- **Sheldon Blackman, Ph.D.** is the Vice President for Grants and Program Development at Staten Island University Hospital. He is a Psychologist by profession and has extensive experience fund-raising and charter school leadership.

- **Dirk Tillotson, Esq.** is the Founder and Executive Director of the New York Charter School Incubator. He is an Attorney with extensive experience in charter development and leadership.
- **Kenneth Gold, Ph.D.** is an Associate Professor and Acting Dean of the School of Education at the College of Staten Island. He has extensive experience in higher education.
- **Joseph Romano** is the Chief of Staff and Vice President for Communications at Wagner College. He has extensive experience in higher education and public administration.
- **James O'Keefe** is Vice Provost at St. John's University with extensive experience in public management and higher education.

The Board of Trustees directs the affairs of the School and delegates certain authority to the School's President, who is responsible for insuring that the mission and the philosophy are maintained and for the overall financial viability of the school. The President supervises senior school leaders including the Principal, the Director of Operations, and the Director of Finance. The Principal is directly responsible for instructional leadership, curriculum development and implementation, and faculty personnel decisions, including the selection, training, supervision, and evaluation of teachers. The Director of Operations is responsible for overseeing human resource administration and all non-educational functions other than finance. The Director of Finance is responsible for insuring that NVCS meets the highest standards of financial management. Together with other members of the school leadership selected by the President, this constitutes the School's management team.

The School's President designee is Dr. Ken Byalin, who has five years of experience as leader of the John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School. During the initial charter, Dr. Byalin will serve NVCS on a part-time basis, while continuing to serve as President of Lavelle Prep. Among his responsibilities will be identifying opportunities for synergistic collaboration between the two institutions. Both the Director of Operations and the Director of Finance serve Lavelle Prep in similar roles and will divide their time between the two schools.

Mr. Ron Gorsky is the founding Principal designee. He has many years of experience as Principal of Concord High School, a transfer high school on Staten Island. Mr. Gorsky will be a full-time employee of NVCS and will devote his full energies to the implementation of the NVCS educational design.

The School will provide a competitive benefit package including a 401(k) plan to which the school will contribute, as well inviting working conditions comparable to those provided by Lavelle Prep. All non-certified teachers will meet federal Highly Qualified standards. Because classes are offered at non-traditional hours, the School will provide an attractive opportunity as well for part-time faculty.

The School will implement a comprehensive annual evaluation system for the performance of classroom teachers and building based on multiple measures of effectiveness, including 40% student achievement measures and observations of teacher performance based on the Danielson rubric. These annual evaluations will be a significant factor in employment decisions and the development of improvement plans for teachers or principals.

The School will work with local colleges of education, two of which are represented on the founding board of trustees, to continuously strengthen the teacher recruitment pipeline.

**Facility**

New Ventures Charter School intends to request NYCDOE co-location space (incubation or permanent). The School is also considering two other options, which are to lease a private facility or co-location with John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School.

**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 New York City, indicating that the fiscal impact of the New Ventures Charter School on the New York City District public schools is expected to be nominal.

The New York State Education Department also conducted additional analysis on the projected fiscal impact of the School on its district of residence, the New York City School District (NYCSD), which is summarized below.

**Table 2: Projected Fiscal Impact Upon District of Location, 2016-17 to 2020-21<sup>14</sup>**

Year	Number of Students Enrolled in Charter School Per Year <sup>15</sup>	Charter School Basic Tuition Rate <sup>16</sup>	Total Charter School Basic Tuition Only	Estimated District Special Education Payment <sup>17</sup>	Total District General Fund Budget <sup>18</sup>	Percent of District Budget
2016-17	60	\$15,686	\$941,160	\$127,057	\$20,623,441,377	0.005%
2020-21	216	\$18,490	\$3,993,840	\$539,138		0.022%

The calculations above assume charter school basic tuition rates in the charter period (2015-16 through 2019-20) based on a trend analysis calculated by the Charter School Office and approved by the Department’s State Aid Office. In order to conservatively avoid underestimating the fiscal impact that the charter school will have on the district going forward, the Department is

<sup>14</sup> In order to conservatively estimate the fiscal impact upon the district of location, maximum enrollment figures for each year were used. For additional information, please refer to Table 2

<sup>15</sup> Source: New Ventures Charter School Application

<sup>16</sup> Source: Education Law §2856(1)(a)(iii) and NYS Education Department Office of State Aid Charter School Basic Tuition Rate Analysis, Spring 2014

<sup>17</sup> Based on 2011-12 calculated special education classification rate for the district of location, as collected by NYSED Information and Report Services

<sup>18</sup> Source: The City of New York 2015 Executive Budget, [http://www.nyc.gov/html/omb/downloads/pdf/erc5\\_14.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/omb/downloads/pdf/erc5_14.pdf)

assuming no growth in the New York City School District budget during the duration of the school’s charter.<sup>19</sup>

It should be noted that, given the nature of district-based per-pupil funding, the estimates made by the Department in conducting this analysis are subject to unpredictable financial fluctuations. 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.

The specifics of the school’s enrollment composition are still unavailable; however, the Department acknowledges that the programmatic and fiscal impact of the proposed charter school on other public and private schools in the same area will also be influenced by the proportion of charter school enrollees that would have attended a same-district public or private school had it not been for the presence of this charter school.

**Table 3: 2013-14 Demographic Detail for Proposed District of Location:  
NYC District #31 – Staten Island<sup>20</sup>**

	Total District Enrollment	
All Students	61,591	
<i>American Indian/Alaska Native</i>	242	0%
<i>Asian/Pacific Islander</i>	5,054	8%
<i>Black</i>	8,083	13%
<i>Hispanic</i>	16,339	27%
<i>Multiracial</i>	578	1%
<i>White</i>	31,295	51%
Economically Disadvantaged	34,228	56%
Limited English Proficient	3,145	5%
Students with Disabilities	13,915	23%

<sup>19</sup> Additional notes: While the school has included other federal grants and/or funds that may flow through the district to be received by the school in its proposed budget, this analysis does not account for these sources of potential revenue, nor does it include the value of certain services (e.g. transportation) that the district is required to provide the charter school. However, the analysis also does not account for district per-pupil expense and overall resource savings that are likely to result from a reduction in the number of students attending district public schools as a result of students attending nonpublic schools located in the school district.

<sup>20</sup> Source: Student Information Repository System (SIRS) 2013-14 Report 303 BEDS Day Enrollment Verification Report by Location of Enrollment & Student Subgroup

**Table 4: High School Accountability Cohort Data Based on Grade Configurations for Proposed School**<sup>21</sup>

High School Cohort Data	NYC #31	NYS
<i>ELA Regents Aggregate (2009 Cohort)</i>	76%	81%
<i>Math Regents Aggregate (2009 Cohort)</i>	36%	84%
<i>4-Year Graduation Rate (2009 Cohort)</i>	75%	75%

### Public Hearing and Public Comment

As required by the Charter Schools Act, the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) held a hearing on October 16, 2014 to solicit comments from the community concerning the proposed New Ventures Charter School. The hearing was attended by 17 individuals and NYCDOE staff. After a presentation by the School, five individuals signed up to comment and each expressed concern about the potential impact on the existing Concord High School, a transfer school on Staten Island. Another 26 individuals appearing to be students attending Concord High School expressed the worry that opening another alternative transfer high school would mean the closure of Concord High. There were no direct expressions of opposition or support, but concerns about the potential impact on other schools.

The Department directly notified the Chancellor of the NYCDOE, as well as public and private schools in the region, of the charter school application and issued an open call for written public comment via the State Education Department Charter School Office website.

### Application Review Process

On January 2, 2014, in accordance with the New York State Charter Schools Act, the New York State Education Department (the “Department”) released the 2014 Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents. The charter school application process used by the Board of Regents and the Department is multi-staged and designed to ensure that any charter school applicant presented to the Board of Regents for possible approval demonstrates a detailed and complete school design proposal that:

- includes a clear plan to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, students who are English language learners, and students who are eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced-price lunch program;

<sup>21</sup> Source: Student Information Repository System (SIRS) 2012-13 Report 101 High School Accountability Data Verification Report; 2013-14 Report 102 Elementary/Middle-Level Accountability Data Verification Report

- provides evidence of public outreach that conforms to the process prescribed by the Regents for the purpose of soliciting and incorporating community input regarding the proposed charter school;
- meets all requirements set forth in the Charter Schools Act as well as all other applicable laws, rules, regulations;
- demonstrates the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner;
- is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes of the Act; and
- would have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the proposed charter school.

In addition, the applicant group and founding board of trustees must demonstrate appropriate knowledge, capacity, and abilities to effectively create, maintain, and oversee a high-quality charter school.

