

# Chicago Public Schools Request For Proposal for the Establishment of New Charter School



**STARS**  
PROJECT ENGINEERING ACADEMY

Respectfully submitted by Stars Project Engineering Academy Founding Board and Design Team

## Community Partners:



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## Domain 1: Parent and Community Engagement and Support

### Dimension 1.1: Understanding the Community

#### Section 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?*

STARS Project Engineering Academy (SPEA) Charter School Design Team's number one priority is their students and their students' families. One possible location for the proposed school is Assumption Church BVM, which is located in Little Village on 24th and California. Due to Little Village being landlocked, there are no buildings for sale in the desired community at this time. As a result, we have considered a second property in a neighborhood that is close to Little Village that is Brighton Park. The second possible location for the proposed school is an industrial property located on the 2700th block of West 36th Place. The necessary steps will be taken in order to inform the Brighton Park and Archer Heights communities of our possible school in their community during the months after Tier 1 of the proposal has been submitted. The student recruitment boundaries for each of the proposed schools is as follows: to the west Western Avenue, to the east is Cicero Avenue, to the south is Cermak Road, and north it will be Archer Avenue. The targeted communities within the student recruitment boundary are Little Village, Brighton Park, and Archer Heights. Brighton Park and Archer Heights are also a part of McKinley Park.

##### Question #2: Profile

*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

Neighborhood	Little Village	Brighton Park**	Archer Heights**	McKinley Park
<b>Total # of Residents</b>	266,169	91,079	91,079	136,814
<b># of School-aged Children</b>	37,457*			60,727*
<b>Average Education Attainment Level</b>	18,484 Some College/Associate s Degree	6,192 Some College/Associate s Degree	6,192 Some College/Associate s Degree	9,888 Some College/Associate s Degree
<b>Median/Average Family Income</b>	\$35,689 (M) \$45,810 (A)	\$41,176 \$49,028	\$41,176 \$49,028	\$34,328 \$45,311

<b>Median/Average Housing Cost</b>	\$41,043	\$42,997	\$42,997	\$40,635
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	0.120 (12%)* ** <sup>1</sup>	0.091 (9.1%) areavibes.com <sup>2</sup>	0.111 (11.1%) areavibes.com <sup>3</sup>	0.095 (9.5%) areavibes.com <sup>4</sup>

\* Based on Pilsen-Little Village Statistics from CPS, all else based on Point2Homes Statistics

\*\*Statistics based on same zip code from Point2Homes

\*\*\*From the Little Village Quality of Life Plan

According to Point2Homes.com, there are 139,166 males and 127,003 females that live in Little Village. The median age is between 28 and 29 years old. There are 11,709 white collar occupational employment and 8,715 blue collar occupational employment in Little Village. There are a total of 76, 059 households, of those, there are 55,243 that are family households and 20,816 non-family households. There are 36,166 households with children and 39,893 without children. The average people per household is between 3 and 4. According to the education statistics: 42,442 have no high school; 24,149 have some high school; 19,701 have some college; 5,460 have an Associate Degree; 13,623 have a Bachelor's Degree; and 5,527 have a Graduate Degree. The median income is \$29, 613 for under the age of 25; \$34,975 for ages 25-44; \$41,972 for ages 45-64; and \$33,263 for over the age of 65. The crime rate and risks are above the National average in all categories while the consumer spending is below the National average in all categories. Little Village is also considered part of the South Lawndale Community and Pilsen-Little Village Neighborhoods. Therefore, some statistics may be unavailable or overlap.<sup>5</sup>

According to Point2Homes.com, Brighton Park and Archer Heights are of the same zip code. Therefore, all of the information is the same and will reflect as such. There are 46,568 males and 44,511 females that live in Brighton Park/Archer Heights. The median age is about 28 years old. There are 11,709 white collar occupational employment and 8,715 blue collar occupational employment in Brighton Park/Archer Heights. There are a total of 24,420 households, of those, there are 19,401 family households and 5,019 non-family households. There are 13,668 households with children and 10,752 households without children. The average people per household is between 3 and 4. According to the education statistics: 16,114 have no high school; 6,695 have some high school; 6,855 have some college; 1,969 have an Associate Degree; 4,117 have a Bachelor's Degree; and 1,399 have a Graduate Degree. The median income is \$33,318 for under the age of 25; \$37,726 for ages 25-44; \$48,911 for ages 45-64; and \$40,000 for over the age of 65. The crime rate and risks are above the National average in all categories while the consumer spending is below the National average in all categories. Brighton Park and Archer Heights are also considered part of the McKinley Park neighborhood. Therefore, some statistics may be unavailable or overlap.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Enlace, Chicago, IL." *Little Village Quality of Life Plan*. N.p, n.d. Web. 10 Mar. 2015.

<sup>2</sup> "Brighton Park, Chicago, IL Employment & Jobs." *Brighton Park, Chicago, IL Jobs, Unemployment Rates & Median Household Income*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Mar. 2015.

<sup>3</sup> "Archer Heights, Chicago, IL Employment & Jobs." *Archer Heights, Chicago, IL Jobs, Unemployment Rates & Median Household Income*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Mar. 2015.

<sup>4</sup> "McKinley Park, Chicago, IL Employment & Jobs." *McKinley Park, Chicago, IL Jobs, Unemployment Rates & Median Household Income*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Mar. 2015.

<sup>5</sup> "Point2 Homes." *Little Village Demographics & Statistics*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2015.

<sup>6</sup> "Point2 Homes." *Archer Heights Demographics & Statistics*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2015.

According to Point2Homes.com, there are 69,422 males and 67,392 females that live in McKinley Park. The median age is between 29 and 30 years old. There are 23,323 white collar occupational employment and 13,388 blue collar occupational employment in McKinley Park. There are a total of 45,385 households, of those, 29,514 are family households and 15,871 are non-family households. There are 18,163 households with children and 27,221 households without children. The average people per household is between 2 and 3. According to the education statistics: 19,289 have no high school; 12,146 have some high school; 11,620 have some college; 3,471 have an Associate Degree; 8,266 have a Bachelor's Degree; and 4,532 have a Graduate Degree. The median income is \$26,786 for under the age of \$25; 35,295 for ages 25-44; \$40,363 for ages 45-64; and \$29,951 for over the age of 65. The crime rate and risks are above the National average in all categories while the consumer spending is below the National average in all categories.<sup>8</sup>

### 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.*

According to CPS Draft Facilities Master Plan, there are 27 Elementary Schools, 1 Middle School, and 10 High Schools in the Pilsen-Little Village Community. However, Little Village Lawndale High School is the only high school in Little Village. There are 4 schools that are homed on this campus: Multicultural Academy of Scholarship High School; Infinity Math, Science and Technology High School; World Language High School; and Greater Lawndale High School for Social Justice. Each school has a maximum capacity allowance of 400 students, totaling 1,600 for the campus. Infinity is the only school that exceeds its maximum capacity, which is evidence of the high demand for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education in this neighborhood.<sup>910112</sup>

As of the 2012-2013 school year, 1,400 students have enrolled at Little Village Lawndale High School. Of those students, 95.9% were low income students; 10.2% were Special Education students; and 7.5% were Limited English Learners. The largest demographic at Little Village are Hispanic, which is at 94.9% (<http://www.cps.edu/Schools/Pages/school.aspx?SchoolId=610384>).<sup>13</sup>

There is a great interest in Little Village for high schools that focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). The Little Village Lawndale High School has 4 different high schools within its building, however, only one is a STEM focused high school, which is Infinity. Infinity High

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<sup>7</sup> "Point2 Homes." *Brighton Park Demographics & Statistics*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2015.

<sup>8</sup> "Point2 Homes." *McKinley Park Demographics & Statistics*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2015.

<sup>9</sup> "CPS Chicago Public Schools." *Draft Educational Facilities Master Plan*. (Edited As Of May 3, 2013. (n.d.): n. pag. Web. 10 Mar. 2015.

<sup>10</sup> "CPS : Schools : School." *Greater Lawndale High School for Social Justice*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Mar. 2015.

<sup>11</sup> "CPS : Schools : School." *World Language Academy High School*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Mar. 2015.

<sup>12</sup> "CPS : Schools : School." *Multicultural Academy of Scholarship High School*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Mar. 2015.

<sup>13</sup> "CPS : Schools : School." *Infinity Math Science and Technology High School*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Mar. 2015.



School has exceeded its capacity with an enrollment of 411 students in 2012. Infinity High School having reached its maximum capacity of students had no choice but to turn students away. Students that are turned away do not seem interested in attending any of the other 3 high schools in the building. The problem is not high schools exceeding their capacity turning students away, the problem was that students and families were not interested in attending any of the other schools. One of the high schools that resides inside The Little Village Lawndale High school which is the Multicultural Academy of Scholarship had the lowest enrollment in 2012, with only 280 students who enrolled.

We understand the urgency and the predicament that our country will face as a whole if we do not take action to increase our future generation of students with STEM based careers. We want to provide our future leaders with the necessary skills and preparation they will need to succeed academically and be able to compete globally in this constantly advancing world where STEM careers are in high demand. Our Engineering Academy Charter School will focus on providing services to our underserved urban youth within Little Village, and its surrounding neighborhoods. Our school’s goal is to increase the percentage of minorities in engineering careers. Little Village alone has alarming data regarding our future leaders. There are only 4 public high schools that serve Little Village students and 27 elementary schools, in which five are labeled as “at risk” schools. Students who retrieve their education from these types of schools are more likely to drop out, lose focus on lectures, have poor diet, have an undeveloped sense of self and society, and finally may never have the chance to live life doing what they love most. Researched data shows that in the southern part of the community 8.63-11.28% of youth students are lacking access to public schooling for the teen youth in the area.

49% to 88% of residents who reside in this area do not have a high school diploma and approximately 40% to 58% of residents live below the poverty level. The Little Village Community Area is the second highest source of revenue in the City of Chicago after the Michigan Avenue Street Area in Downtown. Astonishingly, Little Village is a neighborhood that has high gang activity, low income community residents, low educational attainment, and a large youth population that is potentially placed at risk. Therefore, taking all of these factors into consideration, Little Village and the surrounding neighborhoods are lacking, and need a charter high school that focuses in STEM that is dedicated to closing the widening gap of minorities who are not graduating from college. We want to change the outcome of the dynamics and increase the percentage of minorities in engineering careers ([http://gis.depaul.edu/shwang/CommunityOutreach/GEO242\\_Service\\_Learning\\_Project/GEO242\\_Win1112\\_EnlaceChicago\\_SafeHavenMapping.pdf](http://gis.depaul.edu/shwang/CommunityOutreach/GEO242_Service_Learning_Project/GEO242_Win1112_EnlaceChicago_SafeHavenMapping.pdf)).<sup>14</sup>

**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)?*

MEMBERS	COMMUNITY	TIES & DURATION	AFFILIATION
Yolanda Sanchez	Pilsen-Little Village	Grew up, 20 years Former Science Teacher, 7 years	President

<sup>14</sup> *Moving Towards Revitalization and Safety: An Analysis of Little Village* (2012): n. pag. Sponsor: Enlace Chicago Luis G. Ana L. Bricieda R. Kristin G. Refugio M. GEO 242, Mar. 2012. Web. 21 Dec. 2014.



Paul Dark	Pilsen-Little Village	Business Location, 3 years	Vice-President
Omar Espinosa	Brighton Park	Grew up, 29 years	Media Director
Sonia Soto	Pilsen-Little Village	Grew up, 17 years	Technology Director
Ana Castillo	Pilsen-Little Village  McKinley Park Brighton Park	Grew up, 7 years Mathematics Department Chair, 10 years Lived, 4 years Lived, 15 years	Fundraising Director
Gladys Lomeli	Pilsen-Little Village  Archer Heights  Brighton Park McKinley Park	Grew up, 11 years School, 12 years Non-for Profit Relations, 4 years Clients, 13 years Lived, 12 years Clients, 13 years Clients, 13 years Clients, 13 years	Treasurer
William Gentile	Pilsen-Little Village	High School Counselor, 3 years	Operational Leader
Angelica Negrete	Pilsen-Little Village	Grew up, 11 years	Secretary of Board of Directors
Monica Swope	None	N/A	Academic Consultant
David Martinez	None	N/A	STEM Consultant
Jeff Heredia	Pilsen-Little Village	Resident Principal, 1 year	Academic Leader
Qetsiy'ah Yisra'el	Pilsen-Little Village	Community Outreach and Support, 14 years	CTE Program Coordinator

SPEA Charter School Design Team's number one priority is their students and their student's families. Our goal is to provide different opportunities and tools for our students that will allow them to grow as individuals and become future leaders in order to be successful in all aspects of their lives. We understand that involving our student's parents, guardians, and the community will bring forth necessary support for our children and will help build their confidence personally and socially in order for them to excel academically as individuals. From its inception, SPEA has constantly invited the community and parents to share their ideas and criticism on having an Engineering Academy in Little Village. A few members of SPEA are affiliated with Little Village and reside in or around neighboring communities. We are a diverse team that is committed to having our parents be involved, which is why we have collaborated with parents from nearby schools. We have asked our neighboring school parents to offer their opinions and suggestions as we move forward in building stronger ties in our community.

We used to have our team meetings at the homes of team members and at restaurants such as La Justicia. As we started getting more involved with our community we began receiving lots of positive feedback. Organizations offered their assistance as well as wanted to help and be a part of bringing an Engineering Academy to Little Village by providing incubation space for our gatherings. We eventually began having our weekly work and action meetings at the Little Village Chamber of Commerce building. The Little Village Chamber of Commerce is a membership organization that has represented the interests of local businesses for more than 30 years. Its mission is to promote and support the growth and success of businesses in Little Village and to leverage the community's unique cultural identity to generate new opportunities. The Chamber works closely with business and community leaders to address the issues that affect the community and the commercial area (<http://littlevillagechamber.org/>).<sup>15</sup> The Little Village Chamber of Commerce opened their doors to us in 2013. They also allowed us to participate in the Mexican Independence Day Parade. As we continued creating ties with other organizations, we have also partnered with BLUE1647 Technology & Entrepreneurship Innovation Center. BLUE1647 is an entrepreneurship and technology innovation center focused on education (through classes and workshops), workforce development (through internships), business acceleration, and economic development in technology and 21st century skills. As a beacon of resource through physical space and curated programming, BLUE1647 provides impactful individuals and organizations the resources to realize their ideas for a better world. The BLUE1647 community is a vibrant example of the ways in which creative professionals, entrepreneurs, change-makers, and nonprofits can come together to make meaningful, lasting impact (<http://www.blue1647.com/>).<sup>16</sup> They have provided us with our current incubation space.

We want to make sure the organizations that are helping us make a better future for our children know that we appreciate their time and support. We also want them to know that we care about them as an organization and for the difference they are making in offering their services to create a better tomorrow for our new generation of students and their families. We have and will continue inviting individuals to attend our meetings and asking them to provide their ideas. Other individuals have joined us and have participated with our team wanting to be part of bringing a school into our community. Aside from strengthening our relationship with the University of Illinois at Chicago, the Archdiocese of Chicago, and other community organizations like The Resurrection Project, we will continue building our relationship with the community through ongoing participation and communication.

The mission of the College of Engineering (COE) at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) is to provide the opportunity for each student to become all that he or she is capable of becoming through excellence in education in the three areas of teaching, research, and service. In the area of teaching, the college provides academic excellence to its students through ten Bachelor of Science programs in six departments. With the changing dynamics of society, the college continues to strive for excellence and innovation in both its instructional and research programs. In the area of community service and as part of the University's Great Cities Program related to economic development and environmental concerns, the college is continuously strengthening ties with the industrial community, especially the dynamic region of Illinois. The UIC College of Engineering wishes to contribute to the overall vision of UIC by helping to educate students for careers of leadership and innovation in engineering and related fields, by expanding the base of engineering knowledge through original research, by developing technology to serve the needs

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<sup>15</sup> "Little Village Chamber of Commerce." *Little Village Chamber of Commerce*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Oct. 2014.

<sup>16</sup> "BLUE 1647." *BLUE 1647*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Oct. 2014.

of society, and by benefiting the public through service to industry, government, and the engineering profession (<http://engineering.uic.edu/bin/view/COE/WebHome>).<sup>17</sup> Through UIC, we are creating the pipeline for our students to achieve careers in Engineering where students will go and participate in projects and programs that are offered through the College of Engineering and student organizations such as the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE-UIC) and the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE-UIC). With the help of Gerry Smith, Director of Minority Affairs, we are also making sure that our curriculum aligns with what the university is looking for.

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago was established as a diocese in 1843 and as an archdiocese in 1880. It serves more than 2.3 million Catholics in Cook and Lake Counties in Northeastern Illinois, a geographic area of 1411 square miles. The archdiocese is divided into six vicariates and 31 deaneries. This local church is headed by Cardinal Francis George, assisted by six episcopal vicars, each responsible for a vicariate (region). The “see” city for the diocese is Chicago. The cathedral parish for the archdiocese is the Holy Name ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Catholic\\_Archdiocese\\_of\\_Chicago](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Archdiocese_of_Chicago)).<sup>18</sup> Our first school location, Assumption Church, is through this organization. They are willing to lease the space to us. This will be a temporary first location due to the size availability.

The mission of The Resurrection Project (TRP) is “to build relationships and challenge people to act on their faith and values to create healthy communities through organizing, education and community development” (<http://resurrectionproject.org/>)<sup>19</sup>. TRP is our real estate development team. They will help us solidify our facility.

In April 2013, we held a Meet and Greet Event with a local restaurant, La Justicia, where we did a formal presentation about SPEA Charter School. In July 2013 we canvassed the community, parents, residents, and organizations of Little Village and the surrounding areas where we communicated the school’s mission, vision, and model. Our team handed out flyers to all of the community representatives that we spoke with and were able to obtain over 3,000 signatures in support of bringing our school into Little Village. In August 2013, SPEA held an event to acknowledge two extraordinary individuals, Mr. & Dr. Weffer, founders of Students, Teachers, Educators, and Parents, (STEP) Program at DePaul, that have had a positive impact on education. Their program lasted for 20 years. The program provided academic enrichment courses to students from Benito Juarez H.S. and multiple other high schools in Chicago. Both, Yolanda Sanchez (Chief Executive Director) and Gladys Lomelí (Board Treasurer) are STEP graduates.

We formally introduced our team to business professionals at the National Mexican Fine Arts Museum. We have also participated in the Mexican Independence Day Parade in Little Village for two consecutive years. In December 2013 we had our First Annual Gala, which was held at CASTLE. In June 2014 we canvassed the community again to inform them about our school. In July 2014, we had a Community Meeting at Assumption Church to introduce and share about SPEA. In August 2014 we had another community meeting at Little Village Community Church that was followed by a lunch meeting with Gerry Smith, Director of Minority Affairs at UIC. In October 2014 we had our First Golf Outing and Fundraiser, which was held at Tuckaway Golf Club. In November 2014, we had a community meeting in the Little Village Library to introduce SPEA Charter School to parents and community at large. On that same day, we promoted our school with Radio Vive through live broadcasting. In December 2014, we had our Parent Field Trip to Catalyst High School to educate parents on charter schools and Project Lead

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<sup>17</sup> "COE - WebHome." *COE - WebHome*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Oct. 2014.

<sup>18</sup> "Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 19 Oct. 2014.

<sup>19</sup> "Home - The Resurrection Project." *The Resurrection Project RSS*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Oct. 2014.

The Way (PLTW), which is the curriculum we are bringing into our school. In December 2014 we also had our Second Annual Gala, which was held at APOLLO 2000. In February 2015 we had our community meeting at New Life located in Little Village. In March 2015 we will have our First Annual Casino Night Fundraiser at BLUE1647.

We have created our own website ([www.StarsProjectAcademy.org](http://www.StarsProjectAcademy.org)), Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/starsproject1>), LinkedIn ([https://www.linkedin.com/groups?promosList=&gid=3663232&trk=anet\\_ug\\_promos](https://www.linkedin.com/groups?promosList=&gid=3663232&trk=anet_ug_promos)), and Twitter ([https://twitter.com/stars\\_project1](https://twitter.com/stars_project1)) accounts, which we have and will continue to share, invite, update, and receive feedback with our community. Accounts with Google+ (<https://plus.google.com/108472914816015840208/posts>), Instagram (<https://instagram.com/starsproject1/>), and YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/c/starsprojectacademyorg>) accounts have also been established. We will continue to keep an open line of communication with our community. We are grateful to all of the families, residents, and organizations who have provided their signature in support of bringing our Engineering Academy to Little Village. We also shared with them a brochure to find out more about SPEA (See Appendix A: 1.2.a. Community Outreach) (See Appendix OO: 1.2.a Petitions). We want our community to know what we are doing as we progress. We understand that in order to build a solid relationship, it is essential to create a solid bond. We want our community to know that everyone is welcomed to our events, that we will keep the channels of communication open as we continue working to bring SPEA into the Little Village community, and that we want our parents, community, and others to know they can reach us with any comments, suggestions, or feedback they may want to share. We want to make it clear to our community that their opinions and suggestions matter and that they are important to us.

In December of 2014 we were invited to Saucedo Elementary school for a parent meeting. We were able to introduce and provide information about SPEA Charter School to the parents in attendance. Three of our members attended the meeting and there were about 30 parents present. We were also invited to the parent meeting at Finkl Elementary School in February. We were asked to introduce and share about SPEA Charter School with the parent attendees. There were also about 30 parents and 2 of our members attended. Both schools were very interested and wanted to continue getting updated and involved with the school. The parents also wanted to know how to get their students enrolled. We will continue reaching out to the elementary schools in the targeted communities and attend more of their parent meetings in order to expand our parent networks as well as our potential future students within the 4 months before the Tier 2 deadline.

#### Question #5: Assets and Needs

*What are some of the existing assets within the targeted community(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?*

All four high schools of the Little Village Lawndale High School, combined, can accommodate 1,600 students, which is 400 students each. That is 1,600 students that can receive a high school education in Little Village. Infinity High School is the only school of the four high schools being housed at The Little Village Lawndale High School building that is a STEM school. It is also over capacity, which forces them to turn away students that are interested in STEM.

According to the Level Playing Field Institute, the World Economic Forum has ranked the United States in 52<sup>nd</sup> place in the overall quality of mathematics, and science education. It has also ranked the United States as 5<sup>th</sup> place (and still declining) in global competitiveness. The United States ranks 27<sup>th</sup> place as a

developed nations due to the proportion of college students receiving undergraduate degrees in science, or engineering to students receiving undergraduate degrees in other majors. There are more foreign students studying in the United States in graduate schools than U.S. citizens. Foreign students outnumber the number of U.S. students in higher education institutions, and over 67% of the engineers who receive Ph.D.'s from United States universities are not United States citizens (<http://www.lpfi.org/how-does-us-compare-other-countries-stem-education>).<sup>20</sup>

Our school will serve as a solid engineering network that will help increase the population of minorities who wish to succeed in engineering related fields. Our Engineering Academy wants to help our country increase its college graduates in the engineering careers. Currently, fewer than 12% of baccalaureate engineering graduates in this country are represented by minorities. Academic achievement as well as college readiness has declined within minorities. Only about 35% of minorities are considered to be college ready (<http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/RaceEthnicityReport.pdf>). There is also a report from 2010 that shows that only 9% of certain minorities are ready for the STEM workforce. Our Engineering Academy's interest is to provide awareness about STEM careers to our students, parents, residents, and the whole community while we also increase the percentage of students represented by minorities in our country.<sup>21</sup>

SPEA Charter High School will target community youth with an interest in math and science, which will allow us to prepare and provide resources for careers in engineering to underserved urban youth across the City of Chicago with the emphasis on the Southwest Side. SPEA Charter will target underserved minorities, since there is a critical need for minority youth to be adequately prepared for the competitive workforce. Minorities that come from these low-income communities need a better quality education in their high schools in order to meet academic standards to be competitive and receive a college degree in STEM careers. The school will impact the engineering industry by reducing the academic achievement gap between different minorities and non-minorities while increasing the graduation rate and increasing minorities in STEM careers. Our approach will allow us to meet the needs by inspiring, challenging and empowering young leaders in engineering careers. SPEA will offer high school students the opportunity to be ready for employment as well as being prepared for college by designing a program that fully integrates core academic subjects, project-based classroom learning and career related field experience, and by providing the resources to enhance their educational experience. There is a great awareness of minorities being underrepresented in engineering or STEM careers altogether, and because of our open enrollment to our under-served urban minorities, we will be able to assist in preparing and having a large number of students obtain a career in engineering. This will help to offset the low percentage of minorities in STEM careers. Our outcome will be reflected by the measuring of students performance in standardized tests, number of graduates, number of alumni enrolled in universities that obtain an engineering career, and by the demand of minorities to pursue and obtain an engineering career of great importance.

SPEA will be targeting the underserved students in the Chicago area, concentrated in Little Village and neighboring communities to reduce the academic achievement gap, and the dropout rate. In order to achieve equitable educational outcomes with all students, our charter school will focus on increasing the number of minorities in engineering careers by integrating quality initiatives to higher education.

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<sup>20</sup> "Level Playing Field Institute." *How Does the U.S. Compare to Other Countries in STEM Education?* N.p., n.d. Web. 21 Dec. 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Reports, Research, Educator Reports, Policy Reports, and Issue/information Briefs. *Issue/Information Briefs Do Race/ethnicity-based Student Achievement Gaps Grow over Time?* (n.d.): n. pag. Web. 19 Oct. 2014.

The goal of our school is to increase the number of minorities in engineering careers. Our Engineering Academy will provide the necessary connections and tools that will allow our high school students to develop the essential skills that will lead them to attain an engineering career. Our students will be a part of a rigorous academic and career preparatory learning environment that consists of career focused courses, internships, and hands-on-training exercises. We will create the path for our students to be ready for employment, and to be prepared for college. Our high expectations for all students will produce a high level of achievers regardless of their socio-economic disparities. We will help pave the path for our students to become successful individuals by providing educators that will aid our students on their journey of achieving two of their most important goals: enrollment in college and, obtaining a degree in engineering.

### Section 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?*

Some of our board members are math and science oriented and one of our vast networks are engineers of all aspects. We are formalizing a partnership with Project Lead the Way (PLTW), which is a leading provider of a rigorous and innovative engineering curriculum which will help our charter school strengthen the education of our minority youth to become the most dynamic and productive leaders in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Our partnership will provide us to use their hands-on curriculum that will offer courses that will develop problem solving skills, critical thinking, and creative and innovative reasoning. We will use STEM education programs that will provide hands-on classroom experiences which will engage students in activities, projects and problem-based learning. Our partnership with PLTW will enhance our next generation of leaders to remain economically competitive. This partnership will prepare our minority youth to ensure their college and career success. PLTW curriculum structure provides a relevant high quality STEM education for minorities which will serve as a pathway for engineering.

We have also begun our partnership with City Colleges of Chicago, which will offer educational courses to our students to earn basic certifications in an engineering career. It will help our students reach the skills required in the marketplace and prepare them for careers in their field of interest. We are not only preparing them to attain a degree of their chosen engineering concentration, but also providing them with workforce skills. STARS Project Engineering Academy Charter School will also build a partnership with the University of Illinois at Chicago, College of Engineering (COE) that will offer their resources to our students. The collaboration with UIC will allow SPEA to be the pipeline for students to be prepared to pursue an engineering career. We have also established a strong partnership with the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) to provide us the resources for mentoring, school enrollment, funding, and scholarships to our students. SHPE also hosts annually Noche De Ciencias Nights of Science), which our students can participate in, and also bring robotics club for our students to participate in the robotics competition that is held annually. We can also be recognized as a SHPE Jr. Chapter school as well as participating in the Chicago Regional Science Bowl Competition for our students to have an opportunity to compete nationally and travel to Washington D.C.

Other partnerships of immediate interest to us are as follow; National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), which will provide our students with educational interactions, competitions and experiences nationally; other universities that will provide scholarships and summer programs; The Museum of Science And Industry, which will provide ongoing hands on activities throughout the school



year; and businesses, which will provide internships for our students to assist in preparing our students with workforce skills. We will continue building partnerships because they will offer innovative resources that will contribute in reaching our goal to keep our students on track to mastery and success in all their skills.

