

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Name of the proposed school. STARS Project Engineering Academy (SPEA) Charter School is a proposed charter school in the neighborhood of Little Village in the City of Chicago.

Proposed school type. SPEA Charter School will be a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) High School, accommodating students in grades 9th – 12th. It will be committed to preparing our scholars to be exceptional engineers and lead healthy lives.

Mission, vision, educational philosophy and model, and culture. STARS Project Engineering Academy (SPEA) commits to provide a holistic education by *inspiring, challenging, and empowering* future engineers, while embracing a healthy lifestyle.

SPEA will prepare the next generation of engineers through a collaborative, core leadership value, high-quality, and inquiry-based professional learning environment with a commitment towards a healthy lifestyle. SPEA offers scholars an opportunity to be equipped and skilled for post-secondary readiness, the global economy, and career employment.

We support our mission by preparing our future engineers to live a healthy life, while becoming exceptional leaders in their communities to transform our world; our core values describes all aspects of our school model, and are at the heart of our mission. Our core value, HELP, is for our scholars to learn about helping themselves and others, and to understand the impact that they can have, not only in their community, but our world. It is providing a positive learning environment to hold our scholars to high standards, while providing them the resources and support to excel. It is about learning to understand the importance of maintaining balance of their whole being to live a prosperous life.

- **Healthy.** To reduce teen obesity. As a healthy school we will provide nutritious meals, snacks, beverages, and require that our scholars stay physically active every day. Our scholars will be exposed to various healthy choices and understand the impact of the choices. We will offer access to health care services; provide a school environment that will allow our scholars to feel safe and create a sense of belonging. Also, we will include workplace wellness programs for all staff.
- **Exceptional.** Staff and scholars will live and reflect our core values. We will recruit, hire, and train qualified educators. Educators will participate in ongoing professional development days, weekly dedicated training and ongoing individual development. Our enrolled freshmen will participate in STEP-UP summer camp before the academic school year begins, along with ongoing rigorous, standards-based, college preparatory curriculum on core subjects and project-based learning. The curriculum is enhanced with Project Lead The Way, Farrells Extreme Bodyshaping, internships, basic certification courses and experiential learning. We will provide an extended school year (185 days) and school day (517 minutes). It will focus on the core subjects and delivery of standards-based instruction for scholars to perform at or above grade level, while participating in experiential learning. Teachers will use data to plan instruction, target interventions, and deliver individualized support. Teachers will participate in 1 Data Day per quarter to express interventions implemented and obtain support where needed within the team, make strategic plans, and take action to address any gaps that exist. We will have a monthly event called Shining STARS to inspire, challenge scholars academic growth, and continuously acknowledge their efforts and performance.
- **Leadership.** We believe our scholars' success is a reflection of ours. Leaders and staff will lead by example. Scholars will have an opportunity to exercise collaborative practices. They will practice their leadership through community involvement, peer-tutoring and student governance. Families are vital partners for our school. Hence, caregivers will have many opportunities for ongoing communication with teachers and the e. Additionally, they will receive reports every three weeks, will be required to come into school for parent-teacher conferences to pick up report cards and meet with teachers.
- **Professional.** Create a culture that has respect for different languages, diverse cultures, and is exposed to fast-paced business and academic environments. We believe these experiences will cause breakthroughs in preparing our scholars to succeed globally. Scholars will visit universities and a variety of educational places to develop their plans for attending college. They will participate in internships and obtain basic certifications starting their junior year. Also, our scholars will dress professionally and learn the importance of putting structures in place that work with grace and ease.

Our entire STARS community will prepare our future engineers and their sense of pride will be generated from our four core values. Our commitment is to holistically educate our scholars. **Health:** Our internal being impacts our success,

therefore we will take a stand for our health. **Exceptional:** Our core values will be embraced, lived and shared exemplifying our stellar performance. **Leadership:** Our actions will demonstrate pride, respect, integrity and college readiness, so our leaders can transform the world. **Professional:** Our fast-paced dynamic learning environment will incorporate real world events, projects and internships that can further their expertise for college and beyond. Celebrating in the spirit of joy and wonder that nurtures academic growth and achievement within our STARS community.

Demonstrated capacity to open and manage a high-quality school, including a brief explanation of how the proposed school type and model will drive success for the targeted student population. The Design Team, includes the governing board, and as a diverse professional team there is demonstrated track record of skill and competence in areas critical to the school's success: educational leadership, curriculum and instruction, finance and operations, fund-raising and development, governance and accountability, and facility acquisition. Out of our diverse team, there are six with educational expertise, two engineers, one counselor and one charter parent. Yolanda Sanchez, leading the Design Team, brings a powerful track record as an educational leader and will serve as Executive Director.

A list of the targeted communit(ies) and intended student recruitment boundaries, the rationale for proposing to open a new school in the targeted communit(ies), and an overview of parent and community engagement and support. As a charter school operating on the Southwest Side of Chicago, the scholars we will serve are predominately minority and first-generation college-bound. Our primary goal is to academically prepare our scholars while providing a culture for healthy living. We will provide annual data; we will use cumulative and formative assessments that will be aligned to the common core and college readiness standards. We have established academic, organizational, and SMART goals to clearly measure and achieve our scholars' success. Our goals are to ensure we fulfill our mission by reducing the academic gap and preparing our scholars for STEM careers. Our graduates will be technologically and academically prepared to enter post-secondary STEM careers with a focus in Engineering, through Project Lead The Way (PLTW) curriculum.

SPEA charter school seeks to serve the greater Little Village area on the Southwest Side, which demonstrates a great need for a STEM high school. We are committed to bringing access of the multitude of exciting areas in engineering. We will serve as a solid and strong engineering network to increase minorities in pursuing engineering degrees. Less than 12% of minorities graduate with an engineering baccalaureate in the United States, only 35% of minorities are college ready, and only 9% of certain minorities are ready to be a part of the STEM workforce. There are about 21 schools in the nearby areas; 4 small high schools in Little Village High School's (LVHS) building. Infinity is one of the four schools in LVHS and it is the only one that has a STEM focus. It is also, the only one out of the four that exceeds capacity, and has a waiting list, while the others struggle to reach capacity. There are ~18 elementary schools, and 5 are labeled as "at risk". Statistics show that there is a lack of public schooling for the youth in the area. There are 49 - 88% residents that do not have a high school diploma, and ~40%-58% live below the poverty level.

There are institutions and community-based organizations that have taken notable strides to improve the access to community resources, and we have reached out and partnered up with the Little Village Chamber of Commerce, Little Village Community Church, Boys and Girls Club, Assumption Church, New Life and University of Illinois at Chicago. Also, our design team are residents of Little Village and surrounding neighborhoods. We look forward to continue collaborating with the community and are grateful for the strong support for STARS Project Engineering Academy Charter School.