During 2014 Round 2, the Department received a total of 51 letters of intent. After an initial review process, 17 applicants were invited to submit full applications in Round 2. A total of 15 full applications were submitted and evaluated in Round 2, including the application for New Ventures Charter School.

To assess whether to recommend approval or denial of the charter application to the Board of Regents, the Department established review panels to thoroughly evaluate each full application. Each panel was made up of professional expert consultants, peer reviewers who are school leaders and educators active in charter and public schools in New York, as well as qualified Department staff members. The review panel members reviewed, rated, and commented on each section of the application according to the criteria published in the Application Kit.

On Thursday, October 2, 2014, Department staff conducted a three-hour capacity interview with six of the 11 initial board members proposed for the New Ventures Charter School. The proposed initial board of trustees was asked to complete a task based on fictional scenario created to highlight some likely potential challenges in real-life implementation of the proposed school plan. The task was designed to evaluate the capacity of the proposed initial board members to prioritize issues, accurately identify possible root causes of implementation challenges and plan appropriate board actions, as well as assess understanding of the governance role, knowledge of the application and group decision-making dynamics. The interview team posed general questions to the proposed initial trustees and founding group members about their knowledge of New York State Charter School Law, the roles and responsibilities of various members in the proposed school community, and accountability to stakeholder groups as well as to the Board of Regents as authorizer. To fully understand the proposed academic program, governance role and fiscal viability of the proposed School, staff asked targeted questions of the applicant group.

The responses demonstrated requisite knowledge and grasp of key areas. Members of the applicant group as a whole and individually demonstrated knowledge of the charter school application and the proposed School. Structures, systems, protocols and procedures are in place

to permit the board to effectively govern the School. The applicants addressed questions posed with specific and detailed information that presented a clear, realistic picture of how the School expects to operate.

## Findings

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:

4. 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.<sup>22</sup> This finding is based on the following, among other things:
  - the applicant has included in the application the information required by §2851(2)
  - the proposed charter school would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as prescribed by the NYS Board of Regents,<sup>23</sup> 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 subdivision 2852(9-a)(b)(i)
  - 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 subdivision 2852(9-a)(b)(ii).
5. The applicant has demonstrated the ability to operate the proposed charter school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner.<sup>24</sup> 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;

---

<sup>22</sup> Education Law §2852(2)(a).

<sup>23</sup> Note, the data upon which to base the enrollment and retention targets mandated by the amendments to the Act was not available at the time the statute mandated the RFP be issued. As a result, the Department evaluated the plans for student enrollment, recruitment, and retention plans of each class of student referenced in the amendments to the Act such that the Department could make the determination that the applicant would meet or exceed the enrollment and retention targets when developed. During the first year of the charter term, the Department will develop such targets and incorporate these targets into the school's charter agreement performance expectations.

<sup>24</sup> Education Law §2852(2)(b).

- 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.
6. Granting the proposed charter is likely to improve student learning and achievement, will materially further the purposes of the Act<sup>25</sup> and will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school.<sup>26</sup> 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, Commissioner John B. King, Jr. recommends that the New York State Board of Regents approve the proposal to establish the New Ventures Charter School to open in 2015 in New York City.

---

<sup>25</sup> Education Law §2852(2)(c).

<sup>26</sup> As applicable pursuant to §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 2014 Request for Proposals to  
Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents  
to establish the proposed:

**South Bronx Classical Charter School III**  
November 2014

**Table 1: Summary of the Proposed South Bronx Classical Charter School III**

Name of Charter School	South Bronx Classical Charter School III
Lead Applicant(s)	Lester Long
District of Location	Bronx, Districts 12, 8, 9, 7,11
Opening Date	August, 2015
Projected Charter Term	November 18, 2014 – June 30, 2020
Management Company	None
Partners	South Bronx Classical Charter School and South Bronx Classical Charter School II
Facility	Private or public co-location space
Projected Enrollment and Grade Span during Charter Term	Opening with 124 students in Grade K through 1; growing to 372 students in Grades K through 5
Planned Grade Span (beyond Initial Charter Term)	558 students, K through 8
Mission Statement	<i>“South Bronx Classical Charter School III prepares K-8th grade students in the South Bronx to excel in college-preparatory high schools. Through a classical curriculum and highly-structured setting, students become liberated scholars and citizens of impeccable character who achieve proficiency in and advanced mastery of New York State Performance Standards.”</i>

South Bronx Classical Charter School III (SBCCS III) will replicate and partner with South Bronx Classical Charter School (SBCCS) in NYC CSD 12, and South Bronx Classical Charter School II (SBCCS II) in NYC CSD 7.

South Bronx Classical Charter School was authorized by the New York City Department of Education to serve students in grades K through 5. The School opened in 2006. The charter was renewed in 2011, and revised in 2012 to serve students in Grades K through 8. Currently, 370 students are enrolled in South Bronx Classical Charter School.

The academic performance of South Bronx Classical Charter School has significantly exceeded statewide proficiency levels since 2010.

**Table 2: South Bronx Classical I Charter School 3-8 NYS Testing Outcomes Compared to Statewide Average, 2010-11 through 2013-14<sup>27</sup>**

SY Aggregate and by Gr Lvl	ELA				Mathematics			
	# of Students Tested	So. Bronx Classical Proficiency	NYS Proficiency	Delta +/-	# of Students Tested	So. Bronx Classical Proficiency	NYS Proficiency	Delta +/-
<b>2010-1ff1</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>28</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	53	64	56	8	53	89	60	29
4 <sup>th</sup>	51	67	57	9	51	92	67	26
5 <sup>th</sup>	29	83	54	29	29	97	66	30
<b>2011-12</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>33</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	47	89	56	34	47	96	61	35
4 <sup>th</sup>	43	93	60	33	43	100	69	31
5 <sup>th</sup>	35	89	58	31	35	100	67	33
<b>2012-13</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>34</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	57	49	31	18	59	47	34	13
4 <sup>th</sup>	44	68	31	37	44	84	36	48
5 <sup>th</sup>	36	50	30	20	36	69	30	40
<b>2013-14</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>45</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	47	57	32	26	47	79	42	37
4 <sup>th</sup>	49	67	33	35	49	86	41	45
5 <sup>th</sup>	38	55	29	26	38	87	39	48
6 <sup>th</sup>	26	38	28	10	26	88	37	52

The applicant provided the following additional information about the academic achievement and progress at South Bronx Classical Charter School:

- In 2011, the School was identified as the most improved public school in the NYC DOE School Progress Report, in which the School received straight A's.
- In 2012, the School scored in the 100th percentile on the NYC DOE School Progress Report. In 2014, the School scored in the 93rd percentile.
- The NYC Charter School Center ranks SBCCS as 11th in Math and 12th in ELA across all 135 charter schools.
- The School is the highest performing elementary school in CSD 12 five years straight, and among the State's most fiscally strong non-CMO charter schools, having had clean audit letters each year.

South Bronx Classical Charter School II was authorized by the New York State Board of Regents in 2012 to serve 360 students in grades K through 5. The School opened in 2013 and currently serves 159 students in grades K through 2.

<sup>27</sup> Source: NYSED Information and Reporting Services Office data reporting – English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Assessment Results (<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/ela-math/>)

The terms of the proposed partnership between the South Bronx Classical Charter School, South Bronx Classical Charter School II and the second replication school, South Bronx Classical Charter School III, are described in a letter submitted with the application by C. Stephen Baldwin, founding member and board chair for all three school governing boards. Mr. Baldwin describes his support for the prospective affiliation between the three schools and expects that the partnership will “create real and lasting synergies by leveraging the work, experience and measured success we currently enjoy, to further our impact on more families and students in our community.” He states that the partnership would allow combined and cost-effective teacher development sessions, bookkeeping and financial services, curriculum and assessment, and provide for “leadership pipelines for staff.”

