

A PROPOSED CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION FOR

## KEY CHARTER

### An Illinois Charter School

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DOMAIN 1: PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT</b> .....	<b>3</b>
DIMENSION 1.1: UNDERSTANDING THE COMMUNITY .....	3
SECTION 1.1.a. TARGETED COMMUNIT(IES).....	3
SECTION 1.1.b. COMMUNITY FIT.....	10
DIMENSION 1.2: NOTIFYING THE COMMUNITY .....	12
SECTION 1.2.a. EVIDENCE OF NOTIFYING KEY COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS.....	12
SECTION 1.2.b. SEEKING COMMUNITY FEEDBACK.....	16
DIMENSION 1.3: PARENT AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT.....	17
SECTION 1.3.a. EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT FROM KEY COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS.....	17
SECTION 1.3.b. RISK FACTORS .....	18
DIMENSION 1.4: CONTINUED PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT .....	22
SECTION 1.4.a. CONTINUED OUTREACH PRIOR TO SCHOOL OPENING.....	22
SECTION 1.4.b. VISION FOR LONG-TERM COLLABORATION WITH PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY .....	25
<b>DOMAIN 2: ACADEMIC CAPACITY</b> .....	<b>27</b>
DIMENSION 2.1: MISSION, VISION, AND CULTURE.....	27
SECTION 2.1.a. OVERVIEW OF THE EDUCATIONAL MODEL.....	27
SECTION 2.1.b. STUDENTS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN AND LEARNING SUPPORTS.....	32
DIMENSION 2.2: DEMONSTRATED TRACK RECORD .....	44
SECTION 2.2.a. EXPERIENCE AND TRACK RECORD.....	44
SECTION 2.2.b. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP .....	47
DIMENSION 2.3: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION .....	49
SECTION 2.3.a. STANDARDS FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT .....	49
SECTION 2.3.b. CURRICULUM .....	57
SECTION 2.3.c. INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES.....	60
SECTION 2.3.d. SCHOOL CALENDAR/SCHEDULE .....	63
DIMENSION 2.4: TALENT MANAGEMENT .....	64
SECTION 2.4.a. RECRUITMENT AND STAFFING .....	64
SECTION 2.4.b. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT .....	67

<b>DOMAIN 3: OPERATIONAL CAPACITY</b> .....	71
DIMENSION 3.1: GENERAL OPERATIONS.....	71
SECTION 3.1.a. OPERATIONAL PLAN.....	71
SECTION 3.1.b. OPERATIONAL COMPLIANCE.....	74
DIMENSION 3.2: OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY.....	76
SECTION 3.2.a. GOVERNANCE.....	76
SECTION 3.2.b. BOARD COMPOSITION, DEVELOPMENT, AND EVALUATION.....	85
SECTION 3.2.c. BOARD LEGAL COMPLIANCE AND ETHICS POLICIES.....	100
SECTION 3.2.d. ACCOUNTABILITY.....	100
<b>DOMAIN 4: ECONOMIC SOUNDNESS</b> .....	103
DIMENSION 4.1: SCHOOL BUDGET.....	103
SECTION 4.1.a. FINANCIAL FORMS AND BUDGET NARRATIVE.....	103
SECTION 4.1.b. DEVELOPMENT PLAN .....	105
DIMENSION 4.2: FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND MONITORING.....	106
SECTION 4.2.a. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND MONITORING.....	106
DIMENSION 4.3: FACILITIES .....	106
SECTION 4.3.a. FACILITY OPTION(S).....	106

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our proposed charter school is born of a partnership between educators and entrepreneurs, all united and driven by a passionate belief that we can improve the quality of educational opportunities for our City's children. We have no other agenda. Our only objective is to channel some of the skills and resources we have amassed over the course of our careers into building a charter school (and eventually a charter school network) delivering a world-class education, especially for children in under-served neighborhoods whose schools presently fall short. By providing access to a first-rate education, our plan is to open doors for those children to all sorts of opportunities in life for which those children might otherwise be all-too-often locked out. Hence our school's name: Key Charter.

Some of our school's Founding Members recently launched Beacon Academy in Evanston, the first Montessori-based private high school in the Chicagoland area. Our intention is to make the same first-rate private education now available to families at Beacon equally available to families in under-served communities in Chicago's low income neighborhoods.

Our other Board members are equally accomplished. John Whitehurst (captain of the Design Team) is a retired Head of School from Antioch, where he led an above-average performing school with a sizable portion of low-income students. Debbie Senoff-Langford is presently the Head of School at Rogers Park Montessori School, a very successful elementary/middle school currently in the process of completing an \$8M expansion. Other members of our Board and Advisory Board include: the Honorable Arlander Keys, a retired Federal Judge; Jose Prado, an Assistant Vice President at a national bank who is active in various community organizations; Jamie Hague, a finance professional; Joy Baer, the president of a large technology company; Rich Silverstein, founder of his own real estate development company; Jackie Kaplan-Perkins, founder of a consulting firm for social justice-oriented community organizations; Ross Kimbarovsky, founder of internet start-up companies; Steven Loevy, founder of a fund-raising company serving schools and other community organizations; and Sam Harris, President Emeritus of the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, who personally captained the effort to raise \$45M to create this teaching center dedicated to educating people about the importance of tolerance and the dangers of hate.

As stated, our team has come together to launch this charter school because of our core belief that all children deserve a world-class education, including children living in neighborhoods with limited resources. Our goal is to create a first-rate school at which the vast majority of students perform at or beyond grade level, after which most will not only enroll in colleges and universities, but they will thrive there, having been taught the critical thinking and learning skills necessary to succeed in life. In short, we intend to build a top-tier school located in some of the most resource-challenged neighborhoods in Chicago, a school with standards of excellence on par with the highest-performing schools in the State.

To achieve this, one of our founding principles is the importance of high expectations. While the social problems associated with poverty are very real and cannot be discounted, children can nonetheless succeed in school with the proper support. We remain firmly convinced that *all* children are capable of excelling academically, regardless of circumstance, if provided the appropriate environment within which to learn. While not underestimating the undeniable challenges associated with low-income neighborhoods, our school flatly refuses to lower our expectations as to what these children can achieve. Put simply, we will not cease our drive toward excellence until our school's children perform at the same level, or better, as the children from highly privileged neighborhoods. We are driven by the abiding belief that our students, if given the proper instruction, are cable of the same academic achievements as children at top-tier schools. Nothing short of that will be acceptable.

Our school will also emphasize the importance of the child's end of the proposed bargain. For one thing, students who choose to attend must be prepared to put in far more hours than are required at other schools: To help compensate for some of the structural disadvantages facing our families, our school features extended school days and an elongated school calendar. Much as everyone wishes it were otherwise, there are no easy short-cuts to a first-rate education. We will provide a world-class school and the opportunity for a world-class education, but that is not something that can just be "given" to someone. Rather, it must be earned through diligent hard work. Students and their families (supported socially and emotionally to the maximum extent possible) will be expected to make the commitment and sacrifices necessary to succeed.

By far the most critical defining feature of our school as we see it is the goal of attracting the very best educators. We believe that assembling a group of extremely talented teachers is the single most important component in the formula for a school's success. Everything else follows from that. Central to our mission, therefore, will be an effort to recruit from the very top tier of the profession. Our school will conduct a national search for the best candidates in the entire country. To be attractive to the best possible teachers, we will offer the majority of the teachers at our school at least \$100,000 per year, with the potential for more, plus generous benefits.

A world-class school must be sufficiently capitalized to execute its mission. To that end, we are committed to contributing the money necessary to make it work. Specifically, the Founding Members will **donate a million dollars** immediately upon being awarded a charter in order to put the school on firm financial ground, with additional funds to be contributed as the venture progresses.

We recognize that we are not the first wealthy entrepreneurs from outside the education field who believe we can contribute to the effort to improve schools for under-privileged children. But there is a variable here that we believe truly distinguishes our effort. Our Founding Members earned the money that we are proposing to invest in this school by founding a highly respected civil rights law firm, thus demonstrating our long-standing commitment to social justice. The vision of the type of firm that we built from scratch was originally viewed as hopelessly unrealistic, if not impossible. Having nonetheless succeeded, we have developed an exuberant, almost "unreasonable" confidence in the concept that very talented, empathetic, and justice-minded people, guided by good leadership, can create truly extraordinary organizations to carry out missions in which they passionately believe. We are very eager to apply that same model to our charter school.

Our foundation in civil rights predicts success for another reason as well. In the course of our work on behalf of victims of injustice, the school's Founding Members have built close ties with dozens of present and former clients throughout the City, including those living in the New City / Back of the Yards and Humboldt Park neighborhoods that we propose to serve. We are excited to contribute to these neighborhoods by drawing on our close relationships to build a school together. We have also partnered with key community leaders, including for example, one of our Board members, Father Dave Kelly, Executive Director of Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation. And we intend to use the remaining time before the Tier II deadline to continue to build partnerships with more community members and stakeholders whose "buy in" we regard as important to our success.

In sum, the founding principle of our charter school is that all students, no matter what neighborhood they live in, are capable of academic excellence. We propose to build a world-class school in under-served neighborhoods, a school that will produce students whose achievements and accomplishments will match those of graduates from the most prestigious and highest-funded schools in the State. We view that goal as perfectly realistic, and are prepared to donate at least a million dollars of our money (up front) to make it happen.

## DOMAIN 1: PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

### 1.1: UNDERSTANDING THE COMMUNITY

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#### 1.1.a: TARGETED COMMUNIT(IES)

##### Question #1: BOUNDARIES

*What are the possible location(s) of the proposed school(s)? What is the student recruitment boundary for each of the proposed school(s) and the targeted communit(ies) within it?*

Key Charter proposes to create a school with two facilities, both to open in the Fall of 2016, one in the community of Back of the Yards /New City, and the other in Humboldt Park. Our Back of the Yards location will focus its student recruitment efforts in the community of New City, also commonly referred to as Back of Yards, within the street boundaries of Pershing Road to the north, Western Avenue to the west, Garfield Boulevard (55th Street) to the south, and the railroad tracks along Leavitt Street to the east.

Our Humboldt Park location will focus student recruitment efforts in the western portion of the community of Humboldt Park within the street boundaries of North Avenue to the north, Kenton Avenue to the west, Chicago Avenue to the south, and Kedzie Avenue to the east.

We are in the process of identifying and securing facilities for the proposed schools. In our Tier II submission, we will provide either the location of the secured facilities or two viable independent facility options for each of our proposed schools.

##### Question #2: PROFILES

*Please provide the following information about the neighborhood(s) within the recruitment boundary:*

- *Total number of residents*
- *Number of school-aged children*
- *Demographics*
- *Average level of educational attainment*
- *Median or average family income*
- *Median or average housing cost*
- *Unemployment rate*

The total number of residents in New City, as reported by the 2010 US Census, is 44,311. The total population of New City is 57% Hispanic, 30% African-American, 11% Caucasian, and 2% Asian. A striking number, 42.4%, of adults in New City do not have a high school diploma, which is more than double Chicago's percentage of 20.4%. The median family income is \$38,872. The average income per capita is \$12,524, less than half of Chicago's average of \$27,148. The median housing cost in New City is \$201,193 for a unit in a 2-unit dwelling, which accounts for 44.9% of all units in the community. The unemployment rate is 17.4%, significantly higher than Chicago's rate of 11.1%

According to CPS enrollment data for New City for the school year 2014-2015, there are 7,743 school-aged children in grades K-8 and 1,279 school-aged children in grades 9-12. There are 17 CPS Schools in New City: 13 K-8 elementary schools and four high schools. We expect the demographics of Key Charter School – New City's population to mirror the population of the CPS elementary schools in the community. The demographic data for the student population in K-8 schools, as reported by CPS enrollment data, for the school year 2014-2015 in New City is: 53.5% Hispanic, 42.9% African-American, and 2.9% Caucasian. Over one-quarter, 28.4%, of K-8 students are limited English speakers and 12.4% are diverse learners.

The total number of residents in Humboldt Park, as reported by the 2010 US Census, is 56,323. The total population of Humboldt Park is 53% Hispanic, 41% African-American, 4% Caucasian, and 1% other or multiracial. Over one-third of adults, 36%, in Humboldt Park do not have a high school diploma. The median family income is \$29,532. The average income per capita is \$13,391, amounting to only half of Chicago's average of \$27,148. The median housing cost is \$241,097 for a unit in a 2-unit dwelling, which accounts for 34.5% of all units in the community. The unemployment rate is 12.3%, slightly higher than Chicago's rate of 11.1%.

According to CPS enrollment data for Humboldt Park for the school year 2014-2015, there are 6,631 school-aged children in grades K-8 and 3,224 school-aged children in grades 9-12. There are 18 CPS Schools in Humboldt Park: 12 K-8 elementary schools and six high schools. We expect the demographics of Key Charter School - Humboldt Park's population to mirror the population of the CPS elementary schools in the community. The demographic data for the student population in K-8 schools, as reported by CPS enrollment data, for the school year 2014-2015 in Humboldt Park is: 56.3% African-American, 41.8% Hispanic, and 7% Caucasian. 17.4% of K-8 students are limited English speakers and 14.4% are diverse learners.

### Question #3: HISTORY

*Please provide a brief historical overview of the neighborhood(s) within the proposed recruitment boundary. Include information that your design team believes is important to understand when seeking to serve the targeted student population and community residents. Please cite the key sources of information consulted, both formal and informal.*

Key continues to develop its understanding of the New City and Humboldt Park through dialogue with community stakeholders, firsthand knowledge, and review of demographic and historical data.

New City has a long history as a vibrant, working-class community. The neighborhood developed in the mid-Nineteenth century with the establishment of the Union Stock Yards and surrounding railroads. From the turn of the century until the 1970s, it was home to a predominantly Slavic immigrant community, many of whom were workers in the meatpacking industry. The Union Stock Yards began to decline economically post-World War II due to changes in the meatpacking industry, and it shut its doors completely in 1971. The loss of industry has meant the community has struggled with unemployment, housing issues, and economic instability, which continues today. The ethnic character of the community has gradually shifted to what is reflected in the 2010 US Census: majority Hispanic, particularly Mexican-American, with a sizable African-American population as well.

Many of today's residents in New City have lived in the neighborhood for generations and have deep roots to the community. New City has had a long and celebrated history of community and political advocacy, back from when workers of the Union Stock Yards began to organize to advocate for improved living conditions and public services, and it is home to the Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council, founded in 1939 and one of the oldest non-profit community organizations in the country. Today, New City is split among five City Council wards, which unfortunately can make it difficult for residents to feel that their needs are adequately represented and addressed politically.

New City is an impoverished, underserved community. It has a sky-high unemployment rate of 17.4% and a depressed per capita income of \$12,524, less than half of the per capita income of Chicago as a whole. Many residents have suffered from generational poverty and have been exposed to violence and crime from a young age. New City ranks 16<sup>th</sup> out of the 77 community areas for number of violent crimes reported, as reported by the Chicago Police Department's publicly available record of reported crimes in the city based on its CLEAR (Citizen Law Enforcement Analysis and Reporting) system. There were 494 violent crimes reported in New City in the past one year from April 6, 2014 to April 6, 2015.



New City has 13 elementary schools: on CPS's school quality ratings scale of Level 1 to 3, with Level 1 as the top rating, four elementary schools in New City are rated as Level 1; the remaining nine schools are rated as Level 2. Over one-quarter, 28.4%, of students attending K-8 schools in the community are limited English earners and 12.4% are diverse learners. A strikingly high number, 42.4% of adults in New City, do not have a high school diploma, as reported by the 2010 US Census. Our conversations with community stakeholders have confirmed that there is a deep need and desire for more quality school options for the community's children.

Humboldt Park is a working-class, strongly multicultural, and socially-minded community. Through the 1950s the population of Humboldt Park was predominantly Caucasian with a high number of European immigrants. In the 1950s and 1960s, massive numbers of Puerto Ricans migrated to Chicago, and especially Humboldt Park. Ethnic tensions in the community reached one of its pinnacles in 1966 when a 21-year-old man was shot by police in Wicker Park on the same day as Chicago's first Puerto Rican People's parade; in Humboldt Park, some community members rioted in response for three days. In the years that have followed, economic conditions have deteriorated in Humboldt Park. Most of the Caucasian population left the neighborhood. Meanwhile, African-Americans and Mexican-Americans have steadily moved into the community. Today, Humboldt Park's population is fairly even split among African-Americans and Latinos, with the Latino population itself being fairly evenly split between Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans. Humboldt Park retains a strong Puerto Rican identity and is home, for example, to the National Puerto Rican Museum of Arts and Culture.

Humboldt Park is an impoverished, underserved community with a high level of violent crime. The average income per capita as reported by the 2010 US Census is \$13,391, only half of Chicago's average per capita income. Humboldt Park ranks 5<sup>th</sup> out of the 77 community areas for number of violent crimes reported, as reported by the Chicago Police Department's publicly available record of reported crimes in the city based on its CLEAR (Citizen Law Enforcement Analysis and Reporting) system. There were 860 violent crimes reported in Humboldt Park in the past one year from April 6, 2014 to April 6, 2015. The community also has a huge and well-known open air drug market. The children in the community are regularly exposed to drugs, violent crime, and gang activity. The park that shares the name of the community serves as both a meeting point and dividing line in the community. East of the park has appeared to experience somewhat of an economic upswing in recent years and an influx of new, middle-class residents who have moved in for affordable housing and the social and cultural benefits of living in Humboldt Park. West of the park, where we intend to focus our recruitment efforts has not experienced the same economic upswing. A review of the Chicago Police Department's public record of crimes reported in Chicago shows what our community stakeholders have told us and what can be seen by visiting the community: more violent crime in Humboldt Park happens west of the park.

Humboldt Park has 18 elementary schools: on CPS's school quality ratings scale of Level 1 to 3, with Level 1 the top rating, four elementary schools in Humboldt Park are rated as Level 1; seven schools are rated as Level 2; and one school is rated Level 3. A very high number, 36% of adults, in Humboldt Park do not have a high school diploma, as reported by the 2010 US Census. 17.4% of students attending K-8 schools in the community are limited English learners, and 14.4% are diverse learners. The community stakeholders we have talked with have told us loud and clear that there is a deep need and desire for more quality school options for families.

#### **Question #4: COMMUNITY NETWORK**

*Which members of the design team and/or proposed founding Board members have ties to the targeted communit(ies) within the recruitment boundary? When first planning to conduct outreach in the targeted communit(ies), with whom did the design team connect to enhance its understanding of the communit(ies) and develop an outreach plan? What existing community meetings, events, or volunteer opportunities have members of the design team attended to make additional connections and enhance members' understanding of the targeted communit(ies)?*

Design Team member Jon Loevy has developed relationships over the years with community in the New City and Humboldt Park communities. As founder and managing partner of the civil rights law firm, Loevy & Loevy, Mr. Loevy represents the interests of victims of police misconduct, including wrongful convictions, police brutality, and unlawful arrests. Through this work, he has formed close bonds with his clients and their families, including individuals who have deep ties to the targeted communities. We have begun having conversations with these community stakeholders to deepen our understanding of the targeted communities and gauge need for Key Charter's proposed schools. We are soliciting their feedback on how to most effectively conduct outreach in their communities. As we continue to develop our outreach plan, we may ask some of these community stakeholders with whom we have relationships to serve as Key Charter's Community Ambassadors, and work with us on on-the-ground outreach to garner community support and recruit interested students.

Proposed founding Board member Father David Kelly has been a key community stakeholder and leader in the targeted community of New City for 13 years. Father Kelly is the Executive Director and Catholic Priest for the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR), which he, along with other members of his religious congregation, founded in the New City community more than a dozen years ago. PBMR counsels members of the New City community whose lives have been affected by violence and conflict and strives to help the entire community heal and rebuild. PBMR counsels victims of crimes, the wrongdoers, and the entire community that has been affected. PBMR has shown a longstanding and deep

commitment to the lives of children and families in New City. Some of PBMR's efforts include helping youth involved in the Juvenile Justice System reintegrate into the community, collaborating with other neighborhood agencies to identify and offer holistic services to at-risk youth, and counseling families whose lives have been impacted by violence and crime. Father Kelly will continue to enhance the Design Team's understanding of the New City community and will have a strong voice in the development of our outreach plans. We are exploring options for Key Charter Schools and PBMR to partner and provide holistic services to our students and their families.

Going forward, we intend to make additional connections and deepen our engagement of the New City and Humboldt Park communities by identifying and attending existing community meetings, events, and volunteer opportunities. In New City, our efforts will include reaching out to the Peace and Education Coalition, an alliance of public schools, civic organizations, and businesses seeking to promote peace in the community, and asking to participate in at least one upcoming meeting. We will also reach out to the Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council, a coalition of member-organizations focused on social and economic initiatives and one of the oldest non-profit organizations in the country, and ask to participate in at least one upcoming meeting.

In Humboldt Park, our efforts will include reaching out to United Blocks of West Humboldt Park, an organization of West Humboldt Park residents dedicated to addressing the needs and concerns of community residents and property owners, and asking to participate in an at least one upcoming meeting. We will reach out to the Greater Humboldt Park Community of Wellness, a broad coalition of organizations dedicated to improving the overall health of Humboldt Park residents, and also ask to participate in an at least one upcoming meeting.

In both New City and Humboldt Park, we will seek out opportunities to identify and participate in community groups' meetings and events, and expand our relationships with community advocates. In our update to Tier I of our proposal we will detail the additional actions taken and how we used the feedback received from community stakeholders to fully develop our outreach plan.

## **Question #5: ASSETS AND NEEDS**

*What are some of the existing assets within the targeted communit(ies)? What do community members identify as educational and support needs in the community? What methods and sources did your design team use to identify existing assets and educational and support needs in the community?*

Key Charter will follow a multi-pronged approach to receiving feedback from community members as far as identifying both the educational and support needs and existing assets of New City and Humboldt Park.

First, we have already begun having conversations with the community stakeholders in our network to enhance our understanding of our targeted communities and gauge the need for Key Charter's proposed schools. We have reached out to the local network of community connections Jon Loevy has developed through his civil rights work. We have had conversations with proposed Founding Board member Father Kelly about his experiences in the community of New City, and Father Kelly will continue to connect us with additional community stakeholders that he knows in New City. The community stakeholders that we have already engaged in New City and Humboldt Park have told us emphatically that there is a deep need and desire for more quality school options and, specifically, for a school like Key Charter School. We have also reviewed the CPS data on the schools in these communities. New City has 13 elementary schools: on CPS's school quality ratings scale of Level 1 to 3, four elementary schools in New City are rated as Level 1; the remaining nine schools are rated as Level 2. Humboldt Park has 18 elementary schools: on CPS's school quality ratings scale, four elementary schools in Humboldt Park are rated as Level 1; seven schools are rated as Level 2; and one school is rated Level 3.

Through the conversations with community stakeholders, we have also tentatively identified existing asset organizations in the communities that we intend to reach out to and set up informational meetings with. These include, in New City, the Peace and Education Coalition and Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council, and, in Humboldt Park, the United Blocks of West Humboldt Park and Greater Humboldt Park Community of Wellness, all organizations also identified in Question #4 of this section.

Second, beginning this month, April 2015, and continuing throughout this Spring, we will reach out to and set up meetings with community leaders, and the community organizations and business identified to us as existing assets. We will also conduct our own research to see if we can add to the list of existing assets. In the meetings we have with the organizations, we will ask what methods they use to fulfill the community's needs and solicit their feedback on how Key Charter Schools can most effectively serve the needs of students, families, and the community as a whole. We may also try to set up meetings with existing public traditional and

alternative schools in the community to have a discussion on the methods they use to serve their students' needs and the biggest challenges they face.

Third, beginning no later than May 2015, and continuing throughout the year, we will make contact with and solicit input from a broader range of community stakeholders. We will participate in or host community meetings, ask local churches for the opportunity to discuss our proposed schools with their members, and conduct one-on-one outreach by canvassing the community, knocking on doors, holding stop and chats in public spaces with substantial foot traffic, and distributing Key Charter Schools' informational materials. During these interactions with community members, we will explicitly ask for their input on the educational and support needs of New City and Humboldt Park. We will ask them how Key Charter Schools can best meet the needs of their communities and what they consider to be existing assets in their communities.