In order for us to decrease the dropout rate we will assess students' needs initially and throughout their time spent here. We know that many students will be attracted to our engineering school because of the rigorous college preparatory program; we are also aware that many students drawn to this program will have different performance levels that will need to be developed to meet the rigorous standards expected, and implemented for their success. Therefore, we will offer developmental courses in core classes. While challenging our students, we will provide supportive programs that will improve their skill levels. We are expecting to serve 18% - 20% of English Language Learners (ELL) students because of the demographics of the neighborhoods in which we intend to serve. We will have a mandatory, challenging, and educational four week STEP-UP program that will include an intensive ESL program to increase their language skills, and prepare and help with our students' transition to high school, while providing ongoing support after school throughout the school year. We will also provide accelerated learning for the students that are advanced with honors and AP courses to be continuously challenged, as well as offer dual enrollment through the City Colleges of Chicago to obtain college credit in their junior and senior years, while in their engineering pathway of interest. Since the socio-emotional needs are more fundamental than any other learning need, the social factors at home, school, and neighborhoods need to be considered for the school to have a positive performance. We will create a partnership with the University of Illinois at Chicago for the development of the SEL (Social Emotional Learning) program, which will address three levels of emotional and academic needs of our students. Our school has chosen to use the personalized model that was developed and researched by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) that shares three basic elements for approaching education learners.

The results that SPEA expects by providing the educational, holistic support, and resources, to our students will be to help them enroll and obtain an engineering degree in the concentration of their choice. Our goals will be measured to show ongoing performances, and accomplishments of our school and students as a whole throughout their high school experience and beyond.

The structure our Design Team is utilizing to create the curriculum for our Engineering Academy Charter School is from the Common Core Standards Curriculum along with the curriculum of Engineering from Project Lead The Way (PLTW) to increase the benefits, academics, and achievements of our graduating students. The curriculum is a combination of classic and traditional subjects such as Math, Science, English, Humanities, Social Studies, and Foreign Language with a novel approach towards building an engineering pathway. Our students will earn 28 credits which is beyond the requirement for graduating high school students in Chicago. We will adopt the Hersey Curriculum and Instructional Model because they are two elements we know are suitable and essential for the success of our students. Their focus aligns with the College Readiness Standards (CRS) and it has both remedial and a college prep curriculum. It includes a development program for mastering the basic skills that emphasizes on closing the academic achievement gap, which is a common problem with the inner city students. In order to change this outcome and to help solve this problem we will have our enrolled students take a placement test and be able to enroll into classes that accommodate the different learning levels to meet their specific needs. The college prep curriculum will be systematically implemented along with the engineering pathway paradigm to prepare students in the different engineering fields and careers. Students will also be able to obtain their high school diploma with a basic certification in an engineering related field that will be accredited through the City Colleges of Chicago.



## 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?*

As mentioned previously, all four high schools of the Little Village Lawndale High School, together, can accommodate 1,600 students, which is 400 students each, that can receive a high school education in Little Village. Infinity High School is the only high school out of all the high schools that are housed at The Little Village Lawndale High School building that is a STEM school. Infinity is also over capacity, which forces them to have to turn students away that are interested in STEM. There is a great interest in Little Village for high schools that focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). The Little Village Lawndale High School is the only high school in Little Village open to the public.

Under the current educational system, only a small portion of urban school students succeed. Significant numbers fail to graduate, and the majority of those who do graduate are inadequately prepared for college or the workplace. Schools that serve minority students with low socioeconomic status have limited resources, which creates a cycle of poverty from which only a handful of students can rise above. At the same time, Americans are looking hopefully toward the Engineering industry as focus of economic revitalization and sector of employment growth. Unless things change, many minority students will not receive the education required to participate in and contribute to the growing field of Engineering.

Our goal is to help urban high school students gain proficiency in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) content areas, preparing them for engineering careers of their choice. To increase the number of minority students in engineering careers, we will implement an innovative approach to learning that increases student engagement and encourages parental participation, offer an educational option to the community students, and bring in national and community resources/partnerships. We envision an environment of learning in which students who are interested in math and science will thrive. Intrinsic in our model is a commitment to fostering a culture that welcomes scientific inquiry and career exploration while maintaining high standards.

In order to reduce the achievement gap, improve graduation rates, and increase the number of minority students entering engineering careers, SPEA will offer a thoughtfully-designed program that fully integrates core academic subjects, project-based classroom learning, and career-related field experiences.

SPEA will provide information and connections that will allow students to reach out to real world career experiences. Not only will our high school students meet standards towards a high school diploma, but they will be given the opportunity to complete a certification in engineering related fields. Students will have the opportunity to excel and be prepared in our charter school to pursue their future career goals. We will provide quality education that will enhance students to become educational leaders.

The school will focus on providing services to Latino, African-American, and other underserved urban youth within the Chicago Metropolitan area, which include the following neighborhoods: Brighton Park, Lower West Side, Little Village, Archer Heights, McKinley Park and West Lawn in order to increase the percentage of minorities in engineering careers. Little Village alone has alarming data regarding our future leaders.

SPEA has and will continue forming partnerships with a variety of communities as well as national organizations, businesses, and universities to provide the resources that will enhance the students' educational experience at our school. These partnerships will contribute to building our students' success

in engineering careers.

Dimension 1.2: Notifying the Community

Section 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 facility(ies).*

Method of Notification	Number of Individuals Notified	Evidence
<b>Flyers or brochures</b>	Left 7500 brochures with residents or on homes West of Western Avenue, East of Cicero Avenue South of Cermak Road and North of Archer Avenue	Copy of brochures
<b>Community Meetings</b>	Held community meetings on six different dates and locations	Sign-in sheets
<b>Advertisement in local newsletter or other media outlets</b>	Ad placed in STARS electronic newsletters Ad placed in bulletin for New Life	Copy of ad placed
<b>Appeared on Radio Vive show</b>	The segment had 1300-1600 listeners	November 2014 at 3pm
<b>Social Media</b>	<p>Updates placed on our website that is advertised on our other social media sites available to followers worldwide</p> <p>Posts placed on Facebook page by board members with over 1100 followers</p> <p>Updates provided on LinkedIn with almost 230 members</p> <p>Information tweeted by board members with over 20 followers</p> <p>Google+ is still being developed</p> <p>Instagram is still being developed and has 18 followers</p> <p>YouTube page still being developed</p>	<p>Feed on webpage</p> <p>Facebook feed</p> <p>Profile updates</p> <p>Twitter feed</p> <p>Page feed</p> <p>Posts on page</p> <p>Video(s) on page</p>

	and has 3 views from one video	
<b>Petitions</b>	Collected over 3,000 signatures in the Little Village and surrounding communities	Petitions
<b>Block club event</b>	Presented at a block club event with 30 residents	Copy of sign-in sheets (if available)

Aside from collaborating closely with parents and residents in the community, we have obtained more than 3,000 signatures from Little Village residents who show their support for our school and want to see an Engineering High School in their community (See Appendix A: 1.2.a Community Outreach) (See Appendix OO: 1.2.a. Community Petition). We have also had community meetings in different areas of Little Village where we also had the attendees sign in (See Appendix B: 1.2.b Community Meeting). We have also been on the news and on the radio informing the community about our Gala and other events as well as who we are and what we propose. Proof of organizations and businesses being notified also come from our letters of support as well as the locations of our community meetings. Flyers have also been posted in the different organizations and businesses located within and around our proposed facilities locations and will pass out more in Brighton Park.

STUDIO ARQ, an architectural company owned by Cesar Santoy, made an in-kind donation valued at \$5,250. Services donated provided SPEA with a full survey and report of the areas that will be used at Assumption Church for SPEA’s first academic year.

Thus far, our design team has conducted four fundraisers, 6 community meetings, participated in one parade twice, been a part of the Back to School efforts, conducted parent field trips, and canvassed Little Village from California to Cicero and from 22nd to 31st.

Our Design Team is in agreement that in order for our school to provide our students with all the services and resources they may need as our students, we need to establish strong and meaningful partnerships within and out of the community. We want to be able to offer different services for issues that our families may encounter. As we continue educating our students, we must be able to provide and ensure that our students and parents have access to organizations which will help us meet the needs of our families. In collaboration with these organizations we can help our families enrich their lifestyle with awareness. As a school, we will be readily available to our community and be a model of true “college readiness” education in the community. In turn, we will collaborate with our community through faith based organizations, businesses, corporations, and other educational facilities to expand our knowledge and resources that we can offer to our children and families. We would also like to extend some of these resources to other community residents, those who will help us lead our future engineers and those helping us teach our families the importance of leading and embracing a healthy lifestyle. Cradling a healthy lifestyle increases a student’s effectiveness and efficiency in and out of the classroom. We support and endorse an active community presence in the school, to help make sure our community benefits from our school and our school benefits from our community. We have already established partnerships that are essential to our mission in preparing our future engineers, while creating a culture that not only focuses on academics, but embraces healthy living.

**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

Note: If preferred, this information may be provided in a table.

Elected Official	Position/Title	Meeting Date	Meeting Time	Member(s) in Attendance
Ricky Martinez	Alderman, 22nd Ward	2013 2014	4:00 PM 4:00 PM	Yolanda Sanchez
George Cardenas	Alderman, 12th Ward	April 29, 2014	11:30 AM	Yolanda Sanchez
Chuy Garcia	Commissioner	2013	9:30 AM	Yolanda Sanchez Ana Castillo
Martin Sandoval	State Senator	2015	5:00 PM	Yolanda Sanchez
Silvana Tabares	State Representative	2015	In Progress	TBD
Edward Acevedo	State Representative	2015	In Progress	TBD
Tony Munoz	State Senator	2015	In Progress	TBD
Maria Berrios	State Representative	2012	Email Communications	Yolanda Sanchez

We have reached out to and have been continuously updating our elected officials, both formally and informally, to notify them of our proposed new school. We also continue to invite them to our different events as well as our community meetings via email, in person, and phone calls. We have received a Letter of Support from State Senator Martin Sandoval and anticipate getting Letters of Support from the others and will keep them updated with our progress. Four of the seven elected officials have been invited to our community meetings via email, phone call, and in person. Our goal is to sit down with State Representative Silvana Tabares, State Representative Edward Acevedo, and State Senator Tony Munoz within the next 2-3 months. We will also invite them to attend our community meetings via email, phone calls, and in person. We have attended two Ward nights with Alderman Ricky Martinez, which are every Monday. Within the next 2-3 months we also plan to attend more of the elected officials' Ward and district nights. In the future, we plan to attend Ward nights once a month.

### 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.

Note: If preferred, this information may be provided in a table.

Table 1. Community Support

<b>Community Leader</b>	<b>Business/Organization</b>
Alicia Martinez	LA JUSTICIA
Alonzo Waheed	Gatekeepers
Alvaro Obregon	Contact for Commissioner Garcia
Amy Ostiguin	Mountain Dew
Ashley Taurina	Teddie Kossof Salon Spa
August Sallas	Lawndale Newspaper
Blanca Vargas	League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Carlos Tortolero	Mexican Fine Arts Museum
Catherine Thompson	N/A
Cesar Santoy	STUDIO ARQ
Cherri Selfridge	Elite Resort
Clemente Nicado	Nogocios Now
Courtney Mahoney	Chicago Wolves
Edward Acevedo	State Representative
Emile Cambry	BLUE1647
Erin Stephens	Cargill
Father Chuck	St. Pius Church
Franklin Parker	Taylor Business Institute
Gabriel Najera	NAJERA CONSULTING
Gary Allison	MINUTEMEAN PRESS CHICAGO
George Cardenas	Alderman, 12th Ward
George Schneider	Cargill
Gerrine Paramore	ComEd
Gerry Smith	UIC College of Engineering
Gladys Lomeli	PRIMERICA
Gloria Harper	Golden Apple
Griffin Goldin	Exelon
Guacolda Reyes	The Resurrection Project (TRP)
Hermilo Hinojosa	Boys & Girls Club
Jaime de Paulo	Little Village Chamber of Commerce (LVCC)
Jason Poblocki	TUCKAWAY GOLF COURSE
Javier Galindo	Apollo2000
Jimmy Akintonde	UJAMMA Construction
Juan Salgado	Institute Health Sciences Career Academy (IHSCA)

Julio Martinez	La Justicia
Linda Price	MESIROW FINANCIAL
Lindsay Bently	Lagunitas
Lisa Kirner	La Preferida
Luis Gutierrez	Latinos Progresando
Maria Zack-Cabadas	Exelon- SHPE
Mario Moreno	MORZEP CONSULTING, LLC
Martha Miranda	SOL-TIERRA MANAGEMENT
Martin Martinez	Radio Vive
Martin Perez	Illinois Raise Your Hand
Martin Sandoval	State Senator
Michele Vasquez	Hooters
Mike Dolce	The Archdiocese of Chicago
Mike Rodriguez	ENLACE
N/A	AWARDS & MORE
N/A	Bears
Natalia Brambila	BOOST MOBILE
N/A	Bulls
N/A	Chicago Fire
N/A	CHICAGOLAND CONSTRUCTION AND PROPERTY SERVICES, INC
N/A	Cooper Hawks Winery & Restaurant
N/A	Lettuce Entertain You
N/A	Lynfred Winery
N/A	Museum of Contemporary Art
N/A	OPTICA TROPICAL
N/A	Pacific Park
N/A	PILSEN NEIGHBORS COMMUNITY COUNCIL
N/A	Pollo Bravo
N/A	Skydeck Chicago
N/A	The ComedySportz
N/A	Troha's Shrimp Chicken
N/A	White Sox
Norman Dunbar	Farmers Insurance
Padre Arturo	Assumption Church
Pastor Paco	New Life@ Lawndale

Pastor Victor	La Villita Community Church
Patrick Harris	Imagine IT
Paul Dark	Business Marketing Association (BMA)
Paul Nowak	Iris Reading
Raul Raymundo	The Resurrection Project (TRP)
Richard Price	MESIROW FINANCIAL
Ricky Munoz	Alderman, 22nd Ward
Salvador Pedroza	Pedroza Roofing Chicago
Sena Cooper	Project Lead The Way
Shelley Dunck	Attorney-Loyola University
Silvana Tabares	State Representative
Socorro Quiroz	Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE)
Sonia Soto	YAYO INTERACTIVE
Susana Sanchez	William Blair Investment Company
Tanya Cabrera	Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT)
Tony Munoz	State Senator
Vanessa Ruiz	USS Midway Museum
Vicente Sanchez	Chief of Staff to Danny Solis (25th ward)

### Section 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.*

There were a total of six community meetings thus for all around the Little Village area. Regardless of where they were, we have them sign in at our registration table. Before we direct them to sit down we hand them a SPEA brochure and pen. Parents are greeted and thanked by the present board members, followed by a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation is in both English and Spanish. Seating was always set up in auditorium style. The purpose of our community meetings are to share with the parents and residents who and what SPEA is about. While we introduce ourselves, share our mission and how we are committed as a grassroots non-for-profit of diverse professionals to increase minorities in STEM careers by bringing SPEA to the community. In the end, we have an open discussion, raffle off gift items, thank them for coming, and individually ask if they have any other questions. Meetings tend to last up to 60 minutes depending on the questions the attendees have. Again, once everything is finished, we go around thanking people individually and making sure there wasn't any missed questions, concerns, or feedback. Snacks and water are always provided. (See appendix B: Section 1.2.b Community Meetings)

#### 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?*

There were multiple “on the ground” efforts that our design team conducted. We went door-to-door in Little Village and the surrounding areas and passed out brochures and/or flyers. We have also canvassed said communities and collected signatures from residents, businesses, and organizations within those communities that support our proposed school model. Most of our design team members were able to attend each of our outreach activities. We also invited students that graduated from the program and are now college students to show their support by coming out and helping us in our “on the ground” efforts. All representatives from our team shared SPEA’s mission and vision as well as informed the community of upcoming events. We also handed out brochures and passed out flyers to the local businesses, organizations, and community leaders. In our sharing, we also informed the listeners of the need for this type of proposed school in the neighborhood and cleared up any misconceptions about charter schools. We also asked the community what they would like to see our school provide and what they thought their children and community needed.

### 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?*

The climate in the target community towards charter schools is a mixture of positive and negative feelings. The school board, as well as district administration seem welcoming to the idea of a charter school because it brings innovative ideas in assisting to improve the educational system. They carry the attitude that there is always room for improvement and this is the time where charters are providing a solution.

Some of the concerns of the community was crime and violence, distance of travel for their children, expenses, and individualized teacher-student interactions (classroom sizes). There are also other constituents that seem to be confused about what charter schools are. As we ask residents, business owners and other leaders in the community they seem to think that it is charter schools against public schools. However, when we explain that charter schools are not here to replace public schools, but to collaborate together to enhance the educational experience to the students, they are able to express support due to the clarity provided. We inform them that bringing a charter school into their community would allow their child to be in a small class setting and maintain them in the community without having to commute long distances to attend other schools. Together with the parents, businesses, and leaders we can collaborate to improve the community.

With so many public schools closing and being replaced with charter schools, that negative feeling towards charters is unavoidable, but if teams of charter networks explain what the purpose of this educational entity is targeting to achieve, then it would not be frowned upon. There is an urgency of placing another high school in Little Village to alleviate overcrowding of students. There are only two high schools, which are Farragut and Little Village and twenty-one elementary schools. Although, there are high schools surrounding the neighborhood, there should be another high school to directly serve this large population of students. (See Appendix C: Section 1.2.b Feedback)

As the community is disheartened with being informed recently that one of the existing high school’s in the community will be closed and replaced by a charter school, they are trying to fight it. Even Alderman Munoz has stated that he will not allow that to take place. So, with all this ongoing chaos about public and charter schools, it gives us an opportunity to explain and properly inform people that are trying to understand the difference about the two types of schools.

Another approach that we are taking is that they are fighting because they like that the high school that they are trying to close has four high schools inside the building, and they share what they like about the school is that it is a small school model, which is what we are also building. We are utilizing this opportunity to explain about the high academic achievement gap with our students, the high dropout rate and low percentage of minorities in STEM careers, specifically in engineering. We have been able to incorporate all feedback into the proposal and bring a different perspective of charter school to the community.

### Dimension 1.3: Parent and Community Support

#### Section 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 community(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.*

Community Leader	Business/Organization
Alicia Martinez	LA JUSTICIA
Alonzo Waheed	Gatekeepers
Alvaro Obregon	Contact for Commissioner Garcia
Amy Ostiguin	Mountain Dew
Ashley Taurina	Teddie Kossof Salon Spa
August Sallas	Lawndale Newspaper
Blanca Vargas	League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Carlos Tortolero	Mexican Fine Arts Museum
Catherine Thompson	N/A
Cesar Santoy	STUDIO ARQ
Cherri Selfridge	Elite Resort
Clemente Nicado	Nogocios Now
Courtney Mahoney	Chicago Wolves
Edward Acevedo	State Representative
Emile Cambry	BLUE1647
Erin Stephens	Cargill
Father Chuck	St. Pius Church
Franklin Parker	Taylor Business Institute
Gabriel Najera	NAJERA CONSULTING
Gary Allison	MINUTEMEAN PRESS CHICAGO
George Cardenas	Alderman, 12th Ward

George Schneider	Cargill
Gerrine Paramore	ComEd
Gerry Smith *	UIC College of Engineering
Gladys Lomeli	PRIMERICA
Gloria Harper	Golden Apple
Griffin Goldin	Exelon
Guacolda Reyes	The Resurrection Project (TRP)
Hermilo Hinojosa	Boys & Girls Club
Jaime de Paulo*	Little Village Chamber of Commerce (LVCC)
Jason Poblocki	TUCKAWAY GOLF COURSE
Javier Galindo	Apollo2000
Jimmy Akintonde	UJAMMA Construction
Juan Salgado	Institute Health Sciences Career Academy (IHSCA)
Julio Martinez	La Justicia
Linda Price	MESIROW FINANCIAL
Lindsay Bently	Lagunitas
Lisa Kirner	La Preferida
Luis Gutierrez	Latinos Progresando
Maria Zack-Cabadas	Exelon- SHPE
Mario Moreno	MORZEP CONSULTING, LLC
Martha Miranda	SOL-TIERRA MANAGEMENT
Martin Martinez	Radio Vive
Martin Perez	Illinois Raise Your Hand
Martin Sandoval*	State Senator
Michele Vasquez	Hooters
Mike Dolce	The Archdiocese of Chicago
Mike Rodriguez	ENLACE
Norman Dunbar	Farmers Insurance
Padre Arturo	Assumption Church
Pastor Paco	New Life@ Lawndale
Pastor Victor	La Villita Community Church
Patrick Harris	Imagine IT
Paul Dark	Business Marketing Association (BMA)
Paul Nowak*	Iris Reading
Raul Raymundo	The Resurrection Project (TRP)
Richard Price	MESIROW FINANCIAL

Ricky Munoz	Alderman, 22nd Ward
Salvador Pedroza	Pedroza Roofing Chicago
Sena Cooper	Project Lead The Way
Shelley Dunck	Attorney-Loyola University
Silvana Tabares	State Representative
Socorro Quiroz*	Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE)
Sonia Soto	YAYO INTERACTIVE
Susana Sanchez	William Blair Investment Company
Tanya Cabrera	Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT)
Tony Munoz	State Senator
Vanessa Ruiz	USS Midway Museum
Vicente Sanchez	Chief of Staff to Danny Solis (25th ward)

Appendix D: 1.3.a. Letters of support from Key Community Supporters (in process)

**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.*

The leading jobs in America require potential employees to comprehend math, science and technology basics. The majority of schools in our communities do not expose youth to these fields until their late high school and/or early college careers. Parents are recognizing the need to educate their children on these principles in order to be successful future leaders; and are looking for solutions. Having a high school dedicated to this purpose is part of this solution. We will educate students, not only the basics, but provide them the tools they need to take that next step. Knowing this, majority of our parents are on board and support our cause. We have obtained approximately 3000 signatures on our petition. As shared on Section 1.1.b Community Fit, we know that Infinity is the only school in the community that has a focus on STEM. It is one of the 3 schools in the Little Village Campus that exceeds capacity and has a waiting list, while the other 3 schools struggle to reach capacity. With that being said, we have already started passing out information to our parents for them to do their letters of intent to enroll their children in our school. In the months before Tier 2 is due, we will start collecting these letters. Our team is already speaking in school meetings, such as Finkl Elementary School and Saucedo Elementary School. We anticipate that we will exceed the capacity of the school in the number of intents received. (See appendix E: Section 1.3.a Letters of Intent).

**Question #3: Elected Officials**

*List any elected officials who support the proposed school. Note: if the applicant included a table in Dimension 2.1.b., the applicant may choose to add a "letter of support" column to check if the elected official supports the proposed school.*

<b>Elected Official</b>	<b>Position/Title</b>	<b>Letter of Support</b>
<b>Ricky Martinez</b>	Alderman, 22nd Ward	In Progress
<b>George Cardenas</b>	Alderman, 12th Ward	In Progress

<b>Chuy Garcia</b>	Commissioner	In Progress
<b>Martin Sandoval</b>	State Senator	Yes
<b>Silvana Tabares</b>	State Representative	In Progress
<b>Edward Acevedo</b>	State Representative	In Progress
<b>Tony Munoz</b>	State Senator	In Progress
<b>Maria Berrios</b>	State Representative	In Progress

(See Appendix F: 1.3.a. Letters of Support from Elected Officials)

**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. Note: if the applicant included a table in Dimension 2.1.c., the applicant may choose to add a "letter of support" column to check if the community organizations or stakeholders support the proposed school.*

<b>Community Leader</b>	<b>Business/Organization</b>	<b>Letter of Support</b>
<b>Alicia Martinez</b>	LA JUSTICIA	In Progress
<b>Alonzo Waheed</b>	Gatekeepers	In Progress
<b>Amy Ostiguin</b>	Mountain Dew	In Progress
<b>Ashley Taurina</b>	Teddie Kossof Salon Spa	In Progress
<b>August Sallas</b>	Lawndale Newspaper	In Progress
<b>Blanca Vargas</b>	League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)	In Progress
<b>Carlos Tortolero</b>	Mexican Fine Arts Museum	In Progress
<b>Catherine Thompson</b>	N/A	In Progress
<b>Cesar Santoy</b>	STUDIO ARQ	In Progress
<b>Cherri Selfridge</b>	Elite Resort	In Progress
<b>Clemente Nicado</b>	Nogocios Now	In Progress
<b>Courtney Mahoney</b>	Chicago Wolves	In Progress
<b>Emile Cambry</b>	BLUE1647	In Progress
<b>Erin Stephens</b>	Cargill	In Progress
<b>Father Chuck</b>	St. Pius Church	In Progress
<b>Franklin Parker</b>	Taylor Business Institute	In Progress
<b>Gabriel Najera</b>	NAJERA CONSULTING	In Progress
<b>Gary Allison</b>	MINUTEMEAN PRESS CHICAGO	In Progress
<b>George Schneider</b>	Cargill	In Progress

<b>Gerrine Paramore</b>	ComEd	In Progress
<b>Gerry Smith</b>	UIC College of Engineering	Yes
<b>Gladys Lomeli</b>	PRIMERICA	In Progress
<b>Gloria Harper</b>	Golden Apple	In Progress
<b>Griffin Goldin</b>	Exelon	In Progress
<b>Guacolda Reyes</b>	The Resurrection Project (TRP)	In Progress
<b>Hermilo Hinojosa</b>	Boys & Girls Club	In Progress
<b>Jaime de Paulo</b>	Little Village Chamber of Commerce (LVCC)	Yes
<b>Jason Poblocki</b>	TUCKAWAY GOLF COURSE	In Progress
<b>Javier Galindo</b>	Apollo2000	In Progress
<b>Jimmy Akintonde</b>	UJAMMA Construction	In Progress
<b>Juan Salgado</b>	Institute Health Sciences Career Academy (IHSCA)	In Progress
<b>Julio Martinez</b>	La Justicia	In Progress
<b>Linda Price</b>	MESIROW FINANCIAL	In Progress
<b>Lindsay Bently</b>	Lagunitas	In Progress
<b>Lisa Kirner</b>	La Preferida	In Progress
<b>Luis Gutierrez</b>	Latinos Progresando	In Progress
<b>Maria Zack-Cabadas</b>	Exelon- SHPE	In Progress
<b>Mario Moreno</b>	MORZEP CONSULTING, LLC	In Progress
<b>Martha Miranda</b>	SOL-TIERRA MANAGEMENT	In Progress
<b>Martin Martinez</b>	Radio Vive	In Progress
<b>Martin Perez</b>	Illinois Raise Your Hand	In Progress
<b>Michele Vasquez</b>	Hooters	In Progress
<b>Mike Dolce</b>	The Archdiocese of Chicago	In Progress
<b>Mike Rodriguez</b>	ENLACE	In Progress
N/A	AWARDS & MORE	In Progress
N/A	Bears	In Progress
N/A	BOOST MOBILE	In Progress
N/A	Bulls	In Progress
N/A	Chicago Fire	In Progress
N/A	CHICAGOLAND CONSTRUCTION AND PROPERTY SERVICES, INC	In Progress
N/A	Cooper Hawks Winery & Restaurant	In Progress
N/A	Lettuce Entertain You	In Progress

N/A	LULAC	In Progress
N/A	Lynfred Winery	In Progress
N/A	Museum of Contemporary Art	In Progress
N/A	OPTICA TROPICAL	In Progress
N/A	Pacific Park	In Progress
N/A	PILSEN NEIGHBORS COMMUNITY COUNCIL	In Progress
N/A	Pollo Bravo	In Progress
N/A	Sky Deck Chicago	In Progress
N/A	The ComedySportz	In Progress
N/A	Troha's Shrimp Chicken	In Progress
N/A	White Sox	In Progress
<b>Norman Dunbar</b>	Farmers Insurance	In Progress
<b>Padre Arturo</b>	Assumption Church	In Progress
<b>Pastor Paco</b>	New Life@ Lawndale	In Progress
<b>Pastor Victor</b>	La Villita Community Church	In Progress
<b>Patrick Harris</b>	Imagine IT	In Progress
<b>Paul Dark</b>	Business Marketing Association (BMA)	In Progress
<b>Paul Nowak</b>	Iris Reading	Yes
<b>Raul Raymundo</b>	The Resurrection Project (TRP)	In Progress
<b>Richard Price</b>	MESIROW FINANCIAL	In Progress
<b>Salvador Pedroza</b>	Pedroza Roofing Chicago	In Progress
<b>Sena Cooper</b>	Project Lead The Way	In Progress
<b>Shelley Dunck</b>	Attorney-Loyola University	In Progress
<b>Socorro Quiroz</b>	Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE)	Yes
<b>Sonia Soto</b>	YAYO INTERACTIVE	In Progress
<b>Susana Sanchez</b>	William Blair Investment Company	In Progress
<b>Tanya Cabrera</b>	Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT)	In Progress
<b>Vanessa Ruiz</b>	USS Midway Museum	In Progress
<b>Vicente Sanchez</b>	Chief of Staff to Danny Solis (25th ward)	In Progress

(See Appendix G-G: 1.3.a. Letters of Support from Community in the neighborhood)



### Section 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?*

Our understanding of why parents, community members, elected officials, community organizations, leaders, and businesses are opposed to the proposed school is that there are constituents that seem to be confused about what charter schools are. As we ask residents, business owners and other leaders in the community they seem to think that it is charter schools against public schools. However, when we explain that charter schools are not here to replace public schools, but to collaborate together to enhance the educational experience to the students, they are able to express support due to the clarity provided. We inform them that bringing a charter school into their community would allow their child to be in a small class setting and maintain them in the community without having to commute long distances to attend other schools. Together with the parents, businesses, and leaders we can collaborate to improve the community.