### **Key Design Elements**

South Bronx Classical Charter School III will closely resemble the school model of South Bronx Classical Charter School and South Bronx Classical Charter School II. In addition to a focus on the fundamentals of reading, writing, and math, the proposed school offers character education, instruction in Latin beginning in third grade, and debate starting in fourth grade. Consistent with a liberal arts education, the school seeks to provide students with a diverse array of skills and appreciation in art and music. The program is based on two fundamental principles:

1. All children can achieve academic success when provided with a rigorous and organized curriculum, effective teaching and a structured environment.
  2. Development of responsible, compassionate, productive citizens is a fundamental aim of education.
- **Classical Framework:** The academic program will focus on a core curriculum, the development of strong literacy skills along with numeracy skill, knowledge and understanding of elementary facts.
  - **Rigorous and Organized Curriculum:** The SBCC III curriculum is fully aligned with the Common Core and New York State Learning Standards and focuses on literacy. All students are provided three hours of daily literacy instruction and two hours of daily math instruction. Consistent with the school’s mission and with the tenets of a classical education, students will receive one hour of character education instruction each week.
  - **Effective Teaching:** SBCCS III will hire staff from a mix of teachers and leaders at SBCCS and SBCCS II, as well as through organizations such as Teach for America, New Leaders for New Schools, and outreach to selective businesses and industries. Teachers will receive over 100 hours of professional development annually through summer orientation, weekly grade level meetings, monthly school-wide meetings, and ongoing individual sessions. To attract and retain effective teachers, salaries will be 5% to 10% higher than teacher salaries in district Extended Time Schools.
  - **Structured Environment:** SBCCS III will create positive student behavior through modeling, explicit behavioral instruction, and a transparent set of expectations shared

with families at orientations and throughout the year. These expectations are detailed in the Code of Conduct which outlines School's core values and clear consequences for infractions.

- **Development of Respectful, Compassionate, and Productive Citizens:** SBCCS III will instill a school-wide culture of positive behavior and character modeled on the culture of SBCCS and SBCCS II. All scholars will perform age-appropriate community service based on themes such as the environment and care of senior citizens.
- **Family Engagement:** All families will receive regular communication regarding their scholars' academic and behavioral progress, using grades and test scores as benchmarks for discussion. A Family Advisory Council (FAC) will serve as a liaison between parents and school administration and provide monthly informational and educational opportunities for families.

## **Education Plan**

South Bronx Classical Charter School III will use and refine curricula developed and used by SBCCS. The SBCCS III planning team has researched the proposed academic programs and teaching methods to assure alignment with the mission and goals of the replication school and to meet the needs of the community to be served. The core academic scope and sequence will be drawn from the commercial curricula including: Open Court Reading, Saxon Math, Core Knowledge History and FOSS Science. The curricula will be supplemented as necessary to best support struggling learners.

A school-wide, data-driven instructional model will help to inform decisions about curriculum and instruction. The school plans to use a combination of data derived from New York State tests, TerraNova, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and interim teacher-developed assessments. Assessment data will be used to design and implement appropriate intervention strategies for at-risk students. Such students will be provided Tier 3 intensive intervention individually or in a small group, for fifty minutes per day, five days per week, from a learning specialist.

The proposed school calendar includes 191 days of instruction. The daily schedule is structured to offer a longer school day, beginning at 8:00 a.m. and ending at 4:30 p.m. Each day includes 180 minutes of English Language Arts instruction and 120 minutes of Mathematics instruction. The school will offer after-school supports designed to assist struggling students, challenge advanced students, and as behavior modification strategies for some students.

South Bronx Classical Charter School II plans to serve students residing in the South Bronx, particularly in the Longwood, Hunts Point, Morrisania and surrounding neighborhoods, reflecting very demographically diverse communities. Approximately 17% of the students in the neighborhoods to be served are English language learners and 16% are students with disabilities.

To foster positive school culture, the School plans to create a common message of learning and character. The School will encourage family involvement and communication through the Parent Academy, Open House and Report Card Nights, and Community Gatherings.

SBCCS III will hire a Special Education Coordinator to coordinate all special education services and lead the School's Child Study Team (CST), which will meet twice monthly to discuss specific at-risk students and create individual plans to address their specific needs. The School will ensure that staff is trained to provide differentiated instruction within the classroom, to make accommodations within the classroom to support learning for individual scholars, and to identify scholars with possible special needs. The School prefers to have in-house special education staff provide specialized instruction but may contract out for other services (i.e. counseling, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy) through the NYC Department of Education or a well-qualified third party.

The School plans to serve English language learners (ELLs) by implementing a structured English language immersion program. Teachers in structured immersion settings will receive specific professional development to support student improvement student comprehension and fluency in English. Professional development will include clarity of speech training, classroom noise control, use of native language when appropriate, maintaining positive outlook, setting academic goals, use of visual aids, remedial assistance, and planning toward total "mainstreaming" or declassification. The School ensures full compliance with all applicable laws and regulations regarding the education of English language learners.

### **Community Outreach**

The applicant group and founding board held a community event in which information about the proposed charter school was presented to potential stakeholders. Through postings on the website, flyers displayed throughout the community, and direct telephone calls, stakeholders (largely parents and families) were invited to learn about the proposed charter school and to offer comment to help shape the application. Letters and materials were mailed to inform elected officials and other members of the community about the proposed school and to solicit their comments. Additionally, the applicant group and founding board sought guidance from various experts in the field of education. The experts read summaries of the proposed school application and provided meaningful feedback. The feedback from all stakeholders, community members, and educational experts was considered and incorporated into the final application.

### **School Governance**

The applicant group of six individuals includes five employees of South Bronx Classical Charter Schools and the Board Chair of the flagship SBCCS. All six individuals will have a role at the new school.

The proposed board members of SBCCS III also serve as the trustees of SBCCS and SBCCS II. A School Trustee Background Information form, Statement of Assurance and resume or curriculum vitae was provided for each of the nine individuals who will comprise the School's initial Board of Trustees. As required, the applicant group has provided a set of draft by-laws and a draft code of ethics.

Board of Trustee meetings for all three SBCCS schools will be held monthly, on the same day and in the same location. SBCCS I will meet from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.; SBCCS II will meet from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.; and SBCCS III will meet from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

The Board represents a diverse group of professionals with teaching experience as well as expertise in community engagement, school leadership, finance, legal, real estate, and board governance.

The initial members of the Board of Trustees are:

- **Mr. Stephen Baldwin** has served as the Chair of SBCCS since 2006 and SBCCS II since 2012. He has experience in management, law, organizational leadership, and education. He served as: Executive Director of the Learning Disabilities Association of New York; Chief of the Population Branch at the United Nations; and, Assistant Representative with the Ford Foundation. Mr. Baldwin taught at a South Bronx elementary school for three years.
- **Ms. Kathryn Heleniak** is the proposed Vice Chair and has been the Vice Chair of SBCCS since 2008. Ms. Heleniak has been a professor of Art History at Fordham University since 1987.
- **Mr. J. Kevin Murphy** is the proposed Secretary and has been Board Secretary of SBCCS since 2006. Mr. Murphy has 32 years of experience in financial management (investments, insurance, and treasury) and has taught for the past 11 years at an East Harlem public elementary school.
- **Ms. Melissa Brown** is the proposed Treasurer and has been Treasurer of SBCCS since 2009. Currently, Ms. Brown serves as a Vice President at Barclays Bank (formerly Lehman Brothers).
- **Mr. Bill Higgins** is an original Trustee of SBCCS and brings a diverse group of skills and experience to the Board, including real estate development and the creation of strategic partnerships. Mr. Higgins is a real estate developer, a 20-year veteran of the Navy (served in Operation Desert Storm), a former FBI agent, and a former teacher in the South Bronx.
- **Mr. Larry Hirsch** is an original Trustee of SBCCS who brings community engagement and political advocacy skills to the Board. Mr. Hirsch presently serves as a Senior CPD Representative at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and has over ten years of experience in government support for the disadvantaged.
- **Ms. Louisa Childs** has served as a Trustee of SBCCS since 2010. A graduate of Dartmouth College and NYU School of Law, Ms. Childs is Counsel at the Dwight International School.
- **Mr. James Maher, Jr.**, has been a Trustee of SBCCS since 2011. Mr. Maher is a Vice President at BlackRock, Inc., where he focuses on Real Estate Acquisition and Finance.

- **Ms. Ingrid Bateman** has served as a Trustee since 2012. Ms. Bateman holds various positions in non-profit and theater organizations.

The Board of Trustees is actively seeking to add members who have experience in community development in the South Bronx. The qualities sought in these new members will include (1) substantial experience with successful volunteer groups in the South Bronx, (2) experience with community organizations, (3) commitment to the school mission and energy, (4) fluency in Spanish, and (5) leadership skills. Parents with these qualities will be given preference among potential candidates for Board service.

### **School Leadership and Staffing**

The Executive Director at SBCCS and SBCCS II will also serve as Executive Director at SBCCS III. The Executive Director is supervised and supported by the Board of Trustees and is responsible for implementation of the School's mission and academic program. Additionally, the Director of Business Operations and Director of Curriculum will be shared across the three campuses (anticipated two days/week at SBCCS III).

A School Director has been identified for SBCCS III. She has served in a variety of leadership roles at both SBCCS and SBCCS II. The School Director will hire staff for SBCCS III from a pool of teachers and leadership from SBCCS I and SBCCS II and other sources. The hiring process will commence in January 2015 and be final by May 2015.