In our update of Tier I of the proposal and submission of Tier II of the proposal, we will detail actions taken and the input received from community stakeholders.

### **1.1.b. COMMUNITY FIT**

#### **Question #1: APPROACH TO DEVELOPING AN EDUCATIONAL VISION**

*How did your design team seek to connect with existing institutions, key community advisors, parents, and residents to get their feedback on the educational vision for the proposed school and/or how to adapt an existing model to the unique community?*

Key has sought feedback on the educational vision of Key Charter School - Back of the Yards and Key Charter School - Humboldt Park from our existing network of community stakeholders. We have activated the local network of community stakeholders that Design Team member Jon Loevy has developed through his civil rights work and asked for input on our educational vision and how we can best serve the needs of their communities. We have also sought feedback from proposed founding Board member Father David Kelly, who has been a key community stakeholder and advocate in New City since 2002. These community stakeholders have told us that their communities need more quality schools that will provide students a rigorous academic curriculum while also caring for the students' social, emotional, and wellness needs and are prepared to support children who have suffered from poverty, violence, and other trauma. They want schools that will empower students to succeed in school and in life. This knowledge and belief have shaped our educational vision.

Throughout the school development process, we will continue to make connections with community stakeholders and seek their feedback on how Key's educational vision can best serve the unique needs of their communities. In our update to Tier I of the proposal and submission of Tier II of the proposal, we will provide evidence of how we continued to connect with community stakeholders and receive their feedback on our educational vision.

## **Question #2: COMMUNITY FIT**

*Based on the outreach and research that your design team has conducted, why does your team believe that the proposed school(s) are a good fit for the targeted communit(ies)? How will the proposed school(s) contribute to the existing assets in the targeted communit(ies) and help meet educational and support needs?*

Key Charter wholeheartedly believes that our educational vision is an ideal fit for the New City and Humboldt Park communities, which is why we chose them. Based on our discussions with community stakeholders in New City and Humboldt Park, and proposed founding Board member Father Kelly, Key Charter's school model is aligned with the deep needs of these communities. New City and Humboldt Park are dynamic, working class communities dealing with poverty, violence, and a lack of quality school options. Stakeholders in both communities have told us that they want schools in their communities that will empower students to excel academically while also treating the diverse needs of their community's children, many of whom have suffered trauma from a young age. Key Charter Schools will provide students a rigorous academic curriculum, develop character and leadership skills, and consider students' life experiences and environment while supporting them holistically.

A review of demographic and CPS data reinforces our belief that Key is what the communities of New City and Humboldt Park needs. In New City, 42.4% of adults do not have a high school diploma and the average per capita income is only \$12,524. New City has 13 elementary schools: on CPS's school quality ratings scale of Level 1 to 3, four elementary schools in New City are rated as Level 1; the remaining nine schools are rated as Level 2. In Humboldt Park, 36% of adults do not have a high school diploma and the average per capita income is only \$13,391. Humboldt Park has 18 elementary schools: on CPS's school quality ratings scale, four elementary schools in Humboldt Park are rated as Level 1; seven schools are rated as Level 2; and one school is rated Level 3.

Starting in April 2015 and continuing throughout the school development process, we will identify and reach out to community organizations and businesses that are existing assets to the community and set up meetings to introduce ourselves and enhance our understanding of how these organizations are serving the communities. We will develop a plan to build upon the good work already being

done by them in the community, identify needs not currently being met that we can fulfill, and seek opportunities for partnership. We are committed to connecting with like-minded organizations and businesses in the communities that are supporting the needs of the New City and Humboldt Park residents.

In our update to Tier I of the proposal and submission of Tier II of the proposal, we will discuss the steps taken to connect with existing assets in the community and the plan developed to directly build upon the important work already being done.

## **1.2: NOTIFYING THE COMMUNITY**

### **1.2.a. EVIDENCE OF NOTIFYING KEY COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS**

#### **Question #1: PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

*Please provide quantifiable evidence of having notified at least 10 percent of the individuals residing in the intended recruitment boundary of the proposed new school, as well as 50 percent of residents, organizations, and businesses located within a four-block radius of the proposed facilities).*

In Tier II of the proposal, we will provide quantifiable evidence of having notified at least 10 percent of the individuals residing in the intended recruitment boundaries of Key Charter School - Back of the Yards and Key Charter School - Humboldt Park, as well as 50 percent of residents, organizations, and businesses located within a four-block radius of the proposed facilities. To that end, we have set the following tentative schedule to ensure we will have notified a wide swath of community members and parents:

#### April

- Continue to have one-on-one conversations with individuals in our existing network of community stakeholders in New City and Humboldt Park.
- Begin to reach out to community leaders and elected officials to set up informational meetings and gain their support.
- Reach out to at least one community group in each of the two targeted communities and ask for the opportunity to give a presentation at their next meeting.
- Possibly begin distributing materials on Key Charter Schools, such as flyers and one-page informational sheets, at group meetings and other opportunities. All materials will include, at least, an email and mailing address where community members can send feedback or questions, the link to the CPS website where community members can sign up to serve on Neighborhood Advisory Councils,

information on the upcoming NAC Community Forum and Community Public Hearing, and, when available, the link to the CPS website where proposals will be publicly posted for review.

- Host a Facebook page where individuals can follow us and look for updates.
- Set a goal of having a website for Key Charter Schools up and running by April 30. The website will allow community members to leave feedback and ask questions through a contact form, and sign up to be on our email and/or mailing list to receive regular updates.

### May

- Present at two or more existing community meetings and events in each targeted community.
- Host one community informational session in each targeted community.
- Continue to reach out to community leaders and elected officials and begin to meet with them.
- Reach out to community organizations and businesses for their support and look for opportunities for partnership.
- Ask individuals in our existing network of community stakeholders to be Community Ambassadors and conduct on-the-ground outreach on our behalf.
- Conduct at least one canvassing event in each targeted community, which may include knocking on doors, conducting stop and chats in a public areas with substantial foot traffic, and distributing Key Charter Schools informational materials, such as flyers and one-page informational sheets.
- Begin circulating a petition for support.
- Look for opportunities to advertise in local media.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.

### June

- Present at one or more existing community meetings and events in each targeted community.
- Host at least one community informational session in each targeted community.
- Continue to reach out to community leaders and elected officials and meetings.
- Continue to reach out to community organizations and businesses for their support and look for opportunities for partnership.
- Utilize our Community Ambassadors for on-the-ground outreach.
- Conduct at least two canvassing events in each targeted community.
- Continue to circulate petition for support.
- Advertise in local media.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.

### July



- Present at one or more existing community meetings and events in each targeted community, including the Neighborhood Advisory Council Forum on the week of July 27.
- Host at least one community informational session in each targeted community.
- Meet with remaining community leaders and elected officials.
- Continue to reach out to community organizations and businesses for their support and look for opportunities for partnership.
- Utilize our Community Ambassadors for on-the-ground outreach.
- Conduct at least two canvassing events in each targeted community.
- Continue to circulate petition for support.
- Advertise in local media.
- Secure letters of support and intents to enroll. Begin summarizing and quantifying amount of community support for submission of Tier II proposal.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.

### August

- Host at least one community informational session in each targeted community.
- Continue to look for and secure partnerships with community organizations and businesses.
- Conduct at least one canvassing event in each targeted community.
- Utilize our Community Ambassadors for on-the-ground outreach.
- Continue to circulate petition for support.
- Submit Tier II of our proposal on August 10.
- Attend Neighborhood Advisory Council Community Public Hearings on week of August 11.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.

### September

- May host one community informational session in each targeted community.
- Conduct at least canvassing event in each targeted community.
- Continue to look for and secure partnerships with community organizations and businesses.
- Participate in CPS Public Hearing on September 22.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.

### October

- May host one community informational session in each targeted community.
- Continue to look for and secure partnerships with community organizations and businesses.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.
- Approved to open by Board on October 21.

## **Question #2: ELECTED OFFICIALS**

*Please provide evidence of having conducted (or describe plans to conduct) three methods of outreach to all of the aldermen, state representatives, and state senators within the proposed recruitment boundary:*

- *Requesting a meeting (if meeting(s) have already taken place, please list the dates, times, and individual(s) with whom the design team met)*
- *Attending the elected officials' Ward or district nights*
- *Sending formal notification of the proposed school either by email or letter*

Key Charter plans the following schedule for its outreach of all aldermen, state representatives, and state senators within the proposed recruitment boundaries of Key Charter School - New City and Key Charter School - Humboldt Park:

#### April

- Begin requesting meetings with elected officials.
- Begin sending formal notification of Key Charter School -New City and Key Charter School - Humboldt Park to elected officials.
- May begin attending elected officials' Ward or district nights.

#### May

- Begin meeting with elected officials.
- Request meetings with remaining officials.
- Send formal notification of Key Charter School - New City and Key Charter School - Humboldt Park to remaining elected officials.
- Begin attending elected officials' Ward or district nights.

#### June

- Continue meeting with elected officials.
- Continue attending elected officials' Ward or district nights.

#### July

- Meet with any remaining elected officials.
- Attend any remaining elected officials' Ward or district nights.
- Compile evidence of outreach to all elected officials for inclusion in submission of Tier II proposal.

In our update to Tier I of the proposal and submission of Tier II, we will provide evidence of having conducted these three methods of outreach to the elected officials with the proposed recruitment boundaries of Key Charter Schools.

### **Question #3: COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESSES, AND LEADERS**

*List the community leaders, businesses, or organizations with whom your design team has met to discuss the educational vision for the proposed new school/campus.*

We have had discussions with proposed founding Board member Father David Kelly, community leader in New City and Executive Director and Catholic Priest to Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR) for 13 years. In our update to Tier I of the proposal and submission of Tier II of the proposal, we will provide a substantial list of community leaders, businesses, and organizations with whom we have met and discussed the educational vision of the proposed school. See our Response to 1.2.a, Questions 1 & 2.

## **1.2.b. SEEKING COMMUNITY FEEDBACK**

### **Question #1: COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

*Please describe the structure of the community meetings that your design team has held to discuss the school model and seek residents' feedback on the educational vision for the proposed school.*

In our update to Tier I of the proposal and submission of Tier II of the proposal, we will describe the structure of community meetings held by Key's Design Team. We will also provide, as attachments in the appendices, copies of the presentations from our community meetings, as well as sign-in sheets and any materials used to record attendees' feedback. See our Response to 1.2.a, Questions 1 & 2.

### **Question #2: ON THE GROUND OUTREACH**

*Please discuss the various "on the ground" outreach activities that your design team has conducted. In which geographic areas within the recruitment boundary did your team's outreach activities take place? Which members of your design team participated in outreach activities? Who else did your design team enlist to help conduct outreach in the neighborhoods (e.g. advisors, collaborators, supporters, community members, paid staff, etc.)? What materials and information did representatives of your team share with community members to discuss the educational vision for the proposed school? What questions did your team ask community residents?*

In our update to Tier I of the proposal and submission of Tier II of the proposal, we will discuss, in detail, the comprehensive on-the-ground outreach we will have conducted at that point, including: the geographic areas of our outreach, participants in the outreach, copies of the materials and information shared, and a

description of the interactions had with community members. See our Response to 1.2.a, Questions 1 & 2.

### **Question #3: FEEDBACK**

*In your design team's interactions with elected officials, community organizations, businesses, parents, and community members, what were some of the reactions to the proposed school? What suggestions or feedback did community members have for the proposed school? Which pieces of feedback did the design team incorporate into the proposal and why?*

In our initial interactions with community stakeholders, the response has been overwhelmingly positive and excited for Key's proposed schools. Our educational vision has been fueled by what we have seen in the communities of New City and Humboldt Park and the initial feedback we have received from community stakeholders. We believe that all students can be empowered to succeed when they have excellent teachers who challenge them academically and a school that is dedicated to treating their needs holistically. In our update to Tier I of the proposal and submission of Tier II of the proposal, we will outline key feedback received from different members of the community as we deepen our community engagement. See our Response to 1.2.a, Questions 1 & 2.

## **1.3: PARENT AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

### **1.3.a. EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT FROM KEY COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS**

#### **Question #1: KEY COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS**

*Who are some of the champions of the proposed school in the targeted communit(ies)? Please provide any personalized letters of support from parents and/or community members outlining why they believe the proposed school will be an asset to the community.*

In our update to Tier I of the proposal and submission of Tier II of the proposal, we will describe and provide evidence of key supporters and champions of our proposed schools in New City and Humboldt Park.

#### **Question #2: STUDENT DEMAND**

*Please provide evidence that parents of age-eligible children would consider sending their children to the proposed school in the fall of 2016 or the proposed opening year.*

In our submission of Tier II of the proposal, we will provide a more than sufficient number of letters to intent to enroll for age-eligible children and any other evidence of strong support from parents of age-eligible children.

### **Question #3: ELECTED OFFICIALS**

*List any elected officials who support the proposed school.*

In our submission of Tier II of the proposal, we will cite and attach letters of support from elected officials within the recruitment boundaries of Key Charter School - New City and Key Charter School - Humboldt Park.

### **Question #4: COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESSES, AND LEADERS**

*List organizations, businesses, or leaders in the targeted communit(ies) (required) or city-wide organizations, businesses, or leaders (optional) that support the proposed school. Attach letters of support that explain the basis for their support of the proposed school.*

In our submission of Tier II of the proposal, we will provide letters of support from community-based organizations and Key stakeholders within the recruitment boundaries of Key Charter School -New City and Key Charter School - Humboldt Park.

### **1.3.b. RISK FACTORS**

*Based on your design team's interactions with parents, community members, elected officials, community organizations, leaders, and businesses, who in the community is opposed to the proposed school? What is your understanding of why they are opposed to the proposed school?*

We have not yet encountered any opposition, and hope that will remain the case. In our submission of Tier II of the proposal, we will discuss any opposition to our proposed schools and our understanding of their position.

## **1.4: CONTINUED PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

### **1.4.a. CONTINUED OUTREACH PRIOR TO SCHOOL OPENING**

*What is your design team's continued community engagement plan from proposal submission leading up to the opening of the school?*

Key Charter plans the following tentative community engagement plan from submission of Tier II of the proposal to the opening of the school:

#### August

- Host at least one community informational session in each targeted community.
- Continue to look for and secure partnerships with community organizations and businesses.
- Conduct at least one canvassing event in each targeted community.
- Utilize our Community Ambassadors for on-the-ground outreach.
- Continue to circulate petition for support.
- Submit Tier II of our proposal on August 10.
- Attend Neighborhood Advisory Council Community Public Hearings on week of August 11.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.

#### September

- May host one community informational session in each targeted community.
- Conduct at least canvassing event in each targeted community.
- Continue to look for and secure partnerships with community organizations and businesses.
- Participate in CPS Public Hearing on September 22.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.

#### October

- May host one community informational session in each targeted community.
- Continue to look for and secure partnerships with community organizations and businesses.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.
- Approved to open by Board on October 21.
- Email or mail all supporters with news of approval.

#### November

- May host one community informational session in each targeted community.
- Look for opportunities to participate in or present at one or more community events per targeted community.
- Advertise in local media for hiring of teachers and staff.
- Continue to look for and secure partnerships with community organizations and businesses.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.

#### December

- Advertise in local media for hiring of teachers and staff.

- Look for opportunities to participate in or present at one or more community events per targeted community.
- Continue to look for and secure partnerships with community organizations and businesses.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.

### January

- May hold Open House at each school facility for prospective families.
- Advertise in local media for hiring of teachers and staff.
- Look for opportunities to participate in or present at one or more community events per targeted community.
- Continue to look for and secure partnerships with community organizations and businesses.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.

### February

- Hold Open House at each school facility for prospective families.
- Advertise in local media for hiring of teachers and staff.
- Look for opportunities to participate in or present at one or more community events per targeted community.
- Continue to look for and secure partnerships with community organizations and businesses.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.

### March

- Hold Open House at each school facility for prospective families.
- Deadline for families to be admitted into lottery, if interest exceeds school's capacity for students.
- Advertise in local media for hiring of teachers and staff.
- Look for opportunities to participate in one or more community events per targeted community.
- Continue to look for and secure partnerships with community organizations and businesses.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.

### April

- Lottery held for admission, if necessary.
- Look for opportunities to participate in one or more community events per targeted community.
- Secure remaining partnerships with community organizations and businesses.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.

### May

- Forms due from parents and guardians who accept space in Key Charter Schools on behalf of student.
- Look for opportunities to participate in one or more community events per targeted community.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.

### June

- Look for opportunities to participate in one or more community events per targeted community.
- Start implementing partnerships with community organizations and businesses that were previously secured.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.

### July

- Look for opportunities to participate in one or more community events per targeted community.
- Implement partnerships with community organizations and businesses that were previously secured.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.

### August

- Look for opportunities to participate in one or more community events per targeted community.
- Implement partnerships with community organizations and businesses that were previously secured.
- May hold Open House for community members to visit school and meet teachers and staff before school opens.
- Update website and Facebook page as needed and keep supporters informed.
- Hold Orientation for families and students.
- School opens.

## **1.4.b. VISION FOR LONG-TERM COLLABORATION WITH PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY**

### **Question #1: CONTINUED PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVMENT**



*What formalized mechanism(s) will the proposed school have in place for parents and the community to be involved in the governance of the school and/or provide regular feedback to the Board of Directors? If the proposed governance structure does not require parent and community representatives on the Board, please explain why not. What policies and/or procedures will be in place for parents to share an objection or concern regarding a governing board policy or decision, administrative procedure, or practice at the school?*

Key Charter will require at least one sitting Board member to be a parent/guardian of a current student or a resident of the community as defined by the student recruitment boundaries of the school. Once in operation, we may issue parent surveys periodically in an effort to gather feedback on school initiatives and the school's practices as a whole. We will also consider establishing a Parent Advisory Committee, composed of interested parents, teachers/staff, and the Head of School, who would meet monthly to provide and receive feedback on Key Charter Schools' practices and initiatives from the parents' perspective. Key Charter will continue to explore options to meaningfully engage parents/guardians of students and community residents once the schools are in operation. We will provide an update in our submission of Tier II of the proposal.

## **Question #2: PARTNERSHIPS**

*Describe the coalition of partners and collaborators that your design team has formed in the targeted communit(ies) who can provide support services for the school's students and families once in operation. Please describe any community-based partnerships you are proposing for the new school (required) and partnerships with city-wide organizations (optional). Please provide letters of support from these organizations. Explain whose responsibility it will be leading up to school opening and once the school is in operation to oversee these partnerships.*

We are beginning an in-depth exploration of potential partnerships and collaborations between Key Charter Schools and community organizations that offer support services. We have begun exploring options to work with Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR) in New City, a community organization that counsels members of the community whose lives have been affected by violence and conflict and strives to help the entire community heal and rebuild. PBMR may provide counseling and other support services to Key Charter School students and families.

During the school development process, members of Key's Design Team and Board will continue to share the responsibility of identifying and managing prospective community-based partnerships. Once Key completes its selection process for a proposed Head of School for each school, he/she will be responsible for directing

Key's community engagement efforts and managing community-based partnerships in his/her respective communities.

When Key receives Board approval to open, we will begin our teacher recruitment process, and our search will include teacher applicants who are interested in supporting the Head of School in managing the school's community engagement. During the first few years of operation, at least, Key will rely on the Head of School and other staff to take on all administrator responsibilities, including community engagement. As Key Charter Schools grow in size, we will consider hiring additional administrators, one of whom would, for example, have community engagement as one of his/her sole job responsibilities.

In our submission of Tier II of the proposal, we will outline proposed community-based partnerships for Key Charter Schools and provide strong letters of support.

### **Question #3: COMMUNITY SUPPORTS**

*How will the proposed school contribute to the broader community? What services will it provide to families of students and/or community residents?*

Key Charter Schools will continue to seek opportunities to partner with organizations in a joint effort to serve the parents and families of our prospective students and the community as a whole. We will explore opportunities for our staff and students to volunteer within the community. We will also consider other ways we can be a resource to our communities, such as letting certain community groups use our school facility for meetings and events during school off-hours. In our submission of Tier II of the proposal, we will provide a more developed vision of the services our proposed schools will provide to families of students and community residents.

## DOMAIN 2: ACADEMIC CAPACITY

### 2.1 MISSION, VISION AND CULTURE

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#### 2.1.a. OVERVIEW OF THE EDUCATIONAL MODEL

##### Question #1: MISSION AND VISION

*State the mission and vision of the proposed school. The mission and vision statements should provide the foundation for the entire proposal and be reflected throughout all sections.*

##### **Mission Statement**

Our team has come together to launch this charter school because of our core belief that all children deserve a world-class education, including children living in neighborhoods with limited resources. Our goal is to create a first-rate school at which the vast majority of students perform at or beyond grade level, after which most will not only enroll in colleges and universities, but they will thrive there, having been taught the critical thinking and learning skills necessary to succeed in life. In short, we intend to build a top-tier school located in some of the most resource-challenged neighborhoods in Chicago, a school with standards of excellence on par with the highest-performing schools in the State. To do this, Key Charter School believes that a school with highly-valued and extremely talented teachers, along with committed parents and students who believe in themselves, are the critical ingredients.

##### **Vision**

Key Charter School is committed to the academic success of all students. Upon graduation from Key Charter, students will be prepared to attend the most challenging colleges and universities in the country. We feel that following these core beliefs will enable us to create such a school.

##### **Setting High Expectations**

To achieve our ambitious goal, one of our founding principles is the importance of setting high expectations. While the social problems associated with poverty are very real and cannot be discounted, children can nonetheless succeed in school with the proper support. We remain firmly convinced that *all* children are capable of excelling academically, regardless of circumstance, if provided the appropriate environment within which to learn. While not underestimating the undeniable challenges associated with low-income neighborhoods, our school flatly refuses to

lower our expectations as to what these children can achieve. Put simply, we will not cease our drive toward excellence until our school's children perform at the same level, or better, as the children from highly privileged neighborhoods. Nothing short of that will be acceptable.

### **Required Commitment from Families and Students**

We expect our parents and students to be committed to educational success, to see school as much more than a place they attend during the day. We want them to understand that it often requires sustained hard work and even overcoming failure in order to achieve at the highest level. The school will consistently promote the growth mindset that all people can learn the most challenging material and will provide the support to enable continued learning. Parents and students should be ready and eager to dedicate the time and effort it takes to achieve these results.

Our school will therefore emphasize the importance of the child's end of the proposed bargain. For one thing, the children who choose to attend must be prepared to put in far more hours than are required at other schools: To help compensate for some of the structural disadvantages facing our target population, our school will feature extended school days and an elongated school calendar. Much as everyone wishes it were otherwise, there are no easy short-cuts to a first-rate education. We will provide a world-class school and the opportunity for a world-class education, but that is not something that can just be "given" to someone. Rather, it must be earned through diligent hard work. Students and their families (supported socially and emotionally to the maximum extent possible) will be expected to make the commitment and sacrifices necessary to succeed.

### **Hiring and Empowering the Best Teachers**

Central to our mission will be an effort to recruit from the very top tier of the profession. Our school will conduct a national search for the best candidates in the entire country. For all the criticism leveled at teachers in recent times, there are plenty of super-talented and hard-working educators looking for opportunities to work in a school that empowers teachers to chart their own courses, and truly values outstanding performance.

We seek professionals eager to commit themselves to helping students be successful. These are people who have been academically very successful: knowledgeable in their subject areas, models of the best practices in education, and eager to grow professionally. They want an environment in which they have the freedom and flexibility to fully exercise their professional abilities and discretion, as well as the opportunity to collaborate with other talented, highly engaged educators. We will also reduce the administrative bureaucracy associated with traditional schools, creating teacher-leaders to direct the school.