With so many public schools closing and being replaced with charter schools, that negative feeling towards charters is unavoidable, but if teams of charter networks explain what the purpose of this educational entity is targeting to achieve, then it would not be frowned upon.

### Dimension 1.4: Continued Parent and Community Engagement

#### Section 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?*

Aside from attend Ward nights once a month, we plan to implement a community event once a month for parents, organizations, businesses, leaders, and the Board. Some of the events will also welcome student performances. Each of these events will showcase student and community success as well as address any improvements that need to be made and welcome suggestions for moving forward. We will discuss the current issues of the community and talk about ways of resolving them. We will also keep all lines of communication open, always allowing concerns, questions, and suggestions to be made on their end, and making sure that parents and the rest of the community are always aware of what is going on in and around our school that directly and indirectly impacts our students. We will also allow the community to make suggestions for types of events as well as be in charge and/or run particular events. Our team wants to make sure that parents and the rest of the community continue to have an active role in the success of the students and our school in our communities. Continuing these efforts beyond the opening of our proposed school is also desired.

#### Section 1.4.b. Vision for Long-Term Collaboration with Parents and the Community

##### Question #1: Continued Parent and Community Involvement

*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?*

SPEA will include parent and community members on the school board in order for them to actively be involved in the governance of the school and/or provide regular feedback to the Board of Directors. In order for parents and the community to share an objection or concern regarding a governing board policy or decision, administrative procedure, or practice at the school parent surveys will be developed so that we can receive regular feedback. In addition, a parent advisory council will also be established where

parents will be able to provide suggestions to the school, cite complaints, organize volunteer activities, and more. Performing these best practices will help ensure that we keep continuous close ties to the community and are always aware and knowledgeable about local priorities and policies.

### Question #2: Partnerships

*Describe the coalition of partners and collaborators that your design team has formed in the targeted community(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.*

*Note: If an identified partner will play an integral role in implementing the proposed school model (e.g. providing services or supports as part of the school day or after-school hours), please also provide a detailed memorandum of understanding (MOU), letter of intent or commitment, or draft contract between the two organizations (required).*

We have begun our partnership with City Colleges of Chicago, which will offer educational courses to our students to earn basic certifications in an engineering career. It will help our students reach the skills required in the marketplace and prepare them for careers in their field of interest. We are not only preparing them to attain a degree of their chosen engineering concentration, but also providing them with workforce skills. STARS Project Engineering Academy Charter School will also build a partnership with the University of Illinois at Chicago, College of Engineering (COE) that will offer their resources to our students. The collaboration with UIC will allow SPEA to be the pipeline for students to be prepared to pursue an engineering career. We have also established a strong partnership with the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) to provide us the resources for mentoring, school enrollment, funding, and scholarships to our students. SHPE also hosts annually Noche De Ciencias (Nights of Science), which our students can participate in, and also bring robotics club for our students to participate in the robotics competition that is held annually. We can also be recognized as a SHPE Jr. Chapter school as well as participating in the Chicago Regional Science Bowl Competition for our students to have an opportunity to compete nationally and travel to Washington D.C.

Through UIC, we are creating the pipeline for our students to achieve careers in Engineering where students will go and participate in projects and programs that are offered through the College of Engineering and student organizations such as SHPE-UIC and the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE-UIC). With the help of Gerry Smith, Director of Minority Affairs, we are also making sure that our curriculum aligns with what the university is looking for. This partnership with SHPE and NSBE will open up even more opportunities for our students, giving them access to other school that also have SHPE and NSBE chapters, also allowing them to take advantage of their resources and opportunities they provide. (See Appendix H: 1.4.b Letters of Support from Potential Partners)

### 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?*

SPEA will provide services to the community as it directly relates to the broader community. In other words, our school will offer what the community needs and evolve as the community evolves. For instance, SPEA will provide courses, seminars, and workshops relevant to the community such as debt management, budgeting, English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, and GED courses, just to name a few. These services will be extended to the families of students first, and then extended to the community residents.

## Domain 2: Academic Capacity

## Dimension 2.1: Mission, Vision, and Culture

### Section 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.*

The STARS Project Engineering Academy (SPEA) commits to provide a holistic education to students in the Little Village Community<sup>22</sup> by inspiring, challenging, and empowering future engineers, while embracing a healthy lifestyle.

SPEA will prepare our young leaders for engineering careers through a collaborative, 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. SPEA will provide vital training, fundamental knowledge and new pathways for every scholar, regardless of socioeconomic status. All students will participate in a curriculum that fully integrates core academic subjects, project- based learning, STEM- Engineering, career specific field experiences, and wellness. Our inquiry- based school design and core leadership values advocate practices that most successful schools throughout the country are using when serving minority students from under- resourced communities.

STEM education is at the heart of today's high-tech, high-skill global economy. Our next generation of leaders' -- the students of today -- must develop the critical-reasoning and problem-solving skills that will help make them the most productive in the world. In the 21st century, the country's need for a world-leading STEM workforce and a scientifically, mathematically, and technologically literate populace has become even greater, and it will continue to grow – particularly as other nations continue to make rapid advances science and technology.<sup>23</sup> Our purpose aligns with Mayor Emanuel, "Now is the time to make smart investments alongside tough decisions to ensure our students can reach their bright futures. Our students cannot wait for us to put off these difficult decisions any longer. Every child in every neighborhood in Chicago deserves access to a high-quality education that prepares them to succeed, and expanding access to rigorous STEM, IB and Fine Arts learning opportunities earlier in life helps lay the academic groundwork for their future".<sup>24</sup>

As SPEA realizes our mission to create and empower the next generation of leaders and thinkers; our vision will remain unique among other schools in the City of Chicago because not only are we preparing future global minded engineers, but students WILL learn trade and leadership skills, in order to be knowledgeable of the many different pathways there are within the workforce. We will offer basic engineering certification through the career technical education program while students use experiential classroom based learning to research science related issues and prepare for college.

The goal of our school is to increase minorities in engineering careers. We will provide the necessary connections and tools to allow high school students to develop the essential skills that will lead them to attain an engineering career. The rigorous academic and career preparatory learning environment will prepare students for post-secondary options within the field of engineering and provide them with a path

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<sup>22</sup> A thriving commercial area in Chicago's West Side that is home to the largest Mexican community in the Midwest, "Little Village Chamber of Commerce;" *Little Village Chamber of Commerce RSS*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Feb. 2015.

<sup>23</sup> "Educate to Innovate." *The White House*. The White House, n.d. Web. 10 Feb. 2015.

<sup>24</sup> "CPS CEO Byrd-Bennett Announces Nearly Twenty New IB, STEM and Fine Arts Programs Will Roll Out in Welcoming Schools Next Fall." *CPS: Press Releases*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Feb. 2015.

ready for employment. Our expectations for all students will produce high level of achievements regardless of their socio-economic disparities. We will put into place tracking systems to inform us of ongoing performance in meeting this goal. We will know that we have achieved our goal when 85% of our students choose to enroll in a rigorous post-secondary STEM-engineering related program and obtain an engineering degree (or STEM- related degree).

We will also cultivate a culture of healthy choices. Cultivating a healthy lifestyle means students realize that there **MUST BE** a balance between work and home life, and that what is put into the body has a direct correlation to the performance of the body's output. SPEA's school design is for all scholars to continue their education while obtaining fundamental knowledge to better equip their knowledge base and career choices. This allows students to dive deep and investigate, research and analyze their field(s) of interest. Although, we anticipate that there will be numerous challenges that exist with scholars who are considered at risk, SPEA's core values are designed to provide support to every scholar, so that **ALL** scholars succeed in becoming knowledgeable and well- rounded thinkers.

SPEA will open with 150 9th grade students and plan to expand one additional grade level per year until we reach our goal of 600 students. SPEA will uphold the Little Village community's children to a high academic, professional and ethical standard; while providing holistic support, academic resources and STEM technology to better prepare our future scholars to succeed in college and beyond.

#### Question #2: Educational Philosophy:

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

Despite our historical record of achievement, the United States now lags behind other nations in STEM education at the elementary and secondary levels. International comparisons of our students' performance in science and mathematics consistently place the United States in the middle of the pack or lower. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress, less than one-third of U.S. eighth graders show proficiency in mathematics and science.<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, there is a large interest and achievement gap among some groups in STEM, and African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans and women are seriously underrepresented in many STEM fields. This limits their participation in many well-paid, high-growth professions and deprives the Nation of the full benefit of their talents and perspectives.<sup>26</sup>

The proposed framework for SPEA's instructional design reflects the needs of the anticipated population and ensures all students will meet or exceed the expectations of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), College Readiness Standards (CRS) and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

The intent of the proposed instructional design is to:

(1) Provide a "quality" learning environment that will teach 9th - 12th STEM- Engineering, NGSS, CRS and CCSS;

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<sup>25</sup> "Report to the President: Prepare and Inspire: K-12 Education in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) for America's Future". *The White House*. The White House, September 2010. Web. 10 Feb. 2015.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

(2) Prepare students to enter programs at 2- and 4- year postsecondary institutions in any science, technology, engineering, and mathematics discipline; and

(3) Create critical global minded thinkers that are acquainted with the high demand for STEM- related innovation worldwide and analyze the relation of wellness and nexus in the continuum of innovative research.

SPEA's philosophy is that learning should be experiential. Students should be challenged to take on the issues of the world around them and allowed to create innovative remedies and ideas for these issues. Students should be knowledgeable of the diverse populations and actively engage in varied cultures. SPEA will provide a gateway for students to involve themselves in the world around them through the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) curriculum, healthy lifestyle activities and field learning experiences. SPEA believes that learning should be a familiar process to each child; it should also, encompass an order of succession. When a child is promoted from one grade to the next, the school must be assured that they have the accumulated vital knowledge that will lead to individual student success in the subsequent grade. In the next decade, America is going to experience a shortage in qualified engineers, scientists, and mathematics- based professionals. SPEA, through the PLTW program, is going to better equip our graduates to meet the changing landscape of the job market.

#### Section 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?*

SPEA is creating a safe culture that will be a structured and supportive school community. At SPEA we believe that this culture is essential to promote the intellectual, social and emotional development for all scholars, as well as a personalized experience. This will be accomplished by strictly following our core values which are described by the acronym HELP (Healthy, Exceptional, Leadership, and Professional):

- **Healthy:** To create a scholar with a healthy mind and body so that they may have the optimal chance to be exceptional in their school, life and community. The culture is also focused on being on the forefront of combating childhood obesity through fun and innovative technologies as well as well balanced and delicious meals.
- **Exceptional:** Our scholars will be pushed, yet guided, to become exceptional citizens of this society to create solutions to the common problems within their communities.
- **Leadership:** Our culture is focused on making leaders of our scholars as well as being a school that leads in innovative techniques for teaching, learning, as well as being at the forefront in creating a culture of health.
- **Professional:** At SPEA we strive for a culture that provides levels of professionalism (both academic and future career), which is not attained in most other schools. This professionalism is modeled and carried through from the board members to the staff to all the scholars.

We believe that the implementation of the SPEA culture is a collective enterprise that will consist of many stakeholders being responsible for overseeing the implementation of the HELP core values. SPEA administrators, faculty and staff, partners, members of the community and SPEA student families will work together in providing SPEA students with a holistic learning experience that fosters excellence and develops future leaders. The HELP core values also tie into the mission and vision of SPEA because it provides the framework to inspire, challenge and empower future engineers, while embracing a healthy lifestyle.

## 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?*

SPEA's post-secondary goal exceeds the College Readiness Standards postsecondary goal attainment for Illinois. Again, it is most likely that SPEA's graduates will not have to take remedial college classes nor become unnecessarily in debt pursuing a higher education degree.

The college completion rates are 38% and 23% respectively for the U.S. and Illinois. A recent report by ACT found that only 22% of U.S. high school students met college ready standards in all of their core subjects. These figures are even lower for African Americans and Hispanic students. In order to meet the challenge of ensuring student readiness for college or postsecondary opportunities, we have planned the following college readiness objectives:<sup>27</sup>

Secondary School Persistence: 70% of students served each year will complete the current academic year and continue in school for the next academic school year, at the next grade level

- Secondary School Graduation (regular Core 40 Diploma and STEM): 70% of seniors served will graduate with a regular Core 40/STEM diploma
- Secondary School Graduation: (AP Core 40): 40% of seniors served will graduate with an AP/STEM diploma
- Secondary School Graduation: 30% will graduate with Honors Distinction
- Secondary School Graduation: 80- 90% will pass Illinois Common Core and SPEA's STEM standards
- Secondary School Graduation: 70% will enroll in a post-secondary institution of higher education in Science, Engineering, Technology, or Mathematics disciplines

SPEA students will be assessed on their understanding of and adherence to the core values on a quarterly basis and will receive both core values and academic report cards. Each teacher will assess their students on the core values, and the average grade will be calculated and appear on the core values report card. Students will also evaluate their own performance as it pertains to the core values. At the end of each semester, students who adhere to the core values of SPEA will be rewarded.

At SPEA the school is the students'; therefore, in order for the school to become an authentic learning community it needs to be personalized in all aspects. Students will be organized in cohorts of 25 individuals assigned to a permanent school staff advisor and each cohort will have the same advisor throughout their high school career. This structure will allow the advisor to follow the entire group from start to finish to better guide the cohort on to higher education as well as accustom the cohort as to how a college or university advisor works.

The Staff will be hired to reflect and uphold these core values (H.E.L.P). The core values are what they will uphold both in their professional as well as their personal lives. Strengthening and supporting positive relationships between the staff, scholars, and community are essential to the success of the school as a whole. The staff will work as a team to set common goals for the departments as well as the students. These goals will be set with the utmost integrity and will be upheld by every staff member. This will allow the team to lead by example, better influencing the young scholars of SPEA. The team will share information on students' development as well as educational practices. By doing this any student that is falling behind or that may require a different approach to learning can be better assisted without taking

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<sup>27</sup> The Condition of College & Career Readiness. *Illinois* (n.d.): n. pag. Web.

attention off of the rest of the class. This will also allow for better personalization without singling out the student. The staff will also collaborate on integrated projects, problem solving, and activities. Once again this is done in an effort to create a more personalized experience for the student, which in turn will allow for better enrichment and development of the student's mind.

### 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.*

SPEA's goal is to provide an academically challenging and enriching curriculum and program to students in order to position them for successful progress and preparation for college and career readiness. According to research findings, "four of every 10 new college students, including half of those at two-year institutions, take remedial courses, and many employers comment on the inadequate preparation of high school graduates<sup>28</sup>." It is the goal of SPEA to develop in our students the essential college and career readiness skills as outlined in the CCSS to better prepare them for the demands and expectations of post-secondary college and career options. Throughout all students' high school career, steps will be taken to monitor learning progress and success in reaching performance targets as articulated in the CCSS as we pursue the goal of preparing our students for post-secondary programs.

Each grade level will have their own academic counselor who will assist with tracking students' academic progress. In addition to monitoring students' academic progress, the senior level academic counselor will be responsible for tracking students' acceptance letters at four and two year programs as well as specialist programs. SPEA desires to establish an alumni support committee to assist the senior level academic counselor with monitoring the persistence rates. This team will gather the necessary data of the percentage of students who return to any post-secondary institution for their second year. A primary goal of the alumni support committee will be to maintain a constant connection between the high school and our graduates' post-secondary institutions.

We would also expect that, in addition to assisting with tracking persistence data, the committee offer our graduates other supports to provide a professional bridge to the career world through mentorship programs, networking activities and internship opportunities. We hope that our measuring student progress efforts, tracking students' acceptance letters and persistence rates, and instituting support programs to assist our students with transitioning to the career world will provide our graduates with the opportunity to be prepared for postsecondary training without needing remediation.

### Question #4: Student Profile:

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

The school will be located in the Little Village community and provide services to Latino and other underserved urban youth within the Chicago metropolitan area to increase the percentage of minorities in engineering careers. There are only two high schools that serve Little Village students and twenty-one elementary schools, five of which are labeled "at risk." In the southern part of the community there is a lack of public schooling for the youth in the area. Between 49% and 58% of the youth are living below the poverty line. Little Village is the second highest revenue to the City of Chicago (compared to downtown Michigan Avenue), yet it is an area with high gang activity, low income and educational

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<sup>28</sup> N.p.: n.p., n.d. *A Blueprint for Reform: The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. U.S. Department of Education, Mar. 2010. Web. 19 Feb. 2015.



attainment, and has a large youth population that is potentially placed at risk taking all the factors into consideration.<sup>29</sup>

Little Village and the surrounding neighborhoods lack a charter school dedicated to the dynamics of engineering. The school will service as an engineering network, which will help increase the population of minorities to succeed in engineering-related fields. Currently fewer than 12% baccalaureate engineering graduates in this country are underrepresented minorities. Academic achievement has declined within minorities in college readiness. Only about 35% of minorities are college ready.<sup>30</sup> There is also a report made in 2010 that only 9% of certain minorities are ready for STEM workforce. SPEA's interest is to provide awareness about STEM careers to the whole community.

Students will be able to enhance their career opportunities in areas in which they have been historically underrepresented by having quality education in science, technology, and engineering. SPEA's goal is to provide the necessary resources to help students to enroll and successfully complete an engineering career and engage parents to seek information about engineering careers for their child. There is a lack of educational preparation for STEM workforce by minorities that troubles our community. This raises concerns and awareness that is calling for leadership within our communities to work with minority youth in helping them to be better prepared for the challenging workforce.

#### Question #5: Monitoring Non-Academic Needs and Growth:

*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 and by whom. Who will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of these efforts?*

SPEA's overarching goal concerning supporting the non-academic needs and growth of our students is promoting healthy social emotional development. When students have developed healthy social emotional skills they are better able to manage their emotions, establish positive and rewarding relationships, and maintain social emotional health. Social emotional health contributes to student academic and non-academic success. According to research findings, interventions that promote social emotional development deliver a broad range of benefits for schools<sup>31</sup>:

9% decrease in conduct problems, such as classroom misbehavior and aggression

- 10% decrease in emotional distress, such as anxiety and depression
- 9% improvement in attitudes about self, others, and school
- 23% improvement in social and emotional skills
- 9% improvement in school and classroom behavior
- 11 % improvement in achievement test scores

Therefore, SPEA's approach to monitoring non-academic needs and growth will be strategic. There will be a targeted focus on the following performance indicators: attendance, freshman on-track progress

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<sup>29</sup> Originally We Had Intended On Working With An Organization Committed To Providing "Safe", Spaces For Children. These "Safe Havens" Were Intended To Deter Kids From Gang Violence,, Activity, And Membership. Additionally, These Spaces Attempt To Provide An Outlet For Childhood, and Development: Safety, Comfort, And Sense Of Community. To Date, We Have Altered Our Focus, Due. *Moving Towards Revitalization and Safety: An Analysis of Little Village Sponsor: Enlace Chicago* Luis G. Ana L. Bricieda R. Kristin G. Refugio M. GEO 242 March 2012 (n.d.): n. pag. Web.

<sup>30</sup> Reports, Research, Educator Reports, Policy Reports, and Issue/information Briefs. *Issue/Information Briefs Do Race/ethnicity-based Student Achievement Gaps Grow over Time?* (n.d.): n. pag. Web.

<sup>31</sup> *Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Student Benefits:* (n.d.): n. pag. Web.

towards graduation, and behavior. SPEA’s goals concerning these performance indicators are reflected in the following table:

Table 2.1

<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Average Daily Attendance Rate	95% or higher
Freshman On-Track Rate	90% or higher
Behavioral Referrals	10% or below

To determine whether the goals are being met, SPEA plans to establish a behavioral health team (BHT). The BHT will be a school-based group of school counselors, a psychologist, a community mental health provider, and administrators. The BHT will address the needs and problems of at-risk students and helps to foster an environment that promotes healthy social emotional development on an ongoing process.

The BHT’s objective will be to:

- Meet biweekly to **collaborate in finding solutions** to the problems of at-risk students and families
- Provide a **web of support** for students exhibiting social, emotional, or behavioral difficulties
- Deliver **Tier 2 and Tier 3 Interventions** that address students’ social, emotional, and behavioral needs
- **Assess student needs** and match them to appropriate intervention(s)
- **Facilitate referrals** to school and community-based resources to further support student needs
- Collaborate with school personnel and community-based organizations to **coordinate services and supports**
- Collect, interpret, and report on **data** to improve quality of services
- **Advocate** for the student and **monitor their progress**

When the team receives a request for assistance (RFA) for a student<sup>32</sup>, the team will put into place a tracking mechanism that will contain the following information: referral, student information, data gathering, care team review, and assignment to school based activities and community based interventions. The social worker will meet with the student based on the RFA that was completed for the student. Based on the data compiled in the tracking tool, analysis of the data and types of services will be recommended (Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3):

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<sup>32</sup> Students who will be referred to the BHT are those with social/emotional issues that are negatively impacting academic and social functioning at school, may have anger coping challenges, are/were exposed to trauma, and students who demonstrate other behavioral health problems (ex: depression or anxiety, substance use, family or peer issues, self-harm, avoidance or apathy, or acute changes in behavior).

- Tier 1 interventions include rules posted, pass required for hall, stopping students when you see them in hall, raise your hand to speak, etc.
- Tier 2 interventions offers small group support for students with a pattern of impulsive and reactive aggression or exposed to traumatic events demonstrating clinical symptoms
- Tier 3 interventions provide individual services to address the specific needs derived from the RFA

Additional services provided to the student may include: counseling support, referral to school-based community partner or external agency, mentoring, pregnant/parenting, case management, substance abuse and crisis intervention.

#### **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.*

Students will build positive relationships with their fellow peers, staff, and community through team activities, shared projects, and by involvement with their community. Some of the team activities will be health focused such as participating in Farrell's Kick Boxing program, a program that was developed by Lance Farrell — a long-time taekwondo competitor and teacher — geared to specifically combat obesity and to help people develop healthy lifestyle habits by incorporating the fat-burning, strengthening and endurance building aspects of competitive martial arts training. At SPEA we believe that a healthy mind and body are the base for a successful scholar. This program will help develop focus, discipline, and greater integrity in our scholars.

Shared projects will include the development and maintenance of at least two school gardens. According to the findings from the National Gardening Association's (NGA) survey, *The Impact of Home and Community Gardening in America*, there are great benefits of growing one's own produce. Some of those benefits include improved quality, taste and cost savings<sup>33</sup>. As a way to foster conscientious food selection and eating habits, students will maintain and eat the food grown in the school's gardens.

Community projects can and will be directly connected to the classes offered at SPEA, particularly to senior design. Senior design requires the scholar to use what they have learned throughout their years at SPEA in order to find a solution to a real life issue. Students will attain community services as part of their graduate portfolio to acquire civic orientation and develop leadership skills. All of these projects in turn will help to create a well-rounded scholar in preparation for higher education. SPEA will also provide workshops to address life skills, time management, peer pressure, and how to deal with bullying, drugs and gangs.

#### **Sports, Competitions, and Clubs:**

Sports will also be a part of the SPEA culture as a form of the students' experiential learning. Teachers will be encouraged to coach certain sports in which they have a good understanding of it. In order to further involve the community as well as the parents, volunteers will be invited to join the coaching staff for the sport(s) of their expertise. Some of the sports we will provide include, but will not be limited to: track and field, cross-country, basketball, baseball/softball, soccer, and wrestling. Students will build positive relationships with their fellow peers, staff, and community through team activities.

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<sup>33</sup> "National Gardening Association:" *Garden Market Research*. N.p., n.d. Web. 23 Feb. 2015.

Along with sports, and as a part of their experiential learning, there will be clubs and competitions. SPEA acknowledges that learning takes place both in and outside of the classroom. Clubs help students to foster organizational, interpersonal, communication, planning, critical thinking, financing, and evaluation skills<sup>34</sup>. Clubs also provide students the opportunity to develop effective interpersonal skills as supported by Illinois State Board of Education Social Emotional Learning standards<sup>35</sup>. The clubs will be led by staff volunteers and include, but will not be limited to: Spanish club, decathlon, National Honors Society, mathematics club, chemistry club, and chess club to name a few. Competitions will be held within the school. These competitions will be for all levels and will encourage the students to use the skills and knowledge they have acquired as well as find solutions to everyday issues.

The proposed activities to promote students' social, emotional, and physical health will be funded through our fundraisers, private donations, as well as collegiate donations. Fundraising will also be a way for the students to practice our core values HELP. Our core values are something we hold each and every person involved with SPEA accountable for. We believe that the HELP core values are what will differentiate us from other schools and they are something that each and every person from the board members/ design team to the school's maintenance crew to the students, themselves, will uphold in both their professional and personal lives.

#### 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.*

SPEA's approach to behavior and safety will consist of putting into place structures that can empower our scholars, enhance our school's culture, and transform the overall learning environment. The student discipline and classroom management approach will be based on the five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective and behavioral competencies identified by Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). The definitions of the five competency clusters for students are:

- **Self-awareness:** The ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior
- **Self-management:** The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations
- **Social awareness:** The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports
- **Relationship skills:** The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups
- **Responsible decision making:** The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others<sup>36</sup>

By adopting the CASEL methodology as our approach to behavior and safety, students will be able to effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive

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<sup>34</sup> "After School Clubs: Positive or Negative Impact on Children." [123HelpMe.com](http://123HelpMe.com). 23 Feb 2015.

<sup>35</sup> "Illinois Learning Standards." *For Social/Emotional Learning (SEL)*. N.p., n.d. Web. 22 Feb. 2015.

<sup>36</sup> "SEL Competencies." *CASEL*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2015.

relationships, and make responsible decisions that will lead to challenging, engaging, and meaningful learning experiences.<sup>37</sup>

The CASEL framework is also aligned to the core values (HELP). SPEA's core values, along with the SEL competencies, will establish clear school-wide expectations for our students and create a learning environment with positive behavioral supports. The core values and expectations will be clearly posted throughout the school, communicated to students via various verbal and non-verbal formats, and modeled by teachers to help our students to better understand what the desired behaviors are. The overall goal to be achieved is to put into practice discipline policies and practices designed to teach appropriate behaviors, restore relationships, and promote a safe learning environment for all. SPEA's plan to supporting positive behavior will include having monthly recognitions for students that uphold the core values such as family and community breakfasts and/or luncheons, naming upstanding students on a "wall of fame", providing certificates of recognition, and giving students of distinction STARS "good behavior" T-shirt (that can be worn in lieu of the uniform for a month).