Organizationally, teachers will report to Grade Level Team Leaders and Grade Level Team Leaders will report to the School Director. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction will observe and provide feedback to Grade Level Team Leaders and teams. Through the Grade Level Team Leadership structure, the School will provide additional leadership and growth opportunities for a cadre of experienced, mission-aligned teachers. SBCCS III will develop its faculty and eventually create a 'hire from within' culture that reduces the risk associated with administrative turnover. Grade Level Team Leaders take responsibility for team management and culture-setting, teacher observations, curriculum developing and vetting, and implementation of special school-wide projects. This model is known as the Matrix Organizational Model and is in place in SBCCS and SBCCS II.

As incentives to retain teachers, the school design incorporates competitive teacher salary and benefit packages, student tutoring support from college students and extensive professional development opportunities. First year teacher salaries will be comparable to those of the NYC Department of Education teachers, with increases over time based on performance. The teacher leader model will be a support for teachers and allow for professional growth, as well as support a culture of high expectations and professional respect.

### **Facility**

The School intends to request co-location space (incubation or permanent) from the NYC Department of Education. The School is also considering various opportunities to lease a private facility. One such option is a shared space arrangement with the New York City Roman Catholic Archdiocese.

## Projected Fiscal and Programmatic Impact on New York City School District

The applicant group provided an analysis of the fiscal and programmatic impact of the proposed school on public and non-public schools in New York City, indicating that the fiscal impact of the South Bronx Classical Charter School III on the New York City School District is expected to be nominal.

The New York State Education Department also conducted additional analysis on the projected fiscal impact of the School on its district of residence, the New York City School District (NYCSD), which is summarized below.

**Table 3: Projected Fiscal Impact upon New York City School District, 2015-16 to 2019-20<sup>28</sup>**

Year	Number of Students Enrolled in Charter School Per Year <sup>29</sup>	Charter School Basic Tuition Rate <sup>30</sup>	Total Charter School Basic Tuition Only	Estimated District Special Education Payment <sup>31</sup>	Total District General Fund Budget <sup>32</sup>	Percent of District Budget
2015-16	124	\$13,777	\$1,708,348	\$230,627	\$20,623,441,377	0.009%
2019-20	372	\$17,789	\$6,617,508	\$893,364		0.036%

The calculations above assume charter school basic tuition rates in the charter period (2015-16 through 2019-20) based on a trend analysis calculated by the Charter School Office and approved by the Department's State Aid Office. To conservatively avoid underestimating the fiscal impact that the charter school will have on the district going forward, the Department is assuming no growth in the New York City School District budget during the duration of the school's charter.<sup>33</sup>

It should be noted that, given the nature of district-based per-pupil funding, the estimates made by the Department in conducting this analysis are subject to unpredictable financial fluctuations. 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;

<sup>28</sup> In order to conservatively estimate the fiscal impact upon the district of location, maximum enrollment figures for each year were used. For additional information, please refer to Table 2

<sup>29</sup> Source: South Bronx Classical Charter School III Application

<sup>30</sup> Source: Education Law §2856(1)(a)(iii) and NYS Education Department Office of State Aid Charter School Basic Tuition Rate Analysis, Fall 2014

<sup>31</sup> Based on 2011-12 calculated special education classification rate for the district of location, as collected by NYSED Information and Report Services

<sup>32</sup> Source: The City of New York 2015 Executive Budget, [http://www.nyc.gov/html/omb/downloads/pdf/erc5\\_14.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/omb/downloads/pdf/erc5_14.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Additional notes: While the school has included other federal grants and/or funds that may flow through the district to be received by the school in its proposed budget, this analysis does not account for these sources of potential revenue, nor does it include the value of certain services (e.g. transportation) that the district is required to provide the charter school. However, the analysis also does not account for district per-pupil expense and overall resource savings that are likely to result from a reduction in the number of students attending district public schools as a result of students attending nonpublic schools located in the school district.

- 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.

The specifics of the school's enrollment composition are still unavailable; however, the Department acknowledges that the programmatic and fiscal impact of the proposed charter school on other public and private schools in the same area will also be influenced by the proportion of charter school enrollees that would have attended a same-district public or private school had it not been for the presence of this charter school.

**Table 4: 2013-14 Demographic Detail for Proposed Districts of Location:  
NYC District #7, 8, 9, 11, 12 - Bronx<sup>34</sup>**

	NYC District #7		NYC District #8		NYC District #9		NYC District #11		NYC District #12	
All Students	19,798		29,672		36,585		39,564		24,142	
<i>American Indian</i>	91	0%	192	1%	146	0%	436	1%	220	1%
<i>Asian/Pacific Islander</i>	221	1%	1,427	5%	477	1%	2,864	7%	490	2%
<i>Black</i>	5,409	27%	7,194	24%	11,150	30%	16,797	42%	6,516	27%
<i>Hispanic</i>	13,829	70%	18,947	64%	24,425	67%	16,364	41%	16,604	69%
<i>Multiracial</i>	54	0%	90	0%	71	0%	146	0%	43	0%
<i>White</i>	194	1%	1,822	6%	316	1%	2,957	7%	269	1%
Economically Disadvantaged	18,326	93%	23,884	80%	33,519	92%	29,931	76%	21,729	90%
Limited English Proficient	3,421	17%	3,370	11%	8,376	23%	3,705	9%	4,264	18%
Students with Disabilities	4,504	23%	6,682	23%	7,444	20%	7,573	19%	5,002	21%

**Table 5: 2013-14 Elementary/Middle School Academic Proficiency Rates on NYS Assessments Based on Grade Configurations for Proposed School<sup>35</sup>**

	2013-14 District and State Proficiency					
	NYC #7	NYC #8	NYC #9	NYC #11	NYC #12	NYS
ELA Aggregate	10%	19%	13%	23%	12%	31%
Grade 3	9%	20%	14%	23%	13%	32%
Grade 4	12%	20%	15%	25%	13%	33%
Grade 5	10%	18%	11%	20%	10%	29%
Math Aggregate	16%	28%	19%	31%	16%	41%
Grade 3	15%	26%	20%	30%	16%	42%
Grade 4	17%	28%	18%	36%	17%	41%
Grade 5	17%	29%	19%	27%	15%	39%

<sup>34</sup> Source: Student Information Repository System (SIRS) 2013-14 Report 303 BEDS Day Enrollment Verification Report by Location of Enrollment & Student Subgroup

<sup>35</sup> Source: Student Information Repository System (SIRS) 2012-13 Report 101 High School Accountability Data Verification Report; 2013-14 Report 102 Elementary/Middle-Level Accountability Data Verification Report

## **Public Hearing and Public Comment**

As required by the Charter Schools Act, the NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE) conducted a public hearing on September 29, 2014, to solicit comments from the community concerning the proposed South Bronx Classical Charter School III. Two individuals signed up to comment; remarks were in support of the proposed School.

The Department directly notified the Chancellor of the NYCDOE, as well as public and private schools in the region, of the charter school application and issued an open call for written public comment via the State Education Department Charter School Office website.

## **Application Review Process**

On January 2, 2014, in accordance with the New York State Charter Schools Act, the New York State Education Department (the “Department”) released the 2014 Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents. The charter school application process used by the Board of Regents and the Department is multi-staged and designed to ensure that any charter school applicant presented to the Board of Regents for possible approval demonstrates a detailed and complete school design proposal that:

- includes a clear plan to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, students who are English language learners, and students who are eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced-price lunch program;
- provides evidence of public outreach that conforms to the process prescribed by the Regents for the purpose of soliciting and incorporating community input regarding the proposed charter school;
- meets all requirements set forth in the Charter Schools Act as well as all other applicable laws, rules, regulations;
- demonstrates the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner;
- is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes of the Act; and
- would have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the proposed charter school.

In addition, the applicant group and founding board of trustees must demonstrate appropriate knowledge, capacity, and abilities to effectively create, maintain, and oversee a high-quality charter school.

During 2014 Round 2, the Department received a total of 51 letters of intent. After an initial review process, 17 applicants were invited to submit full applications in Round 2. A total of 15 full applications were submitted and evaluated in Round 2, including the application for the South Bronx Classical Charter School III.

To assess whether to recommend approval or denial of the charter application to the Board of Regents, the Department established review panels to thoroughly evaluate each full application.

Each panel was made up of professional expert consultants, peer reviewers who are school leaders and educators active in charter and public schools in New York, as well as qualified Department staff members. The review panel members reviewed, rated, and commented on each section of the application according to the criteria published in the Application Kit.