We recognize that recruiting the very best teachers is not necessarily an easy proposition, a challenge heightened where teachers are being asked to go to under-resourced neighborhoods to educate children presenting the types of challenges associated with low-income. In order to attract and retain the most talented teachers under those circumstances, we offer two things.

First, it is our belief that outstanding teachers will want to join an organization staffed by other like-minded, high-achieving colleagues. A well-run, highly successful school staffed by other dedicated and motivated teachers is precisely the kind of place where teachers will want to work. Also, one of the advantageous features of charter schools is increased freedom from the sort of bureaucratic “red tape” and inflexibility that too often stifles and frustrates creative teachers in traditional school settings. Our school intends take full advantage of that enhanced freedom. Because we are only going to hire the types of individuals who have earned the right to be trusted in the classroom, our teachers will enjoy a higher degree of autonomy. We plan to vest in our outstanding teachers the authority to lead in the manner they see fit, a characteristic we believe will be exciting to the kinds of people we are hoping to attract, and an important driver of our school’s success.

In addition to a desirable working environment, the second reason for our confidence that we will be able to recruit the most talented teachers is because our school will pay them a highly competitive wage. Our operating assumption is that you cannot get the best teachers without rewarding them, and we want only the best teachers. The majority of the teachers at our school will earn at least \$100,000 per year, with the potential for more, plus generous benefits.

To be sure, that level of commitment is expensive. But it is not unrealistic. As explained in this proposal, the numbers in our budget work because top-performing employees are more effective. The school’s Board members have built very successful companies employing the model and philosophy that if you reward top talent with very high pay, the enterprise tends to operate very effectively. It has been our consistent experience that highly compensated, high performing individuals are capable of running organizations very smoothly and efficiently, without as much need for other resource-consuming support as might otherwise be the case. We believe the same will be true at this school. By putting a disproportionate amount of these resources on the teachers’ salaries, the school can assemble a team of outstanding teachers, which, in our view, is the single most important variable in a school’s success.

## **Question #2: EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

*Briefly describe the educational philosophy of the proposed school. Identify the Design Team's core beliefs and values about education; explain how these priorities inform the school's key program and design components that are critical to its success with the targeted student population. Provide a clear rationale for using these strategies, citing research and evidence of success with similar student populations*

As our vision indicates, Key Charter School believes that skilled teachers, committed parents, and engaged students will ensure that any student can achieve academically. Educational research supports this belief and will guide our efforts to create these conditions.

### **Belief in the Power of Education**

Key Charter School believes passionately that education can transform lives. Education, we feel, enables us to better understand ourselves, to build and sustain meaningful relationships with others, and to improve our community. By creating challenging, engaging curriculum and instruction, we will enable our students to enjoy the benefits that education offers.

### **Commitment to the Education of All Students**

We are dedicated to the education of all students. To help our students become prepared for the most demanding higher education, we offer small classes with nurturing environments. Our academic program is challenging, built on college-readiness standards. We have authentic assessments to measure students' progress and will provide regular feedback to them and their families on the results. When students need extra assistance, they can receive tutoring after school, on the weekends, and by contacting their teachers electronically. In addition to developing students' academic skills, we will attend to their social-emotional needs. We seek a supportive, caring environment in which all students can thrive.

### **Involvement of Parents and Community**

We view a child's education as a partnership, and parental involvement is crucial to the success of children. We will offer a variety of ways for parents to become involved in the school: orientation meetings, parent-teacher conferences, parent training and informational sessions, student recognition ceremonies, and parent advisory committees. Our faculty will regularly communicate with parents about what's happening in the classroom and the progress of their child, and we expect parents to communicate with us. We also want to involve our students in the multitude of resources available in Chicago, such as cultural institutions, and enable them to interact with successful professionals.

## **Incorporation of Values and Character into our Children's Education**

Another key ingredient in our school's success will be a positive culture of success. In researching and designing our school's educational philosophy, we were influenced and persuaded by the literature (e.g., Paul Tough's book *How Children Succeed* and Amanda Ripley's *The Smartest Kids in the World*) suggesting that values matter, and that they can be taught. Development of perseverance, character, and grit, for example, will be an important component of our school program. There are some impressive examples of charter schools that have harnessed these values to bolster educational outcomes, and we are fortunate to have the opportunity to continue to observe, learn from, and draw upon the most successful methods of the highest-achieving charter schools that have blazed the trail before us.

## **Creation of Independent Thinkers Who Are Fully Engaged with Their World**

Key Charter School expects its students to perform well on traditional measures of academic success. But good test scores alone do not translate to a first-rate education. In addition, we want to develop independent and critical thinkers, who question traditions and want to seek new directions. Classes will feature seminar-type discussions and authentic assignments that address the world outside the school and are relevant to students. Students will be provided with resources and opportunities to explore their varied educational interests.

## **Recruitment and Retention of Great Teachers**

As stated in the prior section, Key Charter School believes the most critical driver of its success is to assemble a team of outstanding teachers, drawn from among the highest performers in the profession. We will recruit young teachers from the best colleges and universities and the best teacher preparation programs. We also seek veteran teachers who have a record of success and are eager to mentor new teachers. Finally, we are also open to others, who are not graduates of traditional teacher preparation programs but who have significant real world experience: perhaps, a lawyer or engineer who wants to enter education or teach a class or two. We will provide ongoing professional development, guided by desires of the staff, as well as opportunities for teachers to attend professional conferences and receive additional training. We will devote resources to coaching and mentoring programs, both shown to develop and retain teachers. Because we will keep our administration lean, teachers will have opportunities to assume leadership roles, perhaps just temporarily, without leaving teaching entirely. Our teachers' job will be demanding, as well as financially rewarding and professionally stimulating. Research argues that the teacher is the most influential factor in student learning, and we will ensure that we put the best teachers in front of our classrooms.

## 2.1.b. STUDENTS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN AND LEARNING SUPPORTS

### Question #1: DESCRIPTION OF CULTURE

*Describe the culture of the proposed school. What are the systems and traditions that the school will implement to help the school achieve this culture? Who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of these systems and traditions?*

Students, teachers, parents and administrators together share responsibility for creating and building the school culture, focused on the highest student achievement. We will create a culture around these beliefs.

In the culture we will establish, teachers and staff are focused on student achievement, and strongly agree on educational values. Teachers seek out opportunities to observe and discuss what they and others are teaching and participate in decisions concerning students. Teachers spend time to critically analyze their own practice and those of their colleagues, individually and collaboratively, with the development of their students' intellectual, social, and emotional development at the forefront.

Teachers are open to new ideas and implementing successful practices, open to their colleagues' opinions on instruction and dedicated to a strong culture of trust across the faculty. School leaders expect and actively support effective teaching throughout the school and encourage all teachers to do the same. Teachers take responsibility for helping each other, and all understand that school improvement is a continuous process and goal.

Teachers will value contributions from parents and proactively seek the involvement of all parents in their students' learning, including classroom instruction. Teachers take initiatives for parent engagement and work to maintain positive relationships with all.

The Head of School is primarily responsible for overseeing and encouraging these systems and traditions. At the same time, all teachers are responsible for implementing and supporting each other, and finding ways to incorporate and strengthen this culture through the school. Students are responsible for their own behavior and for encouraging other students' positive behavior as well. Personal responsibility is a common theme, and it applies to everyone from the Head of School down.

Families will be expected to have high expectations for their students' achievements from the outset, participating in conversations and conferences both formal and informal throughout the year. Events at the school invite all members of the



students' families to participate, within the classroom, during the school day, and in school-wide events held after school, evenings and weekends.

We intend to invite regular guests to speak to our students, providing them with role models who have succeeded in various professions. Conventional wisdom has it that some children do not appreciate the point of working hard in school because they fail to see that effort paying off for people that they know in terms of good jobs and careers. The members of our Board have contacts with a tremendous number of successful people. By frequently inviting successful doctors, engineers, entrepreneurs, lawyers, dentists, etc. to speak to the children, we will make the "pay off" of a good education seem more real for them. To emphasize the point, we will put a premium on selecting as many speakers as possible who resemble our students in terms of ethnicity and background. Several of our Board members (qualifications discussed below) will be among the first guests to address the students.

To establish and build the school's identity, school staff will draw other ideas from students, families and the community to express their aspirations for the highest levels of achievement. Staff will have frequent communication using multiple media to continuously build culture while keeping families informed. The school will have open meetings hosted by the Head of School, who will also have high visibility during school hours and at school events for informal conversations. Open hours scheduled by teachers will encourage walk-ins, as well as availability for scheduled meetings initiated by parents.

## **Question #2: COLLEGE READINESS SUPPORTS**

*Describe the specific programs and supports, beyond academic curricula, that the proposed school will provide to expose students to college and ensure that they are successful in college academically and emotionally. If applying to open a high school, describe how the school will help students meet requirements to apply to college, enroll, and persist in college after high school graduation. Who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of college readiness supports? Which staff members will support these efforts?*

In our first year, we have students attending kindergarten and sixth grade. (We plan to add students in additional grades in successive years.) We want to open our school with sixth graders as well as kindergarteners for several reasons. We expect sixth graders to attend the school for three years, a long enough time to show them the importance of education and to help them meet the rigors of high school and later college learning. Key Charter remains dedicated to preparing young people to succeed in college and in life, but we determined that we should start no later than sixth grade in terms of inculcating our school's culture and emphasis on learning. Sixth graders, we also feel, are also better able to participate in the cultural life of

Chicago and to appreciate the professionals we invite to the school. Finally, we want our sixth graders to become models for younger students, clearly showing what they are capable of achieving.

Our goal is to start preparing all students to be college-ready and college-bound from the moment they enter our doors. To achieve this, Key Charter School will align its curriculum with Common Core Standards. Students will take entry assessments in reading and math to determine their performance level and to identify students who enter school needing extra support academically. Formative and summative assessments designed by the staff as well standardized tests will help continuously measure students' progress and design differentiated support to meet students' needs.

All teachers and teacher-leaders are responsible providing students from the earliest grades with the education they need to excel.

### **Question #3: POST-SECONDARY TRACKING**

*If proposing a high school, specify the methods that the school will employ to track student/alumni college acceptance and persistence rates. Identify who is responsible for monitoring and overseeing tracking efforts.*

Although at the start our school will serve younger students, we are committed from the beginning to preparing students for their academic success in high school and college, knowing that this preparation in the early grades is crucial to later success. During our first year of operation, we will start with kindergarten and sixth grade; in each successive year, we will add grades. We will devote a significant amount of the school day to literacy instruction in both language and math. The Common Core standards, which Illinois has adopted, will provide the foundation for instruction. These standards were designed to reflect what students to be able to do at each grade level to be college ready at high school graduation.

### **Question #4: STUDENT PROFILE**

*Describe the anticipated social, emotional, and physical health needs of the targeted student population.*

Key Charter School's targeted student population is anticipated to reflect the student population of the locations of the communities they serve, and based on their needs – social, emotional, and physical health – services will be in place to respond.

All our students, regardless of background, share the need to learn and practice critical life skills that will help personal development and in turn their academic performance. Needs include learning:

- To be empathetic, caring people
- To recognize and manage feelings
- To control impulses and delay gratification
- To reduce stress through health and wellness
- To make good decisions
- To behave ethically and responsibly
- To overcome obstacles
- To avoid negative behaviors.

To meet these social and emotional needs, we will provide a supportive, trusting environment and consistent relationships with empathetic and caring adults. Key Charter School is ideally set up to provide both. Because students who attend Key Charter School are drawn from across the city, we can mediate difficulties they face. For example, attending the same school environment from kindergarten through high school, no matter their Chicago location (even in periods of homelessness), offers consistency of both the learning environment and the relationships so important to students' well-being and achievement.

Key Charter School can also provide our sixth-graders, many of whom may have struggled in previous schools, with educational and social-emotional supports in a nurturing environment to help them onto the path to school performance, graduation, and then high achievement in college and careers.

We recognize that many of our students otherwise could be at risk of not completing high school based on previous academic outcomes and/or lack of school engagement. The challenge of providing extra supports for children who are poor, disadvantaged and sometimes homeless is anticipated and will be met. Indeed, that is the school's core mission, the objective around which the entire project has been designed.

#### **Question #5: MONITORING NON-ACADEMIC NEEDS AND GROWTH**

*Q. Explain how the school will identify and monitor individual students' social, emotional and physical health needs on an ongoing basis at the school. Please describe any non-academic goals that the school may set for students, how they will be measured.*

Responsibility for identifying and monitoring the social, emotional and physical health of our students lies with our staff members, who will work continuously with

our parents. Teachers will have the training, the talent, and the time to do this, and through collaborative efforts and professional development, we will ensure all teachers are ready to meet this responsibility.

Teams of teachers and school leaders, together with parents, will be empowered to make decisions on issues relating to emotional-social learning, student behavior, and school procedures.

Parents can be recruited and trained to be involved at the school, to greet students, to observe behaviors, and to collaborate with teachers in encouraging students to be comfortable asking for and/or receiving help.

Teachers will be able to collect and respond to school-wide data to monitor behavior referrals and track how the programs overall are working. Faculty/staff will have experience implementing social-emotional learning curriculum and/or programs.

Programs will be in place to set and meet non-academic goals for students:

- Practice self-regulation, the ability to control and manage thoughts, feelings and behaviors, which has been linked to academic achievement in numerous studies.
- Become self-aware and confident about their learning capacities, so that they will try harder and persist in the face of challenges they face.
- Set high academic goals, have self-discipline, manage stress, organize their approach to work, so that they can learn more and achieve at the highest levels.
- Learn and practice problem-solving skills to overcome obstacles and responsibly make decisions about studying.

Key Charter School is dedicated to helping unleash students' potential within an academic environment that is caring and encouraging and at the same time has the highest expectations for their behavior and academic achievement.

#### **Question #6: SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH SUPPORTS**

*Describe the programs, resources, and services (both internal and external) that the proposed school will provide in order to promote students' social, emotional, and physical health. Explain how the proposed school will meet the needs of students in at-risk situations, including but not limited to homelessness, poverty, behavioral issues, truancy, drugs, pregnancy, and mental health and emotional issues.*

Social and emotional learning programs at Key Charter School will meet and exceed the highest standards in education. These programs are designed to reduce

aggression and emotional distress and will both help our students' well-being and reduce misbehavior and the amount of time spent on classroom management.

For example the meta-analysis of school-based programs published by *Child Development* summarizes these needs and goals:

<b>SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMS</b>	
<b>1. SELF-AWARENESS</b>	What are my thoughts and feelings? What causes those thoughts and feelings? How can I express my thoughts and feelings respectfully?
<b>2. SELF-MANAGEMENT</b>	What different responses can I have to an event? How can I respond to an event as constructively as possible?
<b>3. SOCIAL AWARENESS</b>	How can I better understand other people's thoughts and feelings? How can I better understand why people feel and think the way they do?
<b>4. RELATIONSHIP SKILLS</b>	How can I adjust my actions so that my interactions with different people turn out well? How can I communicate my expectations to other people? How can I communicate with other people to understand and manage their expectations of me?
<b>5. RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING</b>	What consequences will my actions have on myself and others? How do my choices align with my values? How can I solve problems creatively?

Durlak, J., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). *The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions (PDF)*. *Child Development, 82(1), 405-432*. Retrieved from <http://www.edutopia.org/sel-research-learning-outcomes>

In addition, Key Charter School staff will be familiar with and will regularly review the ISBE Social Emotional Learning Standards. Responsibilities assigned to staff members for identifying, monitoring, and supporting the anticipated social, emotional, and physical health needs of students are cited in the organizational chart and job descriptions.

In addition, we will hire staff that will be familiar with ISBE and CPS guidelines and regulations relating to residency, immigrant students, homeless students,

school fees and waivers. For example, we will ensure that:

- All school materials are easily accessible and reflect accurate information about homelessness and residency rights
- All responsible for school enrollment are trained/familiar with residency and homeless laws.

We will also partner with services and agencies that provide assistance to homeless, immigrant, English-language learners.

We recognize that with children of widely different backgrounds our student body will entail a range of physical health needs, including nutrition, clothing, and health monitoring. Key Charter School will be responsive and resourced to provide for those needs both directly and through partner services, including CPS services.

#### **Question #7: APPROACH TO BEHAVIOR AND SAFETY**

*What is the proposed school's approach to student discipline and classroom management? Outline the system of incremental consequences for both positive and negative behavior, as well as the school's plan for supporting positive behavior and responding to inappropriate behavior when it occurs.*

**Appendices:** *Attach copies of the school's policies for promotion, graduation, and student discipline.* (Not applicable, as the school will follow CPS Student Code of Conduct.)

Key Charter School will follow the CPS Student Code of Conduct (SCC), which outlines the incremental consequences for negative behavior. Following this code will ensure student safety and enable us to respond fairly and appropriately to student negative behavior. Our approach to student behavior will also be informed by recent Department of Education policy recommendations on how to improve school climate and discipline:

- Create positive climates and focus on prevention
- Develop clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations and consequences to address disruptive student behaviors
- Ensure fairness, equity, and continuous improvement.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education. (2011). *Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Policies in Early Childhood Setting*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/policy-statement-ee-expulsions-suspensions.pdf>

Our student discipline and classroom management will focus on avoiding bias and keeping students in class and school. We will train our leaders and teachers in principles and techniques of restorative justice, an approach advocated by U.S. Department of Education, the Illinois Board of Education (ISBE), and CPS. The Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice Program (<http://www.ibarji.org/schools.asp>) includes excellent resources for our staff.

We will develop an active Positive Behavior and Interventions Support (PBIS) program to recognize positive behavior in a variety of ways; such as incentives for positive behavior, school-wide ceremonies, and regular notes to parents describing their children's success.

### **Question #8: BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORT**

*Describe the multi-tiered system of prevention and intervention behavioral supports that the school will put in place for all students and students in need of targeted supports.*

The CPS SCC provides students, parents, and educators with a clear description of the multi-tiered behavioral system to which Key Charter School will adhere. We will apply research to develop targeted support for students in need. The Institute of Educational Services (IES), with the support of the Department of Education, provides research-based guidelines for creating supports.

- Identify the specifics of the problem behavior and the conditions that prompt and reinforce it.
- Modify the classroom learning environment to decrease problem behavior.
- Teach and reinforce new skills to increase appropriate behavior and preserve a positive classroom climate.
- Draw on relationships with professional colleagues and students' families for continued guidance and support.
- Assess whether school wide behavior problems warrant adopting school-wide strategies or programs and, if so, implement ones shown to reduce negative and foster positive interactions.

U.S. Department of Education and Institute of Educational Services. (2208). *Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom*. Retrieved from <http://www.isbe.net/learningsupports/pdfs/reducing-behav-prob.pdf>

Following these guidelines, we will consider a variety of supports; such as family and individual counseling, school-wide programs to address targeted behaviors, and peer assistance plans.

### **Question #9: MONITORING AND EVALUATING BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS**

*How will the school monitor the progress of behavioral interventions and determine whether they are succeeding in promoting positive student behavior? Who will be responsible for overseeing student discipline and behavioral interventions?*

Key Charter's Head of School will be in charge of overseeing student discipline and behavioral interventions. This individual will monitor how the school handles student behavior, making sure that policy guidelines detailed earlier are followed. When the Head of School, social worker, or teacher detects concerns, he or she will bring these to the Head of School and a committee composed of faculty and parents to propose solutions.

Since many problems with student behavior can be dealt with in the classroom, the Head of School will work with teachers as needed to help them with classroom management. Teachers who are particularly adept at classroom management will also provide assistance.

Finally, the Head of School and teachers will be skilled at collaborating with parents about how to approach negative behavior.

### **Question #10: COMMUNICATION OF BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS**

*How will expectations for behavior and corresponding consequences and rewards be clearly communicated to students and families?*

The CPS CSS is posted on its website and will be available on the school's website. As part of the application process and later part of orientation process, the school will review with families the CSS as well as guidelines mentioned earlier that underlie our approach to student behavior. In addition to informing families of our school-wide policies, teachers will communicate their own classroom expectations and approach to student behavior, which will be consistent with the school's policies.

Throughout this information process, we want to emphasize how we aim to build a positive school culture that limits discipline problems. We want parents to see that



our primary aim is to promote and recognize positive behavior, so we describe our PBIS program and other ways we celebrate our culture of high expectations.

### **Question #11: EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE**

*Please provide a preliminary list and definitions of the offenses for which students in the school may be suspended or expelled. What corrective, instructive, and/or restorative responses to misbehavior will the school implement prior to the use of exclusionary discipline?*

Key Charter School will diligently follow the CPS SCC that lists and defines offenses for which students can be suspended or expelled. We will strive, however, not to exclude students from the classroom or school, knowing that such exclusion seriously undermines their learning.

Our director of school safety and student behavior will be informed about the principles and practices of restorative justice and seek to apply these prior to suspending or expelling students. CPS, ISBE, and the Department of Education as well as many private agencies have numerous resources to help guide schools in the implementation of restorative justice. Research on restorative justice shows that it contributes to:

- . Happier and safer schools,
- . Mutually respectful relationships,
- . More effective teaching and learning,
- . Reducing exclusion and
- . Raising attendance.

Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice. (2015). *Restorative Practices in Schools*. Retrieved from <http://www.ibarj.org/schools.asp>

This approach seeks to “repair relationships” rather than “assign blame” by involving those affected by the negative behavior in its resolution. Resolutions arising from a restorative justice approach are more likely to prompt people to reflect on and change their behavior than those imposed by authority. The school will try a variety of restorative justice techniques; such as peer juries, service to school or community as restitution, restorative conferences (peacemaking circles).

### **Question #12: DUE PROCESS**

*Explain how the school will protect the rights of students with disabilities/impairments in disciplinary actions and proceedings and afford due process for all students. Describe the appeals procedures that the school will employ for students facing possible expulsion.*

Key Charter School is committed to protecting the rights of students with disabilities. Founded in part by civil rights lawyers, we will hire people well-versed in the federal, state, and district laws and policies that ensure these rights. Our knowledgeable staff and Board members will create systems that ensure students with disabilities receive their due process rights and that their families are notified of the schedule for and included in disciplinary conferences.

### **Question #13: PARENT ENGAGEMENT**

*How will the school communicate expectations about the school's mission and vision, culture, to families? How will the school engage parents and caretakers in their child(ren)'s education? Outline any requirements for parents' involvement in their students' education. Discuss strategies to provide clear and consistent communication to parents about their students' progress throughout the school year, including parents who do not speak English.*

We want all families to have the opportunity to learn about the school and to see whether it is a good fit for their child. To this end, we will conduct informational sessions throughout the city to acquaint students with the school's mission, vision, and culture. Our application materials will include extensive information about the school, and we will strive to make personal contact with all applicants. Because we seek a student population that reflects CPS' overall composition, we will employ people familiar with different cultures and languages, so all families can have their questions answered about the school.

Our school and individual faculty members will communicate regularly with parents and invite communication from them. Much of the communication will be electronic; however, for families without easy Internet access, we will also communicate by phone and written notes. We will seek to communicate in a variety of languages, so that all families are kept well informed.

### **Question #14: PARENT RESOURCES**

*Describe any programs or resources that the school will provide specifically for parents or caretakers. Will school staff or external organizations provide these services? How will the costs of services be covered?*

Once students join the school, we want all families to be actively involved in the life of the school community. We deeply believe that when parents are committed to a child's education, the student is likely to be committed as well. As a school, we also feel committed to our students' families.

Although there are no specific requirements for parent involvement, we will create many ways for parents to feel welcome at the school. We can, for example, organize events for families that can answer their pressing questions on everything from how to assist their children with homework to how to handle stress or the mistreatment of their peers. If families need resources better provided by other organizations, we will aspire to be in a position to assist them in finding the needed help and making contact.