We expect to leverage positive behavioral systems and supports more often over responding to inappropriate behaviors, however, in cases in which behaviors are exhibited that are contrary to the core values (HELP) the course of action taken will follow SPEA's Code of Conduct (See Appendix I: 2.1.b Promotion, Graduation and Discipline Policy).

#### Question #8: Behavioral Interventions and Supports:

*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.*

SPEA has developed a Code of Conduct, which best supports our mission, outlines all behavioral expectations and tiered layers of consequence, full due process, and is in full compliance with IDEA<sup>38</sup>. This code applies to actions of students during school hours, before and after school, while on school property, while traveling on school vehicles funded by SPEA, while participating on any team or group representing the school or attending such an activity, at all school-sponsored events, and while using the school network or any computer or IT device. This code also applies to actions of students before or after school hours and off school property if those actions disrupt the learning environment in school.

Behavioral prevention and interventions supports consist of merits and demerits. Merits will be given when students perform above and beyond in the areas of our school values: Health, Exceptional, Leadership, and Professional. Demerits are given for a rule infraction. A student can be assigned 1-4 demerits for a rule infraction. Any infraction deserving more than 4 demerits, such as gross disrespect to staff or other students, results in the student being sent to the school leader. It is up to the teacher's discretion as to the number of demerits. Anytime a student earns 4 demerits in a two-week period, he/she is issued a two-hour detention. If students earn more than 4 demerits in a two week cycle, they need to serve one two-hour detention for every 4 demerits earned.

SPEA intends to establish clear rules and expectations that hold scholars to high behavioral standards and are consistently enforced throughout the school (i.e. at lunch, in halls, in classrooms). The goal is to administer appropriate consequences for small issues in order to minimize more significant negative

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<sup>37</sup> "SEL Competencies." CASEL. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2015.

<sup>38</sup> The Code of Conduct is located in Appendix I: 2.1.b Promotion, Graduation and Discipline Policy.

behaviors. In cases where significant levels of negative behaviors may occur the following additional disciplinary consequences may take place:

- **Student Conference/Behavior Contract**-Student is informed of consequences that will be recommended or assigned if inappropriate behavior continues
- **Parent Conference**-Parent is informed by phone or in person with conference documented, incident explained, and future consequences reviewed
- **Good Standing**-Students who break school rules or fail to serve the penalty for breaking them may lose their good standing status at school
- **In-School Suspension**-For particular infractions warrant consequences that are more severe than demerits or detention, but less severe than out-of-school suspension
- **Out-Of-School Suspension**-At SPEA, we believe it is very important to keep students in school as much as possible. However, some severe behaviors will result in a student being suspended from school
- **Expulsions**-A student who is expelled will be subject to due process under Illinois state law
- **Discipline of Students with Special Needs**- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and related regulations require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found eligible for special education services or who the school district knows or has reason to know might be eligible for such services

**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?*

The approach to be taken to monitor the progress of behavioral interventions will be both safe and civil. Behavioral intervention supports will be monitored and evaluated by the CASEL competencies framework.<sup>39</sup> “Research shows that SEL can have a positive impact on school climate and promote a host of academic, social, and emotional benefits for students.”<sup>40</sup> Key indicators to be considered when monitoring and evaluating our students’ behavior will include the following:

- **Academic Performance:** Increased achievement scores percentages and higher grades
- **Improved Attitudes and Behaviors:** Greater motivation to learn, deeper commitment to school, increased time devoted to schoolwork, and better classroom behavior
- **Fewer Negative Behaviors:** Decrease in disruptive class behavior, noncompliance, aggression, delinquent acts, and disciplinary referrals
- **Reduced Emotional Distress:** Fewer reports of student depression, anxiety, stress, and social withdrawal.<sup>41</sup>

The Dean of Students and school assigned social workers will be responsible for monitoring discipline according to these indicators using multiple data sets (such as standardized test scores, grade reports, attendance and behavioral referrals, teacher observations, individual behavioral assessments and students’ behavioral reflections, to name a few).

**Question #10: Communication of Behavioral Expectations:**

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

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<sup>39</sup> "SEL Competencies." *CASEL*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2015.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>41</sup> "SEL Competencies." *CASEL*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2015.

SPEA's overall philosophy regarding communicating the school's behavioral expectations is, "It takes a Village to raise a child." With this African proverb, we recognize that multiple stakeholders must be involved in order to provide a safe school environment that supports student learning. SPEA administrators, faculty, staff, parents, and students play a key role in promoting the core values (HELP).

The behavioral expectations for all SPEA students are outlined in The Student Code of Conduct (SCC). The SCC has been designed to provide a positive and safe environment for student learning. The goal of this policy is to provide students with the necessary tools to develop self-management before leaving our doors on their way to college and life beyond<sup>42</sup>.

To communicate the expectations outlined in the SCC to all stakeholders, SPEA plans to have an orientation meeting for incoming families. Through this platform, administrators, faculty, and staff will share school expectations to parents and students. At the same time, parents are encouraged to share educational hopes that they have for the school in order to help them to support their child(ren) as learners. To increase the accessibility of the SCC, this document will be written in both English and Spanish and can be accessed online or via hard copies available upon request in the main office.

SPEA intends to make constant efforts to foster partnerships between the school and parents. One means to do so, is to provide parents and students a Partnership in Student Success Contract. This contract will reiterate the expectations outlined in the SCC and parents and students will sign off on the contract to express their willingness to collaborate with the school in promoting scholars' success.

SPEA acknowledges that partnerships between the school and families will have a positive impact on students' success. This success will not only be found in school, but throughout SPEA scholars' lives. The collaboration between school and home will be hinged on the three R's:

- **Respect:** All members of the SPEA community will be respected for the role that they play in promoting scholars' success
- **Responsibility:** Safe and meaningful learning experiences are the responsibility of all
- **Relationships:** Relationships formed between school and home build trust and sustain partnerships

Collective efforts provided by multiple stakeholders will help meet the needs of all SPEA scholars.

#### 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?*

A student who is suspended or expelled will be subject to due process under Illinois state law.<sup>43</sup> According to the Illinois Compilation of School Discipline Laws and Regulations (2014), students can be suspended for gross disobedience or misconduct. For gross disobedience or misconduct towards staff members or students (including, but not limited to, bullying, defiance, or skipping school) or does not appropriately participate in class, s/he will be placed in In-school suspension (ISS).

However, some severe behaviors, because of their severity, will result in a student being suspended from school. Infractions that may warrant an Out-of-school (OSS) suspension include, but are not limited to:

- Gross disrespect of a fellow student

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<sup>42</sup> The Code of Conduct is located in Appendix I: 2.1.b Promotion, Graduation and Discipline Policy.

<sup>43</sup> "Legislation and Regulations." *Mental and Physical Disability Law Reporter* 22.4 (1998): 524-28. Web.

- Gross disrespect of faculty, staff, or visitor
- Damaging, destroying, or stealing personal or school property or attempting to do so (including graffiti)
- Using or possessing tobacco products
- Committing sexual, racial, or any form of harassment or intimidation
- Using abusive, vulgar, or profane language
- Making verbal or physical threats, empty or otherwise
- Setting off false alarms
- Gambling
- Serious forgery, plagiarism, or cheating
- Lying
- Leaving school grounds without permission
- Repeated offenses for which the students has already earned in school suspension

Students who receive OSS are prohibited from school and all school activities and a prohibition from being present on school grounds.

Expulsions may be granted to students who are guilty of gross disobedience or misconduct, including gross disobedience or misconduct perpetuated by electronic means and students who is determined to have brought one of the following objects to school, any school sponsored activity or event, or any activity or event that bears a reasonable relationship to school shall be expelled for a period of not less than one year:

- A firearm
- A knife, brass knuckles or other knuckle weapon regardless of its composition, a billy club, or another object if used or attempted to be used to cause bodily harm, including "look alikes" of any firearm

Expulsion or suspension shall be construed in a manner consistent with the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.]. To expel a student, parents have to be notified and requested to appear at a meeting of the Illinois Compilation of School Discipline Laws and Regulations or with a hearing officer. Decisions to expel students are made by the Executive Director and may be appealed to the Board. The board's decision is final and will be communicated to the parent(s) and the student directly and in writing within 48 hours of the meeting. For more information regarding SPEA's ISS and OSS policies (See Appendix I: 2.1.b Promotion, Graduation and Discipline Policy).

At SPEA, we believe it is very important to employ corrective, instructive, and/or restorative responses to misbehavior prior to the use of exclusionary discipline via positive behavioral supports that are aligned to CASEL and giving merits to students who perform above and beyond in the areas of our school values (HELP): Health, Exceptional, Leadership, and Professional.

#### 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.*

Students who have been found to have a disability that impacts upon a major life activity, as defined under §504 of the Rehabilitation Act, are, generally, also entitled to increased procedural protections prior to imposing discipline that will result in the student's removal for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or where there is a pattern of short term removals exceeding ten (10) school days in a given year. The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of students with disabilities:



1. The IEP for every student eligible for special education or related services shall indicate whether the student can be expected to meet the regular discipline code of the school or whether the code should be modified to address the student's individual needs.
2. Students with disabilities may be excluded from their programs for up to ten (10) school days to the extent that such sanctions would be applied to all students. Before a student with a disability can be excluded from his/her program for more than ten (10) consecutive school days in a given school year or subjected to a pattern of removal constituting a "change of placement", building administrators, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team will meet to determine the relationship between the student's disability and behavior (Manifestation Determination). In most instances, during disciplinary exclusions exceeding ten (10) school days in a single school year, the student shall have the right to receive services identified as necessary by the Team to provide him/her with a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion.
3. If building administrators, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school may discipline the student in accordance with the procedures and penalties applicable to all students but will continue to provide a free appropriate public education to those students with IEPs. The student's IEP or 504 Team will identify the services necessary to provide a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion, review any existing behavior intervention plan or, where appropriate, conduct a functional behavioral assessment.
4. If building administrators, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the conduct giving rise to disciplinary action was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will not be subjected to further removal or exclusion from the student's current educational program based on that conduct (except for conduct involving weapons, drugs, or resulting in serious bodily injury to others) until the IEP or 504 Team develops, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent to, a new placement or unless the District obtains an order from a court or from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) authorizing a change in the student's placement. The student's team shall also review, and modify as appropriate, any existing behavior intervention plan or arrange for a functional behavioral assessment.
5. If a student with a disability possesses or uses illegal drugs, sells or solicits a controlled substance, possesses a weapon, or causes serious bodily injury to another on school grounds or at a school function, the District may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to forty-five (45) school days. A court or BSEA Hearing Officer may also order the placement of a student who presents a substantial likelihood of injury to self or others in an appropriate interim setting for up to forty-five (45) school days.

#### 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.*

SPEA acknowledges that partnerships between the school and families will have a positive impact on students' success. The collaboration between school and home is hinged on the three R's: *Respect, Responsibility* and *Relationships*. Therefore, parent engagement is critical to communicate the school's mission, vision, and culture to our families and to actively involve parents in their child(ren)'s education.

SPEA's parent engagement plan will include the following:

- **Ongoing Parent Meetings:** SPEA plans to have an orientation meeting for incoming families to discuss school/home expectations to support scholars' learning. In addition to this initial

meeting, there will be ongoing parent meetings and workshops to help parents to support their child as a learner that are aligned to the Core values (HELP)

- **Core Values (HELP) Workshops:** SPEA will offer workshops to both our parents and community that are aligned to the core values such as healthy cooking and living, fitness classes, speakers who present talks about various fields in engineering, understanding NEXT Generation Standards and related assessments and hands on workshops with partnering STEM related museums and organization-such as STEM nights to name a few.
- **SPEA Parent Activities (Required):** Activities required for all SPEA parents/guardians include the annual open house, two out of four parent/teacher conferences, and participation in at least one out of the four SPEA fundraisers per year.
- **School/Home Correspondences:** Parents/guardians will be informed of school happenings through flyers, brochures, pamphlets handed out at different community organizations and businesses, social media pages (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and newsletters. All correspondences will be written/spoken in Spanish and in English. Hearing/vision impaired needs will also to be addressed.

We are confident that SPEA's parent engagement plan will bridge the gap between the school and home and provide resources for our families to better support their child(ren) for academic success.

#### 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?*

A critical need that we see in order to support parents with ways to support their child as a learner is to provide adult learning opportunities for parents and caretakers. Many of the parents within the community we desire to serve may not have higher education degrees and/or may be unaware of STEM related education expectations. As a result, although willing, they may not know how to support their child to be successful in STEM related learning.

To address this issue, SPEA staff members will provide classes in English language learner (ELL), computer technology, understanding the NEXT Generation Science Standards, and math and science related continuing education courses. SPEA will also partner with external organizations to provide services and courses to our parents in the areas of college and career preparation for students and STEM education.

Programs and services proposed will be covered through sponsorships and fundraising efforts. We are confident, that through the generosity of external sponsors, SPEA will provide learning opportunities for not only our students, but our parents/caretakers as well.

## Dimension 2.2: Demonstrated Track Record

### Section 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.*

In order to establish a successful school, design teams need extraordinary potential to perform in several key areas—educational leadership, finance and operations, curriculum and instruction, governance and talent management, and community engagement. SPEA’s board members have a shared mission, values and commitment that have demonstrated strong skills in these respective areas.

Our design team consists of committed members who are capable of performing exceptional academic expertise. We have a diverse board team that includes a variety of former educators and current educators. The founding Executive Director for SPEA, Yolanda Sanchez, who has an exemplary track record as an educational leader, will head the design team. Upon authorization, all members of the design team will serve on the Governing Board of the school.

(See Appendix J: 2.2.a Design Team Member Resume) for the resumes of design team members, all of whom are proposed to be on the Founding Board or become full- time staff. The table below lists all members of the design team and Founding Board, their capacity to provide instructional leadership and academic expertise, and the role that they will play in the school:

Table 2.2 Design Team Experience & Roles

Design Team Member	Areas Of Academic Expertise	Role in School	Contribution to Proposal
Yolanda Sanchez  <i>Educational Leader</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>President/Executive director of STARS Project, manage and supervise all operations, Execute and educational program to increase minorities in STEM careers.</li> <li>President of Operations at American Campaigns</li> <li>Science teacher at Institute Health Sciences Career Academy, co- lead in creating Chemistry Curriculum, Health Science Curriculum, and Liaison for bringing CPS- Nursing Program</li> <li>President of Operations at American Campaigns</li> <li>Former Science teacher at Benito Juarez Academy high school, Biology and forensic science teacher and Earth space science team leader</li> <li>Golden Apple Teacher of distinguished 2010</li> </ul>	Founding Board President/Executive Director	Dimension 1: Parent and Community Engagement and Support;  Dimension 2: Academic Capacity;  Dimensions 3: Operational Capacity and  Dimensions 4: Economic Soundness
Gladys Lomeli  <i>Specializes in Personal Finance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional leader in Primerica Inc. educate clients on financial principles, compile clients financial data, analyze</li> <li>Mathematics teacher at Irene Dugan Alternative High School</li> <li>Instructor at Spanish Coalition For Jobs at National Latino Education Institute, taught computer classes</li> </ul>	Founding Board Treasurer	Dimension 1: Parent and Community Engagement and  Dimension 4: Economic Soundness
Angelica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Horizon Science Academy- PTO Board</li> </ul>	Founding Board	Dimension 1:

<p>Negrete</p> <p>PTO Parent</p>	<p>Member (Secretary), Fundraising, Market Day Co-Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mckinley Advisory Committee-Community involvement, Community petitions, Attending Community Meetings</li> <li>● Aquinas Literacy Center-ESL Tutor,Workshops</li> <li>● Namaste Charter School-PTO Board Member (Secretary), Fundraising, Library Assistant, Classroom Volunteer, Parent Involvement and communications, Office Volunteer, Community Task Force Committee</li> <li>● Nathaniel Greene Elementary School-Parent Mentor, Light office work, Parent Patrol, Teacher Assistant</li> <li>● Blessed Sacrament Parish-Catechist Teacher,Virtus Training, Volunteering in Church Events</li> </ul>	<p>Secretary</p>	<p>Parent and Community Engagement and Support</p>
<p>William D Gentile</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Professional school counselor at Little Village High School and Austin High School, Member of Instructional Leadership, School improvement, Social Emotional Learning, Administration council. Data Analyst, Collaborate with community resource, and Technical Coordinator</li> <li>● Professional school counselor at North Chicago Community High School, provide individual and group counseling working with various ethnic backgrounds, proficient with student information Systems and Naviance maintaining student records</li> <li>● Commissioned Officer, Lieutenant with U.S. Coast Guard, Education service officer providing counseling to subordinates in academic and career development</li> </ul>	<p>Operational Leader</p>	<p>Dimension 3: Operational Capacity</p>
<p>Paul Dark</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● President at Benefit Management Associates</li> <li>● Sales Executive at Rush-Prudential Health Plans</li> <li>● Territorial Sales Manager at COCA-COLA USA</li> </ul>	<p>Founding Board Vice-President</p>	<p>Dimensions 3: Operational Capacity and</p> <p>Dimensions 4: Economic Soundness</p>
<p><i>Monica Swope</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Curriculum Consultant and Developer for Learning Dimensions</li> <li>● Adjunct Faculty Member for Loyola University</li> </ul>	<p>Academic Consultant</p>	<p>Dimension 2: Academic Capacity</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former Social Science Specialist, Instructional Coach-Team Lead, Instructional Coach-Citywide for Chicago Public Schools</li> <li>• Former educator-History Division, Talent Development Learning Team, Co-sponsor for student participants of the Minority Student Achievement Network, Executive Member of the African American Faculty Advisory Council for Oak Park and River Forest High School</li> </ul>		
<p><i>Sonia Soto</i></p> <p><b><i>Governance / Talent Management</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology Director at Society for Vascular Surgery, oversee technology project plans and plan and develop of information system.</li> <li>• Freelance/contractor at Yayo Interactive, Business development and client consulting and Database Development</li> <li>• Management information System director at American Invsco</li> <li>• Internet and Marketing Manager at First International Digital</li> <li>• Experience in project Management, programming and software knowledge.</li> <li>• Network Engineer at True Value Company</li> <li>• Computer class instructor/Course designer at CEDA Southwest</li> <li>• Network Engineer Edward Don &amp; Company</li> <li>• Help Desk &amp; PC Support Technician at Cook County Government, Bureau of Information and Technology</li> </ul>	Founding Board IT Director	Dimension 3: Operational Capacity
David Martinez	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adobe Experience Manager and Java Developer for Isobar</li> <li>• Java Developer for Siteworx</li> <li>• Java Developer for Valence Health,</li> <li>• Software Developer for Lifescan</li> <li>• Math and reading instructor for Sylvan Learning Center</li> <li>• Regional Recruiter for Santa Barbara County Education Office</li> <li>• Math Program Coordinator for San Luis Coastal Unified School District</li> <li>• Online Instructor for MathTV.com</li> <li>• Network Administrator for Space Information Laboratories, Vandenberg Air Force Base</li> <li>• Outreach Advisor for Upward Bound</li> </ul>	STEM Consultant	Dimension 2: Academic Capacity

<i>Omar Espinoza</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chartwells- Executive Sous Chef</li> <li>• Eataly Chicago- Sous Chef</li> <li>• Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital – Lead Catering Cook</li> <li>• Food Life Chicago - Cook</li> <li>• Goose Island Brewery Chicago - Cook</li> <li>• Wow Café &amp; Wingery - Cook</li> <li>• The American Club – Wisconsin – Cook</li> </ul>	Healthy Lifestyle Consultant	Dimension 1: Parent and Community Engagement
<i>Ana Castillo</i> <b>Community Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Math Department Chair/ Teacher for World Language HS</li> <li>• Volunteer Board Member for World Language HS</li> <li>• Senior Vice President for STARS Project</li> </ul>	Math Curriculum Development	Dimension 2: Academic Capacity
<i>Jeff Heredia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant Principal – Ira F. Aldridge Elementary School</li> <li>• New Leaders Resident Principal – Spry Community Links High School</li> <li>• Curriculum Specialist at Sullivan House Alternative High School</li> <li>• Social Studies Department Chair/Teacher at Sullivan House Alternative High School</li> </ul>	Academic Leader	Dimension 2: Academic Capacity
<i>Qetsiyah Yisra’el</i> <b>Curriculum &amp; Instruction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formerly: Tutor/ volunteer mathematics in class</li> <li>• Member of Hispanic Engineering National Achievement Awards Corporation, helped students in their technology projects</li> <li>• Member of Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers at University of Illinois at Chicago</li> <li>• Ronald E McNair scholar</li> <li>• Member of American Society of Mechanical Engineers</li> </ul>	CTE Programmer Coordinator	Dimension 2: Academic Capacity

Members of the design team share a commitment to increase the number of minority students graduating from college and pursuing engineering careers. To do so, SPEA plans to implement an innovative approach to increase students’ engagement. The team communicates weekly within working groups and meets as a complete group at least once per month. Design team members contribute with their expertise with frequent correspondence between all work sessions and meetings to implement their knowledge in forming parts of the school design.

**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.*

The design of SPEA is based upon many successful models of schools that serve low- income students of color and prepares them for college. Lead founder, Yolanda Sanchez, has studied the Latino community

and other charter high schools in the city of Chicago. Yolanda Sanchez was inspired to create a charter high school in the Latino community of Little Village to service students in the community and provide resources to our SPEA scholars. The model of SPEA is based upon best practices employed at highly successful schools across the city of Chicago, including the Noble Network of Schools.

SPEA has strong leadership team members that will implement a charter school model successfully. Yolanda Sanchez has experience of continually collaborating with schools and educational programs to increase minorities' academic success. For the past seven years she has developed relationships with educational programs, community organizations, institutions and businesses to increase awareness of the importance of education. She has collaborated with University of Illinois at Chicago and Benito Juarez Academy to offer services to students. Ms. Sanchez contributed her leadership roles as a teacher in high schools and helped bring resources to the students. As a Golden Apple Teacher, working as a Biology and Forensic Science teacher in one of the high schools in the city of Chicago, she has been able to bring a CPS nursing program to a school and create a Health Science curriculum.

In addition to being modeled after successful schools that serve low-income students of color and having a strong leadership team headed by an experienced Executive Director (who has worked with schools and educational programs to increase minorities' academic success), SPEA is the scion of the non-for-profit, STARS Project. STARS Project began operation in 2010 (and evolved and received non-for-profit status as STARS Project Academy in 2013). STARS Project was a tutoring and mentoring program for middle school students. Students who participated in the program received academic support and demonstrated gains academically as a result of the one-on-one tutoring. (See Appendix K: 2.2.a Data Demonstrating Academic Track Record) for data that demonstrates academic increase of students who participated in STARS Project.

## Section 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).*

A strong leadership team is essential to driving achievement for all students and opening and managing a high quality school. SPEA will be led by the Executive Director, and followed by the Academic Leader, Dean of Discipline, Director of Community Engagement Liaison, Development Leader, and Student Support Services Coordinator. Deans will work together with the leadership team to execute efficient results to enhance academic growth of our students. All of these positions have similar requirements, which are:

- Committed to SPEA's mission and vision and share the same beliefs that all students can achieve at the highest academic levels
- Deep instructional knowledge and thoughtfulness, willing and able to work across all core subjects
- Excellent organizational skills
- Data- driven orientation and focus on results
- Strong communication skills with individuals of varying backgrounds
- Demonstrate self- awareness, open minded, and humility
- The ability to thrive in a fast- paced, entrepreneurial environment; flexible, able to work autonomously as well as take direction as needed
- The ability to effectively communicate a strong sense of ownership and personal responsibility, commitment to developing leadership within staff
- Demonstrate excellence in sharing the vision and mission of SPEA's core values

The design team/founding board members considered and supported the candidacy of Yolanda Sanchez as SPEA's Executive Director. It was the team's and board member's priority to hire an highly qualified executive director with a demonstrated success track record in enhancing the academic and professional growth of minority students and leading them to be college ready. Yolanda Sanchez is an exceptional leader that meets the requirements established by the design team and founding board members.

Please see Ms. Yolanda Sanchez's resume in (See Appendix J: 2.2.a Design Team Member Resumes). She has consistently achieved incredible results with her students and in her leadership responsibilities working with minority students throughout her professional years.

The Executive Director will be responsible for drafting job descriptions and hiring the remaining members of the administrative team and staff. For job descriptions for all staff positions (See Appendix L: 2.2.b Leadership Team Job Descriptions).

#### Question #2: Selecting Instructional Leader:

*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.*

Under the supervision of the Executive Director, the Academic Leader (AL) will play a critical role in the implementation of the SPEA educational model. The AL will work directly with faculty and staff to increase efficacy and advancement of students' academic performance and growth. The AL will support the growth of staff members through effective feedback, professional development, and other areas of support and serve as a core member of the leadership team at SPEA. As a member of the leadership team the AL may be required to complete other additional tasks in order to support a successful school year for all scholars, faculty and staff.

Currently, SPEA has selected a strong candidate to be the AL. The qualifications used to select the proposed AL included the following:

1. The AL will meet all state requirements and certifications.
2. The AL shall have at least five years of successful teaching, administrative or supervisory experience in urban public schools.
3. The AL shall have broad general knowledge of curriculum, curriculum development and best instructional practices; strong academic preparation; leadership ability; the ability to work effectively with others; ability to make critical evaluations or suggestions for improving the curriculum; knowledge and experience pertaining to curriculum research.

When selecting the AL for SPEA, the Executive Director and selection team considered the candidates' capacity to fulfill the criteria outlined below:

- Criteria 1: Provide leadership to, collaborate with, and act as a resource to the community, staff, administrative team and Board of Education on all matters pertaining to student achievement in the District as subsumed under the District's approved curricula and instructional programs.
- Criteria 2: Oversee and guide a process of systematic, intentional and continuous improvement in student achievement.
- Criteria 3: Remain current in the research and act as a resource to all personnel in the areas of curriculum, assessment practices and instruction, including their implications for the District's programs.



- Criteria 4: Coordinate, collaborate with, and oversee the staff in the development, revision and implementation of all course content, skill, knowledge and performance areas, scope and sequence.
- Criteria 5: Coordinate, collaborate with, and oversee the staff in the development and implementation of a variety of content and performance assessments and their alignment with the respective performance standards within the curricula, including teacher-made, local performance-based and criteria-referenced and state and national norm-referenced assessments.
- Criteria 6: Guide and collaborate with the staff in the selection of instructional materials and resources, their modification, revision, deletion, organizational pattern and use, including a process for their systematic replacement and updating.
- Criteria 7: Lead and collaborate with the staff in the identification, development of, training in and implementation of instructional methods appropriate to the respective curricula they support which are aimed at the continuous improvement of student achievement and expansion of the instructional repertoire.
- Criteria 8: Lead and collaborate with the staff in developing and maintaining a program of continuous staff training/retraining in support of student achievement and other District and approved building goals.
- Criteria 9: Assist in the development of and administer all budgets related to curriculum, instructional programs, assessment, staff development, instructional technology and grants.
- Criteria 10: Function as a contributing member of the administrative team in all visioning, strategic, long and short-range planning, coordination, budgeting, decision-making and professional growth activities of the administrative team.

### 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).*

To date, SPEA has identified our proposed AL, Jeffrey S. Heredia. Mr. Heredia is a dedicated and resourceful professional educator with 12 years of experience promoting a positive school culture that impacts student success. Throughout his professional career, he has implemented necessary changes and strategic plans to drive schools' missions and visions while forming trusting and professional relationships with all stakeholders for the benefit of the students and the community. Additional strengths of Mr. Heredia include:

- Common Core Curriculum development and implementation
- Working with "at-risk learners"
- Effectively managing multiple projects and meeting deadlines
- Data analysis to drive decisions and instruction
- Obtaining available resources to benefit the school
- Coaching skills to improve adult practice
- Systems development to create efficiency and effectiveness
- Building high performing teams

A primary reason why Jeffrey S. Heredia was selected to be the AL for SPEA was because he has experiences that we are seeking to further SPEA's mission and vision. To date he has provided instructional leadership to the faculty, staff and students of Community Links High School, a school servicing a similar demographics that SPEA hopes to service.