On Wednesday, October 8, 2014, Department staff conducted a three-hour capacity interview with seven of the nine initial board members for the proposed SBCCS III, as well as the proposed School Executive Director and School Director, and the SBCCS II School Director. The interview presented the Department team with an opportunity to evaluate the capacity of the board members to prioritize issues, accurately identify possible root causes of implementation challenges and plan appropriate board actions, as well as assess understanding of the governance role, knowledge of the application and group decision-making dynamics. In addition, questions were posed to the proposed initial trustees and founding group members, including general questions around New York State Charter School Law, the roles and responsibilities of various members in the proposed school community, and accountability to stakeholder groups as well to as the Board of Regents as authorizer. To fully understand the proposed academic program, staff asked targeted questions of the applicant group.

The responses demonstrated adequate knowledge and grasp of key areas. Members of the applicant group as a whole and individually demonstrated knowledge of the charter school application and the proposed School. Structures, systems, protocols and procedures are in place to permit the board to effectively govern the School. The applicants addressed questions posed with specific and detailed information that presented a clear, realistic picture of how the School expects to operate.

## **Findings**

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.<sup>36</sup> This finding is based on the following, among other things:

- the applicant has included in the application the information required by §2851(2)
- the proposed charter school would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as prescribed by the NYS Board of Regents,<sup>37</sup> 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 subdivision 2852(9-a)(b)(i)

---

<sup>36</sup> Education Law §2852(2)(a).

<sup>37</sup> Note, the data upon which to base the enrollment and retention targets mandated by the amendments to the Act was not available at the time the statute mandated the RFP be issued. As a result, the Department evaluated the plans for student enrollment, recruitment, and retention plans of each class of student referenced in the amendments to the Act such that the Department could make the determination that the applicant would meet or exceed the enrollment and retention targets when developed. During the first year of the charter term, the Department will develop such targets and incorporate these targets into the school's charter agreement performance expectations.

- 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 subdivision 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.<sup>38</sup> 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 Act<sup>39</sup> and will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school.<sup>40</sup> 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, Commissioner John B. King, Jr. recommends that the New York State Board of Regents approve the proposal to establish the South Bronx Classical Charter School III to open in 2015 in New York City.

---

<sup>38</sup> Education Law §2852(2)(b).

<sup>39</sup> Education Law §2852(2)(c).

<sup>40</sup> As applicable pursuant to §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 2014 Request for Proposals to  
Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents  
to establish the proposed:

**Greater Works Charter School**

November 2014

**Table 1: Summary of the Proposed Capital Preparatory Harlem Charter School**

Name of Charter School	Greater Works Charter School
Lead Applicant(s)	Ted J. Morris, Jr.
District of Location	Rochester City School District
Opening Date	September, 2015
Projected Charter Term	November 18, 2014 – June 30, 2020
Management Company	N/A
Partners	N/A
Facility	Private space
Projected Enrollment and Grade Span during Charter Term	Opening with 96 students in Grade 9; growing to serve 384 students in Grades 9 through 12
Planned Grade Span (beyond Initial Charter Term)	N/A
Mission Statement	<i>“The mission of the Greater Works Charter School (hereinafter, referred to as “GWCS”) is to prepare students to be self-sufficient citizens. GWCS will accomplish this mission by providing a high-quality education in a safe and supportive environment that provides students with the academic and technical skills necessary to earn a NYS Regents diploma and to succeed in college and today’s workforce.”</i>

The primary objective of Greater Works Charter School (GWCS) is to graduate students who have gained the academic and technical skills necessary to earn a New York State Regents diploma and to succeed in college and today’s workforce. Students who achieve these high standards will be at a greater advantage to becoming self-sufficient citizens, able to take care of their basic needs and be an asset to their community.

## Key Design Elements

- **A Focus on Self-Sufficiency:** Preparing students to be self-sufficient citizens is at the core of GWCS's mission. The founding group defines a self-sufficient citizen as an individual who is college- and career-ready, needing no outside public resources to satisfy basic human needs. The School seeks to create a safe and supportive atmosphere where students are able to earn a Regents diploma, prepared to succeed in college and or in today's workforce, thereby able to achieve self-sufficiency.
- **Individual Learning Plans (ILPs):** Teacher advisors will work with each student to create an individual learning plan to guide instruction, which will allow teaching staff to build lessons that explore and strengthen each student's skills, interests, and dreams. Students will be evaluated and work with an advisor to create the ILP based on the number of credits needed for graduation, reading and math grade-level scores, and social/emotional needs. The ILPs will be living documents that students and teacher advisors refer to and update on a regular basis.
- **Advisory:** Time is built into each student's daily schedule to meet with the student's teacher advisor. During this time, teachers will offer motivation, feedback and guidance to their students as they create, review/revise and evaluate the goals in their individual learning plans.
- **Longer Instructional Time:** GWCS will provide a longer school day (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) and school year (193 days, not including the summer bridge program for Grade 9 and Grade 10 students, which will be an additional 19 days), compared to traditional public schools in the area.
- **Blended Learning:** Students will participate in courses that are infused with technology and co-taught by New York State certified and experienced teachers. Using resources such as Odyssey Ware curriculum, which features an engaging, media-rich with 3-D animation, video clips, audio files, and educational games, teachers will be able to provide high-quality learning experiences for their students.
- **Co-Teaching:** Courses at GWCS will be co-taught by a content area teacher alongside a special education teacher or teaching assistant, which will allow for more opportunities for small group and one-to-one learning. Built into the schedule is time for co-planning.
- **Teaching Assistants (TAs):** The school plans to hire teaching assistants from local graduate colleges of education (such as Roberts Wesleyan College, University of Rochester, SUNY Brockport, Keuka College, St. John Fisher College, and Nazareth College, etc.) Teaching assistants will work with teachers to support student learning. They will provide instructional, behavioral, and organizational benefits to the GWCS model.

- **Professional Learning Community (PLC):** GWCS will engage in a professional learning community to support instructional staff. Teacher schedules will include one hour daily for teacher mentoring, professional development, and peer coaching. Teachers will also be able to use this time to create lesson plans with the support of other teachers, the Principal, and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction. A regular focus during these meeting times will be on the local and formative assessment of students as the school year progress. Additionally, there will be weekly and quarterly professional development times scheduled along with yearly professional development that includes two weeks in August 2015 and one week in July every year thereafter.

## **Education Plan**

Greater Works Charter School's academic calendar includes 193 days of instruction, 13 days more than the Rochester City School District provides. This does not include the Summer Bridge program which adds an additional 19 days of instruction for students in grades 9 and 10. The school year begins in September and ends in July.

Students begin their first class at 9:00 a.m. with the student day broken into nine periods of 60 minutes. Advisory is broken up into two 30 minute periods each day. The school day ends at 5:00 p.m. Student schedules will be personalized, taking into consideration individual student needs for specific classes/credits.

Teachers at GWCS will work eleven months a year with four weeks of vacation in August. Their contractual work day will be 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with shortened work days in July. From September to June, each teacher's daily schedule will consist of teaching four classes, facilitating an advisory period, a personal lunch break, an intervention/academic support period, and a period dedicated to professional development, common planning, student data analysis, and/or individual planning. All classes will be co-taught. In July, each teacher will participate in a one week professional development session (except for the first year, when teachers will participate in a two week professional development session in August.) In addition, teachers will facilitate GWCS's four week summer bridge program for students (starting after the first school year, in July 2016.)

During the initial year of operation, GWCS will have a student orientation from August 24 to August 28, 2015, called "Phoenix Week," named after the GWCS logo. Staff will strategically use this time to acquaint the students (and their parents/guardians) with each other and their respective teachers as well as the GWCS climate and culture. Student schedules will be created and distributed. Students will learn about the classes they will be taking. In addition, during Phoenix Week, students will complete Learning Style and Multiple Intelligence Inventories, Interest Inventories, and be interviewed on their goals and aspirations and begin to create their Individual Learning Plans (ILPs).

Students will also meet with their advisors and core content teachers. They will have the opportunity to ask questions and take the Scranton Performance Series assessment in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics. For students who speak a language other than English, they will also complete a Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ). Students will be expected to start GWCS prepared and ready to learn.

In subsequent years, the GWCS orientation for students will be shortened and incorporated, as one component, into the summer bridge program, held in July. GWCS will offer a summer bridge program for four weeks each year, starting after the first school year in July 2016. The program will be required for students in entering or repeating grade 9. Students in grade 10 may be required to attend, if necessary, to recover missing/needed credits. This determination will be made by each student's teacher advisor. The summer bridge program will consist of literacy, remediation, and credit recovery courses as well as enrichment activities and engaging field trips so that students do not feel as though they are missing out on summer break..