## 2.2 DEMONSTRATED TRACK RECORD

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### 2.2.a. EXPERIENCE AND TRACK RECORD

#### Question #1: EXPERIENCE AND ROLES

*Briefly describe the qualifications and experience of members of the design team and/or (founding or existing) Board of Directors in all areas that are key to successfully opening, managing, and sustaining a new school, including education, school leadership/administration, operations, finance, development, law, and ties to the proposed community. Describe how the design team was formed, each member's contributions to the proposal, and each member's proposed role in the school. Please cite any advisors or consultants external to the founding group and define their contributions to the development of the proposal, including their relevant experience and qualifications.*

#### **Appendices:**

*Attach résumés of design team members and any other individuals who have made substantial contributions to this proposal. Label each résumé with the individual's affiliation with the proposed school.*

#### Question #2: ACADEMIC TRACK RECORD

*Provide evidence demonstrating that the design team, whether an existing Chicago operator, existing national operator or Management Organization, or a new operator, has a proven track record of success driving academic achievement and growth for students similar to those the school expects to serve in a school setting.*

#### **Appendices:**

*Attach state or district report cards, vendor reports, or other verifiable sources of data demonstrating the academic track record of design team members with instructional/academic expertise and members of the proposed instructional leadership team.*

#### Questions #1 & #2: Experience and Roles, Academic Track Record

Our Design Team is led by John Whitehurst, a retired Head of School who has created the opening drafts of our school's operative documents included with and summarized in this proposal. He has done this design work in consultation and with input from other Board members on our team.

Mr. Whitehurst is well qualified to lead on the design work. Beginning with his education, he has a M.A. in Teaching from Northwestern University in Evanston, IL, and completed all coursework for doctoral degree at the University of Chicago PhD program in English education, focused on improving English instruction. As for his work experience, for the past two years, Mr. Whitehurst has worked for SUPES Academy Consultant, assisting several Chicago Public Schools (CPS) with school improvement efforts. This has included writing curriculum for professional development of CPS Head of Schools and school administrators around the country, and leading training sessions with CPS Head of Schools.

Mr. Whitehurst began his teaching career at Arden Shore School, Lake Bluff, IL, teaching boys with severe social and psychological problems. He thereafter worked at Antioch High School for more than 35 years, where he was an English teacher and English Department Chair (supervising and evaluating 36 English teachers) before becoming the Principal and interim Head of School of the school for four years. As principal/Head of School, he supervised day-to-day operations and all staff, including student activities, discipline, school-community relations, and coordinating staff development. He also assisted Board and district administrators in the development and implementation of local and state procedures and policies; created and monitored a new three-year School Improvement Plan that identified curriculum, instruction, school climate, and technology goals; directed the school's RtI and PBIS efforts; partnered with Sylvan Learning Center to create reasonably priced ACT Prep course; collected and organized data to monitor student achievement and school improvement efforts; and introduced a variety of new technology into school, including SMART boards, document cameras, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Classrooms.

Under his leadership, his school's PSAE scores were above state averages and there was significant growth year over year. The school was 20% low income, but had extremely low drop out and truancy rates. The graduation rates for Latino and African American students exceeded 90%. The 2013 Illinois School Report card summarizing Antioch's demographics (proportion of minority, ESL, IEP, and TSL students) and Antioch's above-average performance on State tests in the last year before Mr. Whitehurst's retirement is attached hereto as Appendix 2.2a.

Prior to serving as Head of School at Antioch, Mr. Whitehurst was the Assistant Head of School for Curriculum and Instruction for five years, in which capacity he directed school curriculum and instruction to create and implement school and district goals. He also oversaw development of curriculum maps for all English courses, led the Student Achievement Team, which develops school improvement plans, and collaborated with Regional Office of Education to integrate school goals with state requirements and then monitor implementation of the plan. He also assisted with state and district testing (EXPLORE, PLAN, PSAE), and was responsible for presenting information to stakeholders (board of education, parent groups, faculty and staff) about school progress.

Mr. Whitehurst has served on numerous volunteer committees in his District, including chairing the education association's committee to develop teacher evaluation plan, and serving on the Models Research Committee (investigating educational innovations); the Gifted Committee (to distribute school's gifted funds and improve gifted programs); and the Supervision Committee (collaborating with teachers and administration to agree on equitable changes). He also participated actively in all community and school efforts to pass building and education fund referendums, and has led workshops, published articles, and won awards/recognition described further on his attached resume.

In addition to Mr. Whitehurst, other members of the Board possess experience and expertise relevant to the creation of our school's operating plans. The Board member biographies are included in this proposal in Section 3.2.b. As that section makes clear, our school's Design Team received assistance – and will continue to receive assistance – from Board members and Advisory Board members offering a wide assortment of helpful expertise.

Rather than re-producing those bios in this section, we incorporate them herein by reference. But we summarize the skills and qualifications set forth in those bios as follows.

In particular, our Board includes Danielle Loevy, who recently started Beacon Academy in Evanston, taking it from a vision to a successful school now in its second year. As its Board President, Ms. Loevy oversaw everything from selection of the Board and Head of School, to development of curriculum, to securing the facility to acceptance by the community, to fundraising to the tune of several million dollars. Other educators on the team include Debbie Senoff-Langford, who for more than a decade has run Rogers Park Montessori School as its Head of School. In that capacity, Ms. Senoff-Langford developed expertise relevant to the design of our charter school in every conceivable aspect of school development.

Other Board members bring additional helpful experience as entrepreneurs in the fields of law, real estate development, consulting, fundraising, technology, finance, and banking. Rounding out our team include a retired Federal Judge, a Pastor with deep connections to our school's neighborhood, several other community activists, and the President Emeritus of a highly-respected \$45M museum and education center. Between them, the members of our team have collectively started and led numerous successful companies, raised tens of millions of dollars in funds for schools and education centers, and developed extensive expertise in many fields relevant to our schools' design. All of this experience is set forth, *infra*, in Section 3.2.b.

## 2.2.b. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

### Question #1: STRUCTURE

*Briefly describe the proposed instructional leadership structure. (Note: the structure should align with the school-level organizational chart provided in Section 2.5.a. Recruitment and Staffing).*

**Appendices:** *Attach clearly labeled job descriptions for all instructional leadership positions at the proposed school.*

For the first years of operation, the only administrator will be the Head of School. Since the enrollment is small and a school goal is a lean administration, we expect only one full-time administrator is necessary at the outset. Teachers may assume some administrative roles that do not require administrative certification, such as curriculum oversight. The job description of the Head of School is included as an Appendix 2.2.b.

### Question #2: SELECTING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

*If school leader(s) have been identified, provide the criteria that were used to select the proposed leader(s), including skills, qualifications and characteristics. If school leadership has not been identified, describe the criteria that will be used to select the proposed leader(s), provide a timeline for identifying school leader(s), and specify whether past leadership experience is a requirement.*

Key Charter School's leader will necessarily be experienced in the challenges of urban education and has been successful at meeting these challenges. (See job description in Appendix 2.2.b.) The person is responsible for:

- Providing strategic leadership for school improvement and development
- Ensuring high standards of achievement for all students
- Ensuring an orderly, motivated culture and a strong school community where teaching, learning, and healthy relationships can thrive
- Ensuring responsive and effective management of people including all students, parents, teachers, and staff
- Ensuring effective management of the school, including building operation and budgetary oversight
- Monitoring programs and procedures so they are in compliance with federal, state, and district requirements.

The current Head of School has assisted in the initial design and proposal of the school. The new leader will be selected once the school's charter is approved.

### **Question #3: EXPERIENCE**

*If school leadership has been identified, please provide evidence of each proposed leader's success driving achievement with a similar student population in a school setting. If any of the proposed school leader(s) do not have leadership experience in a school, please cite any school leadership programs or fellowships that they have completed or will complete prior to school opening. (For existing operators only) If a proposed leader has not been identified, describe key partnerships, leadership pipelines, networks, and/or sources that the operator will rely upon to recruit the school leader(s).*

John Whitehurst is the temporary Head of School of Key Charter School and has helped prepare the proposal for the school. Mr. Whitehurst has been in education for 40 years and, before retiring, served as an English teacher, English department chair, assistant Head of School for curriculum, and high school Head of School. Since his retirement, he has been an interim Head of School, worked with CPS schools, and written curriculum for the training of CPS Head of Schools. Once the school's charter is approved, the school's new Head of School will be selected. Mr. Whitehurst's resume is included as Appendix 2.2.a.

### **Question #4: EVALUATION**

*How will school leaders be evaluated?*

Appendix 2.2.b. includes a model evaluation form for our school leader. The evaluation form is consistent with the job description of the school Head of School and with the Illinois Performance Standards for School Leaders and the CPS Performance Standards for School Leaders. To evaluate the Head of School accurately, the Board of Directors will seek the input of staff and parents, analyze student achievement and enrollment, observe the leader's communication to groups, and ask for his or her self-assessment. In addition to a year-end summative evaluation, representatives of the board will meet at least three times during the year to provide formative feedback on the Head of School's performance.



## 2.3 CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 2.3.a. STANDARDS FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

#### Question #1: EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND METRICS

*Identify academic, non-academic, and mission-specific goals and metrics for the proposed school. Include a table that details the school's quantifiable goals, including targeted assessment scores, attendance levels, and additional metrics for each of its first five years of operation. For high schools, include goals for graduation rates, leading indicators (e.g. freshman on track), college acceptance and persistence rate, as well as goals related to career readiness. **(Not Applicable)** Sample goals and metrics tables are provided in Appendix 2: Sample Educational Goals Table. Please describe how your design team determined these goals and why these goals are appropriate for the school's intended population.*

During the first year of operation, the school will serve kindergarten and sixth grade. During the second year, first grade will be added, and sixth graders will move to seventh grade. During the third year, second grade will be added, and sixth and seventh graders will advance a level. During the fourth year, third grade will be added. During the fifth year, fourth grade will be added.

In keeping with our mission to produce students that can achieve at the nation's most selective academically rigorous schools, we expect the overwhelming majority of our students by the time of graduation to score at or above college-readiness standards on nationally normed assessments as well as ones designed by our staff. We are confident that the longer students attend Key Charter School, the greater the number of them who will meet or exceed college-readiness standards.

#### Goal 1: Students Achieve Mastery in English Language Arts

- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for one year, 70 percent to achieve at or above the national average performance in Reading on NWEA at the end of year (grades K-8).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for two years, 75 percent to achieve at or above the national average performance in Reading on NWEA at the end of year (grades K-8).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for three years, 80 percent to achieve at or above the national average performance in Reading on NWEA at the end of year (grades K-8).

- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for four years or more, 85 percent to achieve at or above the national average performance in Reading on NWEA at the end of year (grades K-8).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for one year or more, 70 percent to meet individual growth targets determined by NWEA Reading Score. (Grades K-8).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for one year, 70 percent to score Proficient or Advanced on the PARCC Reading/Language Arts Assessment (Grades 3-8 only).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for two years, 75 percent to score Proficient or Advanced on the PARCC Reading/Language Arts Assessment (Grades 3-8 only).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for three years, 80 percent to score Proficient or Advanced on the PARCC Reading/Language Arts Assessment (Grades 3-8 only).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for four years, 85 percent to score Proficient or Advanced on the PARCC Reading/Language Arts Assessment (Grades 3-8 only).

## **Goal 2: Students Achieve Mastery in Mathematics**

- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for one year, 70 percent to achieve at or above the national average performance in Math on NWEA at the end of year (grades K-8).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for two years, 75 percent to achieve at or above the national average performance in Math on NWEA at the end of year (grades K-8).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for three years, 80 percent to achieve at or above the national average performance in Math on NWEA at the end of year (grades K-8).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for four years or more, 85 percent to achieve at or above the national average performance in Math on NWEA at the end of year (grades K-8).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for one year or more, 70 percent to meet individual growth targets determined by NWEA Math Score at the beginning of the year (Grades K-8).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for one year, 70 percent to score Proficient or Advanced on the PARCC Math Assessment (Grades 3-8 only).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for two years, 75 percent to score Proficient or Advanced on the PARCC Math Assessment (Grades 3-8 only).

- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for three years, 80 percent to score Proficient or Advanced on the PARCC Math Assessment (Grades 3-8 only).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for four years or more, 85 percent to score Proficient or Advanced on the PARCC Math Assessment (Grades 3-8 only).

### **Goal 3: Students Achieve Mastery in Science**

- Metric: In a cohort analysis of longitudinal growth, average annual increase of percentiles among students in Science on a nationally norm-referenced test, averages a minimum of 5 percentiles of growth per year until the average percentile score reaches 85 (Grades 3-8 only).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for one year, 70 percent to score Proficient or Advanced on the PARCC Science Assessment when available (Grades 3-8 only).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for two years, 75 percent to score Proficient or Advanced on the PARCC Science Assessment when available (Grades 3-8 only).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for three years, 80 percent to score Proficient or Advanced on the PARCC Science Assessment when available (Grades 3-8 only).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for four years or more, 85 percent to score Proficient or Advanced on the PARCC Science Assessment when available (Grades 3-8 only).

### **Goal 4: Students Achieve Mastery in Social Studies**

- Metric: In a cohort analysis of longitudinal growth, average annual increase of percentiles among students in Social Studies on a nationally norm-referenced test, averages a minimum of 5 percentiles of growth per year until the average percentile score reaches 85 (Grades 3-8 only).
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for one year, 70 percent to score Proficient or Advanced on the PARCC Social Studies Assessment if available.
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for two years, 75 percent to score Proficient or Advanced on the PARCC Social Studies Assessment if available.
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for three years, 80 percent to score Proficient or Advanced on the PARCC Social Studies Assessment if available.
- Metric: Among students who have attended the school for four years, 85 percent to score Proficient or Advanced on the PARCC Social Studies Assessment if available.

**Goal: Students Committed to High Expectations for Their Own Learning**

- Metric: Attendance over time each year to exceed district averages at every grade level
- Metric: Students perform at or above college-readiness standards on assessments designed and evaluated by Key Charter School staff.
- Metric: Majority of students attend after-school and weekend programs that provide assistance and enhanced learning.

**Goal: Staff and Parents Committed to High Expectations for Student Learning**

- Metric: Staff and parent responses to 5 Essentials survey and surveys created by Key Charter School show high level of support for school's programs to emphasize high expectations.
- Metric: Majority of parents attend school events and communicate regularly with staff.
- Metric: Staff communication to parents is frequent and reflects culture of high expectations.

**Goal: School Creates Supportive Atmosphere that Stresses Engagement and Resiliency**

- Metric: Staff and parent responses to 5 Essentials survey and surveys created by Key Charter School show that parents and students feel that school is supportive.
- Metric: 90% of students re-enroll in school.

**Question #2: STUDENT ASSESSMENT PLAN**

*Explain how the school will assess the progress of individual students, student cohorts, and the school as a whole on the metrics identified in **Section 2.3.a. Educational Goals and Metrics** over the course of the five-year contract. Create a table that details specific diagnostic, benchmark/interim, and summative assessments that will be used for each grade level—including the local and state required assessments—and specify the timing of their administration (please see Appendix 3: Sample Student Assessment Plan for sample assessment tables). The proposal narrative should explain the rationale for selecting or developing the identified assessments and note alignment with state standards and/or Common Core State Standards, where applicable.*

Key Charter’s assessment schedule will include required state and district assessments as well as formative and summative ones created by teachers. Assessments created by our faculty will be by carefully aligned with Common Core standards, state standards, and the standards of professional organizations, such as the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The table also lists optional assessments that we may use for specific students or groups of students if we feel that they will supply helpful information. We want to make sure that the assessments we administer do not overly interrupt instruction and will always help us better serve our students.

This battery of assessments will enable us to identify the growth of individual students and the school as a whole. In particular, we will constantly monitor these assessments to ascertain if our students are ready to attend the most demanding colleges, a key mission of our school.

Key Charter School will use diagnostic assessments to measure our students’ learning and progress, and to provide accountability for our school. Most important, Key Charter School will use assessments as a means to support student learning. Teachers will use the data to personalize instruction, to identify areas for extra support, and to communicate with parents about their students’ current position and future aspirations. Parents will have access both to information fact sheets (<http://cps.edu/SchoolData/Pages/Assessment.aspx>) and to staff members who can provide context and deeper understanding about the benefits to all our students, who aspire to the highest achievement levels.

Key Charter School will also participate in developing performance assessments, which “require students to craft their own responses to problems through constructing an answer, producing a product, or performing an activity rather than merely selecting from multiple-choice answers.”

Parsi, A. & Darling-Hammond, L. (January, 2015). *Performance Assessments: How State Policy Can Advance Assessments for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning*.

Retrieved from [http://www.nasbe.org/wp-content/uploads/Parsi-LDH-Performance-Assessment\\_Jan2015.pdf](http://www.nasbe.org/wp-content/uploads/Parsi-LDH-Performance-Assessment_Jan2015.pdf)

<i><sup>x</sup> Required</i>	<i>* Optional based on Target Population</i>										<i><sup>+</sup>As needed</i>
<i>to gauge student progress</i>											
<b>Test and Grade Levels</b>	Se pt	O ct	N ov	D ec	J a n	F e b	M ar	A pr	M ay	J u n	
NWEA MPG Reading, Math K-2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	x					x					x
TRC/DIBELS K-2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	*					+					
Performance Tasks K-2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	x	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	x
mClass K-2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	*					+					
ACCESS K-2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	*										
3 <sup>rd</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> grade Screening for English Language Proficiency K-2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	*										
3 <sup>rd</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> grade PARCC									x		
3 <sup>rd</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> grade NWEA MAP Reading, Math 3 <sup>rd</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> grade	x					x					x
Performance Tasks 3 <sup>rd</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> grade	x	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	x
DLM-AA 3 <sup>rd</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> grade	*										

### K-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Assessments

- NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) for Primary Grades (MPG): Administered to K-2 students in the Fall (for students without a prior score), Winter (as needed to gauge student progress) and Spring (required for all). Locates individual skill levels of early learners, demonstrates academic growth over time, guides classroom instruction during early stages.
- PERFORMANCE Tasks: For all K-2 students, these are written or hands-on demonstrations of mastery or progress toward mastery of a particular skill or standard. Created by teachers and aligned to college readiness standards taught in the classroom; given at the beginning and end of school year and additionally as needed.

- TRC (Text Reading and Comprehension)/DIBELS Next: Administered to all K-2 students, TRC is an early literacy formative assessment to identify students in need of academic intervention or enrichment while DIBELS provides more detailed diagnostic information about foundational literacy skills. Detailed data for teachers about student reading development; helps determine students' instructional reading level; used to plan targeted small-group reaching instruction.
- mClass Math: Administered to all K-2 students. Helps teachers diagnose areas of student strength and need, determine instructional groupings, and monitor student progress throughout the year.
- ACCESS and Screening for English Language Proficiency as needed based on student enrollment
- PARCC Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers: State tests required for all students to determine mastery of Common Core Standards (CCS) administered in the Spring.

### 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Assessments

- PARCC Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers: State tests required for all students to determine mastery of Common Core Standards (CCS) administered in the Spring.
- NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP): Administered to students in the Fall (for students without a prior score), Winter (as needed to gauge student progress) and Spring (required for all). Locates individual skill levels, demonstrates academic growth over time, guides classroom instruction.
- PERFORMANCE Tasks: For all 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, these are written or hands-on demonstrations of mastery or progress toward mastery of a particular skill or standard. Created by teachers and aligned to college readiness standards taught in every classroom; given at beginning and end of school year additionally as needed.
- ACCESS and Screening for English Language Proficiency as needed based on student enrollment
- Dynamic Learning Maps-Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA) for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

### Question #3: DATA-DRIVEN PROGRAMS AND INSTRUCTION

*Describe how instructional leaders and teachers will collect and analyze the results of diagnostic, formative, benchmark/interim, and summative assessments to inform instruction, curricula, professional development, and other school supports.*

*Describe the formalized supports that will enable teachers to reflect on student progress and adjust their instruction accordingly.*

Analyzing student achievement data to improve curriculum and instruction and to meet learning needs will be constant focus of the school. The school will follow recommendations from the U.S. Department of Education (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/> and [h](#)) as well as other sources for creating the conditions that enable schools to use data effectively:

- Establish organizational structures so teachers have time and methods to analyze data
- Develop a place to keep and organize data
- Train data coaches to provide professional development for the staff
- Write shared curriculums and assessments for analysis
- Build trust and transparency, so teachers know that the focus will be always be student achievement

U.S. Department of Education and Institute of Education Services. (2009). *Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making*. Retrieved from [http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice\\_guides/dddm\\_pg\\_092909.pdf](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/dddm_pg_092909.pdf)

Specifically, the faculty will be trained in the method and protocols of the Data-Wise method of examining data, which advocates the following steps:

1. Organize for collaborative work
2. Build assessment literacy
3. Create data overview
4. Dig into student data
5. Examine instruction
6. Develop action plan
7. Plan to assess progress
8. Act and assess

This eight-step process with its accompanying protocols and tools will help the faculty continuously study data and make improvements.

Harvard Graduate School of Education. (2015). Retrieved from <http://sites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=datawise>



## 2.3.b. CURRICULUM

### **Question #1-#2: CURRICULAR MATERIALS and PHILOSOPHY, SELECTION, AND SUPPORTS**

*Applicants are required to submit three types of curricular materials as part of their proposal.*

*Provide a brief description of the applicant’s curriculum philosophy, proposed curricula, and supporting materials for each subject. Outline the rationale for curriculum development or selection decisions. Explain how teachers will know what to teach and when to teach it throughout the school year. What resources and dedicated professional development will be provided to help teachers implement the curriculum?*

*Appendices:*

*Attach the requested curricular materials from groups A, B, and C*

In the upcoming development of curriculum maps, Key Charter School will employ the Understanding by Design (UbD) method created by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe to build its maps. The UbD approach helps teachers build maps that:

- Enable students to grasp the “big ideas” that underlie a discipline and transfer learning to new contexts
- Attach standards to specific activities
- Work backward from intended results of student learning
- Engages students with challenging essential questions.

This curriculum development process is thought provoking and stimulating without being rigid.

Appendices 2.3.ab include UbD maps for first and sixth grades that demonstrate the kind of maps our staff will build. These maps are exemplars from a careful selection of schools and state boards of education and include the information that our maps will also provide:

- Essential questions
- Academic goals
- Assessments
- Skills
- Content knowledge
- Major projects.

Key Charter pledges to hire teachers skilled and experienced in developing curriculum, and we will provide the resources, including consultants, to support them in finalizing curriculum maps. As talented professionals, our teachers will be eager to develop maps that enable their students to learn at the most demanding levels.

Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2011). *The Understanding by Design Guide to Creating High-Quality Units*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

### **Question #3: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

*Describe the curriculum development plan leading up to school opening that provides sufficient milestones and corresponding dates to ensure timely completion of all related activities.*

Once Key Charter School's charter is approved, we will immediately hire teachers to work with our Head of School to map our curriculum. In line with our guiding principles, we will hire highly skilled, experienced teachers, and because during our first year we will enroll a limited number of students in only two grades, creating the curriculum maps, selecting appropriate resources, and developing lessons and assessments will be completed by Summer. We will also secure any necessary professional assistance and secretarial help the teachers need to finish the curriculum well prior to the opening of school.

### **Question #4: RESEARCH BASE**

*Provide evidence that the proposed curricula are research-based and have been effective with students similar to those the school expects to serve. Also include a brief description of how these curricula will keep students on track for college and career readiness, highlighting any backwards-planning efforts, if relevant. If proposing to use or develop innovative curricula, present evidence and/or a rationale for why your design team believes the selected curricula will drive student success with the targeted student population.*

The UbD model, which Key Charter School will use to develop its curriculum, is founded on learning principles supported by cognitive psychology. McTighe cites several principles reflected in UbD:

- The focus of teaching should be student understanding and application rather than drill.
- High contextual transfer rates happen with students understanding material in depth.
- Experts seek to develop understanding of problems and their thinking revolves around big ideas; novices approach problems looking for a quick correct answer.
- Students retain information that is extensively covered with meaningful connection.
- Feedback is fundamental to learning and formative assessments provide feedback.
- Assessments should provide students with opportunities to apply their knowledge rather than just recite it.
- Expert teachers should know the structure of their discipline and use their knowledge as “cognitive roadmaps” to guide assignments, assessment and questions.