Community Links High School is located in the heart of the Little Village community of Pilsen. It is a community school located within a bilingual community in close proximity to the major commercial strip at 26th street, which takes great effort in fostering pride in the language and culture of our students. The heavily populated neighborhood is characterized by large families who are dedicated and committed to expanding their economic and educational opportunities with a strong emphasis on hard work. The interaction of community resources and the school is a priority. As a leader within this school community, Mr. Heredia, assisted with providing a challenging and supportive environment in which the students were encouraged to reach their potential, emotionally, socially, and academically by analyzing and assessing the school's systems, programs and achievement data in order to develop strategic plans focused on improving student achievement and developing a positive school culture. For more information on the proposed AL's experiences (See Appendix J: 2.2.a Design Team Member Resumes).

#### Question #4: Evaluation:

*How will school leaders be evaluated?*

The school leader will be evaluated using the *Illinois State Board of Education Performance Evaluation Advisory Council State Model for Principal Evaluation*.<sup>44</sup> The State Model for Principal Evaluation is designed to satisfy the State Board of Education's statutory requirement but, more importantly, incorporate student growth as a significant factor in the evaluation of a principal.

The evaluation tool consists of two sections:

- Section I: Evaluation of Principal Practice:
- Section II: Student Growth for Evaluation<sup>45</sup>

The evaluation focuses on six areas:

1. *Living a Mission and Vision Focused on Results:* The principal works with the staff and community to build a shared mission, and vision of high expectations that ensures all students are on the path to college and career readiness, and holds staff accountable for results
2. *Leading and Managing Systems Change:* The principal creates and implements systems to ensure a safe, orderly, and productive environment for student and adult learning toward the achievement of school and district improvement priorities
3. *Improving Teaching and Learning:* The principal works with the school staff and community to develop a research-based framework for effective teaching and learning that is refined continuously to improve instruction for all students
4. *Building and Maintaining Collaborative Relationships:* The principal creates a collaborative school community where the school staff, families, and community interact regularly and share ownership for the success of the school
5. *Leading with Integrity and Professionalism:* The principal works with the school staff and community to create a positive context for learning by ensuring equity, fulfilling professional responsibilities with honesty and integrity, and serving as a model for the professional behavior of others
6. *Creating and Sustaining a Culture of High Expectations:* The principal works with staff and community to build a culture of high expectations and aspirations for every student by setting clear staff and student expectations for positive learning behaviors and by focusing on students' social- emotional learning

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<sup>44</sup> Nlns. *Illinois State Model for Principal Evaluation* (n.d.): n. pag. Web.

<sup>45</sup> Student Growth for Principal Evaluation is determined by evidence that shows a measurable change in student outcomes at the school level.

## Dimension 2.3: Curriculum and Instruction

### Section 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. 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.

Inspiring, challenging, and empowering future engineers commit SPEA to providing a holistic education to students in the Little Village Community.<sup>46</sup> SPEA will prepare our young leaders for engineering careers through a collaborative, high- quality and inquiry- based professional learning environment with a commitment towards a healthy lifestyle.

The overall goal of our school is to increase minorities in engineering careers. The rigorous academic and career preparatory learning environment will prepare students for post-secondary options within the field of engineering and provide them with a path ready for employment. Our expectations for all students will produce high levels of achievements regardless of their socio economic disparities. We will put into place tracking systems to inform us of ongoing performance in meeting this goal. We will know that we have achieved our goal when 85% of our students choose to enroll in a rigorous post-secondary STEM-engineering related program and obtain an engineering degree (or STEM- related degree). See the following chart for specific details regarding SPEA educational goals and metrics (See Appendix M: Section 2.3.a Educational Goals & Metrics).

#### 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.*

SPEA plans to align the student assessment plan to Chicago Public Schools' as it is outlined in the CPS Assessment Data Analysis Toolkit for Teachers. We find this assessment plan effective for streamlining the assessment to meet the assessment goals established by CPS:

- Emphasize the importance of time spent on Common Core-aligned tasks that will prepare students for the types of analysis, critical thinking and problem solving activities that will be expected of them in college, career and life
- Reduce time spent on test preparation activities focused on rote memorization, and increase time spent with authentic learning tasks for students
- Increase school-leadership ownership of the formative assessment process, through high expectations for the quality of formative assessment

(See Appendix M: 2.3.a Student Assessment Plan)

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<sup>46</sup> A thriving commercial area in Chicago's West Side that is home to the largest Mexican community in the Midwest., "Little Village Chamber of Commerce;" *Little Village Chamber of Commerce RSS*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Feb. 2015.

## Required Assessments<sup>47</sup>

Elementary G	9-10	<b>EXPLORE-9 PLAN-10</b>	9/23/13 to 10/4/13 (ONLY students with no Spring EXPLORE, PLAN scores)  12/9/13 to 12/13/13 (Optional. Will NOT contain Day 2 PSAE tests)  <b>5/19/14 to 5/23/14</b> <b>(Required EXPLORE and PLAN only)</b>	Measure of whether students are meeting grade level learning and year-to-year growth expectations. Also a factor in teacher, principal and school evaluation.
	11	<b>PSAE</b>	<b>4/23/14 to 4/24/14</b>  5/7/14 to 5/8/14 (make-up)	Required by ISBE. ACT growth is also a factor in teacher, principal and school evaluation.
	K-12 ELLs only	<b>ACCESS</b>	1/13/14 to 2/14/14	Required by ISBE. Measures English language development.

Along with the required assessments, SPEA plans to have benchmark assessments. The benchmark assessments data analysis will be part of our formative assessment cycle. SPEA intends to incorporate common (across courses/grades) assessments in our assessment plan. These common assessments will measure the depth and breadth of CCSS skills, in literacy and math, at least quarterly. Examples of commonly developed assessments to be developed by our teachers may include unit projects/tasks, common mid-terms and finals that include constructed/extended components aligned to the CCSS. Being consistent with CPS' overarching assessments goal, the goal for SPEA's assessment plan is to ensure that our teachers are thoughtful and strategic about the rigor of tasks for our students. See the chart below for a proposed breakdown of common assessment format, focus, timing, and resources:

**Table 2.3 SPEA Benchmark Assessment Plan<sup>48</sup>**

Subject	Grades	Focus/format	Timing	Resources
ELA	9-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Aligned to the Literacy Content Framework 2.0</li> <li>● PARCC-like items with authentic texts from CCSS-Literacy Appendix B</li> <li>● Multiple choice (3-12) or constructed response (K-2), with a longer writing task (K-12), unit projects/tasks</li> <li>● Primary standards: RI/RL 1, 10. W1-3, dependent on grade and qtr. Other reading standards infused dependent on grade/qtr.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● End of Q1, Q2, Q3</li> <li>● Actual assessments provided at the beginning of each quarter for teacher review/planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Answer key</li> <li>● Rubric for writing tasks</li> <li>● Guidance on responses to look for</li> </ul>
Math	Algebra, Geometry, Algebra II/ Trig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Aligned to the Math Content Framework 2.0</li> <li>● Two part tests: multiple choice and MARS tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● When instructionally appropriate, aligned to a particular teacher's or team's scope and sequence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Answer key</li> <li>● Rubrics with explanations</li> <li>● Mathematics</li> </ul>

<sup>47</sup> Chart modified from Chicago Public Schools' Assessment Data and Analysis Toolkit for Teachers.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Multiple choice and 1-2 unit projects and/or performance tasks</li> <li>● Focus on 4 key big ideas in each grade/course, aligned to critical focus areas outlined in the CCSS</li> </ul>	<p>(i.e. after a particular concept has been taught)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All Assessments provided by mid-September</li> </ul>	<p>Instructional Units that provide aligned lesson plans and daily tasks, on the Knowledge Center</p>
Science	HS Biology, Chemistry, Physics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Aligned to the Science Content Framework 1.0 and CRS and PSAE standards</li> <li>● Two part tests: Multiple choice and extended response, unit projects/tasks</li> <li>● Focus on 3 big ideas in each course, and 2-3 topics for each big idea</li> <li>● Mix of skill-based (e.g. data analysis, forming hypotheses...etc.) and content focused questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● When instructionally appropriate, aligned to a particular teacher's or team's scope and sequence (i.e. after a particular concept has been taught)</li> <li>● All assessments provided by mid-September</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Answer key</li> <li>● Rubrics for extended response</li> <li>● Science Planning guides on Knowledge Center</li> </ul>
Social Science	US and World History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Document Based Analysis in grades 9-10, with documents and questions similar in length and structure to those of REACH Performance Tasks, unit projects/tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● End of Q1, Q2, Q3</li> <li>● Actual assessments provided at the beginning of each quarter for teacher review/planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Answer Key</li> <li>● Rubric</li> <li>● Social Science Framework 3.0</li> </ul>

### 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.*

We, at SPEA, believe that data-driven programs and instruction will lead to gains in our students' performance. Our data-driven programs and instruction will follow six main stages: plan, teach, predict, assess, analyze and reteach.

SPEA teachers will *plan* with future assessments and CCSS and CRS in mind. The "Backward Design" model will be instrumental in this process as it allows teachers to focus on the distressed areas of knowledge and skills. The "Backward Design" product can lend support as a reference guide in this area.

The day-to-day interactions that SPEA teachers have with their students, by *teaching*, are the most important step towards successful student learning. The interactions our teachers will have with our students will make or break our students' ability to learn and succeed. The questions our teachers ask, the information they present, and the tasks students are asked to do – all of these allow for a successful educational experience for students.

In order to measure our students' gains, *predictions* will be used to serve as a starting point for data analysis. Predictions will be based off of previous test scores and classroom performance. Predictions must be made for each student and for each test. Predictions can be gauged using a percentage estimation of a student's likelihood of answering a question correctly.

Assessing students' learning via assessments are a teacher's launching point. Again, if we refer to Backwards Design, Stage 1 is to start with desired results. SPEA teachers will be required to understand what they are trying to teach and what they are trying to improve upon before they create their lesson plans. Assessments must be made and/or understood at the outset so that lessons can be crafted so that

students are able to reach designated standards and goals. The teacher-designed curriculum must be aligned to CCSS, CRS, ILS, and additional academic standards focused on STEM learning. There should be no disconnect between what is being assessed by teachers and what is being taught to students.

There will be multiple levels of *analysis* within our data-driven programs and instruction including item level, skill, strand, individual student, whole class and grade. These levels allow teachers to accurately assess what areas of instruction need re-teaching. For example, when looking at data on the item level, teachers can assess how many students were able to answer a specific item correctly. If the majority of students got the question wrong, then perhaps the way they answered will allow the teacher insight into what needs to be re-taught. Or, more likely, perhaps that question points to a key skill that the students have not yet learned and must be taught. Comparing item level analysis to skill or strand analysis will allow teachers to see if entire skill sets need to be re-taught or if concepts within a particular skill set need to be revisited instead. In addition, comparing individual student data to the class as a whole will also allow a teacher to gauge more accurately if there are particular students who are more or less proficient than others. By focusing on individual weaknesses, SPEA teachers can provide the students that need extra help with either group or individual re-teaching opportunities which will help raise the level of the class overall and allow for differentiation to take place in the classroom.

It will be an expectation that SPEA teachers will work collaboratively to discuss the data and create action plans. Working together with peers to discuss areas of strengths and weaknesses allow for continued alignment of curriculum goals and key ideas on teaching strategies and planning techniques will come forward as well. Using specific protocols allows teachers the chance to discuss their data more objectively while working with building administrators, consultants or specialists, and department members. SPEA plans to use the protocols outlined in the Chicago Public Schools' Assessment Data Analysis Toolkit for Teachers to assist with data analysis.

Once meetings devoted to analysis have taken place, SPEA teachers will be able to plan which standards must be re-taught and to whom. They will also be able to continue moving forward with their colleagues to ensure that the department and grade-levels are moving forward together and not on separate learning tracks. *Re-teaching* certain skills will allow teachers to provide their students with the necessary knowledge and skills before the end of the unit and before the end of the school year while there is still the opportunity for improvement. Re-teaching specific standards will also help the teachers to continuously improve their teaching skills and strategy for future units and school years.

### Section 2.3.b. Curriculum

#### Question #1: Curricular Materials:

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

SPEA's yearlong curricular material that is being submitted includes the curriculum maps, unit and lesson plans for our 9th and 11th graders (See Appendix O: 2.3.b 9th grade curricular material) (See Appendix P: 2.3.b 11th grade curricular material).

#### Question #2: Philosophy, Selection, and Supports:

*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?*

The vision of **SPEA** is to prepare our students for college and future engineering careers, so a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) is incorporated throughout the curriculum.

The typical SPEA student will be socio- economically disadvantaged and likely a Limited English Learner.<sup>49</sup> The Average ACT score of students in the **Pilsen/Little Village** neighborhood is 18, which is barely at the threshold for college acceptance.<sup>50</sup> According to data gathered by Abouteducation.com, students with an ACT score of 19 would most likely need a 3.0 grade point average (or higher) to be considered for acceptance to University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)<sup>51</sup>, and the UIC College of Engineering's (COE) admission process is even more selective. Facing these challenges, we must first decrease the academic gap of our students in order to bring this vision to fruition. The educational program is designed to close the gap through several effective academic supports and interventions such as the STEP-UP summer program, Response to Intervention program, and a strong cross- curricular literacy focus.

Despite the level at which our students may enter high school, SPEA will provide a rigorous standards- based curriculum. Learning goals will be based on the CCSS, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and the ACT CRS.

As of January 2014, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) adopted the NGSS, therefore, SPEA will follow the standards outlined in these national standards. NGSS provides the level of skills and content rigor expected for SPEA scholars to excel beyond their high school career.

All SPEA students are provided with exposure to the engineering field from the moment they enter the school doors. Our scholars will develop 21<sup>st</sup> century technical skills, problem-solving skills and gain valuable experience through internships. One of the hallmarks of SPEA is that all students will have access to the full Project Lead the Way course offerings. "Project Lead The Way is the leading provider of rigorous and innovative STEM education curricular programs used in middle and high schools across the U.S."<sup>52</sup> PLTW has also been shown to be successful with urban students of color.

### **Description and Proven Track Record of Project Lead the Way (PLTW)**

SPEA has chosen to use the nationally recognized, educator- designed PLTW program as an effective way to fulfill its mission to increase minorities in engineering. PLTW's comprehensive curriculum for engineering and biomedical sciences has been collaboratively designed by PLTW teachers, university educators, engineering and biomedical professionals and school administrators to promote critical thinking, creativity, innovation and real world problem solving skills in students.

The PLTW curriculum is founded in the fundamental problem-solving and critical-thinking skills taught in traditional career and technical education (CTE), but at the same time integrates national academic and technical learning standards and STEM principles, creating what U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan calls one of the "great models of the new CTE succeeding all across the country." PLTW was recently cited by the Harvard Graduate School of Education as a "model for 21st century career and technical education."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> "About CPS." *CPS : Home* :. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2015.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Grove, Allen. "UIC (GPA, SAT Scores and ACT Scores for Admission)." N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2015.

<sup>52</sup> "About PLTW." *PLTW*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2015.

<sup>53</sup> "Triangle Coalition For Science And Technology Education." *Project Lead The Way*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2015.

STEM education programs like the one offered by PLTW engage students in activities-, projects-, and problem-based (APPB) learning, which provides hands-on classroom experiences. Students create, design, build, discover, collaborate and solve problems while applying what they learn in mathematics and science. They're also exposed to STEM fields through professionals from local industries that supplement the real-world aspect of the curriculum through mentorships and workplace experiences. According to PLTW, "More than 4,200 schools in all 50 states and the District of Columbia are offering PLTW courses to their students in the 2011-12 school year. In addition, PLTW has trained more than 10,500 teachers to instruct its engaging, rigorous STEM education curriculum"<sup>54</sup>.

PLTW has also been shown to be successful with urban students of color. Some results are: "A three-year analysis of Galt High School PLTW<sup>55</sup> student progress compared to non-PLTW students, including the Latino student population, found that:

- 'Project Lead The Way has been an effective program during the past three years at narrowing the achievement gap for Hispanic/Latino students in all four core areas.' –Analysis of Student Achievement and Programs 2007, Galt Joint Union High School District
- For the third year in a row, students participating in PLTW scored higher than non- PLTW students at Galt High School in all five subject areas on the 2006 California Standards Tests (CSTs): English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, History/Social Science, and Life Science.
- For the third year in a row, Hispanic/Latino students in PLTW scored higher than other Hispanic/Latino students at Galt High and higher than the total student scores for all students in all five subject areas of the 2006 CSTs." The statistics above indicate that the PLTW curriculum is effective in closing the achievement gap for urban students of color. It has also been effective increasing the number of students who choose engineering majors and continue on the STEM pathway. A national analysis of 200 college transcripts of PLTW students found that: Analysis of college transcripts of PLTW students who graduated in 2007 or 2008 showed 31% of PLTW students studied engineering and engineering technology in their first year of college compared with 8% of all first- time freshmen in baccalaureate institutions or 5% of all post- secondary students. PLTW students are four times more likely to study engineering or engineering technology in college compared to first- time freshmen at four- year institutions. (True Outcomes – 2009) In 2006- 2007, first- year retention (freshmen to sophomore) of all students was 76% (76% stayed with their declared major). 100% of Milwaukee School of Engineering's PLTW students remained in their declared major.

### 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.*

The intent of the proposed instructional design for SPEA students is to:

- (1) Provide a "quality" learning environment that will teach 9th - 12th STEM- Engineering, I, NGSS, CRS and CCSS;
- (2) Prepare students to enter programs at 2- and 4- year postsecondary institutions in any science, technology, engineering, and mathematics discipline; and
- (3) Create critical global minded thinkers that are acquainted with the high demand for STEM- related innovation worldwide and analyze the relation of wellness and nexus in the continuum of innovative research.

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<sup>54</sup> "About PLTW." *PLTW*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2015.

<sup>55</sup> Sheet, Fact. *FACT SHEET* (n.d.): n. pag. Web.



In order to fulfill our instructional design goals, SPEA will follow the proposed plan for curriculum development leading up to school opening:

- Executive Director (ED) recruits a team of content and grade level experts to review curriculum considerations such as Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Framework, Project Lead the Way Engineering Framework, and NGSS (Spring 2016)
- ED compiles resources for assessment bank from high-performing schools (Spring 2016)
- Curricular review team hired (Spring 2016)
- Academic Officer and ED draw on Conley’s research, Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC)’s work, College Board and ACT, and backwards plans exit requirements at each grade based on finalized college readiness standards (Summer 2016)
- Curricular Review Teams create assessment bank, which illustrates types of questions appropriate and to what depth for each grade level/subject (Summer 20156)

**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 National Research Council (NRC)’s Committee on Highly Successful Schools Programs in K- 12 STEM Education has identified effective approaches to STEM instruction.<sup>10</sup> According to the NRC’s recommendations high quality STEM instruction “captures students’ interest and involves them in STEM practices.”<sup>10</sup>

The SPEA curriculum is built around project- based and student- centered learning and a variety of other instructional strategies that have been shown to capture students’ interest. SPEA immerses students in STEM practices via the core curriculum, Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Engineering curriculum, outside internships and experiential learning. In addition to student- centered instructional strategies and authentic project- based formative and summative assessments, SPEA teachers and academic leaders will monitor and increase student achievement by using standards- based assessments, which have also been shown to be effective for raising student achievement.<sup>11</sup>

A study on Texas school reform, identified that inclusive STEM- focused schools tend to have higher mathematics and sciences standardized test scores, have a higher attendance rate, and have students that take more advanced courses than traditional comprehensive schools. The factors that appear to have yielded these results are shown in the table below alongside an explanation of how SPEA will include them.<sup>14</sup>

Table 2.4 Research Base

<b>Success Factor</b>	<b>SPEA Success Strategy</b>
STEM school blueprint that helps guide school planning and implementation	Using Wheeling High School as STEM focus model among others.
Strong academic supports	Supports include a Response to Intervention (RTI) program, Learning Center, Aides, Study Hall, Freshman Summer Remediation Program (STEP-Up)
Small school size	Maximum of 600 students
Charter management organization	Chicago Public Schools and looking into working with High Tech High, Expeditionary Learning or NewTech Network

College preparatory curriculum and explicit focus on College readiness for all students	Using the Noble model for College Readiness Standards, Cross Curricular Literacy Focus
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## Model Schools

SPEA models itself after several examples of successful inclusive STEM high schools, all of which have received medals for excellence from US News and World Report.<sup>6</sup> Two examples of successful inclusive STEM high schools with project- based learning as the core instructional approach are New Manor Technology High School in Texas, and High Tech High in California.<sup>10</sup> In addition, all of the schools SPEA has chosen to guide our curriculum serve similar student populations: low- income students of color. SPEA has established professional relationships with Wheeling High School (WHS), Wheeling, IL and UNO High School, Chicago, IL; additionally, SPEA continues to consult WHS administrators and UNO school designers on the successful aspects of their models.

**Manor New Technology High School** located in Texas uses New Tech Network's school model, which has three major components: (1) use of a project- based learning instructional approach to offer engaging, collaborative opportunities for learning; (2) use of technology integrated across the curriculum; and (3) creation of a school culture that is based on trust, respect, and responsibility.

For the 2009- 2010 school year, Manor New Tech High served a total of 315 students. The student population had the following racial/ethnic makeup: about 56% of students in 2009- 2010 were considered to be economically disadvantaged, and 5% participated in special education programs.

**High Tech High (HTH)** in San Diego, California, also uses a project- based approach to learning.

- 98% of HTH graduates have gone on to college, with approximately 75% attending 4- year programs.
- About 35% of HTH graduates are first- generation college students.
- Over 30% of HTH alumni enter mathematics or science fields (vs. 17% national rate)
- Innovative features include performance- based assessments, daily shared planning time for staff, state- of- the- art technical facilities for project based learning, internships for all students, and close links to the high tech workplace.

**Wheeling High School** One of the successful local high schools that SPEA design team visited was recently recognized as One of America's Best High Schools in US News and World Report. <sup>6</sup> WHS is a comprehensive high school with a STEM focus that offers Project Lead The Way (PLTW) to all students, with 85% of the student body enrolled in the program. WHS faces some of the same academic challenges that SPEA will face with a similar student body.

- Minority Enrollment – 59%
- Hispanic 49%
- Economically Disadvantaged – 38%

Although it is located in the suburbs, a fair amount of their students are low- income, English Language Learners (ELL) and come from first- generation immigrant families. SPEA has established a professional relationship with WHS and continues to consult WHS administrators and teachers on these aspects of their model.

We are adopting their PLTW implementation in that we will offer a whole sequence of courses instead of just one or two. All students will take PLTW classes, not just the brightest or those that have interest. By

engaging students in a highly focused engineering curriculum we hope to increase the chances of SPEA scholars completing their college degree within a STEM field.

SPEA will follow WHS's model for the Career/Technical Education (CTE) department, which oversees the PLTW program. SPEA aims to offer students internships and technology classes, which will be another role of the CTE department.

Another aspect of WHS that SPEA is implementing is an innovative cross- curricular literacy program called QUEST, based on the following strategies: Question, Understand, Evidence, Synthesize, and Tell.

#### **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.*

The primary goals to be achieved concerning SPEA's curriculum refinement process is to have teachers be deliberate about aligning their curriculum to CCSS, NGSS and CRS standards and use data from assessments to drive their instructional decisions. Teachers will work as course teams on curriculum planning throughout the entire school year.

To prepare our scholars for college, CRS must be a central component of the curriculum. The Academic Leader will guide teacher instructional leaders in creating a plan for continual curriculum refinement in teaching that is aligned to CCSS, NGSS and CRS. Using the plan, teachers will constantly be required to incorporate "Ideas for Progress" and continue to determine how their curriculum is aligned to develop curriculum aligned to CCSS, NGSS and CRS. Each core subject-matters (mathematics, science, reading, social studies) must show evidence that the CCSS, NGSS and CRS have been considered in curriculum development (e.g., inclusion of informational text across content areas, behaviors that scientists engage in as they investigate and build models and theories about the natural world, and ACT- style assessments items). Curricular resources will be re- evaluated and revised by subject matter teams that will meet once weekly. The SPEA curriculum refinement plan will be heavily based on the Noble Charter School network's successful model. The Academic Leader will use the ACT EXPLORE Administrator's guide to support teachers in creating their curriculum materials as well as resources shared by the Noble Network.

A key component of SPEA's curriculum refinement plan will be having teachers play an active role in creating assessments (such as midterms and unit assessments) using a backwards design process to plan out each unit, week, and finally, daily lessons. These assessments will include learner outcomes derived from the CCSS, NGSS, and CRS. At the end of the quarter, using interim test results, SPEA teacher teams will have data analysis meetings modeled after the Noble Network method. The data gained will drive specific instructional goals. SPEA's teacher teams will also develop strategies based on their analysis of the assessments. These strategies may include but are not limited to revising assessments, re-teaching, giving students new academic supports, and making curriculum modifications.

#### **Section 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.*

Our vision is that each student will be actively engaged in project- based learning (PBL) throughout his or her career at SPEA. SPEA believes that PBL will be one of the central factors in closing the

achievement gap and preparing students for STEM college majors and future careers. There are many instructional approaches and strategies that can be used to support high student achievement. The strategies that we have chosen to best realize SPEA's objective of preparing college and employment ready, future engineering leaders, are constructivist, student- centered, and primarily project- based learning strategies.

### **The Research and Results**

- Research indicates that “PBL increases long- term retention of content, helps students perform as well as or better than traditional learners in high- stakes tests, improves problem- solving and collaboration skills, and improves students' attitudes towards learning (Strobel & van Barneveld, 2009; “Walker & Leary, 2009).<sup>56</sup>
- A recent study published by the University of Chicago tied the academic gains of 200 low- performing schools in Chicago to a set of five common qualities. Schools that lacked these qualities did not have increased achievement. A student- centered learning environment that is stimulating, nurturing, and focuses on learning for *all* students is one of those key qualities.<sup>57</sup>
- A promising project- based learning focused school in Chicago is UNO Major Hector Garcia MD High School. Although it is a relatively new school, it has thus far outperformed most schools in the neighborhood based on average ACT scores. UNO has the second highest ACT average of all the high schools in Little Village and the surrounding neighborhoods, outranking even the Infinity Mathematics Science and Technology HS.<sup>58</sup>

### **Instructional Strategies**

**Extended Day:** SPEA will increase the pace and quality of learning through extended instructional time. Students will have an additional 60 minutes of instructional time per day than CPS schools. More instructional time is necessary to close the academic gap and to meet the rigorous challenges of college- level coursework such as AP classes and PLTW courses.

**Inquiry- Based Instruction:** SPEA teachers are committed to primarily teaching through inquiry, which includes project- based learning. Inquiry- based instruction strategies involve asking students to structure problems, pursue information and investigations, pose and test hypotheses, collect and analyze various kinds of data, and draw inferences and conclusions for themselves. The subject matter addressed is relevant to the students' lives, and may include outside audiences. As appropriate, other instructional strategies are used, including lectures, explanations and demonstrations through which students are asked to acquire concepts, instructions and information, learning to take notes, asking questions and clarifying ideas in a whole class, small group, or one- on- one format.

**Service- Learning:** Considering issues in their own community will afford students the opportunity to apply their learning in real world settings, build relationships with adults, and make contributions to their communities. Students' interests and current issues will drive the selection of community- based subjects to explore.

**Project- Based Learning:** Students learn through the process of solving real- world problems with teachers serving as facilitators of inquiry and reflection. Students often work collaboratively to carry out

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<sup>56</sup> "Project-Based Learning Research Review." *Edutopia*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2015.

<sup>57</sup> Bryk, A.S., Sebring, P.B., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., and Easton, J.Q. (2010). *Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>58</sup> "INCS I Charter Schools That Transform Lives & Communities." *INCS Home Comments*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2015.

research and analyze and synthesize information across disciplines in order to complete final products.<sup>59</sup> Students will display midterm projects, to the parents and community, which will be invited to attend the showcase.