The framework for developing curriculum is based on the New York State Learning Standards, Common Core Learning Standards, and Next Generation Science Standards implemented by using Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe). GWCS will use the Odyssey Ware curriculum (or a similar resource) to supplement and support this framework.

The Odyssey Ware curriculum is designed to meet the specific needs of high school students. Flexible and interactive, it engages their minds, helps prepare them for the challenges of college and a career, and teaches the 21st century skills to encourage lifelong learning. The Odyssey Ware curriculum includes four core subjects and a variety of other courses and electives.

Core content area classes will be structured with attention focused on direct instruction and practice in several ways during lessons. The typical, predictable structure for an hour long class will be: 15 minutes of direct instruction, 15 minutes of guided practice, 15 minutes of independent practice, 15 minutes of evaluation and reflection. In addition, there will be frequent cold-reads in all content areas as well as technology-based instruction using Odyssey Ware and other digital media in the classroom.

### English Language Arts

English language arts courses at GWCS will help students develop important communication skills with an emphasis on reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Courses will cover essential skills, unit by unit to allow a thorough exploration of each topic. Vocabulary, comprehension, and classical literature components round out reading programs. Writing exercises and online games are used to build spelling, grammar, and composition skills.

### Mathematics

Math courses balance the fundamentals with cognitive reasoning and practical problem solving skills. Using a hands-on learning approach, the math program repeats concepts to ensure student understanding and mastery. Interactive games and animations motivate students and illustrate complex ideas, while developing critical thinking skills. Courses will help students learn algebra, geometry, measurement, number skills, and statistics. Courses are designed to help students meet the requirements of the Common Core State Standards and Regents exams as organized by the traditional course pathway for Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. In addition to addressing and assessing the proficiencies specified within the content standards of the traditional pathway, these courses will provide students opportunities to apply knowledge and skills to complex real world situations through the completion of performance tasks modeling the structure and

approach used in sample tasks produced by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium.

### Science

GWCS's science courses integrate life science, earth and space science, physical science, and the nature of science. Exploring the world around us, students build observation skills, perform hands-on experiments, and gain an appreciation of the complex scientific principles of the world and universe. All of GWCS's science courses are designed to prepare students to take and successfully pass the Chemistry, Earth Science, Living Environment, and/or Physics Regents examinations. The Science courses planned will also prepare students to take college-level courses.

### Social Studies

Students will gain a historical and cultural perspective of the world around them through an exploration of geography, world and American history, government, civics and citizenship, economics, and social studies. Throughout the coursework, students will discover the impact geography and the availability of natural resources have had on the development of civilization. By accessing historical diaries, letters, and memoirs online, notable events and movements come to life. Blended learning courses include interactive learning activities in each lesson to engage students with the world's past and their own future. All of GWCS's social studies courses are designed to prepare students to take and successfully pass the United States History and Government Regents and the Global History and Geography Regents examinations. In addition, they are designed to prepare students for college-level courses.

GWCS proposes to use several evidence based curriculum and instructional practices to support student learning. These include quarterly reviews of the taught curriculum with updates of Odyssey Ware and its suite of products, yearly curriculum mapping and renewal as part of professional development opportunities, co-taught classes, peer-to-peer support, regular adherence to Instructional Strategies that Work (Marzano, 2002) and student assessments. The learning culture at GWCS will be one in which evaluation and assessment inform decision making.

The staffing structure will be based on student need for a particular subject. All students will be in classes with two staff. Integrated classes will be taught by content area teachers working alongside special education teachers. Stand-alone core classes will be taught by a content area teacher and either a special educator or a teaching assistant depending upon student need. In addition, a teacher of English as a Second Language will join the co-teaching team and rotate throughout the core classes to make sure that the language needs of English Language Learners (ELLs) are met, especially for academic and content area language.

The faculty will model a collaborative approach to teaching and learning, and students will be encouraged to do the same. Beginning with the summer program and the initiation of advisory groups, students will be encouraged and supported to work together in study groups, affinity groups based on similar academic interests, intervention groups for challenging content, enrichment groups for extending learning beyond the curriculum, and in cooperative learning

groups in classes as per Instructional Strategies that Work. In this way, students will successfully complete the problem solving, communication and collaboration, adaptability, social and cultural acumen, and leadership and responsibility portions of the college and career readiness portfolio.

Aligned with the GWCS mission, the assessment system will be used as an instrument of continuous improvement to drive student achievement. The instructional staff will meet on a regular basis to analyze student work from daily and weekly formative and weekly and quarterly summative assessments to determine the student's level of learning and to make adjustments to instructional practices. A dashboard system which will provide current daily weekly, quarterly, and yearly data summaries will be utilized to monitor and adjust teaching, to inform students and their families of student progress, and to create programmatic improvements to increase student achievement.

GWCS will administer all New York State Regents examinations across subject areas. Data from these assessments provides an absolute indicator of student achievement in courses. Students will take practice exams at least once a week. Teachers will learn through regular professional development how to develop practice exams modeled after PARCC and NYS Regents exams. Teachers will regularly study their students' performances and conduct item analyses of the questions students did not answer correctly. This information will be used to design future learning experiences for the students. Such ongoing use of NYS Regents and PARCC examination questions will help students understand the conventions of the particular exam as well as help them master the content and skills necessary to perform effectively.

The daily and weekly assessments proposed under the key design elements for GWCS as well as the quarterly performance assessments and the yearly capstones will be designed to focus students on college and career readiness skills. Rubrics will be designed by the Director of Curriculum and Instruction in the pre-opening phase, to be used when teachers and then community members adjudicate performance assessments and final capstones that include indicators for each of these fifteen important skills

Professional development during the pre-opening phase will cover the key design elements, evidence based assessment practices, use of assessment, special populations, classroom management, blended learning, and other topics. Teachers will also design weekly tests modeled after PARCC examinations. In addition, every quarter, whole school and content area professional development will be implemented.

Time for professional development, common planning, student data analysis, and/or individual planning is embedded into the school day from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. daily. During this time, teachers will work collaboratively with their colleagues and receive professional development. In addition, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Principal, and Director of Curriculum and Instruction will work with teachers on formative and summative assessment practices, curricular mapping, implementation and curriculum support, lessons and test review, and case management of students. Teachers will use this time with one another to analyze student data and collaborate on lesson planning to ensure connectivity in students' learning and relevance. GWCS's leadership team will also use this time to address teachers' progress on their individual Professional Development Plans (PDPs), which will be created in August 2015. Once a week, while student cohorts complete mock-PARCC examinations, intensive embedded professional

development will be provided connected to the key design elements, implementation of a strong advisory program, individualized instruction, use of classroom technologies, co-teaching, and evidence-based assessment practices.

As the first year and subsequent years develop at GWCS, a process for teachers visiting one another's classes and mentoring one another to higher levels of performance will be established. The teacher evaluation process at GWCS will be utilized to provide professional growth for teachers, emphasizing conversations about how to make highly effective teaching and learning universal throughout the school. Routine formal evaluations for all teachers and staff, coordinated by the Principal and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, will be established three times per year. "Walk through" visits of classes will take place on a regular basis beginning day one. Professional development will be based on these observations as well as on the needs teachers discover and establish through their protocols of collegial visits.

The school is planning to implement strategies to promote a safe and supportive learning environment that supports the achievement of the educational goals. The culture at GWCS will be a professional one that promotes learning and self-sufficiency. All staff will reinforce school policies to students and school visitors. A component of the annual professional development training and ongoing weekly sessions throughout the year will focus on classroom and behavior management.

The founding board ensures a commitment to serving all students including Students with disabilities (SWD) and English language learners (ELLs). The Director of Curriculum and Instruction (acting as the Special Education Coordinator for the school) will ensure compliance to Educational Law. The co-teaching model which includes having the special education teacher in the classroom will support identified students. The founding group ensures that the special education programs and services as indicated on each student's IEP will be provided directly to the student during school hours. Special education staff will provide consultation and support to classroom teachers, work in the general education classrooms with special education students individually and in small groups, provide resource room services and serve as special education consultants to the overall school community.

All classroom teachers will be knowledgeable about the needs of students with disabilities; informed of their responsibilities for particular students; receive the support they require to implement a student's program; and implement any modifications or accommodations in their classes in accordance with the students' IEPs. Teachers will receive ongoing training regarding the education of special needs students beginning with and including the pre-opening professional development phase and prior to the opening of school each year. In the case of students suspected of having undiagnosed disabilities, GWCS will adopt a referral process that implements all procedures as outlined in the regulations of the NYS Commissioner of Education for initiating a referral in accordance with Part 200.4 of the Regulations.