Several research studies have shown that curriculum that embodies these principles, such as those following the UbD model, result in high levels of student achievement. For example, the High Schools That Work program found that curriculums producing higher achievement all demand that students think analytically, use their knowledge to complete real-world projects, and do assessments that align to clear standards. Numerous schools and districts currently build their curriculum based on UbD tenets.

The curriculum created by our staff will reflect the principles of UbD:

- Asking students to confront “big ideas” and essential questions
- Aligning work to standards,
- Having students complete authentic assessments
- Helping them transfer their learning to new contexts

Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2011). *The Understanding by Design Guide to Creating High-Quality Units*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

We believe that such a curriculum will engage students and prepare them for the most demanding college work.

### **Question #5: CURRICULUM REFINEMENT**

*Once the school is in operation, what process will the school use to further develop the school’s curriculum? Describe the procedures that school leaders and teachers will use to evaluate, review, and revise the curricula to ensure its continued effectiveness in driving academic achievement and growth for all students, its alignment to state standards, and alignment across grade levels.*

Curriculum must be continually examined and refined. Just as we are confident that skilled teachers using the UbD method will produce exemplary curriculum, we know that the same skills and commitment that empowered these professionals in the design of their initial maps will also drive them to make improvements. New standards, state mandates, and required assessments will also provoke curricular improvement.

Time will be built into teachers' daily and weekly schedules to look critically at the curriculum and make changes. We will devote significant funds to summer curriculum work, so teachers have time to reflect on and revise the curriculum. The Data-Wise model, as mentioned earlier, will provide tools for teachers to identify what is and is not working with students.

### **2.3.c. INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES**

#### **Question #1: APPROACH**

*Describe the instructional strategies that will be implemented at the proposed school. Explain how the proposed instructional strategies support the mission, vision, and educational philosophy of the school. Highlight evidence that the instructional strategies are research-based and have been effective with students similar to those the school expects to serve.*

We expect our teachers to be familiar with and use research-based instructional strategies. Based on his analysis of numerous research studies, Marzano recommended nine effective instructional strategies:

- Identifying similarities and differences
- Summarizing and note-taking
- Reinforcing effort and providing recognition
- Homework and practice
- Nonlinguistic representation
- Cooperative learning
- Setting objectives and providing feedback
- Questions, cues, and advance organizers

Marzano, R. & Pickering, D. (2001). *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

In *Visible Learning*, John Hattie describes his findings from a recent meta-analysis of more than 800 research studies on effective instruction, and we want our teachers to know and practice his suggestions. For instance, he outlines the mind frames of effective educators, recommending that teacher have dialogues rather

than monologues and that they create environments in which students can learn from failure. Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion* books offer many instructional strategies designed for urban schools.

Hattie, J. (2008). *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Because we will spend so much time and energy selecting teachers in whom we have confidence, we will have great confidence in our teachers, and will trust them to use these practices judiciously, always selecting the ones that work best for them, their students, and their subject matter. Above all, we believe, as Charlotte Danielson does, that student engagement is fundamental to learning and we want our teachers always to employ strategies to engage students.

## **Question #2: DIFFERENTIATION**

*Discuss how teachers will identify students in need of remediation and accelerated learning opportunities. What different methods of instruction and supports will teachers use to meet the needs of all students, including students who require remediation and accelerated students?*

Key Charter School understands that many of our students will arrive at the school with educational deficits, and we are committed to providing the resources that will enable them to overcome these deficits and excel. We will have assessments available that will help the staff identify specific areas of need and respond to these. We will provide a variety of ways that students can receive assistance with their learning: tutoring in school and out of school, an extended school year, and information through the school's website. We will do what is necessary to enable our students to succeed.

We will also be responsive to the needs of accelerated learners, particularly through the way we design our curriculum. Curriculum will identify ways to expand learning, and create engaging, authentic projects that will help accelerated learners fully utilize their talents. We will look for opportunities for all of our students to connect to the many learning opportunities offered by the Chicago area, including museums, colleges and universities, high-level professionals, and special programs for students.

To respond effectively to the needs and interests of all of our students, we will make sure our faculty is acquainted with the differentiation ideas of Carol Tomlinson and other experts in this field. Tomlinson outlines general principles that guide differentiation:

- Respectful tasks
- Quality curriculum
- Teaching up
- Flexible grouping
- Continual assessment
- Building community

She describes how teachers can differentiate through content, process, product, affect, and learning environment, always being responsive to students' readiness, interest, and learning profile. Her work and that of others describe a variety of instructional techniques that complement differentiation.

Tomlinson, C. (2015). *Carol Tomlinson*. Retrieved from <http://www.caroltomlinson.com>

### **Question #3: SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTION**

*Articulate how the educational program of the proposed school will meet the needs of all enrolled students, including students with disabilities and students who are English Language Learners (ELL).*

*Appendices: Attach a completed ISBE Special Education Certification form.*

Key Charter School welcomes all students. We believe strongly that all students are capable of performing at the highest academic level. We will employ a staff that is well acquainted with the needs of students with disabilities and ELL students, and is able to respond to the needs of these students. Although in our first year of operation we will serve a limited number of students in just two grades (kindergarten and sixth), we will have a person on staff certified in special education, who can assist parents, students, and teachers, and a person knowledgeable about the needs of ELL students.

We are committed to following all federal, state, and district laws and requirements for students with special needs, rigorously following a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Such students will receive appropriate accommodations and will be able to participate in the extracurricular activities. Our special education staff member will monitor our compliance with special education rules. We are particularly passionate about serving these students in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), in other words, in the general education classroom. During professional development time, our staff will receive training in assisting students with special needs. Key Charter School is aware that as a charter school its student population should reflect the overall proportion of students with disabilities in the district, and will comply during the application and selection process.

Since our school's composition of students will mirror that of the district, we know that we will serve students who need assistance with English. As mentioned earlier, our staff will include someone with background and training in ELL, who will make sure that these students can actively participate in learning and that are not misclassified as special education students.

In accordance with CPS RFP instructions, ISBE Special Education Certification form (not included in the Appendices) will be provided after acceptance of this proposal.

### **2.3.d. SCHOOL CALENDAR/SCHEDULE**

#### **Question #1: Overview**

*Describe how any innovations in the annual school calendar and daily schedule will enhance student achievement. If proposing a longer school day/year, please describe how your design team has budgeted for overtime pay for faculty and staff, as appropriate.*

On the next pages are the preliminary school calendar and daily schedule. Once the RFP is approved, the school staff will finalize the details. The school calendar includes an extended school year for students and extensive professional development time for staff. To prepare the school for a successful opening, the staff will be receiving training and developing curriculum at the very least during the month of July and prior to the opening of school in August. August will also include orientation days for both parents and students before classroom instruction begins. A number of professional development days are placed throughout the school year for teachers to critically analyze student achievement and curriculum and instruction. Our budgetary documents indicate that Key Charter School is a well-resourced school that can compensate teachers for their additional work.

Holidays on the final calendar will coincide with the CPS calendar.

#### **Question #2: Daily Schedule**

*Teacher's Daily Schedule: Describe how a typical teacher's day will be structured Monday through Friday, explicitly citing the amount of time devoted to core teaching assignments, planning, PD, and other activities as applicable (such as before or after school electives, remediation, lunch duty, advisory group, etc.).*

*Student's Daily Schedule: Describe how a typical student's day will be structured Monday through Friday. In addition to daily classes, please reference any time spent in elective courses, advisories, receiving social-emotional supports, after-school activities, etc.*

### *Appendices*

- *Attach the proposed school calendar and daily schedule using the school calendar template*
- *Attach sample teacher and student schedules for a typical week*

In the Appendix 2.3.d. is a preliminary daily schedule for kindergarten through second grade classes. Students could arrive as early as 7:30 for breakfast. The day opens and closes with sharing ceremonies, either in the classroom or for the school as a whole. Extended periods in the morning and afternoon are for learning in core areas like reading and math. The afternoon allots time for student interest groups, which could be time for music, art, drama, or other activities. Two times are available for active play, which is important for children. The school will partner with a community organization for after-school programming or develop its own.

Also in the Appendix 2.3.d. is a preliminary daily schedule for sixth grade during the first year of operation. Again, breakfast is available before school and after-school programming will be created. Periods are devoted to: English, math, social studies, science, physical education, language, and fine arts. Core subjects will meet daily; other subjects, several times a week. Teachers will be encouraged to collaborate to allow extended time for students to work on special projects and will be available after school hours for additional help.

On Fridays, students will be dismissed earlier so teachers can attend professional development or work collaboratively. For kindergarten through second graders, each school day, with the exception of Friday, will have 355 instructional minutes. For sixth graders, each school day with the exception of Friday will have 300 minutes, although the lunchtime slot will also include academic work.

Teachers will devote 200 minutes a day to their core teaching assignment. The rest of their day will be devoted to a variety of activities: tutoring, planning, curriculum development, data analysis, coaching and mentoring, and leadership responsibilities. The school is dedicated to hiring extremely talented teachers, keeping a lean administrative layer, and offering teachers a variety of roles outside of classroom instruction. The way we adapt our calendar and schedule will reflect these goals.



## 2.4. TALENT MANAGEMENT

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### 2.4.a. RECRUITMENT AND STAFFING

#### Question #1: STAFFING PLAN

*Discuss the rationale for the proposed staffing numbers and structure outlined in the attached five-year school staffing model and organizational chart. Cite teacher-student ratios for each type of teaching position. Attach job descriptions that outline roles and non-instructional positions listed in the attached school-level organizational chart.*

*Attach a school staffing model that lists all instructional and non-instructional staff positions over the school's first five years of operation. Attach a school-level organizational chart for the school's first five years of operation that presents the lines of authority and reporting within the school and clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities of staff members. Attach comprehensive job descriptions for all instructional and non-instructional positions listed in the staffing plan. Attach resumes for any identified candidates not serving on the design team. All resumes should be clearly labeled with the positions that these candidates are seeking to fill.*

Because Key Charter School will open with only two grades (kindergarten and sixth), we will begin by hiring four teachers, focusing particularly on the areas of math and reading/language arts. We have budgeted for a part-time social worker, but will have access (at no charge) to an additional social worker who presently works for the Founding Member's company. One of our teachers will have special education certification, who, at least during the school's first few years of operation, will also teach reading or math. We expect to start with about 25 students per grade level, keeping the teacher-student ratio small. As we add grade levels, we will increase the teaching staff, adding positions in science, social studies, physical education, and fine arts. We will create opportunities to include people who do not have a teaching background but are experienced in their field -- for example, a lawyer who wants to teach a social studies class. Some of these people may teach part time, and we may be able to save money by recruiting volunteers (including possibly retired people with much left to offer, for example).

One of our key goals is to have a small administration. For at least the first few years of operation, the Head of School will be the only administrator, in charge of variety of areas. (See job description.) We want to create opportunities for our talented teaching staff to assume traditional administrative responsibilities; for example, a staff member may be eager to direct professional development, lead an instructional team, or guide the technology of the school. As the school's enrollment

increases, we are receptive to including administrators to direct curriculum and instruction, student discipline, or student services. These people will also teach. This multi-assignment employees model is one our Founding Members have used successfully in their own businesses, and we hope to adopt it at Key Charter.

To conserve resources, Key Charter can expect to have access to the assistance of support staff who are employed by the Founding Members' firm (at no charge) to assist with various tasks: updating the school database, preparing required reports, creating informational material, preparing for school events, and other tasks.

Our present thinking is to have both a senior and junior teacher in each class, so that younger teachers can become familiar with all facets of the school while learning from and being mentored by teachers who have mastered the craft. The more senior teachers would be paid on a different (and higher) scale,<sup>1</sup> and would have more decision-making authority over the direction of the school. The younger teachers would aspire to be promoted to that level, something they would have to earn through impressing other teachers with exemplary performance. We believe that this model, used in some of the Founding Members' businesses, would represent an effective innovation that would translate well to a school.

## **Question #2: HIRING PROCESS**

*Describe your design team's strategy, process, and timeline for recruiting and hiring the teaching staff. Include the selection criteria, planned mix of experienced and new teachers, and any unique considerations needed to support the school design. Ensure that the teacher hiring timeline aligns with the curriculum development and professional development timelines.*

Shortly after the school's charter is approved in the Fall of 2015, we will select people for key positions. These staff members will focus on preparing for crucial aspects of the school: purchasing materials, preparing the school building, continue our planning for recruitment of students, and hiring additional staff. Key Charter School will start by finding experienced teachers who are familiar with needs of our students and highly skilled at curriculum and instruction. The teaching staff, which will be selected in early 2016, will start the curriculum planning process. During the summer of 2016, the staff will work intensively to develop the curriculum, resources, and assessments so the school is well prepared to open in August 2016. As the school grows, we will also seek teachers who are new to the profession and people from outside of teaching who would like to teach either full- or part-time.

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<sup>1</sup> For budgeting purposes, we used \$80,000/year average, though the reality will be closer to \$100,000 and \$60,000 for the two tiers, respectively.

### **Question #3: COMPENSATION**

*Discuss the proposed salary ranges and benefits (including pensions) listed in the attached budget and explain any financial incentives or rewards that may be included in the compensation system. Explain how the salary and benefit plans will enable the school to compete with other schools to attract and retain high-quality staff.*

A key value of Key Charter School is selecting excellent teachers, compensating them generously, and creating a stimulating professional atmosphere in which they work. As the budgetary information in this proposal indicates, we are able and willing to attract and retain such a high-quality staff. Our pay will be at or above the salary schedules of the prestigious schools in the Chicago area. This means six-figure salaries (plus benefits) for senior teachers. We cannot attract the best teachers without paying them along the lines of the highly-talented professionals that they are.

### **Question #4: PROFESSIONAL CULTURE**

*Describe the professional culture of the new school, including how the school will establish and maintain this culture and how it will contribute to staff retention. Discuss how faculty and staff will be involved in school-level decisions and in developing new initiatives.*

One of Key Charter School's core values is selecting exemplary teachers. One of the keys to recruiting and retaining people of this caliber is the creation and maintenance of a strong professional culture. Rather than having the administration proscribe the curriculum they must teach, our faculty will have the autonomy to, and be responsible for, designing its own curriculum. They will create meaningful assessments and carefully monitor student achievement. We will provide them the resources, consultants and professional development, to accomplish these tasks. Extensive professional development time will be held during the Summer, and there will be weekly early releases for teachers to work together. In addition, existing teachers will be expected to become mentors and coaches for new teachers, and teachers will participate actively in the operation of the school through a variety of committees, such as focusing on culture, professional development, and student behavior.

We are committed to building and sustaining a collaborative but challenging culture that always seeks the best ways to help students achieve at the highest levels.

## 2.4.b. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Question #1: TEACHER INDUCTION

*Describe the induction program for new and existing teachers. Cite the number of hours/days of PD to be included in the induction program.*

Initially, the Head of School and members of the Board (particularly the President) will be responsible for hiring the teachers for the school. The selection of teachers for the first year will be crucial to establishing the school's culture of high achievement. As well as traditional interviews, the hiring process will where practical include observations of the teacher's instruction, examination of his or her curriculum, and indications of the teacher's ability to analyze data. These teachers hired for the first year will, in effect, be in charge of creating the school's induction program. They will have an opportunity and will be encouraged to visit similar schools that have a demonstrated a record of success and to gain advice from the staff of these schools. Our Board members have numerous connections at high-performing schools – including some in neighborhoods analogous to ours – that we intend to learn from, and we intend to leverage those connections to provide observation opportunities. We are also willing to secure consultants from organizations that advise charter schools to help our new staff set up a school that reflects our goals.

In later years, the hiring process remains crucial to identifying the best teachers for our school. In addition to descriptions of the hiring process above, we expect to include parents and potentially even students in the process. Also, as the Founding Members presently do at some of their own businesses, hiring of future teachers will be a process in which all of the existing employees have a role and a stake. In our experience, distributing that kind of “ownership” of the hiring process is beneficial on a number of levels. Not only does it facilitate selection of the optimal candidates, but it minimizes friction that might otherwise develop where the teachers had a direct voice in choosing their own partners in the organization.

New teachers will receive mentors and coaches to help them be successful. As our preliminary school calendar shows, we will offer a number of professional development days both during the school year and the summer; several of these, particularly prior to the opening of school, will be devoted to the orientation of new staff.

## **Question #2: APPROACH**

*Describe the school's goals and strategy for ongoing professional development (PD), including whole staff development, grade-level/department/course teams, and instructional coaching. Identify which staff members will be responsible for overseeing PD opportunities. Describe how the PD plan (including both internal and external PD opportunities) will be driven by data to improve teaching, student learning, and school performance.*

*Appendices: Attach a professional development calendar.*

Our proposal has mentioned a number of educational programs that we expect our staff to have knowledge of: UbD curriculum design, the Data-Wise analysis of data, social-emotional learning, special education and ELL needs, the unique challenges of teaching students from struggling backgrounds, and the principles of differentiation, RTI, and PBIS. We will try to select teachers who are acquainted with this background, and then provide them the time to share, define, and apply their knowledge to the creation of a new school of high expectations. We will give the staff significant time to do this collaborative work. When they need outside resources, such as outside experts or more professional development, we will make sure that they have access to them.

Once the school is up and running, the Head of School will establish a professional development committee to determine what is best for the school. In addition to professional development inside the school, we will encourage our faculty to attend and present at professional conferences and receive additional education. We will want our veteran teachers to be coaches and mentors for new teachers. Talented, enthusiastic, high performing teachers are essential to our school, and we are dedicated to presenting with professional development that will allow them and their students to excel.

Our preliminary professional development (PD) calendar in Appendix 2.4.b. indicates the PD days during the summer and school year. The exact topics will be determined by the staff.

## **Question #3: TEACHER EVALUATION**

*Describe the processes for evaluating school leader, faculty, and staff performance. Describe the protocols, framework/criteria, and/or tools that will be used for conducting evaluations, delivering feedback, and coaching school leaders, faculty, and staff members. Specify who is responsible for overseeing and conducting these procedures. Please explain how the school intends to handle unsatisfactory school leadership, teacher or staff member performance.*

*Appendices: Attach any documents related to teacher evaluation, including evaluation frameworks/criteria, evaluation policies, and sample evaluation forms.*

During the school's opening years of operation, it will use CPS' REACH evaluation plan. (As a result, separate documents are not applicable as Appendices.) The plan will be familiar to some of the school's teachers, it follows ISBE and state requirements, and it is based on the research of Charlotte Danielson, a recognized expert on teacher evaluation. REACH specifies clear procedures for conducting evaluations, delivering feedback, and handling unsatisfactory performance. The Head of School will be responsible for evaluating staff and will hold required Illinois certification and have passed the Illinois training necessary for evaluating teachers.

In future years, once the school has developed its culture, it may want to modify the evaluation plan, making sure that it follows state rules.

Key Charter's Board of Trustees is responsible for evaluating the school's Head of School. An appendix includes a preliminary evaluation plan.

#### **Question #4: EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS**

*Describe the process for evaluating the efficacy of the PD policies, procedures, and offerings.*

Key Charter School will establish a professional development committee not only to identify the staff's professional development needs, but also to determine the effectiveness of the existing professional development. The committee will survey the staff to determine its response to the offerings. Based on the information, the committee will make necessary adjustments.

### **DOMAIN 3: OPERATIONAL CAPACITY**

### 3.1 GENERAL OPERATIONS

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#### 3.1.a. OPERATIONAL PLAN

##### Question #1: OPERATIONAL PLAN, GOALS AND METRICS

*Explain how non-academic services will be managed once the proposed school is in operation. In a table, identify quantitative operational metrics and goals for the proposed school for each of its first five years of operation. Discuss how these metrics will be used to monitor progress and guide corrective actions.*

The Head of School, with the help of the staff, will be in charge of setting up and overseeing the non-academic goal. Below is a table that shows the goals.

Goal	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Strong Average Daily Attendance (ADA)	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Strong Annual Retention	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
High Percent of Families Pleased with Academic Program as Measured by Survey	85% Satisfied	85% Satisfied	85% Satisfied	85% Satisfied	85% Satisfied
High Percent of Families Pleased with Social-	85% Satisfied	85% Satisfied	85% Satisfied	85% Satisfied	85% Satisfied

Emotional Supports as Measured by Survey					
Budget Funds Expenditures	100% of Funds Meet Projections	100% of Funds Meet Projections	100% of Funds Meet Projections	100% of Funds Meet Projections	100% of Funds Meet Projections
Meet Projections					

**Question #2: START-UP PLAN**

*Provide a timeline and schedule for the activities your team will undertake in the planning year(s) to ensure a successful school opening. The plan should address the wide range of activities required to successfully open a new school, clearly cite which staff member(s) are responsible for overseeing completion of the task(s), and identify start dates and deadlines for the completion of each task.*

<b>Timeline for Planning Year Activities</b>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>
Hire Design Team	Board, Head of School	May 2015	May 2015
Hire Faculty	Head of School, Design Team	Fall 2015	Spring 2016
Set up Required Technology	Head of School, Design Team	Fall 2015	January 2016
Design Curriculum and Assessments	Design Team, Faculty	Fall 2015	Summer 2016
Select and Purchase Instructional	Head of School, Design Team, Faculty	Fall 2015	Summer 2016



Resources			
Prepare Building	Head of School	Fall 2015	Summer 2016
Design Social-Emotional Programming	Head of School, Social Worker	Fall 2015	Summer 2016
Design Programs for At-risk and Special Needs Students	Special Educator	Fall 2015	Summer 2016

Immediately upon conditional approval of Key’s charter, it will select a Design Team to direct the process of setting up the school. This team will initially focus on securing a few key teachers, social worker, and special educator to direct key parts of the program.

**Question #3: STUDENT ENROLLMENT**

*Provide an enrollment chart for the first five years of the proposed charter school contract citing the enrollment capacity for each grade. Discuss attrition assumptions, grade configurations, etc.*

Number of Students					
Grades	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
K	25	25	25	25	25
1		25	25	25	25
2			25	25	25
3				25	25
4					25
5					0
6	25	25	25	25	25
7		25	25	25	25

8			25	25	25
Total Students	50	100	150	175	200

As stated earlier, Key Charter will open with students in kindergarten and sixth grade. Over the next five years, it will add students in the grades shown, eventually offering all K-8 grades. We aim to have at least 90 percent of our students re-enrolling.

**Question #4: STUDENT RECRUITMENT**

*Discuss strategies to recruit the targeted student population. How will the school attract and retain all students, including those with disabilities, students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), English Language Learners (ELL), and students in temporary living situations?*

Immediately upon approval of the school’s charter, the team will start actively recruiting students. It will advertise the school using a variety of media emphasizing the special mission of the school, and our goal of delivering a world-class education of the caliber available at the best schools in the City. We will hold informational meetings in a variety of locations. We will contact community organizations and political groups encouraging them to make the school known to their constituents and to help us identify families who might be interested in what the school has to offer. The small enrollment of the school and its focus on a supportive environment promoting high academic achievement will make it a viable option for families with children of special needs, at-risk learners, and ELL—and we are committed to serving these children.

**3.1.b. OPERATIONAL COMPLIANCE**

**Question #1: APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT POLICIES**

*Please describe the proposed school’s application, enrollment, and registration policies and procedures for all students. Outline the requirements for parents and students to apply to the proposed school, explain how the proposed school will conduct its lottery if over-subscribed, and specify how students will register once enrolled. Explain how the proposed school will ensure that the application, enrollment, and registration policies are in compliance with the Illinois Charter School Law and Illinois School Code.*

*Appendices: Attach copies of application, registration, and enrollment forms.*

Key Charter is open to any student who can attend a CPS school. Application, enrollment, and registration policies and procedures will carefully follow the Illinois Charter Schools Law (ILCS). If more students apply to the school than it can accept, Key Charter will adhere to procedures in the law, including the rules regarding applicants who can receive preference. If intake meetings occur after the lottery, Key Charter understands that they will not be tied to acceptance. Application, registration, and enrollment forms will only ask for information specified in the law. Appendix 3.1.b. includes exemplars for application, registration, and enrollment forms that will serve as models for the forms Key Charter will develop.