**Technology as a Tool for Learning:** All SPEA students will have access to state-of-art technology, which will be used as learning tools throughout their courses. Classrooms will be equipped with Smartboards and each department will have a mobile classroom set of laptops in addition to the fixed computer lab. Although SPEA has only budgeted for 2 mobile laptop carts for the first year and one computer lab classroom for year 2, SPEA is searching for sources through which the remaining computers can be donated. Technology classes will take place in labs set aside for that sole purpose. This technology will provide our students with access to information for investigation and research and to multiple media-related tools for expression of their understanding. Technology is also integrated through instruction as a tool to support academic learning.

**Experiential- Learning:** Students will choose an experiential learning class, which will be held at the end of every academic day, except on Fridays when there is time for two. SPEA scholars will have one elective Monday- Thursday, and two on Fridays. They will be able to choose from a wide variety of choices such as debate, art, technology, sports, journalism, and robotics. This will allow for development of student interests, leadership experience as well as social-emotional skills.

**Cross- Curricular Literacy Focus:** When given reading and writing assignments in core classes, students will follow the QUEST format. The QUEST protocol includes: Questioning, Understanding, Explaining, Synthesizing and Telling. This cross-curricular literacy focus will increase students' reading and writing skills in their content areas.

**Mentorships and Internships:** During Junior year, as students begin to identify personal interests that might develop into college or career choices, they will be given the opportunity to learn more through mentorships and internships. These placements, typically during the summer or after school, will give students a closer look at different aspects of the job market, local government, community agencies or nonprofits. The initial placements are planned to be offered to SPEA's first Junior class during the 2015- 2016 school year.

**University- School Partnerships:** Partnerships have been developed between SPEA and University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) College of Engineering (COE) as well as the UIC Chapter of Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE). Students gain valuable knowledge and experience while participating in University-directed activities. Plans are still being developed to increase these opportunities for the 2015- 2016 school year.

**Interdisciplinary Projects:** All grade level teachers have a planned professional development time once per week. During this time, teachers have the opportunity to create cross-curricular projects. After the core components of the curriculum have been established, professional development at grade-level will be shifted to interdisciplinary projects. This shift is proposed to take place during the third year of operation.

**Advisory:** Advisory will be focused on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and character building. The curriculum for advisory will be developed by each teacher and will focus on the core values (HELP). Teachers will be encouraged to share their unit/lesson plans at grade-level meetings.

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<sup>59</sup> "Project-Based Learning Research Review." *Edutopia*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2015.

## 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?*

According to the 2006 Alliance for Education report, there are some disturbing statistics about low-income students:<sup>60</sup>

- “Among low- income eighth graders, just fifteen percent read at grade level (Perie et al., 2005).”
- “In a typical high- poverty urban high school, approximately half of incoming ninth- grade students read at a sixth or seventh- grade level or below (Balfanz et al., 2002)”

In addition, data from Little Village schools allows SPEA to predict that the average freshman will enter with an average EXPLORE score of 14, significantly behind the ACT Benchmark for college success. Therefore, many SPEA students will require strong academic supports in order to make the necessary gains in reading and college readiness skills.

### **Placement**

SPEA’s incoming freshman will take the EXPLORE test in June, two (2) weeks prior to the summer STEP- UP program so that the results can be used for placement purposes. EXPLORE does not assess writing skills, so SPEA will also include a free- response essay prompt which will be evaluated using a rubric. All students will be required to take Spanish and will also take a Spanish placement test, which is already developed. Students will be placed into Spanish for beginners or native speakers.

Core classes at SPEA will each have two tracks, regular and honors, which will be flexible, allowing students to be in both tracks for different classes, and move between tracks as needed. Administration will look at several factors for placement including student grades, standardized test and EXPLORE scores, student Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and English Language Learners (ELL) status. Each family will have an entrance interview during which assessment and placement is discussed where students and parents/guardians can have input on the placement decisions. SPEA will reevaluate existing IEPs, and ELL status.

Classes in the regular track will each have a special education teacher or aide in addition to the lead teacher. Classes in the honors track will cover material at a faster pace and will only have one teacher. Students with mostly A’s and B’s with above average standardized test and EXPLORE scores will be considered for placement into the honors track. Students’ needs in both tracks will be assessed on an ongoing basis and will be based on their academic performance.

### **Remediation**

Freshman College Readiness Skills remediation will begin even before the first day of school. The summer freshman academy, STEP- UP, will be four (4) weeks long starting in July. The curriculum will be finalized by the team prior to the beginning of STEP- UP and will focus on college readiness. STEP- UP curriculum designers will use available CRS curriculum materials from Noble Street Charter Schools and ACT, such as those found at [www.act.org/standard/instruct/index.html](http://www.act.org/standard/instruct/index.html) to build the summer program.

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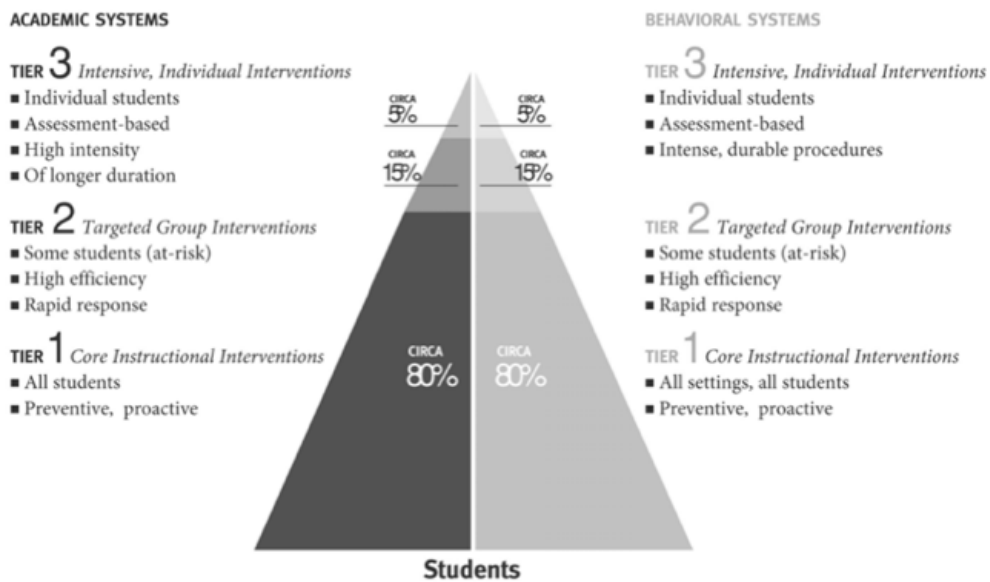
<sup>60</sup> *Why the Crisis in Adolescent Literacy Demands a National Response.* Alliance for Excellent Education. N.p., June 2006. 6- 8. Web. 15 July. 2013.

The culture of SPEA is one that believes that all students can learn. That belief is integral to the success of our program. Our scholars will be supported in their learning through many different ways. According to ACT, “High school students’ ability to read complex texts is strongly predictive of their performance in college mathematics and science courses (ACT, 2006).” Therefore, improving literacy skills is paramount for student success. Research also points to high achievement when there is a wide set of student supports. SPEA academic supports are explained below:

### Supports

- Teaching Assistants (TAs): Regular level classes will have teaching assistants. TA’s will be expected to be actively involved in student learning, assessment and feedback. Additionally, the aid will have a responsibility of assisting students who have IEPs, are ELLs and are struggling students as identified through the RTI program. See the diagram below:

RTI Diagram<sup>61</sup>



- Learning Center: The Learning Center (LC) will be a tutoring center for all students that need individualized support (e.g., ELLs, students with IEPs, and RTI targeted students, and others). The LC will be staffed by high achieving SPEA scholars and college tutors.
- Cross- Curricular Literacy Focus: A 25 minute daily study hall with tutors available to offer class and homework support.
- Response to Intervention Program - SPEA staff will track students who are not performing well academically or having behavior challenges, and respond with interventions to bring the students back on track. If multiple tiers of interventions fail then students will be assessed for Special Education Services.

<sup>61</sup> Response to Intervention A Joint Paper by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) and the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) White Paper on RTI, May 2006

## **Accelerated Learning**

Students with mostly A's and B's and with above average standardized test and EXPLORE scores will be considered for placement into the honors track. Students' needs in both tracks will be assessed on an ongoing basis and will be based on their academic performance. The scope of honors courses may be broader or more in depth, so course material will be covered at a faster pace. AP courses are also offered. Teachers will include differentiated instruction for students at a higher- level in their lesson planning.

## **Students Teaching and Reaching Students (STARS)**

The STARS Project organization is the driving force in creating SPEA. This organization is an excellent way of developing leadership, and for this reason, it will be incorporated in SPEA. Any students who are on the honor roll, with mathematics and science grades of B's or higher, can apply to be a tutor through the STARS Project program. They will receive a stipend to tutor either students at SPEA or at a local elementary schools.

### **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).*

SPEA will identify students with disabilities by using the RTI process. Students who are struggling academically or behaviorally can be referred by staff or a parent to the RTI Program. If the referred student receives supports and exhausts the three tiers of the RTI pyramid (see RTI diagram) then they will be referred for a Special Education needs evaluation.

SPEA will hire one special education certified teacher each year until there are four special education teachers. SPEA will provide access to all the services special education students are entitled to by law (e.g. instructional, inclusion, personalized IEPs, supportive services, and curricular accommodations when appropriate). Individual student services will be determined during the annual review meeting. The goal of these meetings is to ensure that instruction will be made available in the least restrictive environment. Students receiving special education services will be programmed first for classes, pursuant to Section 13 of the IEP through joint consultation between the student's case manager and programmer. Our daily schedule allows for time blocks for specialized instruction, tutoring, and individualized pacing of material. As students become proficient, they are moved to higher levels. This movement can be incorporated as goals for students with IEPs.

SPEA will provide substitute coverage for teachers as necessary to ensure that they are able to attend special education committee meetings. As required by IDEA, a student's regular education teacher will be involved in the development and implementation of a student's IEP, provided that the student is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment. SPEA will ensure that the teacher is knowledgeable about the student's needs and will help implement any modifications or accommodations as determined by the Special Education Committee. SPEA will send the mandated procedural safeguards notice to the parents. Every teacher of a student with a disability will be provided a copy of the student's IEP and training will be provided by the special education coordinator, as needed, to ensure their understanding of the student's needs and his or her specific responsibilities related to implementing the student's IEP.

ELL students will be placed according to their academic performance. SPEA will use English language immersion and will support ELL students through the Learning Center. English speaking peers can earn service- learning hours for tutoring as part of the STARS Program. Access English proficiency test will



be used for placement. All communication with families is provided in their home language, and no student is denied access to any portion of our academic program due to their language abilities in the planning session prior to the beginning of the school year, the Student Support Service Coordinator (Case Manager) will lead a professional development session on analyzing and meeting the students' needs. Teachers and co- teachers will have time to discuss instructional strategies and develop tiered lesson plans. This is an inclusive process for all students, including students with special needs, ELL students, and students in at- risk situations. SPEA will also have a social worker available to provide services to at- risk students. In addition, the Student Support Service Coordinator will work with teachers throughout the academic year to ensure that lessons are differentiated so that all scholars can engage effectively and master the material (See Appendix Q: 2.3.c ISBE SpED Form).

#### Section 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.*

SPEA scholars will have access to a rigorous curriculum in an extended school day with block scheduling for longer class periods. Also, we will provide students with experiential learning within school hours so that all students can have the opportunity to participate. Students will be able to choose between two different activities each semester (e.g, technology, robotics, journalism, dance, art or music). We are planning for teacher days to end at the academic schedule and are investigating outside partnerships to run the after school programs. We are looking into partnerships with YMCA, Afterschool Matters, Boys & Girls Club, Chicago Park District, universities as well as community- based programs.

Teachers will have common department planning time before school. Research shows that instruction improves when teachers have the opportunity to work together.<sup>62</sup> On Fridays, students will be dismissed early and teachers will stay for professional development. SPEA believes that having quality professional learning will create better teacher performance and in turn will yield increased student performance.<sup>63</sup> There will also be time allotted for grade- level meetings. One important goal of these meetings will be to discuss supports and interventions for students that have been identified for the RTI program.

##### 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.*

Our daily school schedule of classes starting every day from Monday - Thursday at 8:00 am- 5:19 pm, which include core classes, and the last hour is an experiential class. On Friday the school day schedule is from 8:00 am - 3:43 pm. On Friday there is no advisory, however, there are two classes of experiential learning. (See Appendix R: 2.3.d Sample Teacher and Student Schedules)

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<sup>62</sup> Mandel Morrow, Lesley and Gambrell, Linda B. Best Practices in Literacy Instruction 4<sup>th</sup> Ed The Guilford Press New York 2011. Best Practices in Literacy Assessment - Peter Afflerbach, Jong- Yun Kim, Maria Elliker Crassas, Byeong- Young Cho

<sup>63</sup> Jacob, B.A., & Lefgren, L. (2002). *The impact of teacher training on student achievement: quasi- experimental evidence from school reforms in Chicago*. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

The typical SPEA teacher’s schedule will consist of five classes’ total: an advisory period, three core teaching assignments, one common planning period/department meeting and a period devoted to offering assistance to either the Spanish or Physical Education teacher.

The typical school day for a SPEA freshman level student will consist of a student advisory period, four core classes, Experiential learning (after-school programs that are embedded in the regular school day; classes offered may include technology, robotics, journalism, dance, art or music), and lunch. All periods will be 50 minutes, except for advisory and experiential learning. As reflected in the student schedule, a SPEA student will have Algebra and Experiential for both semesters and English, Biology, US. History, Spanish I, Physical Education/Health and Introduction to Engineering as semester long courses.

Note: For additional examples of school calendar and daily schedule (see Appendix S: 2.3.d School Calendar and Daily Schedule).

## Dimension 2.4 Talent Management

### Section 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 responsibilities of each of the instructional and non-instructional positions listed in the attached school-level organizational chart.*

SPEA staffing needs will be based on the number of students enrolled for the 2015-2016 SY. For the first year, we project that 160 students will be enrolled in SPEA. A primary goal of SPEA is to allow students to obtain the most optimal learning experience by having smaller class sizes. SPEA intends to make this goal a priority when making decision regarding our staffing needs.

According to research findings, there are proven long-term benefits for reducing class size such as achievement gains and higher graduation rates.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, research findings further contest that the benefits of smaller class sizes include the following:

- Closing racial-based achievement gaps
- Improved high school graduation rates
- Increased college entrance test-taking rates
- Improved student behavior and a significant reduction in discipline referrals

With the understanding of the benefits of class size and student achievement, we plan to have a student-teacher ratio of no more than 1:27 for the initial year of the school’s opening and hire additional personnel as needed to successfully operate SPEA during the first year of opening.

<b>Administrators</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Staff</b>
1 Executive Director	2 Algebra teachers	1 Business/Human Resource Manager (part-time position for year one)
1 Academic Officer	2 English teachers	1 Administrative Assistant
1 Operational Leader	2 Biology teachers	3 Contracted Positions (security and custodial/labor)
1 Dean of Discipline	2 World Studies teachers	1 Student Recruiter/Volunteer Coordinator/Parent Liaison (these roles will be assumed by one person)
1 Director of Development	2 PLTW teachers for SPEA’s engineering classes	
	1 Spanish teacher	
	1 Physical Education teacher	

<sup>64</sup> *Class Size Reduction: A Proven Reform Strategy* (n.d.): n. pag. Web.

		1 Kitchen Manager 2 Special Project Coordinator/Development (works with PLTW/CTE, Experiential Coordinator and responsible for extracurricular and curriculum enhancement programs)
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As enrollment increases, our staffing needs will increase to maintain a low student/teacher ratio.

Note:

- For additional information on all instructional and non-instructional staff positions over the school’s first five years of operation (See Appendix T: 2.4.a 5-Year School Staffing Mode).
  - For additional information on lines of authority and reporting within the school as well as the roles and responsibilities of staff members (See Appendix LL: 3.2.d Organizational Chart).
- For details on roles and responsibilities of proposed staff members, see job descriptions for each positions listed above (See Appendix V: 2.4.a Comprehensive Job Descriptions).
- Resumes for any identified candidates not serving on the design team are non-applicable.

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.*

Our deep belief in the importance of exceptional teachers drives our aggressive recruiting efforts focus on staffing. As recent studies show, “expanded time is most effective when combined with quality teaching and an unwavering focus on student achievement.”<sup>65</sup> We will hire a mix of experienced teachers with a demonstrated track record of achieving dramatic student results, and a handful of promising teachers at the beginning of their careers who have the right mindsets, beliefs and skills to positively impact students. All staff will meet the criteria detailed in section 27A- 10(c) of Illinois Charter Schools Law. In the first year, we’ll have experienced teachers as we build the school; as time goes on and staffing capacity expands, we will bring on a higher percentage of new teachers. Combined with significant instructional coaching and professional development for all teachers, this mix will yield results in individual classrooms and nurture a professional culture that is intellectually stimulating for teachers excited about their craft (See Appendix T: 2.4.a 5-Year School Staffing Model) for our staffing model.

Recruitment and hiring will involve an expansive local and national search for talent. We are particularly interested in hiring faculty and staff that mirrors the diversity of our students. As this is such a key lever for the school, a significant amount of the Executive Director’s time will be devoted to this process annually. Recruitment will involve a mix of casting the net wide and individually cultivating and pursuing talent. To reach a broad audience, we will use the following sources to recruit teaching positions:

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<sup>65</sup> Mass 2020 Massachusetts Expanded Learning Time Initiative. 2010- 11 Update. Np.: Mass 2020.2011 4. Print.

- **The Golden Apple Foundation.** We will contact all current and former award winners and finalists to see if they are interested in positions, and/or seek out recommendations.
- **Word of mouth.** This is our best resource and at the heart of this aspect of our strategy. With a sizable number of individuals in our database who are members of the education community locally and nationally, we will promote open positions extensively and send targeted information to those connected in the education world to ensure we are reaching top candidates nationally. There may be opportunities for referral bonuses.
- **Individual cultivation.** By using the existing relationships and networks outlined above, we will individually reach out to talented educators we know during recruitment season and ask them for names and contact information of talented teachers. We will reach out to those individuals to cultivate them as well as network to see if they know people who may be interested. We will recruit teachers on a continuous basis because we know how critically important teachers are in our school's development. Our recruiting season begins upon authorization, and we will interview people as they apply throughout the first quarter of the year. While we may not be aware at this time of the school year as to who on staff is returning, we will be growing for the first planning years of the school and will therefore be hiring every year.

These actions will ensure we reach a broad pool of talent. We will work to cultivate a deep pool of talent, with individuals who come highly recommended by using these resources.

The selection criteria planned to consider highly talented experienced and new teachers who will be committed to SPEA's mission and vision will be based on the following:

- Demonstrated record of success with minority students on both quantitative, objective measures as well as qualitative measures
- Strong communication skills with individuals of varying backgrounds
- Deep instructional knowledge and thoughtfulness, willing and able to work across all core subjects
- Excellent organizational skills
- Data- driven orientation and focus on results
- Committed to SPEA mission and vision and share the same beliefs that all students will produce exceptional scholars regardless of their socio- economic status
- Strong communication skills with individuals of varying backgrounds
- Demonstrate our core values (HELP) which is Healthy, Exceptional, Leadership, Professional
- Ability to thrive in a fast- paced, entrepreneurial environment; flexible, able to work autonomously as well as take direction as needed
- Ability to effectively communicate a strong sense of ownership and personal responsibility, commitment to develop leadership within staff
- A strong desire to help minority students excel in college readiness in STEM careers

We include recruitment and hiring of the Student Support Services Coordinator and the Learning Specialist in this process; the prospect pools overlap with the ones for general education teachers. For more specifics on the requirements of these positions (See Appendix V: 2.4.a Comprehensive Job Descriptions).

The application and interview process will have multiple data points for measuring these qualities. The first stage will be submission of a resume, cover letter, and questions to help the hiring selection team to determine whether potential candidates are a "SPEA- match". If those documents reveal a promising candidate, the candidate will have a 20- 30 minute phone interview, centered on the questions that Martin Haberman outlines in *Star Teacher*.<sup>66</sup> If the phone conference is successful, candidates will be invited to

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<sup>66</sup> Haberman, Martin. *Star Teachers: Ideology and Best Practice of Effective Teachers of Diverse Children and Youth in Poverty* N.p.: The Haberman Educational Foundation, 2005. Print.

teach a sample lesson. Before the lesson, they will submit lesson plans as well as an example of a relevant long- term planning material (such as a unit plan). After the lesson, there will be a debrief session in which the candidate will be given feedback similar to what they would receive as a SPEA teacher. The candidate will be asked to apply the feedback they received, either in a sample lesson within three days at SPEA or via a videotape of a lesson in their classroom during that same time. The debrief/ interview will follow, and if all signs are promising, the Executive Director will contact professional references. At that point, an offer would be given.

Heavy hiring season will be in February, March and April, with the goal of having all teachers hired by May 1 of the preceding academic year. As part of their welcome to SPEA, teachers will have a reading list with reflection questions to participate in a virtual book club around seminal SPEA instructional texts, including Paul Bambrick- Santoyo's *Data- Driven Instruction* and Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion*, among others.

To the extent that it is feasible, new teachers will be invited to observe at SPEA throughout the spring to get a sense of the cultural systems, as well as the academic and behavioral expectations. During the planning years, the incoming staff will make several carefully selected school visits to schools that share our mission and vision. Teachers will then begin professional development in July, with both new and seasoned SPEA teachers participating in the two weeks of professional development. Curricular development work will also be done at this time. During the planning years, the Academic Leader and Executive Director will do the foundational curricular development work of standards and exit requirements so that teachers are able to delve deeply into their own long- term and unit planning.

### 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.*

SPEA's desire is to offer competitive salary packages (compared to other charters) for certified teachers. The average salary proposed for certified staff is \$55K as of Spring of 2015. The reason for our proposal for higher salary for certified staff than other charters is because we are a STEM school and want to assemble the best quality teachers we can afford to provide a rigorous, relevant, and enriching educational experiences to our students. Darling-Hammond (1995) observes that experienced teachers are more effective than beginners at resolving a number of instructional and managerial problems, such as maintaining discipline, motivating students, and adapting instruction for students with diverse learning needs. Experienced teachers are also more knowledgeable about the content matter.<sup>67</sup>

In addition to a competitive salary all certified teachers will participate in the Chicago Teacher Pension Fund (CTPF). CTPF will provide benefits such as retirement, survivor, and disability benefits for certified SPEA teachers. In order to attract experienced teachers to our school we plan to provide an appealing monetary incentive.

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<sup>67</sup> Darling-Hammond, L. (1995). Inequality and access to knowledge. In J.A. Banks & C.A. McGee Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education*, p. 465-483. New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan. Cited in Dezmon, B. (Ed.). (2001, January). *Minority Achievement in Maryland at the Millennium*. Baltimore: Maryland State Department of Education. - See more at: <http://www.aft.org/periodical/american-educator/winter-2002/attracting-well-qualified-teachers-struggling#sthash.Lm0B7Jit.dpuf>

Monetary incentives alone will not attract and retain quality teachers, but non-monetary incentives such as support and opportunities for professional advancement, we believe, will aid in building and maintaining a quality teaching staff. Non-monetary incentives include staff recognition, quality professional development programs, and opportunities to create and maintain an effective teaching portfolio that includes artifacts such as lesson plans, anecdotal records, student projects, class newsletters, videotapes, annual evaluations, and letters of recommendations. The portfolio will provide opportunities for teachers to constantly reflect on their practices as well as act as a record of teachers' activities and tasks to be reviewed when seeking professional advancement.

#### 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.*

SPEA believes students need excellent teachers who drive exceptional results. Establishing a strong, healthy and professional culture where teachers can thrive is critical. There will be consistency with applying the core values (HELP) from both our students and faculty and staff. Below are SPEA staff values that have been derived from the student core values.

- **Health:** Taking ownership over our actions and results and, individually and collectively, we demonstrate a strong internal locus of control. We are honest with ourselves and each other about our strengths and struggles, and strive to get better every day, no matter where the starting point. We value sustainability, enjoying our work, and modeling for students that you can and should find pleasure in hard work.
- **Exceptional:** Having fun together, and enjoy the work we do to make the world a better place alongside some of the greatest colleagues in the world. We seek first to understand, then to be understood and work with each other with a generosity of spirit. We treat our students and our colleagues like a team and a family.
- **Leadership:** Work through all challenges, modeling the kind of deep perseverance we know our students need to see and live themselves. We are determined to ensure our school reaches our vision and reflect on our successes and struggles constantly, prompting action and a continuous effort to improve. We work closely with each other to find the best course of action, even if it is not the easiest. We approach our work with a strong sense of possibility and an assets-based orientation.
- **Professional:** Admit when we need help and ask for it. We accept help from others, and we do whatever we need to in order to ensure our students' success. We speak the truth, even when it is difficult.

By focusing staff values around our school's core values, we give every person in the building the same frame of reference in our daily interactions and hold everyone accountable to living the same values. This fosters a deeper staff understanding of the core values and building-wide reflection on the same concepts. At the same time, this strong staff culture creates an environment where teachers thrive, and therefore, positively contributing to staff retention.

Communicating and developing staff culture begins in our interview process, as we discuss our core values and allow staff members to reflect on what values will be easiest and most difficult to live out. During the two-week summer professional development, we will devote significant time to exploring and defining these core values in order to ensure that each academic year will begin with a shared understanding of our common values. As part of professional development, we discuss examples not aligned with our core values, as well as professional behavioral norms we want to establish, such as meeting deadlines and expectations for communication during and after the school day. We also discuss how to address any breaches of our values, norms, or culture.

Through the year in our weekly staff development, we take time to publicly acknowledge and appreciate strong examples of our professional culture and values, ensuring that we are constantly reinforcing our developing culture and highlighting strong examples to recognize the efforts of staff. Staff values are incorporated into observation forms and feedback conversations, as well as within staff self- evaluations and performance evaluations. Visual reminders, examples, and shout- outs populate the staff work room and in high- traffic teacher areas, like those areas surrounding the copy machine. Occasionally during the year, faculty and staff will have opportunities to reflect individually and collectively on how we, as a school community, are doing in living out the values and moving toward our collective successes.

The individual teacher, teacher teams, and in some cases, Academic Leader, will assess the success and health of our adult culture on a variety of informal and formal metrics (including the conclusions reached during individual and collective reflection points during the year, the evidence shown on self- evaluations and performance evaluations, and informal observation of staff interactions and morale).

By being upfront and clear about our desired professional culture starting in the interview process, building on our core value expectations during our summer professional development and reinforcing those core values throughout each academic year, we select teachers attracted to and who will thrive within the SPEA environment. Working as part of a team towards the larger goal of college graduation for all our students sustains our staff and gives them “fuel for the fire” as they do the hard work of teaching and ensuring all students are on track for college. While a variety of factors contribute to staff retention, we believe the strength and health of our adult culture at SPEA will ensure that the working environment is a true asset for all staff and one that will be difficult for anyone to leave.

Teachers and staff are valued voices of experience and insight in our school and as such are greatly esteemed for their opinions and contributions. There are a number of informal and formal ways in which their perspective is sought. Informally, the Executive Director and Officer(s) will constantly talk to staff members, soliciting their opinions and ideas, running ideas by them and gathering concerns. These conversations happen during weekly check- ins, after school or casually in hallways. The Executive Director and Officer(s) will sit in on grade- level team and department meetings to ensure they have a pulse on collective ideas, areas of concern and questions. In grade- level meetings, teachers will be making decisions that range from what to do during Pride Time each week to what kinds of support to offer a particular struggling student. In department meetings, teachers make decisions on a host of topics ranging from how to best prepare students for assessments to what common rubrics will be used (and tweaked) in each subject area. Formally, all grade- level and department chairs serve on the Leadership Team of the school, which meets weekly to discuss cultural and academic issues. Whenever appropriate and possible, ideas and initiatives discussed by the Leadership Team are brought to the entire staff for input, either in the weekly staff development or individually.

As part of our entrepreneurial, start- up culture, the administration is open to and encouraging of any new initiatives or ideas staff members may want to implement, whether offering a new type of enrichment or tweaking the way we run tutoring. The best idea wins at SPEA, no matter with whom it originated.