GWCS will build awareness of the charter school opportunities in neighborhoods where large numbers of English language learners reside. GWCS will implement a freestanding English as a Second Language (ESL) program to provide instruction in English, using both push-in and pull-out models, based on student needs. Teachers will utilize special instructional strategies sometimes referred to nationally as Sheltered English Techniques (SET) or Specially Designed

Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) for delivering content to ELLs in English. At GWCS, students will receive instruction from their classroom teacher and, as needed, discrete ESL instruction from the highly qualified ELL teacher. GWCS will use the new standards document entitled, *The Teaching of Language Arts to Limited English Proficient/English Language Learners: Learning Standards for English as a Second Language* as a guide to ensure that ELL students meet the same standards as the general student population. Professional development for teachers and administrators in instructional methodology appropriate for language learners will ensure that the materials and facilities available to ELL students are equal to those of the general population

GWCS ensures that ELL students will not be excluded from any activity based on an inability to speak and understand English. Parents whose English proficiency is limited will receive notices and information from GWCS in their native language to encourage participation in GWCS. Further, GWCS will undertake a training program for teachers who are directly involved with ELL students.

Family and community involvement are key to the success of GWCS. Parents and community members will have various opportunities to be involved in the planning, implementation, and program design of GWCS. A parent representative will be added to the board of trustees and given the responsibility of working with the school's social worker and teachers to devise a plan for involving parents and the community in the school. Additionally, all traditional strategies will be used to involve stakeholder groups, some of which will include participating as a member of the BOT's Community Relations Committee, volunteering at the school, establishing and participating in the school's parent's association, helping organize and facilitate parent nights and entertainment performance nights at the school.

### **Community Outreach**

The founding group has been working to inform and solicit community input since 2010. To date they have conducted fifteen public community meetings, with three taking place in 2014. At each meeting a Spanish translator and American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter were present to meet the needs of attendees. The group has solicited feedback from various community, civic, and business groups as well as education leaders and elected officials. Twelve letters of support and commitment from community based organizations, community leaders, and elected officials were included in the application.

### **School Governance and Leadership**

Including lead applicant Ted J. Morris Jr, the founding team consists of ten individuals, nine of whom will serve as members of the School's initial Board of Trustees with one member serving as an advisor. A School Trustee Background Information form, Statement of Assurance and resume or curriculum vitae was provided for each of the five individuals who will comprise the school's initial Board of Trustees. As required, the applicant group has provided a set of draft by-laws and a draft code of ethics.

The Board represents a diverse group of professionals with teaching/administrative experience as well as expertise not for profit governance, higher education, high school level teaching, grant writing, human services, insurance, and counseling.

The initial members of the Board of Trustees are:

- **Ursula Burke**, is a personal trainer, health coach and group exercise instructor. She is active in the community and currently volunteers for the American Cancer Society.
- **Emily Robbins**, is an independent insurance agent. Prior experience includes event planning and education coursework.
- **Roberta Favitta**, is a Senior Document Solutions Specialist. Experiences include Vice President of Sales and Marketing and as a lending officer for a community bank. She volunteers and sits on the Board of Directors for the local Chamber of Commerce.
- **Asfa Sill**, is Assistant Director for Better Community. He has eleven years of teaching experience and is awaiting the results of School Building Leader certification exam.
- **Bonni Thousand**, is an Administrator at the University of Rochester. She is a community volunteer.
- **Peter L. Kozik, Ph.D.**, is an Assistant Professor of Education at Keuka College. He has worked in the field of education for over 25 years. He is a certified elementary teacher, English grades 7-12 teacher and School District Administrator.
- **Norman Meres, Ph.D**, is a molecular environmental scientist and education at the secondary and postsecondary school level.
- **Ted J. Morris, Jr.**, is the lead applicant and founder of the proposed school. He serves as an education consultant and has held operations positions at various non-profit, education, and human service-related agencies.

The Board of Trustees will delegate day-to-day operations of GWCS (including instructional, operational, financial, and legal responsibility) to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO will provide leadership and direction to the senior leadership team (Principal, Director of Operations, Business Manager (starting in Year 3), Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and the Director of Student Affairs); and will hire, evaluate, and terminate staff (delegating this responsibility in some cases to the Principal); administer scheduling, enrollment and curriculum with assistance from the Principal and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction; facilitate parent education and involvement; make formal reports to the Board of Trustees and charter entity; act as a liaison between GWCS and authorizer; implement and follow policies and procedures; plan school fundraisers and special events; provide a safe environment for learning; advance the cause of GWCS to city, county, and state constituents; ensure proper budgeting, accounting, auditing, and financial planning with assistance from a firm like Charter School Business Management or Victory Education Partners. The CEO will be hired in February 2015.

The Principal is the primary instructional leader of GWCS and will report to the CEO. S/he will supervise the instructional staff. The Principal's responsibilities will include overseeing the day-to-day operations of the academic program, monitoring student attendance, maintaining data on student achievement, shaping the climate and culture, overseeing student discipline, making formal and informal observations on teachers as prescribed by the New York State teacher evaluation protocol. GWCS is a school with completely inclusive classrooms. The school will use the New York State United Teachers evaluation rubric which includes language for English Language Learners and students with disabilities as a teacher performance measure. The Principal will foster parent/guardian engagement with staff throughout the academic year and will furnish a formal education report monthly to the CEO for the BOT. The Principal will be hired in March 2015.

The CEO, Principal, and Director of Operations will use a variety of methods to attract and retain a high-quality and effective teaching and school staff. To recruit teachers and staff, the Principal will participate in local hiring and career fairs, post advertisements on career-based websites, visit and present at local colleges of education, and create a recruitment marketing campaign. To retain teachers and staff, GWCS will have a supportive leadership structure and a compensation package (as compared to other local charter schools) that includes a competitive salary and comprehensive benefits. Teachers will be offered a base salary that is comparable to other local charter schools in the City of Rochester. Increases will be provided each year based on a performance review and Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increases. This has been incorporated in the budget for every position.

### **Facility**

The founding board has developed an extensive knowledge of Rochester's school facility options, working with realtors and professionals with school acquisition and financing expertise, and identified several promising short- and long-term options. Costs related to facilities are included in the budget to cover rent, utilities, renovations, and unexpected facility emergencies. The founding group prefers and is currently working to acquire a facility that will accommodate GWCS at full capacity (384 students, Grades 9 through 12).

### **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 Rochester, indicating that the fiscal impact of the Greater Works Charter School on the Rochester City School District public schools is expected to be nominal.

The New York State Education Department also conducted additional analysis on the projected fiscal impact of the School on its district of residence, the Rochester City School District, which is summarized below.

**Table 2: Projected Fiscal Impact upon District of Location, 2016-17 to 2020-21<sup>41</sup>**

Year	Number of Students Enrolled in Charter School Per Year <sup>42</sup>	Charter School Basic Tuition Rate <sup>43</sup>	Total Charter School Basic Tuition Only	Estimated District Special Education Payment <sup>44</sup>	Total District General Fund Budget <sup>45</sup>	Percent of District Budget
2016-17	96	\$13,228	\$1,269,888	\$224,770	\$788,259,462	0.190%
2020-21	384	\$14,195	\$5,450,880	\$964,806		0.814%

The calculations above assume charter school basic tuition rates in the charter period (2016-17 through 2020-21) based on a trend analysis calculated by the Charter School Office and approved by the Department’s State Aid Office. In order to conservatively avoid underestimating the fiscal impact that the charter school will have on the district going forward, the Department is assuming no growth in the Rochester City School District budget during the duration of the school’s charter.<sup>46</sup>

It should be noted that, given the nature of district-based per-pupil funding, the estimates made by the Department in conducting this analysis are subject to unpredictable financial fluctuations.

Additionally, given the nature of district-based per-pupil funding, the estimates made by the Department in conducting this analysis are subject to unpredictable financial fluctuations. 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.

The specifics of the school’s enrollment composition are still unavailable; however, the Department acknowledges that the programmatic and fiscal impact of the proposed charter school on other public and private schools in the same area will also be influenced by the

<sup>41</sup> In order to conservatively estimate the fiscal impact upon the district of location, maximum enrollment figures for each year were used. For additional information, please refer to Table 2

<sup>42</sup> Source: Greater Works Charter School Application

<sup>43</sup> Source: Education Law §2856(1)(a)(iii) and NYS Education Department Office of State Aid Charter School Basic Tuition Rate Analysis, Spring 2014

<sup>44</sup> Based on 2011-12 calculated special education classification rate for the district of location, as collected by NYSED Information and Report Services

<sup>45</sup> Source: Rochester City School District 2014-15 Proposed Budget

<sup>46</sup> Additional notes: While the school has included other federal grants and/or funds that may flow through the district to be received by the school in its proposed budget, this analysis does not account for these sources of potential revenue, nor does it include the value of certain services (e.g. transportation) that the district is required to provide the charter school. However, the analysis also does not account for district per-pupil expense and overall resource savings that are likely to result from a reduction in the number of students attending district public schools as a result of students attending nonpublic schools located in the school district.

proportion of charter school enrollees that would have attended a same-district public or private school had it not been for the presence of this charter school.