### **Question #2: TRANSPORTATION**

*Briefly describe how the school will meet the transportation needs of all of its students, including low-income and at-risk students, students with disabilities, and students who are homeless.*

Key Charter will meet the transportation needs of all of its students as required by ILCS. The Head of School will ensure that these needs are met. The school will explore acceptable ways to meet these needs: bus service, subsidized public transportation, coordinated parent or volunteer carpools, and/or participation in the state's Parental Transportation Reimbursement program. We expect that some of our students may have special transportation challenges, in particular students with disabilities and homeless children. Our budget will include funds to supply necessary transportation for these students.

### **Question #3: ADA COMPLIANCE**

*The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability and requires accessibility in all aspects of school operations, including employment, buildings, programs and activities, communications, and information technology. Briefly describe the processes the school will implement to ensure ADA compliance.*

The Head of School will ensure that the school is ADA compliant. An architect will inspect for compliance, and the school will provide all of the financial resources to establish compliance.

## 3.2: OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### Section 3.2.a. GOVERNANCE:

#### Question #1: STRUCTURE

*Describe the structure of the governing Board at the proposed school. (If an existing Chicago replicator, describe if/how the structure of the Board will adapt to support the additional grade configurations and/or the new school/campus.) Identify any proposed Board officer positions, committees, or advisory councils—including those with parent members—and explain their role, planned membership, and reporting structure as they relate to the governing Board and school leadership.*

*Appendices: Attach board bylaws*

### 3.2.a GOVERNANCE

#### Question #1 Structure (and governance plan)

The school will be governed by a Board of Trustees, to which the Head of School will report. Board officer positions will include the Board President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and, eventually, the immediate Past President. We contemplate that the Board of Trustees will play an active oversight role for the school, as well as provide assistance and guidance to the Head of School.

The Board's bylaws are attached to this proposal as Appendix 3.2a. The bylaws outline the Board's ongoing responsibilities to ensure a meaningful impact on school decision-making. They are consistent with the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/27A-5) and with the forthcoming Charter School Agreement.

The Board's governance plan specifies the following roles and responsibilities for each Board officer position and committee.

#### **Governance Plan: Board Officer Roles and Responsibilities**

The **BOARD PRESIDENT** serves as the chief volunteer of the organization and acts as a collaborative partnership with the Head of School in achieving the organization's mission. The President provides leadership to the Board of Trustees, which sets policy and to whom the Head of School is accountable. Working with the Head of School, the Board President develops the agenda for the Board meetings, and then chairs those meetings.

The Board President is responsible for ensuring that the Board of Trustees and its members are aware of and fulfill their governance responsibilities, comply with applicable laws and bylaws, conduct board business effectively and efficiently, and are accountable for their performance. The President ensures that structures and procedures are in place for effective recruitment, training, and evaluation of board members.

The Board President will establish committees of the Board, and assign tasks and delegate responsibilities to board committees and/or various board members. He or she will appoint the chairpersons and members of the various committees described below, in consultation with other Board members. The president serves *ex officio* as a member of these committees and attends their meetings (as a voting member) whenever he or she deems it appropriate.

The Board President serves as the Board's liaison to the Head of School, reviews with the Head of School any issues of concern to the Board. The President is expected to actively engage in an ongoing discussion with the Head of School on behalf of the Board regarding the issues confronting the organization, and guiding and mediating Board actions with respect to organizational priorities and governance concerns.

The Board President also monitors financial planning and financial reports, and takes on a leading role in fundraising activities. The President ensures that structures and procedures are in place for securing the resources required by the organization.

The Board President formally evaluates the performance of the Head of School, and informally evaluates the effectiveness of the Board members and the performance of the organization in achieving its mission.

The Board President is designated by the Board and the bylaws as one of the signing officers for certain documents. In this capacity, the President may be authorized or required to sign or countersign checks, correspondence, applications, reports, contracts or other documents on behalf of organization.

The President is accountable to the Board of Trustees or Members as specified in the bylaws. The President may delegate specific duties as appropriate, but accountability remains with the President.

The **BOARD VICE PRESIDENT** is a member of the Board, and will preferably be the Board President's anticipated successor. The Board's Vice President serves as the President in the latter's absence, and performs his responsibilities and functions under those circumstances. The Vice President reports to, and works closely with, the Board, performing any additional responsibilities as may be assigned. A primary responsibility of the Vice President will be to assist the Board President in carrying out the various Board President responsibilities and functions described *supra*.

The **TREASURER/CFO** will have primary responsibility of overseeing the management and reporting of an organization's finances. Specific duties will include:

- Bank account maintenance – Selecting a bank, signing checks, and investing excess funds responsibly and prudently
- Financial transaction oversight – Being knowledgeable about who has access to the organization's funds, and any outstanding bills or debts owed, as well as developing systems for keeping cash flow manageable
- Budgets – Developing the annual budget as well as comparing the actual revenues and expenses incurred against the budget
- Books and records – ensuring that regular books of account and maintained
- Financial policies – Overseeing the development and observation of the organization's financial policies
- Reports – Keeping the Board regularly informed on a timely basis of key financial events, trends, concerns, and assessment of fiscal health in addition to completing required financial reporting forms in a timely fashion and making these forms available to the Board
- Finance Committee – Serving as Chair of the Finance Committee, and manages, with the Finance Committee, the Board's review of, and action related to, the Board's financial responsibilities
- Financial strategies – Works with the Board President, the Finance Committee and the Head of School to develop long-term financial strategies
- Open communication with the Board – expected to maintain an open and constant line of communication with the Board President and Board of Trustees regarding financial policies/procedures and budget oversight.

The **BOARD SECRETARY** will be responsible for maintaining the records of the Board and ensuring effective management of organization's records. The Secretary is responsible for ensuring that accurate and sufficient documentation exists to meet legal requirements, and to create a record of when, how, and by whom the board's business was conducted. He or she is responsible for ensuring that accurate minutes of meetings are taken and approved, including at a minimum the date, time, location of meeting, a list of those present and absent, a list of items discussed, and a list of reports presented. The Secretary will sign a copy of the final, approved minutes and ensures that this copy is maintained in the corporate records.

The Secretary will ensure that the Board minutes are distributed to members shortly after each meeting on a timely basis. The Secretary will also be charged with being sufficiently familiar with operative legal documents (by-laws, etc.) to

note their applicability during meetings. The Secretary will also ensure that the records of the organization are maintained as required by law, and made available when required by authorized persons.

The **IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT** is expected to remain as a member of the Board to Trustees for at least a full year after the expiration of his or her term. In that capacity, the Past President shall play an advisory role, assisting the successor President with transitioning into the duties and responsibilities of that position.

### **Governance Plan: Board Officer Roles and Responsibilities**

Board members and non-Board members, including parents and members of the advisory committees discussed below, are all eligible to be designated by the Board President to serve on these various committees. The committees we intend to form to support the school are as follows.

The Board will form a **GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**, charged with helping the Board carry out its due diligence function related to healthy development and operation of the Board, its committees and task forces, and performance of the individual Board members. The Governance Committee answers to the Board President.

The Governance Committee is responsible for performing the following functions: (a) governance, including reviewing and amend by-laws for how the Board operates; (b) nominating new Board member Trustees (the Nominating Committee); (c) orienting new Board member Trustees; and (d) goal-setting, *i.e.*, charting the course for both delivering the school's objectives, as well as for future improvement and growth. Other responsibilities include: reviewing and revising committee job descriptions and recommendations to the Board for action; monitor the Board's due diligence function as it relates to governance; recommend any structure changes to assure that the Board fulfills its legal and moral obligations; reviews and recommend optimum composition for the Board, including diversity, skills, and behaviors; design and execute an intentional process to recruit and retain the best Board members to help achieve the institution's mission.

There will also be an **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**, consisting of the Board President and the Chairs of the various committees, and authorized to act on certain delineated matters requiring attention between regularly scheduled Board meetings. The Executive Committee is responsible for working in support of, or where appropriate and necessary, in place of, the full Board. The areas in which the Executive Committee might be asked to operate include policy work (carrying out specific directions of the Board and taking action on policies when the full Board directs the Committee to do so); acting as a liaison to the Head of School (providing counsel, feedback and support as needed, facilitating his or her annual assessment, and reviewing compensation and benefits); conducting the search for Heads of School should vacancies arise, as well as researching appropriate compensation and benefits; and handling urgent issues in times of organizational emergencies, when

full Board participation is impractical. Under our governance plan, the Executive Committee should be expected to limit itself to making decisions on rare occasions, and will be expected to remain mindful that it reports to and stays accountable to the full Board, rather than being a replacement for it.

The **BUSINESS FINANCE COMMITTEE** will consist, at least in part, of professionals in the field of finance, and is charged with oversight over the financial health and stability of the school. Under our governance plan, the Business Finance Committee is responsible for: developing an annual operating budget with staff; approving the budget; monitoring adherence to the budget; setting long-range financial goals along with funding strategies to achieve them; and presenting all financial goals and proposals to the full Board for approval. In addition to developing an annual budget, the Committee will set long-term financial goals, including, for example, the creation of a cash reserve.

The Business Finance Committee will also be required to provide regular reports for the Board members communicating clearly the school's financial and cash position and how well it is meeting the goal of adhering to the budgets. These reports are important to the proper functioning of the Board; accurate and high quality reports will be expected sufficiently in advance of Board meetings so that members have sufficient time to review them.

Our Business Finance Committee will also create, approve, and update (as necessary) policies that help ensure the school's assets are protected, as well as ensure that approved financial policies and procedures are being followed. Although the entire Board carries fiduciary responsibility for the organization, the Business Finance Committee serves a leadership role in this area, making sure appropriate internal control procedures for all financial transactions are documented and followed. The Committee should also play a role in determining and updating bank account signatories as well as overseeing all legal and governmental filing deadlines are met.

Our Business Finance Committee committees will also be charged with ensuring compliance and/or developing other policies to protect the school and manage its exposure to risk, including personnel policies; contracts or leases; loans or lines of credit; computer security; capital purchases; insurance requirements and reviews; record retention; and gift acceptance.

Additionally, there will be a **DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**, responsible for the general affairs of the Board. This includes meeting with prospective board members and recommend candidates to the Board; recommending a slate of officers to the Board; designing and conducting orientation sessions for new Board members; organizing training sessions for Board; suggesting new (non-Board) individuals for committee membership; designing and implementing an ongoing program of Board information, education, and team building.



Other responsibilities of the Development Committee include leading the Board in regularly reviewing and updating the Board’s description of its roles and areas of responsibility and what is expected of individual Board members; assisting the Board in periodically updating and clarifying the primary areas of focus for the Board, and helping shape the Board’s agenda for upcoming years; and initiating periodic assessment of the Board’s performance; and proposing, as appropriate, changes in board structure and operations.

Finally, the **AUDIT COMMITTEE** will help select the statutorily required auditor, and will serve as the auditor’s interface and liaison to the organization in terms of assisting in gathering information and documentation. As a result of its oversight role, the audit committee (for which members will participate for a maximum of five years) will coordinate, monitor, and work closely with the school’s staff to prepare the nonprofit for the independent audit. The Audit Committee will also participate in the decision to hire the auditor and should be responsible for evaluating the audit process and recommending whether or not to reengage the audit firm for subsequent audits. The Audit Committee is the body that presents the auditors' findings to the Board, making sure that the full Board understands any recommendations made by the auditors before formally accepting the audit report. Finally, the audit committee will recommend changes in practices or reporting in order to maintain or bring our school into a “best practices” position.

### **ADVISORY COUNCILS**

The school will also form a number of Advisory Councils, made up of professionals with experience and expertise in education, business, real estate, technology, finance and community relations. Specifically, there will be (a) an Education Advisory Council, composed of teachers and administrators; (b) a Community and Business Advisory Council, whose members will include community and business leaders, and (c) an Active Parent Council, composed of parent volunteers.

#### **Education Advisory Council**

Our proposed charter school is very fortunate to enjoy the support and assistance of a number of education professionals who believe deeply in our mission to provide a world-class education to children who might not otherwise have that opportunity. These education professionals have been and will continue to be generous with donating their time and education expertise, at no charge to our organization. Drawing on decades of collective experience and teaching excellence, the members of our Education Advisory Council (whose backgrounds and qualifications are described more fully in Section 3.2b., *infra*) will provide valuable consulting assistance to our teachers and Head of School.

## **Community and Business Advisory Council**

The seven members of our Advisory Board are profiled, *infra*, in Section 3.2.b, and they have much to offer to our school in terms of expertise and talent in the fields of law, real estate development, consulting, fundraising, technology, finance, and banking. These individuals, all of whom have already committed to serve on the Advisory Council have all agreed to be available as needed for consultation with the Board, its Committees, its President, and the Head of School. As a result, the leaders of our school will have the ready ability to tap (for free) into skilled professionals on a wide assortment of issues. This will help us drive the mission forward, overcome obstacles, and keep expenses to a minimum.

We anticipate holding meetings of the Advisory Council in order to build and maintain support for the school's mission, but not nearly as frequently as the formal Board meetings. Members of the Advisory Council also serve as our "bench" for possible future recruits to join the Board.

## **Active Parent Council**

The vision of our charter school contemplates an active role for those parents interested in contributing to our school community. Under the bylaws, parents are eligible to join any of the previously described school committees, and our goal will be to cultivate future parental members for the Board of Trustees.

Our school also envisions an active network of parent volunteers. Because funding is not unlimited, our hope is that parent volunteers will be able to help fill some of the functions necessary for successful operation of the school, including duties that the teachers and staff may not have a lot of extra time to perform. These might include "room parents" to assist in classroom management and coordinate class-related communications with other parents; booster clubs, to develop and encourage parent involvement and morale; and special event planning, such as school picnics or outings, and possibly fundraiser opportunities. All of the forgoing will provide opportunities to maximize parental and community involvement in the mission and operation of the school.

The Active Parent Council will also be the representative body responsible for encouraging and facilitating parental and community involvement in the governance of the charter school. Communication between the school leadership and the parental stakeholders is important to the success of the school, and the Active Parent Advisory Council will be an important means of developing and encouraging this line of communication.

Once our endowment allows for it, we also hope to employ parents in the operations of the school (for example to assist in manning the front desk or performing security functions) not only to help ensure that necessary services are performed by employees with a real and personal stake in the enterprise – namely, their children – but also in order to enhance community stability by adding much-needed jobs and opportunities to earn income through work.

## Question #2: PROGRESS MONITORING

*Clearly articulate the procedures that the Board will use to continually monitor academic, financial, operational, and legal compliance metrics. Describe any policies or procedures that will help ensure that Board meetings are conducted in an efficient, timely manner.*

### Question #2: Progress Monitoring

The ability to monitor progress in accomplishing the school's organizational mission, including staying on top of all of the key metrics, is critical to the success of the school. Put simply, the school cannot achieve its goals unless effective processes are established to ensure that the Board is able to track the operational, financial, and educational performance of the organization in order to make course corrections wherever necessary.

To that end, the Board will not only require financial reports on a monthly basis, but will be specifically apprised of any unplanned spending variances from the budget. In other words, wherever actual expenditures exceed budgeted funds for particular outlays, explanation will be required. This will allow the Board to stay on top of the finances, minimize the possibility of untenable budgetary shocks, and help the Board to revise and optimize future budgets in more realistic terms.<sup>2</sup>

The Board will also approve accounting policies and procedures, setting up protocols for scrupulous tracking all of the funds received from the government and donors. Complete and total accountability for those funds will be a paramount priority. Mechanisms for ensuring proper stewardship of those funds include double signatures for expenditures, logging checks in well-maintained ledgers, and segregation of the responsibility for receiving and depositing checks.

The Board will hire and work with the auditors to ensure the auditors have all the documents and policies they need to perform an effective review. (New auditors will be selected, at a minimum, every five years.) The results of the audit will be supplied to CPS pursuant to the charter school's legal obligation, but will also be carefully reviewed by the Board's Financial Committee to ensure sound fiscal management.

Founding Members of the Board have considerable experience with running efficient and effective Board meetings. Running a Board meeting correctly is an important skill, one that will be prioritized. The people serving as Board members

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<sup>2</sup> Based on past experience with other school governance, our Board will vote to approve the budget at least two months prior to the upcoming fiscal year. This cushion will ensure appropriate time to hire appropriately, and operate within the budget.

are volunteers; they have competing commitments, and their time is valuable. The responsibility for running efficient meetings will fall on the shoulders of the Board President, who will be expected to set an agenda in advance of the meeting at the meeting and follow it. The President creates this agenda in conjunction with Head of School, thereby bridging the governance and operational sides of the organization and ensuring appropriate coordination.

To ensure proper progress monitoring, Board meetings will include report-outs from all of the major committees, including such subject matter as the school's financials and operations. Minutes will be created at every meeting, to be reviewed and approved at the following meeting.

The Board will employ project management software (such as Basecamp) to make available to all Board members the written reports to be discussed at upcoming meetings. There will be an expectation that Board members will have accessed and reviewed those reports in advance of the meeting so the meeting discussion time can be used productively.

To monitor academic metrics, teachers will be expected to account to the Board in some fashion about how well curriculum goals are being met. This may be accomplished through Committee reports, or, on occasion, through teacher appearances at Board meetings. Each class level will set testing goals for the year, and the Board will be apprised as to how the students are performing toward those goals, with adjustments as necessary to make a better learning environment. Testing results will be reported timely to the Board, including any trends in either positive or negative directions.

Responsibility for monitoring legal compliance with state and federal requirements associated with charter schools will rest with the Board and, more specifically, a Compliance Committee. Our charter school is fortunate to have multiple lawyers on the founding team, and will thus have the benefit of significant legal experience. The Board will also select the individuals responsible for the creation of an employee handbook, which will set forth, among other things, provisions for compliance monitoring with respect to annual forms and other regulatory requirements.<sup>3</sup> Similar oversight function will be necessary for legal issues such as school contracts (including employment contracts with teachers) and the selection/procurement of appropriate insurance.

Finally, the Board will monitor progress toward its broader strategic planning by means of annual goal-setting and visioning sessions. Topics for this strategic visioning will include operational and educational metrics, the state of the budget

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<sup>3</sup> Among other examples, the Board will oversee compliance with Form 1023 (application for recognition of tax exempt status); Form 990 (tax return for tax exempt organizations); Form CO-1 (registration with the state Attorney General for charitable organizations); and other documentation required by the Illinois Department of Revenue and federal Internal Revenue Service.

and fundraising, and the feasibility/desirability of future organizational (and financial) growth. At least annually, the Board will focus its attention on whether the school's vision and mission is being accomplished, and specific ways in which operations might be improved. We believe that traditional "brainstorming" sessions – involving parents, teachers, and students – are effective and necessary to make the school the best it can be.

The Founding Members have used these sorts of sessions successfully in their other business endeavors, and plan to implement similar protocols for this charter school. In particular, Board retreats have proved effective for conducting brainstorming and visioning sessions; at those retreats, Board members commit once a year to isolate themselves together for at least a day to focus on big picture strategic planning and thinking. Drawing on the collective experiences of its members, the Board will be charged with deciding the best format to accomplish these goals.

### **3.2.b. BOARD COMPOSITION, DEVELOPMENT, AND EVALUATION**

#### **Question #1: BOARD EXPERIENCE**

*CPS expects that by the time of Tier 1 proposal submission, design teams will have identified at a minimum the proposed Board Chair and at least two other directors.<sup>21</sup> CPS strongly encourages applicants to have identified at least one founding Board member with close ties to the proposed community.<sup>22</sup> CPS highly encourages design teams to have identified at least a sufficient number of Board members to comprise a quorum of the Founding Board by the time of submission. Please identify who will fill these roles, as well as any other founding Board members already identified, and discuss their qualifications to serve on a public charter school Board.*

#### *Appendices*

*· Each proposed member of the Board is expected to complete a Board Member Form, found in Appendix 5 of the RFP and a Board Member Economic Interest Form, found in Appendix 6 of the RFP. (Note: The Board members of existing Chicago operators do not need to fill out the Board Member Form. However, all Board members are required to fill out the Board Member Economic Interest Form).*

*· Attach the résumés of any Board members who have already been identified in the appendix. Label each résumé as "3.2.c. Board member\_ [proposed position]." (Note: Resumes are also requested in Section 2.2.a. Experience and Track Record. Applicants do not have to submit multiple copies of resumes. However, please note that resumes must be submitted at a minimum for the Board Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer and should be labeled.)*

## Questions #1 & #2: Board Experience and Composition

We have identified and received commitments to join the Board of Trustees from seven individuals: Hon. Arlander Keys, James Hague, Jose Prado, Danielle Loevy, Jon Loevy, Father David Kelly, Sam Harris, and Debbie Senoff-Langford. Seven others have joined our Advisory Board of Trustees: Juan Rivera, Rich Silverstein, Joy Baer, Eric Caine, Steven Loevy, Ross Kimbarovsky, and Jackie Kaplan-Perkins. The proposed Board President is Jon Loevy. The Vice President is Sam Harris, the Secretary is Danielle Loevy, and the Treasurer/COO is James Hague.<sup>4</sup>

Our Board members – at least half of whom are minorities, women and veterans – also reflect the diversity of our Chicago community. As described more fully below, we also enjoy diversity of age, geography, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. Our team believes in diversity not as an end in itself, but because diverse Boards are the most effective Boards, able to draw on the widest varieties of valuable experiences and perspectives. This is particularly true for a school, where students derive intrinsic benefits from being taught and led by school leadership that mirrors their own identities.

As suggested by the RFP, and as also described below, we also have several founding members with very close ties to our proposed communities, including Father Kelly in Back of the Yard and Jose Prado in Humboldt Park. Multiple members of the Boards also have prior governance experience, both on schools, and with other non-profits.

One of the strongest foundations of our proposal is the extent to which the founding Board teams that we have assembled possess the diverse skills, experience, and backgrounds needed to develop and govern a successful, accountable and compliant school. This skill, experience, and background is set forth as follows.

### A. The Board of Trustees

**DANIELLE LOEVY (founder of a successful school).** For the past three years, Danielle Loevy has been the President of the Board for Beacon Academy in Evanston. Joining other parents and educators who wanted to create a Montessori-influenced high school in the Chicagoland area, Danielle became the leader of the effort. Her vision was to provide a first-rate high school focused on critical thinking, rigorous academics, experiential and inter-disciplinary learning, and preparation for career and life. Under Ms. Loevy's presidency and leadership, the school went from a concept to a reality, opening its doors in the Fall of 2015 with 40 incoming freshmen.

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<sup>4</sup> Each proposed Board member has completed the Board Member Form found in Appendix 5 of the RFP, and a Board Member Economic Interest Form, found in Appendix 6. These forms memorialize that all Board Members have been familiarized with our school's mission, vision, governance structure, and bylaws. Executed forms are attached as Appendix 3.2.a.

After helping to raise \$2.5 million dollars through fundraising, Ms. Loevy has led that school's successful expansion in its second year, drawing tuition-paying students from 26 different schools throughout Chicago and the suburbs. The school has proved to be a tremendous success, and its expansion continues. After three years as President of the Board at Beacon, Ms. Loevy is ready to bring all of that experience and track record for success to our charter school effort.

Ms. Loevy is also a lawyer, having earned her JD from Chicago Kent College of Law. She joined with her husband to form the civil rights law firm described in Jon Loevy's bio below. Eventually realizing that she was far more interested in avoiding litigation than she was in litigation, Ms. Loevy pursued a career in the prevention of lawsuits and disputes through mediation, facilitation and training. To that end, Ms. Loevy founded a dispute resolution firm known as Stone and Loevy, LLC, and was eventually elected by her peers to be the President of the Association for Conflict Resolution in Chicago (from which she has twice received the prestigious honor of Trainer of the Year), and as Vice President of the Mediation Council of Illinois.