Because teachers and staff are our most valuable asset, it is vital that they have significant time and opportunity to work with each other, as a collective group of exceptional teachers that can do more than any one individual teacher. This time together is both collaborative in nature, as well as an opportunity for mentoring. While schedules vary, teachers have at least two planning periods per day. This includes common planning time for departments which meet weekly to discuss student work, analyze student data, and identify gaps in student knowledge and skill, as well as interventions necessary to ensure that students reach the high bar set for them in content and cognitive strategies. Vertical alignment is stressed in weekly department meetings, particularly in making sure that the rigor increases every year as students

grow. Grade level teams meet weekly during part of Wednesday afternoon staff development, to ensure they are able to discuss student culture, individual students and other topics of importance.

Strong teamwork and communication is critically important at all meetings, which builds on the foundation of trust and collegiality developed during our five- week summer staff development. During this time, teachers work with their grade level and subject area teams to write a Curricular Alignment Template (CAT) for their course. The CAT is a template, based on the model work of Roxbury Preparatory Charter School (of the Uncommon Network of Schools and consistently one of Massachusetts' top- performing charter schools) and as used in their staff professional development. The template incorporates state, Common Core and college readiness standards. Teachers will work closely together, spending much time with assessment questions, and using assessment data to help deepen understanding of what the appropriate level of mastery looks like at each grade level for each standard. Departments will work closely to ensure a shared understanding of standards and how the standards progress over time as students grow. Grade levels will work extensively together during summer professional development, ensuring there are shared cultural and behavioral expectations for students and shared understanding of what is expected and what is appropriate. This time includes norming on the merit/demerit system, role playing situations that may arise with students and rehearsing lessons to ensure consistency across the grade level.

This high level of teacher collaboration is a strong driver of our professional culture and allows for formal and informal mentorship opportunities. Department and grade levels working closely together to ensure the easy exchange of ideas, sharing of best practices, advice- seeking and gathering that are hallmarks of successful collaboration and mentoring relationships. As the Executive Director and Academic Leader give feedback to teachers, they will suggest opportunities for teachers to collaborate and seek each other out for ideas. For example, if the eleventh grade science teacher is struggling with clearly explaining concepts, he/she would be encouraged to observe the ninth grade English teacher who does this very well. This kind of nurtured mentorship and collaboration outside of departments and grades contributes to the collegiality of the environment, and ensures everyone who is teaching in the building is learning from their peers and everyone is improving. When it is appropriate—such as when a skilled teacher is looking to take on expanded leadership opportunities—teachers will be formally

#### Section 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.*

According to the article, *Highly Effective Teachers Are Never Done Learning* (Goldnick, 2015), “Great teachers aren't born and are never completely "made" -- but continuously develop over the course of their careers. There is no such thing as a finished product when it comes to highly effective teachers. Talented, experienced teachers are reflective, curious and persistent. Like their students, they are learners, too.”<sup>68</sup> With this understanding, SPEA desires to provide newer teachers the opportunity to come into the profession through an intensive induction program. The SPEA induction program will consist of the following research-based practices: a focus on enhanced student achievement through data-driven instruction, accelerated teacher effectiveness through professional development, and improved teacher retention by putting into place structures that will make newer teachers find their place within SPEA's school culture<sup>69</sup>.

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<sup>68</sup> "Highly Effective Teachers Are Never Done Learning." *Highly Effective Teachers Are Never Done Learning*. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Mar. 2015.

<sup>69</sup> "Teacher Induction Programs." *Teacher Induction Programs*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2015.



SPEA's induction program plans to assist first-year teachers with understanding the multi-faceted aspects of data-driven instruction in order to help novice teachers to be able to create the learning experiences that maximizes student success. One ongoing platform that we plan to include in the school's professional development program is Data Days. Data Days will allow teachers to compile data reports and engage in data analysis with a mentor to determine growth over time, achievement on an absolute scale and strengths and weaknesses of student skills, and overall progress towards meted identified learning goal(s). Analyzing and using data to inform instruction can be a challenging task for novice teachers, therefore, having a mentor teacher to guide a novice teacher throughout the process will build new teachers' capacity in this area.

Accelerating teacher effectiveness through professional development is another focus of SPEA's induction program. Every school year will begin with two weeks of summer professional development for teachers. The trainings will focus on: ensuring that staff has a deeply shared understanding of our mission and vision and how our daily work helps to achieve our long-term vision; establishing a strong staff culture and norms to ensure productive and effective working relationships ongoing; creating and refining high-quality curricular tools like long-term plans and trimester assessments; and ensuring that a strong foundation is in place for establishing and refining a strong culture for students. All teachers are required to attend these two weeks of development, although as the school grows, the time may be differentiated based upon longevity in the school. For example, new teachers would attend a "CAT 101" session explaining our Curricular Alignment Template (CAT) and how these tools are used, while returning teachers might use that time to reflect on their past CATs and areas they want to adjust/improve on for that year and/or become part of the teaching team for the 101 sessions. Ongoing professional development opportunities being considered for the SPEA induction program may include the following: effective instructional practices; effective classroom management procedures and routines; unity and teamwork among administration, teachers, support staff, parents, and community members; and teaching as a reflection of lifelong learning and ongoing professional growth, to name a few.

Putting into place structures that will allow novice teachers to realize the school's mission and vision as well as find their place within SPEA's school culture is paramount in order to improve teacher retention. The kick-off the school year professional development will primarily focus on developing a shared understanding of our ultimate mission and vision, as well as how our work for the upcoming school year coincides with SPEA's mission and vision. Much time will be devoted to our desired student culture—defining and flushing out the systems, structures and procedures that will enable student success, norming on the merit/demerit system, role-playing culturally challenging moments and norming our responses to those. Novice teachers, along with their assigned mentors, as well as their school-wide colleagues will discuss and practice instructional strategies that support the development of SPEA's desired student culture, like Lemov's "100%" and "No Opt Out."<sup>70</sup> Strategies detailed in Doug Lemov's Teach Like a Champion include concrete approaches and teacher actions that ensure 100% of the student participation, 100% of the time. Lemov also details techniques that teachers may use to help ensure that students are always held accountable and "opting out" of answering a question is not an option.

Throughout the year, there will be activities offered to new teachers to help develop a strong foundation of trust, collaboration and teamwork in order to establish collegial relationship such as<sup>71</sup>:

- Designing and preparing materials

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<sup>70</sup> "Home - Teach Like a Champion." *Teach Like a Champion*. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Mar. 2015.

<sup>71</sup> "Building Collaborative Cultures: Seeking Ways to Reshape Urban Schools." *Building Collaborative Cultures: Seeking Ways to Reshape Urban Schools*. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Mar. 2015.

- Designing curriculum units
- Writing curriculum
- Preparing lesson plans
- Reviewing and discussing plans
- Inviting others to observe one's teaching
- Teaching others in informal in-services
- Designing in-services for the school

SPEA's efforts to assist new teachers with navigating the school culture via collegial relationships will ensure a shared understanding of our adult and student culture.

#### 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.*

One of the most seminal aspects of our educational philosophy is the belief that all students deserve exceptional teachers who drive exceptional results. The professional development at SPEA supports this, as it works to ensure that student achievement results are strong and allow the achievement of our academic goals, and at the same time, provides meaningful professional development that invests in teachers to make them even more effective over the long- term.

Strong professional development - professionally stimulating, intellectually energizing, and most importantly, impactful in driving gains in student exceptionalism - is critically important at SPEA. Our big- picture goal for professional development is to ensure that teacher practices improve in a way that has a demonstrably positive effect on student achievement gains. To facilitate this, faculty and staff will be expected to work through a variety of professional development structures, including annual summer professional development, ongoing weekly professional development, cyclical Data Days, and individual professional development.

Summer professional development will be a two- week program before school begins which all faculty and staff members will be required to attend. The most important goals of this professional development will focus on: (1) ensuring that staff has a deep shared understanding of our mission and vision and how our daily work helps to achieve our long- term vision; (2) establishing a strong staff culture and norms to promote productive, effective, and ongoing working relationships; (3) creating and refining high- quality curricular tools like long- term plans and trimester assessments; (4) establishing a strong foundation for a data- driven instructional culture; and (5) ensuring that a strong foundation is in place for establishing and refining a strong student culture. Professional development, launched over the summer, will continue on an ongoing basis each month throughout the school year.

Additional allocated time for professional development will be scheduled throughout the year. Time allocated for furthering faculty and staff professional practice will consist of proactive professional development (i.e. identifying needs over the summer during curricular planning that teachers would like more support around) and responsive professional development (i.e. responding to any needs which arise based on student achievement data, trends across the school, etc.). For information regarding SPEA professional development program (See Appendix W: 2.4.b Professional Development Calendar).

In addition to targeted professional development days, there will be Data Days, scheduled within three school days of all interim and trimester assessments, thus allowing time for teachers to grade and enter assessment data and for the Academic Leader to compile data reports from each set of assessments to be

analyzed by teachers prior to the Data Day. In preparation for Data Days, data will be accessed online and exported to Excel, each teacher will receive a data analysis report with individual breakdowns of each student in the grade they teach, in all subjects. The report will show growth over time, achievement on an absolute scale and strengths and weaknesses of student skills based on error and test item analysis. For interim assessments, student progress towards meted identified learning goal(s) will be noted. The Executive Director and Academic Leader will receive this report for all grade levels. Faculty will reflect on the data and answer preliminary questions before arriving to Data Day, in order to maximize the time used for strong collaborative analysis and planning.

As Paul Bambrick- Santoyo notes in *Driven by Data*, introductory professional development, ongoing professional development and teacher- owned analysis are three essential components of ensuring data- driven instruction at the school level.<sup>72</sup> “Data - driven instruction succeeds only when it is truly teacher- owned, meaning teachers must personally analyze their own classes’ data. Only when teachers feel that data- driven instruction is *theirs* will fundamental improvement begin.”<sup>73</sup> Time spent in summer professional development will establish the foundation for a data- driven culture. Data Days, where teachers will have the opportunity to own the analysis, will ensure that SPEA is able to use data- driven instruction effectively to drive student results.

This in- depth team analysis provides all SPEA teachers and leaders a shared understanding of student strengths and gaps. From the analysis on Data Days, students will be assigned to STARS mentoring group, and parents are notified of the student’s obligation to stay for the extended days until their student demonstrate sufficient progress on the next round of interim or trimester assessments. Individual professional development will be facilitated by the Academic Leader and the Dean during weekly check- ins and observations of each staff member and will be guided by their students’ results, self- evaluations and identified areas of growth in performance evaluations.

The school’s professional development programs will primarily take place internally, given the tremendous instructional expertise of the proposed Executive Director, Yolanda Sanchez, and the unique curricular demands of SPEA. External trainings and professional development sessions are encouraged for staff members as they fit within their personal development goals. Some recommended resources may include: Weekend Warrior sessions with Building Excellent Schools; Doug Lemov’s training on *Teach Like a Champion*; Resources for Better Teaching’s work on pedagogy; excellent school visits; and the KIPP school summits and retreats, among others.

Content- specific professional development will also be supplemented as appropriate—for example, mathematics teachers may attend a conference by the National Conference of the Teachers of Mathematics or a social studies teacher may participate in some online modules and workshops through Facing History and Ourselves. While the school will have some content- specific resources in its own staff (for example, the proposed Executive Director has led several national groups on teaching middle school reading and writing), it is important to us that teachers in all disciplines are able to develop their content knowledge and any content- specific pedagogy. A portion of the budget is set aside for all external professional development, with an average of almost \$1,500 allotted per staff member. Teachers may access these funds by completing a brief application that details why this will help their development in a way that will impact student results.

Effectively educating students with disabilities requires flexibility in lesson plans that accommodate for students learning differences. Our school is an inclusion model, with pull- out options only as needed, so

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<sup>72</sup> Bambrick- Santoyo, Paul. *Driven by Data: A Practical Guide to Improve Instruction*. San Francisco. Jossey- Bass. 2010. 132 Print.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

it is essential that all teachers are able to effectively differentiate for their students. Teacher induction includes time learning about different ways to effectively differentiate lessons, and the suggested lesson planning template that our teachers will use has several components that ask teachers to reflect on how they will differentiate (e.g., modifying a note-taking template or lending additional support to a student). The Executive Director and Dean will regularly review lesson plans, as does the Student Support Services Coordinator, who explicitly looks for and gives feedback on the differentiation that is occurring in lesson. In addition, the Student Support Services Coordinator often plans together with classroom teachers so that they are able to leverage the Coordinator's expertise in differentiating and the classroom teacher is able to ensure that all students in their class are able to engage effectively and master the materials. For more information on SPEA's professional development plan (See Appendix W: 2.4.b Professional Development Calendar).

### 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.*

Building on the atmosphere of trust and collegiality at SPEA, as well as our staff values and emphasis on continuous growth and improvement, the leadership and teachers are in constant contact and dialogue about what is working well in classrooms, and what areas could be pushed to make student results even stronger. SPEA, has an open-door policy, meaning observations of teachers by both peers and leaders occur frequently and are welcomed, whether they are brief pop-in visits for ten minutes or longer-duration observations. Strong communication follows the observations, with notes and feedback sent to teachers immediately following the observation. In addition to written feedback, each observer follows up individually with the teacher, whether briefly during a planning period, in a regularly scheduled check-in, or at an after-school time for debriefing. Every teacher will have regular check-ins with either their Academic Leader or Executive Director and department chair. Every staff member, regardless of to whom they report, has formal quarterly meetings with the Executive Director to check in on their progress and satisfaction. Grade-level chairs will meet weekly with the grade level to discuss teacher practices trends. Our culture for leading and being exceptional accelerates teacher effectiveness and exceptional academic achievement.

By frequently observing teachers, the Executive Director and Academic Leader will ensure that teachers are choosing instructional methods that fit the identified evaluation criteria, and that students are on track to meeting our ambitious goals. If a teacher is not choosing the appropriate instructional methods or is not executing them effectively, the Academic Leader and/or Executive Director will work with the teacher to rectify the issue—either in the planning stages, if the issue is the choice of instructional method, or in the execution stages, if the deficit is in the delivery. Intervention strategies include real-time coaching of the teacher, modeling lessons, co-writing lesson plans or other appropriate techniques.

Teachers will receive monthly feedback and coaching throughout the year, using the SPEA Teacher Rubric to track their own growth and development informally. The SPEA Teacher Rubric<sup>74</sup> will help to ground the staff in a common language of the components of exceptional teaching Leadership rubric. Teachers will be expected to complete a self-evaluation twice per year—once in December/January for

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<sup>74</sup> Informed by the Teach For America and KIPP Framework for Excellent Teaching, assesses criteria including student achievement results and growth, effective planning and execution of the teaching cycle, teacher's content knowledge, classroom culture, self-awareness, working effectively with others, the ability to invest students and families, and continuously increasing one's effectiveness.

their mid- year review, and once in June for the end- of- year review. For information on SPEA teacher evaluation (See Appendix X: 2.4.b Teacher Evaluation Documents).

Sharing best practices are hallmarks of successful collaboration and mentoring relationships. As the Executive Director and Academic Leader provide feedback to teachers, they will suggest opportunities for teachers to collaborate and seek each other out for idea exchange (e.g., if the eleventh grade science teacher is struggling with clearly explaining concepts, they would be encouraged to observe the ninth grade English teacher who does this very well). This kind of nurtured mentorship and collaboration cross-departments and grade levels contributes to the collegiality of the environment, and ensures everyone who is teaching in the building is learning from their peers and everyone is improving. When it is appropriate—such as when a skilled teacher is looking to take on expanded leadership opportunities—teachers will be formally paired together so that more proficient teachers can mentor teachers who are developing.

If at some point it becomes clear that a teacher is struggling and the standard intervention strategies are not having the desired impact, the Executive Director and/or Academic Leader may initiate a Performance Improvement Plan. This plan, which would be written by the Executive Director with the input of all involved, would specify the current challenges, the ways in which those challenges are impacting student growth, and the specific, clear, concrete goals for the teacher or staff member to reach during a predetermined amount of time. It will also outline the steps that all individuals involved will need to take to support teacher in question. The plan will also identify times for all those involved in enacting the plan to assess progress towards meeting identified goals and adjust any steps as needed.

At the end of the period of time allotted, all involved parties discuss the progress made and if the goals have been achieved. Possible outcomes include: the individual may have met the goals; the individual may have made significant progress towards the goal but fallen short; or the individual may have fallen significantly short of the goals. Depending on the specifics and the circumstances, future discussions will center on if the individual should be released from the plan (likely if they have met the goals and demonstrated significant improvement) or if the plan should be extended and continued (likely if the individual has made significant progress but still has fallen short of the goal). If the individual has fallen significantly short of the goals, future discussions will focus on whether working at SPEA is a good fit in either the short- or the long- term. Decisions to dismiss any employees are made at the sole discretion of the Executive Director.

Note: In addition to teacher evaluation, the Academic Leader will be evaluated using the *Illinois State Board of Education Performance Evaluation Advisory Council State Model for Principal Evaluation*. For details on evaluating the Academic Leader (See Section 2.2.b. School Leadership, Question 4).

#### Question #4: Evaluating Effectiveness:

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

Research has shown that educator quality is one of the most important influences on student achievement. High quality professional learning opportunities are essential in order to increase educator’s knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs so that they are better able to help students to succeed academically. Professional learning that is most effective in improving educator practice is “[i]ntensive, ongoing, and connected to practice; [f]ocused on student learning and addresses the teaching of specific curriculum content; [a]ligned with school improvement practices; and [b]uilds strong working relationships among

teachers.”<sup>75</sup>

The overarching goal for SPEA’s professional development evaluation plan is to make the most out of our professional learning experiences. We desire to put into place a professional learning program that moves away from professional development as an adult-centered, fragmented, and “one shot” event to a student need centered, goal-oriented, and a strategic learning process. We intend to shift the focus of professional development at SPEA from planning, attending, and evaluating a professional development program to focusing on planning, implementing, and evaluating learning and change in educator practice. Therefore, it is critical that SPEA’s evaluation process for our school’s professional development program is not only researched based, but also engages our teachers in collaborative learning experiences with a focus on team, school and system improvement.<sup>76</sup>

Our school intends to put into place an on-going school professional learning assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of our school based professional development system. The on-going assessment will enable us to continue to learn the strengths of our professional development program and areas needing improvement to increase effectiveness.

SPEA’s professional learning assessment will look at the following components that research has found are necessary to make professional development effective:<sup>77</sup>

- **Focus on Student Learning and School Improvement Goals:** Goals for professional development program are aligned to the school’s school improvement goals.
- **A Systemic Approach:** The school’s professional development system is ongoing and defined in a plan and is an integral part of the system of school improvement.
- **Supportive Leadership:** Distributed and supportive leadership creates an expectation of continuous learning for all staff and provides crucial supports for successful learning.
- **Data-Based Planning:** Data Based Goals for professional development and school improvement are based upon student data and identified learning needs.
- **Research-Based Content:** Professional development content is research-based and has proven to be effective in raising achievement of students of similar characteristics.
- **Collaborative Learning:** Professional learning process is purposeful, focused, ongoing, sustained, collaborative, and job embedded.
- **Follow-up to Facilitate Implementation:** Targeted follow-up to facilitate the implementation of professional learning activities.
- **Evaluation:** Professional development is evaluated in terms of changes in educator practice and improved student learning.

Another consideration means SPEA intends to implement to monitor the effectiveness of our school-based professional development program will be to engage our faculty, staff, and administrators in professional development cycles. SPEA’s professional development cycles will include the following:<sup>78</sup>

- Assess student’s learning needs
- Determine the skills, knowledge and beliefs our teachers need to meet student needs (i.e., via professional development evaluations, teacher performance evaluations, and/or informal and formal observations)
- Develop professional development goals, activities, implementation and evaluation criteria

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<sup>75</sup> National, Staff, Development, and Council. *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession*: (n.d.): n. pag. Web.

<sup>76</sup> Education, Vermont Department Of. *A Guide for Increasing the Effectiveness of* (n.d.): n. pag. Web.

<sup>77</sup> Education, Vermont Department Of. *A Guide for Increasing the Effectiveness of* (n.d.): n. pag. Web.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

- Engage in intensive, ongoing professional development and collaborative practice with colleagues, consultants, or peer coaches
- Implement new learning in classrooms regularly with fidelity and peer and/or consultant coaching
- Evaluate educator use of new knowledge, skills, practice (i.e., both informally and formally)
- Evaluate changes in student learning (i.e., Were goals met? Were the professional learning activities effective in building teachers' capacity to help the students to meet targeted learning goals?)

The process outlined we believe will assist us with evaluating the efficacy of SPEA's professional development policies, procedures, and offerings and, more importantly, maximize students' achievement by building the capacity of the adult learners in our building.

### Domain 3: Operational Capacity

#### Dimension 3.1 General Operations

##### Section 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.*

STAR's Project Engineering Academy (SPEA) will operate as a not-for-profit corporation in the state of Illinois and will be governed by a Board of Directors. The Board will hold the public charter and use strategic planning, thoughtful governance and oversight to ensure that the school is held accountable to its mission, is faithful to the terms of the charter, and remains financially strong over time. The sole responsibility of the Board will be to govern the school by developing and maintaining school policies, hiring and evaluating the Executive Director, and maintaining financial oversight and fiduciary responsibility in alignment with the mission and vision of the school. The Board will delegate all management decisions to the Executive Director, who will be responsible for the management and oversight of the day-to day functioning of the school. The Executive Director will hold an ex-officio position on the Board that will allow him/her to perform a critical advisory role and to provide an effective voice in the school's governance that accurately reflects the ongoing needs of the school. The Board will measure Operational Goals and take action toward those goals during the school year. The Board will further develop a rubric to evaluate and measure progress toward the goals utilizing The CPS School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP) as a template

<http://cps.edu/Performance/Pages/PerformancePolicy.aspx>.

#### Performance areas monitored include, but are not limited to:

<i>Board Monitoring Components</i>	
Increase student achievement	Includes academic-related topics such as test scores, grades, attendance, graduation rate
Provide a safe, productive environment	Includes metrics related to the school environment such as safety, security, facilities, cleanliness, school culture, etc.
Build and maintain a talented, effective and satisfied workforce	Includes metrics related to staff recruitment, retention, training, evaluation, satisfaction, etc.
Operate efficiently	Includes metrics related to finances and making effective use of resources such as budgeting, departmental effectiveness, etc.

Ensure public support and customer satisfaction	Includes board and community relations, internal and external communications, surveys, and general satisfaction.
College/career readiness	Metrics related to college or career readiness such as graduation rates, college preparatory exams, college success, etc.
Assessments and exams	Metrics related to federal, state or local examinations or assessments
Student progression (courses and grade levels)	Metrics related to student progression such as grade promotions, academic growth, year over year student improvement, etc.
Programs/initiatives/extra-curricular	Metrics related to programs for sub-groups such as Special Education, Gifted and Talented Education, district or school initiatives, or extra-curricular activities.
Engagement/attendance/truancy (all stakeholders)	Metrics related to student or staff engagement/satisfaction, attendance rates or truancy
Demographics, enrollment, other baseline data	Metrics related to general school/organization statistics such as demographics, student enrollment and other baseline numbers.
HR Systems	Metrics related to HR systems such as payroll, grievance reporting, etc.
Staff evaluation and effectiveness	Metrics related to staff effectiveness either through evaluation or other methods
Staff preparation/training	Metrics related to the preparation and training of staff.
Staff retention and Staff recruitment	Metrics related to the recruitment and retention functions of a school system.
Facilities and equipment	Metrics related to facilities or equipment such as building quality/maintenance, laptop availability, etc.
School support services (transportation, food, etc.)	Metrics related to non-academic school services such as food service, transportation, office supplies, etc.
Discipline	Includes student suspension, expulsion, truancy and other disciplinary measures.
Security/safety and health	Includes incidence of violence and crime, security detail involved, etc.
School culture	Includes in a general way metrics related to the culture of the school
External communications crisis management, reporting achievement results, etc.	Includes metrics related to the ability of the system to communicate internally or externally such as
Transparency and access (includes responsiveness)	Metrics related to the ability of the organization to include families and the public in decision-making as well as keeping them informed as to ongoing operations.
Board/governance interface	Metrics related to the ability of the administration to engage effectively a governing body such as a school board
Cost reduction measures	Metrics related to cost reduction
Finance/budget planning process	Includes metrics related to finances and resource management
Departmental efficiency/effectiveness	Includes metrics related to the effectiveness or efficiency of departments or schools, such as relative school rankings, # of unfilled positions for the HR department, etc.



**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*

Table below provides summary of SPEA’s Start-Up plan.

<i>SPEA Function</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
Student Recruitment & Admissions	Executive Director	Operational Leader	Oct.-June
Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning	Academic Leader		Oct. -June
Instructional Program	Academic Leader		Oct. - March
Special Education	Academic Leader		April- May
School Culture and Climate	Executive Director		Oct. – Feb.
Facilities	Executive Director	Operational Leader	Oct.-Nov.
Fund Development/ Fund Raising	Executive Director	Operational Leader	Continuous
Financial Management	Executive Director	Operational Leader	Continuous
Governance	Executive Director		Continuous
Board Expansion and Transition to Governing Board	Operational Leader	Executive Director	Oct. – Nov.
Develop governance strategy, i.e.	Operational Leader	Executive Director	Oct. – Dec.
Board Structure	Operational Leader	Executive Director	Oct.
Board Meetings	Executive Director		Monthly
Board Development	Executive Director		Nov.-Dec.
Personnel	Executive Director	Operational Leader	Oct. - May
Food Service	Operational Leader	Executive Director	March - April
Health and Safety	Operational Leader	Executive Director	Oct. – July
Community Partnerships	Executive Director		Continuous
Parents and Community	Executive Director		Continuous.
Communication	Operational Leader	Executive Director	Continuous
Purchasing	Operational Leader	Executive Director	Continuous
Contract Personnel	Operational Leader	Executive Director	Feb. – May
Technology	Operational Leader	Executive Director	Continuous
Uniforms	Operational Leader		March- July

(See Appendix Y: 3.1.a Detailed Development Team Timeline).

### 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.*

#### **Enrollment Chart**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
9	165	165	165	165	165
10		165	165	165	165
11			165	165	165
12				165	165
<b>Total</b>	165	330	495	660	660

### 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?*

The marketing process will begin after formal notification that the SPEA charter school proposal contract has been approved. The marketing for the school will continue until the month of April. At that time, it will be determined if further marketing efforts are required to fill enrollment. If the grade slots are filled, parents/guardians of the accepted students will be notified in writing. If, as we anticipate, the number of applications exceeds available slots, a random selection drawing will be held no later than the month of May. The time, date and location of the random selection will be announced via local newspapers and school website. The random selection will be done by an accounting firm. The same representative will conduct the random selection for the school waiting list if such a list exists. If seats are still available, recruitment efforts will continue on an open enrollment basis until all seats are filled.

Methods utilized for Student Recruitment will include engaging Community Partners as outlined in Section 1.1.a. Question #3 Community Organizations, Businesses, and Leaders. On going recruitment efforts will also include, but not limited to:

- High School Fairs
- Direct mail announcements targeted to families in the areas with school aged children
- Radio commercials
- Cable TV spots
- Newspaper
- Local Businesses
- Local Churches
- Local Community Centers
- Letters and flyers to local community organizations
- School website
- Door to door residence visit

SPEA will build relationships with local elementary schools via direct contact visits and conferences with school Administration and Counselors to ensure awareness of how we can holistically build on the academic and social emotional efforts of their students. SPEA will host three (3) Open House session's; one per month targeting December, February, and April. During the Open House, we will have breakout sessions for parents and students to receive information and participate in specialized events in Engineering, Architecture, Experiential Learning, School Programs, and other demonstrations to engage

and showcase what opportunities there are for any student; to include students with IEP, 504's, ELL, and/or Homeless.