**Table 3: 2013-14 Demographic Detail for Proposed District of Location:  
Rochester City School District<sup>47</sup>**

	Total District Enrollment	
All Students	30,877	
<i>American Indian/Alaska Native</i>	66	0%
<i>Asian/Pacific Islander</i>	1,123	4%
<i>Black</i>	18,683	61%
<i>Hispanic</i>	7,833	25%
<i>Multiracial</i>	23	0%
<i>White</i>	3,149	10%
Economically Disadvantaged	26,932	87%
Limited English Proficient	3,373	11%
Students with Disabilities	5,524	18%

**Table 4: High School Accountability Cohort Data Based on Grade Configurations  
for Proposed School<sup>48</sup>**

High School Cohort Data	Rochester CSD	NYS
<i>ELA Regents Aggregate (2009 Cohort)</i>	35%	81%
<i>Math Regents Aggregate (2009 Cohort)</i>	11%	84%
<i>4-Year Graduation Rate (2009 Cohort)</i>	43%	75%

<sup>47</sup> Source: Student Information Repository System (SIRS) 2013-14 Report 303 BEDS Day Enrollment Verification Report by Location of Enrollment & Student Subgroup

<sup>48</sup> Source: Student Information Repository System (SIRS) 2012-13 Report 101 High School Accountability Data Verification Report; 2013-14 Report 102 Elementary/Middle-Level Accountability Data Verification Report

## **Public Hearing and Public Comment**

As required by the Charter Schools Act, the Rochester City School District) held a hearing on October 8, 2014 to solicit comments from the community concerning the proposed Greater Works Charter School. No speakers were present. The Department directly notified Dr. Bolgen Vargas, Superintendent of the Rochester City School District, as well as public and private schools in the region, of the charter school application and issued an open call for written public comment via the State Education Department Charter School Office website. No comments were received.

## **Application Review Process**

On January 2, 2014, in accordance with the New York State Charter Schools Act, the New York State Education Department (the “Department”) released the 2014 Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents. The charter school application process used by the Board of Regents and the Department is multi-staged and designed to ensure that any charter school applicant presented to the Board of Regents for possible approval demonstrates a detailed and complete school design proposal that:

- includes a clear plan to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, students who are English language learners, and students who are eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced-price lunch program;
- provides evidence of public outreach that conforms to the process prescribed by the Regents for the purpose of soliciting and incorporating community input regarding the proposed charter school;
- meets all requirements set forth in the Charter Schools Act as well as all other applicable laws, rules, regulations;
- demonstrates the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner;
- is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes of the Act; and
- would have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the proposed charter school.

In addition, the applicant group and founding board of trustees must demonstrate appropriate knowledge, capacity, and abilities to effectively create, maintain, and oversee a high-quality charter school.

During 2014 Round 2, the Department received a total of 51 letters of intent. After an initial review process, 17 applicants were invited to submit full applications in Round 2. A total of 15 full applications were submitted and evaluated in Round 2, including the application for Greater Works Charter School.

To assess whether to recommend approval or denial of the charter application to the Board of Regents, the Department established review panels to thoroughly evaluate each full application. Each panel was made up of professional expert consultants, peer reviewers who are school

leaders and educators active in charter and public schools in New York, as well as qualified Department staff members. The review panel members reviewed, rated, and commented on each section of the application according to the criteria published in the Application Kit.

On Tuesday, September 30, 2014, Department staff conducted a three-hour capacity interview with seven of the eight initial board members proposed for the Greater Works Charter School. The proposed initial board of trustees was asked to complete a task based on fictional scenario created to highlight potential challenges in real-life implementation of the proposed school plan. The task was designed to evaluate the capacity of the proposed initial board members to prioritize issues, accurately identify possible root causes of implementation challenges and plan appropriate board actions, as well as assess understanding of the governance role, knowledge of the application and group decision-making dynamics. In addition, questions were posed to the proposed initial trustees and founding group members, including general questions around New York State Charter School Law, the roles and responsibilities of various members in the proposed school community, and accountability to stakeholder groups as well to as the Board of Regents as authorizer. To fully understand the proposed academic program, governance role and fiscal viability of the proposed School, staff asked targeted questions of the applicant group. Questions were posed to the proposed initial trustees and founding group members, including general questions around New York State Charter School Law, the roles and responsibilities of various members in the proposed school community, and accountability to stakeholder groups as well to as the Board of Regents as authorizer. To fully understand the proposed academic program, governance role, Charter Management Company role, and fiscal viability of the proposed School, staff asked targeted questions of the applicant group.

The responses demonstrated adequate knowledge and grasp of key areas. Members of the applicant group as a whole and individually demonstrated knowledge of the charter school application and the proposed School. Structures, systems, protocols and procedures are in place to permit the board to effectively govern the School. The applicants addressed questions posed with specific and detailed information that presented a clear, realistic picture of how the School expects to operate.

## **Findings**

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.<sup>49</sup> This finding is based on the following, among other things:

- the applicant has included in the application the information required by §2851(2)
- the proposed charter school would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as prescribed by the NYS Board of Regents,<sup>50</sup> of students with disabilities, English

---

<sup>49</sup> Education Law §2852(2)(a).

language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the federal free and reduced price lunch program as required by Education Law subdivision 2852(9-a)(b)(i)

- 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 subdivision 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.<sup>51</sup> 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 Act<sup>52</sup> and will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school.<sup>53</sup> 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.

---

<sup>50</sup> Note, the data upon which to base the enrollment and retention targets mandated by the amendments to the Act was not available at the time the statute mandated the RFP be issued. As a result, the Department evaluated the plans for student enrollment, recruitment, and retention plans of each class of student referenced in the amendments to the Act such that the Department could make the determination that the applicant would meet or exceed the enrollment and retention targets when developed. During the first year of the charter term, the Department will develop such targets and incorporate these targets into the school's charter agreement performance expectations.

<sup>51</sup> Education Law §2852(2)(b).

<sup>52</sup> Education Law §2852(2)(c).

<sup>53</sup> As applicable pursuant to §2852(2)(d).

## **Recommendation**

Based on the Department's review and findings, Commissioner John B. King, Jr. recommends that the New York State Board of Regents approve the proposal to establish the Greater Works Charter School to open in 2015 in Rochester.

New York Charter School Fact Sheet (*SUNY action for 2015/2016 - changes in **Bold/Italics***)  
 October 2014

Charters Issued Towards Legislative Caps^

Charter Authorizer	Total Charters Approved To Date	Charters Counted Towards 2007 Cap	Charters Remaining 2007 Cap	Charters Counted Towards 2010 Cap	Charters Remaining Under 2010 Cap (# in NYC)	Conversion Charters Not Counted Towards Cap
Board of Regents	71	32		39	91 (27)	0
SUNY	<b>159</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>70 (0)</b>	0
NYCDOE	75	67		0	NA	8
Buffalo BOE	2	1		0	NA	1
Total	<b>307</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>161 (27)</b>	9

Note^: The Charter School Act of 1998 amended in 2007 and 2010 set caps on the number of charter schools allowed by authorizer. The cap for 1998 was reached for all authorizers. Under the 2007 cap SUNY still has 6 remaining charters that may be approved; the other authorizers reached the 2007 cap. SED and SUNY have charters remaining under the 2010 cap.

Charter Schools in New York State

Charter Authorizer	Charters Open with students in 2014-15	Charters Scheduled to open in 2015-16 or later	Charters Closed to Date *	Total Charters Approved To Date
Board of Regents	57	7	7	71
SUNY	120	<b>27</b>	12	<b>159</b>
NYCDOE	69	1	5	75
Buffalo BOE	2	0	0	2
Total	248	<b>35</b>	24	<b>307</b>

3 of the 22 charter schools closed were NYCDOE conversions.

Charter Schools in New York City

Charter Authorizer	NYC Charters Open with students in 2014-2015	NYC Charters Scheduled to open in 2015-16 or later	NYC Charters Closed to Date	Total NYC Charters Approved To Date
Board of Regents	30	6	3	39
SUNY	98	<b>25</b>	2	<b>125</b>
NYCDOE	69	1	5	75
Total	197	15	10	<b>239</b>