Deeply committed to the value of diversity, Danielle has also designed and led diversity workshops with Kaleidoscope Group, a nationally and internationally recognized diversity consulting firm based in Chicago. Through KG, Ms. Loevy has helped educated numerous organizations and thousands of individuals on the benefits of valuing and leveraging diversity.

In sum, our school believes that Ms. Loevy possesses the qualities and track record for success that will enhance our Board of Trustees, including her prior experience having created a highly successful school from the ground up. Ms. Loevy has agreed to serve as Board Secretary.

**FATHER DAVID KELLY (community leader).** Father David A. Kelly has deep and long-standing ties to the Back of the Yards / New City neighborhoods. He has worked for Kolbe House at Assumption, a parish-based jail ministry of the Archdiocese of Chicago since 1985. For more than thirty years he has worked as a chaplain in Cook County Jail and Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center.

About 15 years ago, Father David A. Kelly, along with other members of his religious congregation, started the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR) to create a place and effort for those who have been impacted by violence and conflict. PBMR strives to be a resource to other groups and communities who seek reconciliation. Father Kelly is also active in Peacemaking Circle training.

Father Kelly's organization is located in the former school of St. John of God at 51st and Elizabeth Streets, a building that also hosted Catholic Charities, Youth Outreach Services, and Second Chance Alternative High School. This space has become known as the Precious Blood Center, and has become a place of safety and welcome for many people and groups to gather, to pray, and to tell their stories.

Father Kelly's ministry chose the Back of the Yards/ New City neighborhood of Chicago as the place to live and work, a community that struggles with issues of poverty, gangs, and racial divisions.

Father Kelly received his B.S. in Bio-Chemistry from St. Joseph's College, a Masters of Divinity, Masters of Arts in Cross Cultural Studies and a Doctorate of Ministry (D.Min) from Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. His doctoral thesis is entitled: Responding to Violence among Urban Youth: a Restorative Approach. He has been trained and certified as a mediator from DePaul University and has received training in the restorative practice of Peacemaking Circles. He has published articles and spoken on reconciliation, restorative justice and jail/detention ministry.

In sum, our school believes that Father Kelly possesses the qualities and track record for success that will enhance our Board of Trustees, including his prior experience having created a successful social justice organization from the ground up, and his resultant deep ties to the community we propose to serve.

**THE HON. ARLANDER KEYS (former federal judge).** The Hon. Arlander Keys was raised in segregated Mississippi, where he experienced first hand the inequities of "separate but equal" access to education. Originally denied equal access to school enjoyed by white children in Mississippi, he was picking cotton from sun-up to sundown by the age of six. After enlisting in the Marine Corps and serving two tours of duty in Vietnam, Judge Keys worked himself through college and then law school at DePaul University, earning a B.S. in political science and then his law degree in 1975.

In 1975, Judge Keys joined the National Labor Relations Board as a trial attorney, becoming regional counsel to the Federal Labor Relations Authority in 1980. In 1986, Keys was appointed an administrative law judge for the Social Security Administration Office of Hearings and Appeals. He served as chief ALJ from 1988 to 1994.

In 1994, Judge Keys was selected by the federal judges in Chicago and appointed to become a Magistrate Judge. He began an eight-year term in early 1995, and re-appointed to a second term in 2003, a judicial career that lasted approximately two decades. During his time on the bench, Judge Keys presided over thousands of civil and criminal matters in both the pretrial and trial stages of litigation. Since retiring from the bench, Judge Keys has become a respected mediator of disputes for JAMS, the largest private alternative dispute provider in the world.

In sum, our school believes that Judge Keys possesses the qualities and track record for success that will enhance our Board of Trustees, including his life experience of having used education to rise from the cotton fields of Mississippi to the pinnacle of his profession, the federal judiciary.



**DEBBIE SENOFF-LANGFORD (Montessori school principal).** Debbie Senoff-Langford has taught preschool through elementary in Montessori schools around the world and is currently the Head of School at Rogers Park Montessori School (RPMS) in Chicago. Under her leadership, RPMS has expanded substantially, and presently educates children from age 2 through 8th grade, located in Chicago. With a faculty of 70 and 385 students, RPMS is ISACS and AMS accredited, ISBE recognized and a member of AIMS.

Ms. Senoff-Langford has in the past served or presently serves on the Boards of the Association of Illinois Montessori Schools (Board president); the Illinois Coalition of Non Public School (Executive Committee); LMAIS (Lake Michigan Association of Independent Schools, Executive Committee); Beacon Academy; and the Intercultural Montessori School, among others.

Ms. Senoff-Langford holds a Bachelor's degree in History from the University of Wisconsin, a Master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education, completed the Ph.D. dissertation and received a certification in non-profit leadership from Kellogg School of Management and Type 75 certification from the State of Illinois.

In sum, our school believes that Ms. Senoff-Langford possesses the qualities and track record for success that will enhance our Board of Trustees, including more than a decade of experience leading a successful school, as well as extensive, highly relevant experience obtained from serving on the numerous Boards of education-related organizations.

**JOSE PRADO (bank officer).** Mr. Prado was born and raised without privilege in Nuevo Laredo Tamaulipas, a Mexican border town. He started working when he was eight (as a shoeshine boy) and has been working ever since. Mr. Prado came to Chicago when he was 14, and has worked his way up from a dish washer into, eventually, community banking. Working at several national banks over the past six years, Mr. Prado began as a teller but has since risen to Assistant Vice President, Business Banker at PNC Bank. In that capacity, he works with business owners with credit needs, and maintains a network of referral partners such as commercial banking, payroll, cash management, and institutional banking.

Over the past two years, Mr. Prado has been the single-highest, top-producing banker in the entire Chicago/Wisconsin market, an accomplishment for which he was awarded two of the company's most prestigious awards: the Circle of Excellence in sales and service, and the Market All-Stars award. He has consistently been rated one of the company's top producing bankers, nationwide.

Very active and plugged in with his community, Mr. Prado serves on the Board of a number of community organizations. These include the Children's Home + Aid Society of Illinois, a leading child and family service agency dedicated to "helping children recover their health, their hope, and their faith in the people around them"; Centro Romero, a community-based organization that provides refugees and immigrants on the Northeast side of Chicago with the tools and resources they need

to improve opportunities for upward social mobility; and the Little Village Chamber of Commerce. An accomplished boxer, Mr. Prado also served as a volunteer coach for the Chicago Park District's boxing program, coaching and mentoring children of various ages.

In sum, our school believes that Mr. Prado possesses the qualities and track record for success that will enhance our Board of Trustees, including his long-standing and deep ties to the community, as well as his banking experience.

**JON LOEVY (founder of civil rights law firm).** Jon Loevy graduated from the University of Michigan and Columbia Law School. Upon graduating, he joined the firm then-known as Sidley & Austin, where he spent a year and a half before leaving to start his own firm, first as a solo practitioner, and then in partnership with his wife, Danielle Loevy.

The law firm Loevy started out of his apartment about 18 years ago has since grown to more than 40 employees, including 25 lawyers. Its business model has proved that a law firm can both be dedicated to civil rights and social justice issues, yet also be for-profit, thereby helping to attract top talent – lawyers who might otherwise be working at the most prestigious, and highest-paying, corporate law firms.

The firm pursues cases on behalf of people who have been victims of governmental misconduct, particularly police abuse. These include clients who have been wrongfully convicted and imprisoned for crimes they did not commit, people shot or abused by the police without justification, and people who have been subjected to unreasonable searches and seizures. Devoted to constitutional rights, the firm pursues projects and litigation devoted to prisoners' rights, First Amendment freedoms, juvenile justice issues, transparency in government, and anti-discrimination.

Loevy has become an accomplished trial lawyer, having won more than \$100 million in jury verdicts for his clients. Loevy was previously named one of the Chicago Law Bulletin's prestigious "40 under 40" attorneys to watch in Chicago, as well as one of Chicago Lawyer's "Next Generation Rising Stars of the Trial Bar. More recently, Loevy was awarded a Lifetime Achievement award from the Chicago Law Bulletin, putting him in the select group of 11 attorneys in the history of the State of Illinois with five or more jury verdicts in excess of \$5 million (Loevy has seven).

Last month, Loevy and his firm won a Social Justice Advocacy award from Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice, an impact research, education and advocacy organization working to make reforms relating to social justice and government effectiveness issues. Loevy's firm won for their *pro bono* research project with Chicago Appleseed on identifying best practices for implementation of street-level diversion programs in Cook County to keep children out of the criminal justice system (and, by extension, in school).

Interested in teaching, Loevy is also a lecturer at law at the University of Chicago, where he co-teaches a clinic on wrongful conviction litigation with other members of his firm. Loevy also teaches Trial Advocacy to clinic students at the University of Chicago.

In sum, our school believes that Mr. Loevy possesses the qualities and track record for success that will enhance our Board of Trustees, including his prior experience having created a highly successful civil rights law firm from the ground up. Mr. Loevy has agreed to serve as the Board President.

**SAM HARRIS (President Emeritus of a Highly-Respected Education Center).**

Sam Harris is a former insurance company executive and the President Emeritus of the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center. He is one of the youngest holocaust survivors alive today, having survived six years of internment at two concentration camps in Poland under the protection of his older sister. In 1947, at the age of nine, he was adopted by a family in Illinois.

Chicago Magazine named Mr. Harris one of its Chicagoans of the Year in 2009 for his determined work in making the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center a reality, a \$45M project in which he took the leading role. In addition to his work with the Museum, public speaking and public advocacy, Mr. Harris has been involved in numerous other projects for which he has won many awards, including the State of Illinois Human Rights Award for Distinguished Leadership, the Ellis Island Medal of Honor Award, and Grinnell College's Alumni Award for Distinguished Achievement. He has also played an integral role in a project of the Rotary Club aimed at eradicating polio world-wide.

Mr. Harris has served on a number of other boards of directors, including South Central Bank since the opening of its new headquarters in 2000, servicing its original neighborhood in South Central Chicago, one of the fastest growing residential and commercial areas in Chicago. Mr. Harris was asked to join the board with the aim of facilitating the transfer of land, small business loans, residential mortgages, and the funding for community improvements associated with the urban renewal of the neighborhood. In addition to serving on the Bank's Board of Directors for the past 14 years, Mr. Harris has been a member of both the Investment Committee and the Loan Committee at the bank.

In sum, our school believes that Mr. Harris possesses the qualities and track record for success that will enhance our Board of Trustees, including his commitment to a compassionate society and advocacy of a community-minded institution. Because of his years as a Board Member for a bank, it is also anticipated that Mr. Harris will help us address our need for banking services. Finally, Mr. Harris also has CEO-level experience building the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, as well as raising the \$45M it took to do that. Mr. Harris has agreed to serve as our Board Vice-President.

**JAMES HAGUE (investment advisor).** James Hague founded and currently manages Janian Investment Advisers. The firm's mission is to deliver sophisticated, world-class investment advice to individuals in a personal manner. It offers general financial planning, as well as investment portfolios built through detailed fundamental research and analysis. Prior to founding Janian, Mr. Hague was Portfolio Manager at The Millburn Corp. from 2001-2012, and worked as an Analyst and Associate Portfolio Manager at Glenwood Capital from 1996-2001; both firms are among the oldest and most experienced hedge fund investors in the world. The investment track records of both firms were top-quartile during Mr. Hague's tenures, and the client bases for the Funds that Mr. Hague focused on grew meaningfully, with very little client turnover. Mr. Hague holds a M.B.A. from the University of Chicago and a B.A. from Carleton College.

In sum, our school believes that Mr. Hague possesses the qualities and track record for success that will enhance our Board of Trustees, including experience in finance and accounting rules, upon which the school can draw to enhance its endowment and growth. Mr. Hague has agreed to serve as the Board's Treasurer/CFO.

**B. Design Team Captain: John Whitehurst**

Our design team is led by John Whitehurst, a recently-retired Head of School who will serve as our acting Head of School until the final selection is made by the Board for his more permanent successor this Spring. Thereafter, he may well (the Board hopes) decide to join the Board. Mr. Whitehurst's experience and qualifications are summarized in Section 2.2.a of this proposal, and are incorporated by reference into this answer as well. In sum, our school believes that Mr. Whitehurst possesses the qualities and track record for success to lead our Design Team and eventually join our Board, including his prior experience teaching at and leading a successful school, a school presenting at least some of the same sorts of challenges faced by the students at our charter school.

**C. Our Advisory Board**

In addition to the Board of Trustees, our charter school is fortunate enough to have secured the commitment to join our Advisory Board by other people with talent, skills contacts, and resources. They include the following.

**JOY BAER (President of a 200+ employee internet company).** Joy Baer is the President of STRATA, a leading media/buying software provider. Ms. Baer has 25 years of enterprise software experience, and a background that includes many years of software, strategy and management consulting expertise with Fortune 500 and large media companies nationwide.

Ms. Baer previously held the role as EVP/COO at STRATA, overseeing operations for all of STRATA's business lines and has guided the development of media buying/selling platforms that incorporate the most advanced technologies in the industry. Under Ms. Baer's leadership, STRATA has grown to 200 employees and developed partnerships and efficiencies that are unparalleled in the field.

Prior to joining STRATA, Ms. Baer worked as the CEO for SpotBuySpot (SBS was purchased by STRATA in 2007). During her tenure as CEO of SBS, she directed new business and enterprise-scale software development initiatives. Under Ms. Baer's leadership, SBS's scaled to accommodate revenue growth of over 100% annually for 4 years in a row. Now the Custom Division at STRATA, SBS continues to be the industry leader in e-Business, research, business and financial solutions for media companies.

In sum, our school believes that Ms. Baer possesses the qualities and track record for success that will enhance our Advisory Board, including management skills honed in running a 200+ employee internet company, and the ability to contribute guidance and advice on our school's technology needs.

**RICH SILVERSTEIN (real estate developer of affordable housing).** Rich Silverstein has been involved in real estate development for more than twenty years. Mr. Silverstein has overseen more than 1,500 housing units, utilizing a variety of affordable housing initiatives, including HUD Project Based Section 8, Voucher Based Section 8, Tax Credit, Low Income Bond and municipal low income tax relief programs. In an industry where some landlords have made money by skimping on capital improvements, maintenance, and tenant services, Mr. Silverstein's business model has been the opposite: he provides the best possible tenant service and to treat tenants with the maximum respect. As a result, his properties have been recognized by the Ronald McDonald House, Jane Addams Hull House and the Cook County Sheriff's Department for making positive contributions to their communities.

Previous positions held by Mr. Silverstein include Vice President, Hospitality Acquisitions for Waterton Associates and Midwest Acquisitions for Crescent Heights of America. Presently, Mr. Silverstein is the Managing Member of Silverstein Realty Group, which he formed in 2010. Mr. Silverstein's company acquires underperforming or undervalued multifamily apartment buildings throughout the country and continues to manage them with an emphasis on improving the quality of the facilities and tenant service.

In sum, our school believes that Mr. Silverstein possesses the qualities and track record for success that will enhance our Advisory Board, including his extensive experience in the real estate field and his ownership of multiple buildings on the South Side of Chicago. Our school intends to draw on this experience in selecting and financing our school buildings.

**JUAN RIVERA and ERIC CAINE (community activists).** Juan Rivera and Eric Caine each have the distinction of having been exonerated after spending roughly two decades in prison for crimes they did not commit. Since their respective exonerations, both obtained settlement agreements providing substantial compensation for their wrongful convictions. These settlement agreements total millions of dollars, thereby putting each of them in a position to become catalysts for positive changes in their communities. Deeply committed to improving the lives

of under-privileged young people, Mr. Rivera and Mr. Caine both believe strongly in education as a force to transform lives, and they are very excited about the opportunity to become part of this charter school.

In sum, our school believes that Mr. Rivera and Mr. Caine possesses the qualities and track record for success that will enhance our Advisory Board, including their ties to the our school's communities and their commitment to the school's mission and goals.

**JACKIE KAPLAN-PERKINS (consultant and fundraiser).** Jackie Kaplan-Perkins has spent the past twenty-five years working with organizations that reflect her dedication to ensuring a more just and equitable world. Consistent with that commitment to social justice, she has been a leader, fundraiser and trainer in Chicago's philanthropic and political communities, serving as senior staff at the Chicago Foundation for Women, the National Center on Poverty Law, AVODAH, the Shriver Center on Poverty Law, and as the finance director for Jan Schakowsky's successful bid for United States Congress. She has worked as a consultant with dozens of grassroots groups in Chicago and nationally, as well as an instructor for the Donors Forum of Chicago, The Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training, The School for Continuing Studies at Northwestern University and the Graham School at the University of Chicago.

Ms. Kaplan-Perkins received her B.A. from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. She was a fellow in the Rockefeller Foundation's Next Generation Leadership program as well as a fellow in Leadership Greater Chicago. She has been named one of the "100 Women to Watch" by Today's Chicago Woman Magazine, "A Face of the Future" by The Windy City Times, and has received the "Changing the Face of Philanthropy Award" by the Women's Funding Network. She also co-chaired the Gay and Lesbian Outreach committee for Obama for Senate in 2004.

Since February, Ms. Kaplan-Perkins has been the Chicago and Midwest Director for Human Rights Watch, a highly respected and effective human rights organization that conducts research and advocacy on human rights, and actively defends the rights of people worldwide by investigating abuses, exposing the facts widely, and pressuring those with power to respect rights and secure justice.

She has served on Boards for various community organizations, such as the Center on Halsted ("the Midwest's most comprehensive community center dedicated to advancing community and securing the health and well-being of the LGBTQ community"); Community Media Workshop (working to "diversify the voices in news and public debates by providing a unique mix of communications coaching for grassroots, arts and other nonprofit organizations and sourcing grassroots and community news for journalists" and "connecting the community with media" by "promoting news that matters"); and Public Allies (dedicated to advancing "new leadership to strengthen communities, nonprofits and civic participation," and "changing the face and practice of leadership in communities across the country by

demonstrating that everyone can lead, and that lasting social change results when citizens of all backgrounds step up, take responsibility, and work together”). Other previous Boards include Beacon Academy, The Chicago Reporter, and the Peace Museum.

In sum, our school believes that Ms. Kaplan-Perkins possesses the qualities and track record for success that will enhance our Advisory Board, including extensive experience in all aspect of organization planning, as well as cultivating and soliciting major donors. She enjoys long-standing relationships, ranging from members of donor and philanthropic communities to activist, political and civic leaders, and charter school leaders, and she is extremely committed to community organizations and social justice.

**ROSS KIMBAROVSKY (internet entrepreneur).** Ross Kimbarovsky is founder and CEO at Startup Foundry. Startup Foundry is a team of a half-dozen engineers and entrepreneurs building innovative and sustainable startups.

In 2007, Mr. Kimbarovsky left a successful 13-year career as a trial lawyer to pursue his dream of founding a technology company called crowdSPRING -- the world's #1 marketplace for crowdsourced logo design, graphic design, industrial design and copywriting services. His start-up is helping to re-share advertising and marketing around the world by giving clients of all size access to 171,000 talented designers and writers.

Mr. Kimbarovsky mentors entrepreneurs through TechStars and Founder Institute, is a member of the Executive Advisory Board for TechWeek (one of the largest technology conferences in the world), and was honored in 2011 and 2012 as one of Techweek100's top technology leaders and business visionaries.

**STEVEN LOEVY (fundraising consultant).** Steven Loevy is a co-founder of the Loevy Consulting Group, an independent, Chicago-based firm providing strategy for fundraising, organizational development, evaluation, and philanthropy. The firm specializes in, among other things, fundraising and philanthropy in the education and social services spaces. Having spent his career in the field, Mr. Loevy has developed technical expertise in strategy formation, organizational development, evaluation, program implementation, research and analysis, and fundraising campaigns. He has cultivated a vast network of relationships with staff, boards, members and donors in organizations throughout the Chicago area and has a broad experience working with large and small community-based organizations and start-ups.

## **Question #2: COMPOSITION**

*Identify the desired composition of the governing board, including key skills and*

*constituencies that will be represented. Note: Charter schools are required to describe the nature and extent of parent, professional educator, and community involvement on the Board (105 ILCS 5/27A-7(10)).*

### **Questions #3 & #4: RECRUITMENT and SELECTION**

*#3 Provide a plan and timeline for recruiting a governing board prior to school opening and thereafter that represents the diverse skill sets, experience, and backgrounds required for rigorous school oversight, in particular Board members with skill sets that are not yet represented on the founding Board. Identify any existing relationships with individuals or organizations that the design team can leverage as it develops its founding board.*

*#4 Specify the process by which board members have been selected and will be in the future.*

One of the important foundations underlying our proposal is that the talent and qualifications of the people on our Board is a key driver of our success. As such, we have already received commitments from people with each of the necessary pieces we have targeted as essential to building outstanding charter school, including the “professional educator” required by 105 ILCS 5/27A-7(10).

For that reason, the “recruitment” and “selection” asked about in Questions #3 and #4 has already been largely conducted (although this is not to imply that we would turn away exceptional Board members who wanted to join as we go forward, provided they offered the types of skills, interest and passion that would help us advance our mission).<sup>5</sup> Should some unanticipated need arise that we do not presently foresee, our Board is so deep and so “networked” that we are extremely confident in our ability to timely identify and recruit additional Board members with the desired skills and expertise.

All of the existing Board members were identified and invited by the Founding Members to join our effort. That process was collaborative, constructive, by consensus, without any meaningful dissent. Drawing on lifetimes of personal relationships and professional contacts, we targeted a group of talented and experienced individuals whose records of achievement demonstrated positive alignment with our mission, vision, and educational philosophy, as well as the expertise to provide rigorous academic, operational and financial oversight of our

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<sup>5</sup> The one exception would be that the Board will eventually include at least one member of the Board who is also a community member and parent of a child at the school. See 105 ILCS 5/27A-7(10). We obviously cannot recruit and select parents until we have students, but that goal will be accomplished forthwith once students begin attending our school.



proposed school. We then continued our recruiting process until we found people with the time and desire to make this level of commitment.

As the need arises in the future, we intend to use an analogous process to identify desirable additions to our Board. However, now that the founding Board is officially constituted, the future working Board selection process will be more formalized, consistent with our bylaws, under which the Nominating Committee, under the jurisdiction of the Governance Committee, makes recommendations upon which the Board votes. Per the bylaws, the Nominating Committee includes, at a minimum, the President, the President-Elect (if applicable), the Head of School, and the Chair of the Governance Committee.

### **Question #5: TRANSITION**

*Discuss the design team's role in interacting with or participating in the founding Board during the start-up of the school and after school opening. Describe a transition plan and associated timeline as the founding Board becomes the "working" Board.*

Because our working Board is already in place, we have a big head-start on the transition phase. Drawing on our Founding Members Board experience with other non-profits and schools, we believe the best way to launch is to get the members of the Board together face-to-face for an initial orientation session to ensure that everyone is a good fit for the mission and vision. As is true in sports, sometimes a team that looks good on paper needs some time to come together and begin clicking. Our plan is to provide an opportunity for everyone to get to know each other earlier rather than later, so we have a good foundation for positive working relationships.

At these early meetings, we anticipate assigning Board members committee roles as appropriate, based on their skill sets and interests. Key decisions will be made by vote of the whole group, with efforts made toward reaching consensus.

As far as the design team's role in interacting with the founding Board, we expect to facilitate that transition by having our Design Team captain (retired Head of School John Whitehurst) attend these early team-building and brainstorming sessions. That way, Mr. Whitehurst can answer questions and explain his reasoning to the other educators and Board members, a process whereby the school's curriculum, philosophy and mission can continue to sharpen. While we are proud of the work we have already completed in terms of designing the school and its curriculum, this is necessarily a living and evolving project, one that we intend to work hard to continue perfecting before doors open in the Fall of 2016.

To that end, as explained elsewhere in this proposal, we believe it undesirable to make some of the transition decisions until the Board makes its final selection for Head of School. That is because whoever is selected to carry out the Board's mission and vision will be trusted to have a large say in shaping the particulars. In

advance of the Tier II deadline, we will have selected our Head of School (based on a national search) and began moving forward with that transition. The timeline for that is Spring 2015.

The Head of School will then have at least a year lead time in advance of the school's opening to select teachers. As explained throughout this proposal, we regard teacher selection as one of the most important ingredients in the formula for our school's success, and substantial time will be devoted to the selection process by the Head of School, working in consultation with the Board President. In our collective experiences, it is important to hire teachers before Winter ends if you want to get the best, which we do. The later it gets into the Spring, the smaller the pool of excellent teachers, and we will thus want to avoid waiting.

As discussed in prior sections, enrollment will begin one year in advance opening. Prior to opening up enrollment, we intend to spend resources publicizing and promoting our school in the targeted communities. The goal will be to educate members of the community about the existence of our very rigorous academic option, one with an extended school calendar and long school days. Subject to space constraints, we will welcome all comers, and will open our doors to every student with interest. But we must be realistic in anticipating that a school emphasizing such a rigorous student commitment will not be of interest to everyone. Our plan is to get the word out as widely as necessary, and we will not stop devoting resources to do so until we find enough interested families.

Another key decision that will be made at least one full year before the Fall of 2016 opening involves securing the proper facility. Based on our experience with Beacon Academy, the presence of a physical building makes it easier it is to recruit students; conversely, it is difficult (though not impossible) to attract interest where the school is more of a concept than a reality. We will thus hope to secure sites by the Summer 2015, which will also leave us sufficient time for permitting, design and architectural planning, build-out, and code compliance.

Our Founding Members have experience with each of these phases in connection with other schools, and will apply that experience here. The physical lay-out of a school requires much thought and planning, the extent of which cannot be underestimated. Design elements such as the number, placement and size of classrooms, the use of open spaces, and all other such details all require careful consideration. Working closely with the Head of School, and drawing specifically on his or prior experiences, we will convene a Facilities Committee to captain the building's design, with an eye toward creating a facility conducive to the practical realities of the learning that we want to occur.

#### **Question #6: TRAINING**

*Describe any orientation and ongoing training that Board members will receive, including a timeline for training and topics to be addressed.*

Drawing on the prior experiences of other Boards on which the Founding Members have previously served, we believe that orientation and training as to proper Board governance is important for establishing an effective Board. Accordingly, the Governance Committee shall be responsible for conducting orientation sessions for all new Board members, starting with a two-hour session for the Board at the launch of our school venture. Following trainings will occur biennially, likely in conjunction with and in advance of the planned annual retreat.

Orientation and trainings will cover the Board's bylaws, including an explanation thereof, as well as a deeper understanding of the governing mission. Another area of focus will be the proper role for a Board, with an emphasis on the principle that the function of the Board is governance, not to micromanage school operations, which is under the jurisdiction of the Head of School and school staff. In our experience, Board's that are trained to understand that distinction are more successful. Finally, orientation and training cover the importance and need for confidentiality for the Board's deliberative process; the Board's decisions are open and matters of public record, but the process by which the Board arrived at its decisions should be respected.

#### **Question #7: BOARD SELF-EVALUATION**

*Explain how the Board will evaluate its own effectiveness on an ongoing basis. What expectations will there be for board membership and what clear, measurable goals and metrics will the Board utilize to evaluate itself? What actions would trigger removal from the board and what process would guide removal?*

The ability of the Board to evaluate its own effectiveness is important to the success of any organization. First, our plan calls for ongoing self-assessments, including informal ones by and to the Board members with each other. We aspire to be the kind of Board whose members are very open to feedback, particularly in the form of constructive criticism that is properly communicated well (direct, respectful, etc.). That is the way our Board President runs his existing business, and the same attributed will be valued for our school's Board.

Informal self-assessments aside, our collective experiences on other Boards teaches that more formal self-assessments should occur annually, ideally in advance of the yearly Board retreat. A healthy, well-functioning Board needs to conduct a periodic examination of what it could be doing better. This annual self-assessment will inquire into things such as what sorts of things the Board should be working on improving.

Our plan is to send out a written survey/evaluation once per year, with Board members being asked how the Board works together as a whole and how their own skill sets fit with the Board. Every Board member will be called upon to state

whether they feel their skills being used effectively, whether they consider themselves over- or under-utilized, whether they see themselves as aligned with the Board and Head of School, what the Board President could do differently, and whether they believe the Board makes decisions efficiently.

The proposed plan utilizes SurveyMonkey or similar application, with at least some (but not all) parts of the questionnaire to be anonymous, so as to facilitate more candid answers. The results of all questions will be reviewed by the Governance Committee, which will then set the agenda for further goal-setting conversations with the full Board. The written surveys will provide the metrics and data necessary for informed discussion and positive changes.

In addition to the survey results, other red flags that should trigger Board reflection include sharply divided votes. Everyone is not always going to agree on everything (that itself would be an unhealthy sign) but, as stated, he hope to commonly achieve consensus, and frequent divisions will be deemed a sign that perhaps it might be time to take steps to re-align the Board members.

Question #7 also asks about cause for removal of a Board member and the appropriate process to achieve it, subjects governed by our bylaws, attached as Appendix 3.2.a. To summarize, removal from the Board may be justified by sufficiently serious violations of the ethics or conflict of interest policies, confidentiality violations, or chronic failure to attend meetings.<sup>6</sup>

### **3.2.c. BOARD LEGAL COMPLIANCE AND ETHICS POLICIES**

#### **Question #1: TRANSPARENCY**

*Specify where and how frequently the Board plans to meet. Describe the procedures that will be in place to ensure compliance with the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act.*

Once operating, the Board will meet monthly for at least the first year, given the quantity of business associated with this phase of the project. After the school opens, it is expected that meetings will occur at least once every six weeks, give or take, depending on the need as deemed by the Board. Until a facility is secured and

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<sup>6</sup> If things are operating the way they should attendance at Board meetings should be something to look forward to, not a burdensome chore. Our Board President believes strongly in the importance of being respectful of people's time, and the corresponding necessity of running meetings efficiently.

built out for the school, meetings will occur at the Founding Members' law office, 312 North May Street in Chicago. Thereafter, all meetings will occur at a mutually convenient location determined by the Board, but presumably at the school.

The Board will comply with the Illinois Charter School Law, 105 ILCS 5/27A-5(c), which in turn requires compliance with the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

Consistent with the provisions of the Illinois Freedom of Information Act and Illinois Open Meetings Act, it is the policy of Key Charter that, subject to applicable exceptions under the law, all persons are entitled to full and complete information regarding the affairs of the school and that the actions of the school will be deliberated in the open. The school will operate under a presumption of openness and will assert exemptions only when able to prove their applicability by clear and convincing evidence based on a detailed and specific factual justification.

Key Charter will designate a staff member as its FOIA Officer. The FOIA Officer shall take the required annual Attorney General FOIA certification training, and will be responsible for the school's FOIA compliance. When appropriate, the FOIA Officers shall seek legal advice from the school's attorney.

Key Charter accepts all statutorily-compliant FOIA requests made in writing and sent to the designated mailing address, fax number, or email address, which shall be posted at the school's office and on its website. In response to an oral request for records, the FOIA Officer shall inform the requester of the need to submit a written request. All requests will be immediately forwarded to the Officer for processing. The FOIA Officer will immediately calendar the deadline for response in the school's electronic calendar system with a two-day reminder and will immediately contact the persons believed to have responsive records to begin the collection process.

FOIA Officers, in their discretion, may ask the requester to identify whether the request has been made for a commercial purpose, as that term is defined in the FOIA statute.

The responsible FOIA Officer will respond to all FOIA requests by the required deadline of five business days, or, when the criteria for an extension are met and the extension is properly sought, within the extended deadline of ten business days. The response will be in writing and indicate whether the request is granted, denied, or partly denied. Only exempt information may be withheld or redacted. Before claiming the "undue burden" defense under FOIA, the FOIA Officer will consider the public interest in disclosure and will provide, by the response deadline, an opportunity to narrow the request. The FOIA Officer may apply the commercial request, voluminous request, copying fee waiver, and recurrent requester provisions of FOIA as applicable. Requests for electronic records shall be produced in the

requested format, if feasible, even if the records do not ordinarily exist in that format, and otherwise shall notify the requester that the records are available in paper format or the format in which they are ordinarily maintained, at the requester's option, at a cost of \$.15 per black and white page.

The FOIA Officer shall periodically calculate an estimate of the actual cost of photocopying records, excluding personnel time, and publish a fee schedule reflecting the actual cost of reproduction, which may not exceed.

Key Charter shall publish on the school website and at the school's office the notices and agendas of all meetings of the Board in advance of the meetings, and all Board meeting minutes within 10 days of their approval.

In order to comply with the Open Meetings Act (OMA), all discussions of school business by a majority of a quorum of the Board shall take place in a public meeting consistent with the requirements of the OMA. Discussions in closed session are limited to the specific exemptions in the OMA after properly voting to go into closed session.

A copy of a sample Board calendar is attached as Appendix 3.2.c.

The Charter Proposal Assurances signed by all existing and Founding Board member are attached as Appendix 3.2.c.

Key Charter School has applied for 501(c)(3) status by the Tier I application deadline, as required by the RFP. A copy of our application and proof of postage are attached as Appendix 3.2.c

## **Question #2: ETHICS POLICY**

*Please provide a draft Ethics Policy for the proposed school's board members, directors, officers, and employees.*

*Appendices*

*Attach an Ethics Policy*

Our Board takes ethics extremely seriously. A copy of our Ethics Policy is attached as Appendix 3.2c.

## **Question #3: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY**

*Describe how the Board will identify and address conflicts of interest. Please identify any existing actual or perceived conflicts of interest among the proposed*

*founding Board members and explain how the design team/founding Board plans to address them. Include a draft Conflict of Interest policy that establishes safeguards to prohibit any of the proposed school's board members, directors, officers, employees, agents, or family members from having a private interest, direct or indirect, or acquiring any such interest directly or indirectly, which would conflict in any manner with the charter school's performance and obligations under the Charter School Agreement.*

#### *Appendices*

*Attach a formal Conflict of Interest policy*

*Each proposed member of the Board is expected to complete an Economic Interest Form found in Appendix 6.*

We are presently aware of no potential conflicts of interest. This is because none of our Founding Members or Board members have transacted or intend to transact any financial business with the school, nor be employed by it, nor receive any gifts from anyone associated with it. We expect that to remain true going forward.

Our Board will identify and address any potential conflicts of interest by means of scrupulous reporting and disclosure requirements, as well as oversight and monitoring. It clearly defines a private interest, direct or indirect, for all persons affiliated with the Board and school; it establishes a clear policy and procedure to disclose conflicts of interest; it specifies procedures to address or mitigate conflicts; and provides a method to determine the appropriate response in the event of a breach of the policy.

A copy of our Conflicts of Interest Policy is attached as Appendix 3.2c.

A copy of all proposed Board members' Economic Interest Forms are attached as Appendix 3.2.b.

### **Section 3.2.d. ACCOUNTABILITY**

#### **Question #1: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**

*Provide a narrative description of an attached comprehensive organizational chart, which should clearly describe the lines of authority and reporting structure of the school leadership, management organization (if applicable), and any school advisory bodies or parent/teacher councils (if applicable) to the governing board. Explain the rationale for this proposed structure.*

#### *Appendices*

*Attach a comprehensive organizational chart that clearly shows lines of authority and accountability between the Board, MO (if applicable), network (if applicable), and/or school leadership.*

Though our organizational chart may seem unduly simple, (See Appendix 2.4.a.) it reflects one of the school's goals: maintaining a lean administrative layer and empowering teachers to assume responsibilities traditionally performed by administrators. Because our enrollment will be small, particularly in the first few years of operation, we expect our Head of School will be able to fulfill key administrative duties: evaluation of staff; monitoring compliance with federal, state, and district laws and policies; handling of serious disciplinary infractions; and evaluation of curriculum and programs. By consolidating functions in this way, we free up more resources to devote to teacher and Head of School salaries, thereby ensuring our ability to hire the types of individuals who are capable of effectively handling multiple functions.

We are not proposing lack of oversight. This Head of School will continually report to the Board of Trustees, which is responsible for overseeing the school's operation, and everyone else in the building will report to the Head of School. The social worker we hire will have experience in counseling and social-emotional learning, and special educator(s) will enable us to accommodate the needs of special education students. Teachers will direct curriculum and instruction, analyze data, and help manage professional development. Parents will have numerous ways to provide guidance, such as our Parent Advisory Committee, explained above.

## **Question #2: SCHOOL LEADER EVALUATION**

*How will the Board hold network (if applicable) and school leader(s) accountable for school performance?*

Our plan is to subject our Head of School to regular performance-related evaluations. These evaluations will be the primary mechanism to help maintain accountability to the Board.

We will not settle for sub-standard student performance. Improving standardized test scores are one important way that performance will be measured. But our assessment of the Head of School will not be limited strictly to numerical goals. Other, more intangible measures to take into account in evaluating Head of School's effectiveness include whether the school is attracting students; whether the students are staying or leaving, and if the latter, why that is so; whether he or she has attracted outstanding teachers; and whether the teachers are staying or leaving, and if the latter, why that is so.

"Customer satisfaction" is also obviously important. Happy parents and happy children are good. But we will be reluctant to put too much emphasis on the results of things like satisfaction surveys in judging the Head of School. The Head of



School sometimes must make difficult decisions with unpopular outcomes. The job is not necessarily to make everyone happy so much as it is to do what is best for the school and its overriding educational mission, namely, to provide the best possible education to the children who attend. Evaluation of a Head of School, in other words, is not simply a popularity contest.

At the end of the day, we will demand results. As with others, education must be a “results business.” Excuses and rationalizations for poorly performing students will be unacceptable. The Head of School will be a highly paid professional, leading a staff of extremely capable teachers, and he or she will only remain in that position only for as long as he or she can consistently deliver real and measureable results. There is little margin for error in our extremely high student achievement goals, and our Head of School will be held strictly accountable and responsible for executing our plan.

## DOMAIN 4: ECONOMIC SOUNDESS

### 4.1 SCHOOL BUDGET

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#### 4.1.a: FINANCIAL FORMS AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

**Question #1: Complete the budget workbook. Instructions are provided on the first tab of the budget workbook.**

*Include a budget narrative that summarizes the budget and describes how the budget reflects the mission, vision, education plan, and overall strategic development of the proposed school. Discuss how resources will be used to support identified school priorities, including any changes in that allocation over the first five years of the school's existence.*

As a general matter, our budget is patterned on the philosophy that our Founding Members used to grow their own successful businesses, which is summarized as follows: Successful organizations reward their key employees with above-market salaries, but expect a lot for it, and thus keep administrative costs lower than would otherwise be the case.

One of the founding principles of our school, in other words, is that we propose to attract top-tier quality people, the kinds of outliers who rise to the top of their field. We expect to be able to recruit those people through high pay, combined with the creation of an extremely desirable workplace, one in which the teachers are valued and empowered. A school, in short, where the most talented people want to work. That has been our philosophy in business, and we intend to bring it to this school.

This philosophy affects the budget assumptions. Based on our collective experience, extremely dynamic and effective individuals that we expect to recruit are the kinds of employees that can handle all sorts of tasks in addition their primary functions. These are the types of people who get things done. They are driven and efficient. As such they accomplish things that others would not have time to do, or would consider to be “not their job.”

Our budget is thus relatively thin on administrative personnel and costs, and instead stacks resources into the teacher salaries. We propose to pay lead teachers \$100,000 plus generous benefits, and hope to give sizeable raises in the future if the school is successful (which will generate donations from donors encouraged by the results). In our budget model, we have not budgeted for raises, because we do not want to be required to provide them, and because we do not want to have to promise the additional revenues. Instead, we intend to run our school like a business:

people do not get raises for showing up. They get raises for results. If our teachers accomplish their goals, the school will succeed, and they will be rewarded.

In addition to the senior teachers, we also contemplate a second layer of teacher salaries at \$60,000 for the more junior of the two teachers in each classroom. This high-promise younger teacher will learn from the senior teacher what it means to be an outstanding teacher. If that person “graduates” to the rank of senior teacher (through a clearly-defined process to be worked out by our Head of School) then he or she will enter the ranks of the \$100,000-plus senior teacher, much like an associate earns a partnership in the law firm. If, over time, the junior teacher does not demonstrate the ability, commitment and talent to graduate to senior teacher, then he or she will have to find work at another school.

For purposes of our budget, the spreadsheet did not allow us to set two tiers of teacher salaries. Accordingly, since the split of senior/junior teachers is roughly 50/50, we used \$80,000 as the average salary.

As for supplies, educational materials, technology equipment, office supplies, and furniture, we have used aggressive numbers rooted in efficiency. To be clear, should any of these allocations prove insufficient, we have a huge safety net: We budgeted things this way because our school will have ready access to donations of such materials should they be needed. As explained above in our proposal, our Boards are loaded with more than a dozen successful entrepreneurs very dedicated to the school’s success. Most of us have companies that already have the sorts of supplies needed. If the school needs more furniture or office supplies, it will have them from the excess capacity at our existing businesses.

The same is true for services. Our school will never have a need for a legal budget, for example, because our Founding Members run a 25-lawyer law firm, one that already not infrequently provides free services to this very type of organization. There is not one legal need (including, for instance, the types of filings needed for this proposal) that our law firm cannot easily provide to the school. The same should be true for other types of services. We expect to have the benefit of similar contributions from our Board members specializing in technology, consulting services, accounting, etc. And anything necessary that is beyond the scope of what the Board members actually do (though it is hard to imagine what that might be) should be accessible through our networks and connections.

As far as the facilities, this part of our budget remains under development at this stage because we have not made final decisions about our buildings. One option under serious consideration is to have the Founding Members purchase and build-out its school buildings at no charge to the school. Such a decision will be made before the Tier II submission, and will obviously have a substantial effect on the proposed budget.

#### 4.1.b. DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**Question #1:** *Discuss additional revenue needed to maintain financial viability over the five-year contract, including assumptions behind the calculation of need. Please identify existing relationships with potential funders, indicate current levels of interest, and articulate contingency plans in the event that development goals are not realized.*

Ours is a somewhat unconventional development plan. Instead of scrambling each year to raise funds in small increments, our Founding Members are so committed to the mission and vision that they will donate a million dollars to Key Charter School on Day 1, in order to put the school on firm financial footing. Moreover, that is only the beginning. As our school expands and succeeds, our Founding Members fully intend to continue to support this project in equally substantial amounts as appropriate.

There are other potential sources of substantial funds as well. While we are proud of the socioeconomic diversity on Key Charter's Board of Trustees, the fact is that some of its members are very wealthy -- and all are deeply committed to education for under-privileged children.

Furthermore, a number of Board members have extensive fundraising experience. A career fundraiser, Steven Loevy of the Advisory Board co-founded a consulting company that performs fund-raising for schools and community organizations. Fellow Advisory Board member Jackie Kaplan Perkins, too, has raised substantial funds for socially-just causes. Most impressive of all, as president of the board of the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, Sam Harris (the Vice President of Key Charter's Board) was singularly responsible for raising the \$45 million it took to create it, tapping into his network of extremely high net-worth individuals, including some of the wealthiest (and most generous) families in the City.

This Question asks for contingency plans in the event of budget shortfalls. In the highly-unlikely event that no other funding sources materialize, and none of our Board members decide to make substantial contributions, and our general fundraising efforts (should we choose to use them) prove ineffective, then our two Founding Members are fully prepared to make up the difference. If this school is chartered, the founders are fully dedicated to the cause and are in a position to ensure the school's continued success by funding it themselves.

## 4.2: FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND MONITORING

### 4.2.a. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND MONITORING

**Question #1:** *Describe the policies and procedures that the proposed school and Board will utilize to sustain financial health of the organization and ensure legal compliance with any requirements and restrictions for the use of public funds. How will the Board receive updates and monitor the school's financial position? Who is responsible for directly managing and overseeing the school's budget? Please note that Illinois Charter Schools Law (105 ILCS 5/27A-5(f)) requires charter schools to submit an annual audit of school finances conducted by an outside, independent contractor.*

Our school intends to employ best accounting practices to ensure that the finances are carefully monitored. Extensive precautions will be observed. These procedures and required financial reports are described, *supra*, in Section 3.2.a, and that discussion is incorporated into this answer as well. But to summarize, the Board Treasurer/CFO will review the books at least monthly to ensure the absence of any irregularities and to monitor any expenditures beyond budgeted amounts. Additional layers of redundant review are important as well, including oversight by the Board President, the Audit Committee, and a professional bookkeeper. Timely and regular standard monthly reports to the Board help to facilitate this review by making finances as transparent and accountable as possible (and thereby making it correspondingly more difficult to steal or embezzle any school funds). The Board's role in preparing for and then reviewing the annual audit, also described above, supplies an additional check. As also summarized above, multiple members of the Board have backgrounds and careers in finance, which will assist the Board in performing its oversight role.

## 4.3: FACILITIES

### 4.3.a. FACILITY OPTIONS

**Question #1: SPACE REQUIREMENTS**

*Provide an overview of the space requirements needed to successfully implement the proposed school model, including a description of how the proposed site will need to evolve to support the school as it grows.*

Key Charter intends to secure two facilities, one in the New City neighborhood, the other in Humboldt Park, preferably accessible by public transportation. Each building will feature approximately 100 sq/ft per student, a model that includes space for a gym, common area, lobby, and possibly a cafeteria (though we are still

considering whether students will instead eat meals in their classrooms). The building will need ample natural light, suitable ventilation, sufficient numbers of bathrooms, and school-related fixtures such as drinking fountains. We will also need access to outdoor space for physical recreation and recess, and a room for art/music. The building must be amenable to security, including a main entrance serviced by a buzzer entry system. Obviously everything must be compliant with the building codes, the ADA, and other applicable laws.

As our budget narrative explains, our organization is not heavily administrative, freeing up more space to be utilized by the students. Further economizing on space, teachers will be expected to be flexible and “double up” offices if necessary.

Moving facilities is disruptive, expensive, and inefficient, and should be minimized to the greatest extent possible. However, because our plan calls for adding additional classes each school year, our space needs will change over time.

Our preliminary plan calls for multiple phases of development. Though not ideal, we will begin with a temporary space that fits our relatively small starting school. We will explore co-tenancy with existing organizations, or possibly conversion of a residential building in the range of at least several thousand square feet. For the next phase, likely as soon as Year 2, we will explore buildings of roughly 10,000-15,000 square feet, with the intention of growing into them as our more permanent home.

In sum, these are issues that Key Charter has not yet resolved. Prior to our Tier II submission, we will have a much better idea of what our facility plans are. We will provide supplemental information at that time.

## **Question #2: SCHOOL SITE(S)**

*Provide an overview of each proposed site and include the following supporting materials:*

- i. The address and a general description of the property, including its current owner and previous use.*
- ii. An Inspecting Architect’s Report completed by a CPS-approved architect.*
- iii. An ADA Compliance Report completed by a CPS-approved architect.*
- iv. If the property is not currently ADA compliant, a plan for bringing the building into compliance.*
- v. Evidence that the site is or will be secured (Letter of Intent or Memorandum of Understanding) and a description of your design team’s plan to meet lease or purchase requirements.*

- vi. *A plan detailing how rehabilitation work will address issues raised by the architect, meet applicable building codes, and support the proposed school's educational program, including:*
- a. *The scope of work to be completed;*
  - b. *A description of persons/managing parties responsible for project management and related qualifications;*
  - c. *A project timeline for any necessary renovations; and*
  - d. *A completed Sources and Uses of Funds Report for facility development and the planned funding mechanism to cover projected costs.*

### **Question #3: FACILITY PLAN**

*Describe the plan to secure and update (if applicable) an appropriate facility in time for school opening.*

At this time, Key Charter is not yet ready to provide substantive answers to Questions #2 and #3. We are in the process of exploring possible sites, and making decisions about what options fit best for our plans. We will utilize the assistance of our community partners, and the services of real estate professionals, to investigate the best possible building options. All possibilities are under presently consideration, including conversion of various types of existing facilities.

Prior to our Tier II submission, we will supplement our proposal with specific information responsive to these Questions.