Once a student has been accepted, an acceptance letter will go to the students home addressed to the student in care of their guardians/parents. In addition, an email will be sent and a phone call will be made. The Recruitment Team will go to the elementary school where the student is coming from and deliver a Welcome Aboard Package (WAP) and make the announcement in front of their peers to increase awareness and interest in what SPEA has to offer.

Student retention will be managed and monitored by the Holistic Wellness Team (HWT) who will monitor the needs of the students on an ongoing basis. The HWT will initially consist of an Administrator, a Dean, a Social Worker, and a Teacher. The HWT will grow to meet the needs of the students as needed. The HWT will meet biweekly to review student performance data, referrals from Administration and Staff, and professional evaluations conducted by the HWT. The HWT will target students for specific interventions (such as Individual Counseling, Group Therapy, Think First, Cognitive Behavioral Intervention to Trauma in Schools, referral to external partners, etc.) that meet the needs of the students and their family with wrap around services internally and externally from SPEA.

### Section 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.*

Based on Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/27A-4(d)), enrollment in a charter school shall be open to any pupil who resides within the geographic boundaries. It is the stated policies of SPEA to admit all students using fair practices without regards to race, religion, origin or gender. This non-discrimination policy applies to students' access to instructional and experiential learning; to counseling and advisors; vocational education programs; financial assistance; extracurricular activities; and other matters related to students. It is the responsibility of the school to see that this non-discrimination policy for students is followed. Recruitment information will be marketed in SPEA within programs like: 21st Century Scholars, Educational Talent Search, social service agencies and other key agencies that serve families in poverty, low-income/first generation, students with disabilities and youth at-risk for academic failure. It is the intention of SPEA that all ninth grade applicants will be enrolled without the number of students exceeding 28 students per classroom. If the class reaches capacity, a student lottery will take place. All application and enrollment policies will be posted on the SPEA website for public access.

#### **Application Period (December – April)**

In order to apply to SPEA, students along with their parents/guardians will fill out an electronic version of the application and submit online via the SPEA website. Paper copies of the application will also be available upon request. SPEA will accept applications for attendance from anywhere in the Chicagoland area. The marketing emphasis of the school will, however, focus on the Southwest area, in particular the Little Village community. SPEA will not engage in policies, which discriminate against students on account of race, gender, religion, national origin, ancestry or color or disability.

First round decisions will be made by the last day in February. Second round decisions will be made on the last day in April. Lottery will be held on the last day in June (see "Lottery due to over-enrollment" below). Within 10 days of the selection of students for SPEA, the parents/guardians of the students will

be notified of their acceptance via letter to the students home addressed to the student in care of their guardians/parents. In addition, an email will be sent and a phone call will be made. Parents of those students accepted will be asked to sign a form verifying that they will be sending their child to the school and that they understand and will comply with school policies and regulations. Parental acceptance forms must be returned to the SPEA office within two weeks or the child's name will be removed from the acceptance list and another student will be selected from the waiting list (if applicable). By the month of June, parents/guardians and students will be invited to an open-house in July which includes an introduction of SPEA staff. The parents/guardians and students will then be assisted by the staff to complete the enrollment process.

### **Lottery due to over-enrollment**

If there are more eligible applicants for enrollment in a charter school than there are spaces available, successful applicants shall be selected by lottery. A lottery system will be put into place where by assigning a random Identification Number (ID) to the student applicants and selecting those ID numbers at random. Per 105 ILCS 5/27A-4(h), the lottery selection will be videotaped with the Time/Date stamp and sent to the authorizer by September 1 of each year. The authorizer or its designee will be present for the lottery. Applicants will be ranked in lottery based on (1) siblings of pupils enrolled in the charter school, (2) pupils enrolled in the charter school the previous school year, and (3) pupils who reside within an applicable attendance boundary, if one has been designated.

### **Waiting List**

A waiting list will be established for applications not selected in the lottery. The position on the waiting list will be determined by the application submission date. Preference may be given to siblings of existing or already admitted students. Applicants will be notified of their position on the waiting list within 10 days after the application deadline has passed.

### **Upon acceptance of a student, the following information will be required to enroll all students:**

- Enrollment Forms
  1. Student application
  2. Birth certificate or State/Government ID (proof of age)
  3. Social Security Number Request form & Social Security Card
  4. Proof of residence (utility bill, etc)
  5. Proof of guardianship
  6. Emergency Contact Form
- Academic
  1. Transfer (ISBE/CPS Transfer Form)
  2. Diploma (Freshman) / Transcripts (Transfer)
  3. Standardized and/or Educational testing records
  4. Specialized Service (Individual Education Plan (IEP) and/or 504) (if applicable)
  5. Disciplinary records
  6. Attendance records
- Medical
  1. Physical / Immunizations records
  2. Health/immunization records - Any student who has not attended SPEA previously must present proof of immunization for diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, measles, rubella polio, meningitis, and mumps. Students who fail to provide the immunization information will be excluded from school until which time proof is secured by the school
- Administrative
  1. School-Based health Center Consent Form
  2. Media Consent Form
  3. Electronic Devices Policy

4. Dress Code Policy
5. Home Language Survey
6. Signed Free and reduced lunch form
7. Activity Fee

### **Withdrawals**

The parent should contact the school if a student is wishing to withdraw. Students who plan to withdraw from SPEA must give written notice to Administration at least two business days in advance in order to have the proper records to take with them to their new school. A withdrawal form will be given to the parent, which enables the student to receive grades up to the date of withdrawal. Students will return books, library books, and should pay any fees before withdrawal. A health record will also be given at this time, as some schools require this record before enrolling a new student.

Students may withdraw at any time with their parent/guardian permission. Students and parents must complete a Withdrawal Form and must attend an exit interview with the SPEA Administration to make sure that the school has exerted all efforts to serve the student. The withdrawal form must be approved by both the Principal and Dean of Discipline. If the student needs to be referred to another agency, this process will be worked out between SPEA and the referral agency.

Under Illinois law, any student who is at least 16-years of age but is not yet 18 years of age may withdraw from school prior to high school graduation after an exit interview with the student's parents or guardian is conducted. If the exit interview fails to occur, the Principal will notify the proper authorities and ask that legal action be taken against the student and parent/guardian. The law states that a student may withdraw from school when the student graduates, turns 17, or turns 16 and has the written consent of a parent or guardian.

### **Re-admission**

Students are re-admitted on a best-qualified basis. All applicants are considered on the basis of their school records, completion of the required registration procedures, and a personal interview with school administration. A student's previous academic progress, behavior, and attitude are also considered in the acceptance process. The Principal will recommend acceptance or non-acceptance of a new student and will make the final decision regarding a student's' acceptance (See Appendix Z: 3.1.b Application, Registration, and Enrolment forms).

*NOTE: SPEA reserves the right to deny enrollment to any student who has been expelled from another educational institution during the current school year*

### **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.*

### **Transportation Plan**

The Operational Leader will be responsible for overseeing the transportation and services to students. SPEA is proposed as a neighborhood school. As such, we anticipate drawing the vast majority of our students from Little Village and surrounding Priority Communities. It is our expectation that students will walk to school, or, if their families choose, take public transportation or transport their own children via privately owned vehicles. We are working to ensure that the school is centrally located for families residing in this community, and with access to public transportation. In addition, SPEA will facilitate making arrival to and departure from school convenient for students (i.e. school doors will open 1 hour before school opens so students can wait inside in the cafeteria rather than outside the building in inclement weather). SPEA will not provide any school transportation, except as outlined under Students with Disabilities, Homeless Students, and Transportation Plan for ADA Compliance below. We are

exploring the ability for reimbursement of funds for families that travel further distance through the Parents Transportation Reimbursement Program

[http://www.isbe.net/funding/html/parent\\_guardian\\_transport.htm](http://www.isbe.net/funding/html/parent_guardian_transport.htm) .

### **Students with Disabilities**

In accordance with legal requirements, we will provide transportation for students with disabilities. We anticipate serving a small number of students who have this need, and the Student Diverse Learner Coordinator will work with these students and their families on an individual basis to find a solution that best meets their needs. The Student Diverse Learner Coordinator will work with the Business Manager, who works with all vendors, to ensure transportation needs are successfully met. Student Diverse Learner Coordinator is responsible for the implementation of all Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) at SPEA and will thus be fully informed as to what students may need transportation provided to them. The Student Diverse Learner Coordinator will also be aware of which students become classified as a student with special needs during their time at SPEA, which may necessitate that we provide transportation for them.

### **Homeless Students**

The McKinney Vento Act authorizes educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. This act provides guidelines to services which are available to homeless children. In the student interview process data will be collected for reporting purposes and to help with assistance. We will work closely with families of homeless students to ensure they are able to remain in our school as they are allowed to do under the law. The Operational Leader will work with these students and families on a case-by-case basis to arrive at the best transportation method for their circumstances, including the use of CTA cards for students and for parents. In order to ensure that the Student Support Services Coordinator is aware of any changing developments with students' living situations, s/he will meet weekly with grade level chairs as part of the Leadership Team where changes in student needs will be a standing agenda item. Much reference will come from Illinois State Board of Education in matters pertaining to students experiencing homelessness <http://www.isbe.net/homeless/> .

### **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. (Note: For additional information on ADA compliance requirements, please see the ADA Guidelines & Services document located in the Resources Section of the ONS website, [www.cps.edu/2014RFP](http://www.cps.edu/2014RFP).)*

### **ADA Compliance**

Per the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, SPEA will ensure relocation of activities from any room or space identified as not accessible on the ADA report, obtain accommodations for parents or visitors to school events who have hearing or visual impairments, and ensure that the proposed school website and all information technology in the proposed school, including hardware, software, and web-based applications are accessible to persons with disabilities. To ensure SPEA following ADA requirements, SPEA will follow the ADA Compliance Check List as a guideline to compliance (See Appendix AA: 3.1.b. ADA Compliance Checklist).

## Dimension 3.2: Oversight and Accountability

### Section 3.2.a Governance

#### Question #1: Structure

*Describe the structure of the governing Board at the proposed school. 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.*

SPEA shall be governed by a governing body or Board of Directors pursuant to Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/27A-5). The SPEA Design Team consists of a demonstrated track record of competence and skill sets in the areas of academia to include current and former educators, members possessing MBAs, individual team members specializing in marketing, accounting and finance, members with governance experience, members who have served on School Council's, members who have served and continue to serve on nonprofit Boards with an expertise in fundraising, members with experience building and managing data systems, and members with prior charter experience. Upon charter approval, the Design Team will transition to the Founding Board of Directors.

SPEA will have a Board of Directors composed of a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of seven (7) Board members representing a wide range of skill sets in education, governance, organizational development, real estate/facilities, community work, finance, accounting, marketing/public relations, and strategic planning who have a variety of expertise that embodies the Board functions. The Board will continue to develop its membership to have the attributes and qualities which will lead to overall enhancements in the Board's effectiveness. SPEA also recognizes the importance of community representation and have made recruitment of a community resident a high priority.

The Governance Committee shall prepare and submit to the Board a report of the nominees it recommends for election. The Board will appoint a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The number of seats available shall be determined in accordance with the by-laws. Whenever possible, nominated Board member credentials will be presented one meeting prior to their election. Board members will be elected by two-thirds of all members. Each director shall serve from the next scheduled Board meeting after the election until the end of his or her term as determined by the Board. The officers of the Board shall be elected to serve a four (4) year term. Each officer shall hold office until his or her successor shall have been duly elected and shall have qualified, or until he/she shall resign or shall have been removed in the manner hereinafter provided. Election of an officer shall not of itself create contract rights.

The Board of Directors shall designate and establish standing committees that shall have and exercise the authority of the Board in the management of the Corporation. The Board president shall appoint chairpersons of each committee and other directors to serve on each committee. The committee chairperson may appoint additional members of the committee who need not be directors, however, persons who are not directors shall not exceed the number of the majority of the members on any standing or special board committee. The directors may, from time to time, create other committees, task forces or advisory councils at a regular or special meeting of the Board that may or may not have directors or members, which body may not act on behalf of the Corporation or bind it to any actions but may make recommendations to the Board of Directors or to the officers. The Board shall provide the direction and guidelines of such committees. The president shall appoint the chairpersons of such committees.

**The President** shall be the chief executive officer of the corporation and shall, at the direction of the Board of Directors, supervise all of the business and affairs of the corporation. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board. S/he shall appoint all committees, temporary or permanent. S/he

shall be one of the Officers who may sign checks or drafts of the Corporation. S/he shall discharge all duties incident to the office of President. Additional duties include, but are not limited to:

- Chair Board and officer meetings.
- Work in partnership with the Executive Director to execute Board decisions.
- Work with the staff to recruit board members and other needed volunteers.
- Call special meetings if necessary.
- Appoint, with input from other officers, all committee chairs and recommend who will serve on committees.
- Assist the Executive Director in preparing the agenda for board meetings.
- Conduct new Board member orientation in conjunction with Governance Committee and Executive Director.
- Oversee, with the Board officers, searches for a new Executive Director.
- Coordinate, with the Board officers, the Executive Director's annual performance evaluation and board assessment
- Frequently consult with Board Directors on their roles and help them evaluate their performance
- Annually focus the Board's attention an assessment of its own structure, role, and relationship to management

**The Vice President** shall assist the President in the discharge of the President's duties as the President may direct and shall perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to the Vice President by the President or the Board of Directors. S/he shall also serve as the President in the event the President is unable to serve, and shall so serve until such time as the President is capable of resuming his or her position. Additional duties include, but are not limited to:

- Participate as a vital part of the Board leadership, attending all meetings.
- Serve on the executive committee
- Understand the responsibilities of the Board Chair and be able to perform these duties in the Chair's absence.
- Perform special assignments as requested by board chair

**The Treasurer** shall have the care and custody of all monies and securities belonging to the corporation. S/he shall be one of the Officers who may sign checks or drafts of the corporation. S/he shall render at stated periods as the Board of Directors shall determine a written account of the finances of the organization. The Treasurer shall exercise all duties incident to the Office of Treasurer and such other duties as may be assigned to the Treasurer by the President or the Board of Directors. Additional duties include, but are not limited to:

- Attend board meetings.
- Serve on the executive committee and chair the finance committee.
- Assure that accurate financial records for the organization are being secured
- Assure financial accounting for nonprofit organizations are secured and following appropriate financial policies. Understand regulatory and legal requirements for financial functions.
- Facilitate the Board's review of current financial data and actions to be taken related to the Board's financial responsibilities.
- Assist the Executive Director and the Finance Committee in preparing the annual budget and presenting the budget to the Board for approval
- Work with the Executive Director to ensure that appropriate financial reports are made available to the Board on a timely basis.
- Disburse organizational funds and issue checks and drafts for the organization
- Work with Executive Director, review the annual audit and answer Board directors' questions about the audit.



**The Secretary** shall (a) keep the minutes and records of the corporation in the appropriate books; (b) see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws; (c) be custodian of the corporation records; (d) in general perform all duties incident to the Office of Secretary and such other duties as may be assigned to the Secretary by the President or the Board of Directors. Additional duties include, but are not limited to:

- Attend all board meetings.
- Serve on the executive committee
- Maintain all Board records and ensure their accuracy and safety.
- Review Board minutes.
- Provide notice of meetings of the Board and/or of a committee when such notice is required.
- Carry on responsibilities of the chair in the absence of Board Chair and Vice Chair

The Board of Directors shall designate and establish standing committees that shall have and exercise the authority of the Board in the management of the Corporation. The Board president shall appoint chairpersons of each committee and other directors to serve on each committee. The committee chairperson may appoint additional members of the committee who need not be directors, however, persons who are not directors shall not exceed the number of the majority of the members on any standing or special board committee.

The directors may, from time to time, create other committees, task forces or advisory councils at a regular or special meeting of the Board that may or may not have directors or members, which body may not act on behalf of the Corporation or bind it to any actions but may make recommendations to the Board of Directors or to the officers. The Board shall provide the direction and guidelines of such committees. The president shall appoint the chairpersons of such committees (See Appendix BB: 3.2.a. Board Bylaws).

**Board of Directors identified members:**

President - Yolanda Sanchez  
Vice President - Paul Dark  
Treasurer - Gladys Lomeli  
Secretary - Angelica Negrete  
Director of Development – Renee Holloway  
Director of Technology – Sonia Soto  
Director of Media – Omar Espinoza

**Design Team identified members:**

Academic Leader – Jeff Heredia  
Academic Consultant - Monica Swope  
Math Department Chair – Ana Castillo  
CTE Coordinator – Qetsyi’ah Yisra’el  
STEM Consultant – David Martinez  
Operational Leader – William Gentile

**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*

SPEA’s Board of Directors will have responsibility for the academic performance, operational capacity, legal compliance, and financial matters of the school. The Board monitors the school’s performance by analyzing data presented during committee and staff meetings. The Executive Director prepares a Board

packet which includes information that helps Board members monitor the health of the school on a regular basis. Information includes enrollment, academic benchmarks, and financial state of the school, fundraising, staff performance, human resources, Board development, and other critical information as needed. Additionally, each committee receives a committee-specific Dashboard that goes into detail for that committee’s responsibility area. The Board of Directors will monitor the academics and operational performance based on a rubric to measure progress and guide corrective actions. The rubric will consist of the following markers to determine progressiveness:

- **Not in Place (Red):** The component has not been address.
- **Emerging (Yellow):** The component is being implemented.
- **Proficient (Green):** The component has been implemented and completed.

Any goal that falls into the category of “**Not in Place**” will require immediate attention by the Board, Academic Leader, Operational Leader, and any other responsible party assigned to the task. An Action Plan will be developed to address the goal to be completed at an accelerated rate of completion in order to stay on timeline of or to complete the task by the deadline agreed upon.

Monitored Dashboard Data will include, but not limited to:

<i>Goal</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Progress</i>
Academic Status			
Academic Growth	TBD		
Academic Performance	GPA Average TBD		
Freshmen On-Track Rate	90%		
Percent of Graduates Earning a 3+ on an AP Exam, a 4+ on an IB Exam, an Approved Early College Credit and/or an Approved Career Credential	80%		
Dual Enrollment	25%		
AP / IB Enrollment	25%		
Students participating in tutoring who require it	90%		
Juniors participating in Saturday SAT/ACT prep class	90%		
% Exceeds on PARCC Assessment	TBD		
Board Performance			
Mission Specific Performance	100%		
Teacher retention	85%		
By the end of our second year in operation, SPEA will run a cumulative surplus of 5% per each year's budget.	5%		
By the end of our second year in operation, SPEA will raise over \$250,000 in fundraising and grants.	\$250,000		
By the end of our second year in operation, SPEA financial compliance requirements are met annually with minimal discrepancy between budget projections and budget accruals.	TBD		
Post secondary Readiness			
Students participating in College Tours at all grade levels	100%		
College Enrollment Rate	100%		
College Persistence Rate	80%		
Student and Community Engagement			
Student retention	85%		

Annual Attendance Rate	95%		
4 Year Graduation Rate	95%		
5 Year Graduation Rate	100%		
Dropout Rate	>3%		
CTE Certification Attainment	80%		
Parent Participation in Teacher Conferences & Parent University PD's	80%		
Student Health Improvement	50%		
At least 3 out of the 5 areas of the 5 Essentials Survey will be rated as "Satisfied"; Effective Leaders, Collaborative Teachers, Involved Families, Supportive Environment, and Ambitious Instruction.	3		
Students participating in Afterschool programs	90%		

Materials will be distributed ahead of Board meetings and the expectation is that materials will be reviewed by board members prior to the meeting. The agenda for a meeting will be linked to an annual goal. Board packets will be sent to Board members at least one week prior to a Board meeting. Information included the packet (but not limited to) for Board members are:

- The previous meeting's minutes
- Reports from committees and Executive Director
- Financial statements
- Academic achievement data
- Copies of any documents requiring board approval

(See Appendix CC: 3.2.a Sample Dashboard Data and Project Management Tools)

### Section 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.*

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Role</b>
President - Yolanda Sanchez	Golden Apple Teacher of distinguished 2010, President/Executive director of SPEA Project, manages and supervises all operations, and oversees execution on educational programs to increase minorities in STEM careers. President of Operations at American Campaigns. Science teacher at Institute Health Sciences Career Academy, co-lead in creating Chemistry Curriculum, Health Science Curriculum, and Liaison for bringing CPS-Nursing Program. President of Operations at American Campaigns Science teacher at Benito Juarez Academy high school, Biology and forensic science teacher and Earth space science team leader.	Founding Board President/Executive Director
Vice President - Paul Dark	President at Benefit Management Associates Sales Executive at Rush-Prudential Health Plans Territorial Sales Manager at COCA-COLA USA	Founding Board Vice- President

Treasurer - Gladys Lomeli	Regional Leader at Primerica Inc. educating clients on sound financial principles, compiles and analyzes clients' financial data, and develops customized strategic financial needs solutions for clients. Mathematics Teacher at Irene Dugan Alternative High School. Classes include Computer Literacy, Chicago Studies, Business Math, and English Composition. Computer Science Instructor at Spanish Coalition For Jobs at National Latino Education Institute. Assisted with writing and designing the organization's newsletter. The Resurrection Project-Volunteer, Community Leader, Community Outreach.	Founding Board Treasurer
Secretary - Angelica Negrete	Horizon Science Academy- PTO Board Member (Secretary), Fundraising, Market Day Co-Chair Mckinley Advisory Committee- Community involvement, Community petitions, Attending Community Meetings Aquinas Literacy Center-ESL Tutor, Workshops Namaste Charter School-PTO Board Member (Secretary), Fundraising, Library Assistant, Classroom Volunteer, Parent Involvement and communications, Office Volunteer, Community Task Force Committee	Founding Board Secretary
Director of Development – Renee Holloway	Clerk IV (Payroll) City of Chicago Department of Aviation O'Hare Airport; Clerk III (Voucher Audit Section) Comptrollers Office City of Chicago; Clerk III (Data Entry) City of Chicago Police Department 911 Center; Clerk III City of Chicago Department of Housing; Parent Mentor Nathaniel Greene Elementary School; Teacher Assistant Blessed Sacrament Parish-Catechist; Teacher Virtus Training; Volunteering in Church Events	Development Director
Director of Technology – Sonia Soto	Technology Director at Society for Vascular Surgery, oversee technology project plans and plan and develop of information system. Freelance/contractor at Yayo Interactive, Business development and client consulting and Database Development Management information System director at American Invsco Internet and Marketing Manager at First International Digital; Experience in project Management, programming and software knowledge; Network Engineer at True Value Company; Computer class instructor/Course designer at CEDA Southwest; Network Engineer Edward Don & Company; Help Desk & PC Support Technician at Cook County Government, Bureau of Information and Technology	Founding Board IT Director
Director of Media – Omar Espinoza	Chartwells- Executive Sous Chef; Eatly Chicago- Sous Chef; Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital – Lead Catering Cook; Food Life Chicago – Cook; Goose Island Brewery Chicago – Cook; Wow Café & Wingery – Cook; The American Club – Wisconsin – Cook	Healthy Lifestyle Consultant

<i>Design Team Member</i>	<i>Experience</i>	<i>Role</i>
Academic Leader – Jeff Heredia	Ira F. Aldridge Elementary School-Assistant Principal; Spry Community Links High School-New Leaders Resident Principal; Sullivan House Alternative High School-Curriculum Specialist; Sullivan House Alternative High School- Social Studies Department Chair/Teacher	Academic Leader
Academic Consultant - Monica Swope	Curriculum Consultant and Developer for LEARNING DIMENSIONS; Adjunct Faculty Member for LOYOLA UNIVERSITY; Social Science Specialist, Instructional Coach-Team Lead, Instructional Coach-City-Wide for CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS; Educator-History Division, Talent Development Learning Team, Co-sponsor for student participants of the Minority Student Achievement Network, Executive Member of the African American Faculty Advisory Council for OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST HIGH SCHOOL	Academic Consultant
Math Department Chair – Ana Castillo	Teacher World Language HS- Math Department Chair/ Teacher; Volunteer Board Member for World Language HS	Math Curriculum Development
CTE Coordinator – Qetsyiah Yisrael	Tutor/ volunteer in mathematics; Member of Hispanic Engineering National Achievement Awards Corporation, helped students in their technology projects Member of Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers at University of Illinois at Chicago; Ronald E McNair scholar; Member of American Society of Mechanical Engineers	CTE Program Coordinator
STEM Consultant – David Martinez	Adobe Experience Manager and Java Developer for Isobar; Java Developer for Siteworx Java Developer for Valence Health; Software Developer for Lifescan; Math and reading instructor for Sylvan Learning Center; Regional Recruiter for Santa Barbara County Education Office; Math Program Coordinator for San Luis Coastal Unified School District; Online Instructor for MathTV.com; Network Administrator for Space Information Laboratories, Vandenberg Air Force Base; Outreach Advisor for Upward Bound	STEM Consultant
Operational Leader – William Gentile	Served on Instructional Leadership, School improvement, Social Emotional Learning, Administration council and on track teams. Experience as Data Analyst, Evaluating & modifying Evidence Based Intervention Plans, Testing Coordinator, Assisting students and parents analyzing test data, Providing comprehensive Post Secondary Transfer Planning, Freshman Connection Coordinator, Developing Intervention Groups, Providing crisis prevention & intervention, Identify Community & Institutional Resources, Homeless Liaison & Homebound Coordinator, Mentoring Counseling Interns. Volunteer Mentor & Site Supervisor for Non Profit at Cabrini Connections mentoring economically disadvantaged students. Commissioned Officer, Lieutenant with U.S. Coast Guard. Education Service Officer providing counseling to subordinates in academic and career development. Instructional Coordinator Advisor for Great Lakes Naval Training Center developing training program to identify & resolve basic skills deficiencies.	Operations

(See Appendix DD: 3.2.b Board Member Form and Economic Interest Form)  
(See Appendix J: 2.2.a Board Member and Design Team Resumes)

### Question #2: Composition

*Identify the desired composition of the governing board, including key skills and constituencies that will be represented. (If an existing operator is proposing a new school/campus or additional grade levels, describe any additional skillsets that the Board may try to acquire to support the growth and/or any professional development that existing Board members may receive.) 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)).*

The SPEA Governing Board will include seven (7) members preselected once charter is approved:

President - Yolanda Sanchez  
Vice President - Paul Dark  
Treasurer - Gladys Lomeli  
Secretary - Angelica Negrete  
Director of Development – Renee Holloway  
Director of Technology – Sonia Soto  
Director of Media – Omar Espinoza

These members possess a demonstrated track record of competence and skill sets in the areas of academia to include former and current educators, members possessing MBAs, individual team members specializing in marketing, accounting and finance, members with governance experience, members who have served on School Council's, members who have served and continue to serve on nonprofit Boards with an expertise in fundraising, members with experience building and managing data systems, and members with prior charter experience.

Per (105 ILCS 5/27A-7(10)), SPEA will have a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) to address the nature and extent of parent, professional educator, and community involvement on the Board responsible for approving how school funds and resources are allocated, developing and monitoring the annual School Improvement Plan, and evaluating and selecting the school's principal. Local School Councils will include parents, community members, teachers, non-teacher staff, school's principal, and student representative.

All parents, community members and teachers who want to strengthen SPEA and have a positive impact on student achievement are encouraged to run. No experience or formal education is required. LSC members are elected by parents and community residents in an election held every two years. Teacher representatives and the non-teaching staff representative are appointed by the Board, following a preference poll of all full-time staff. The school principal is automatically a member of the LSC. A high school student is appointed by the Board, following a preference poll of the students at the school.

### Question #3: Recruitment

*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.*

Recruitment and selection of Board members will reflect the qualities, qualifications and diversity determined by the Board and as delineated in the Job Description of the Board of Directors. We recognize the importance of community representation within the school's governing body and have made recruitment of a Little Village resident a high priority. SPEA shall be governed by a Board of Directors

pursuant to Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/27A-5). The SPEA Design Team consists of a demonstrated track record of competence and skill sets in the areas of academia to include former and current educators, members possessing MBAs, individual team members specializing in marketing, accounting and finance, members with governance experience, members who have served on School Council's, members who have served and continue to serve on nonprofit Boards with an expertise in fundraising, members with experience building and managing data systems, and members with prior charter experience. Upon charter approval, members of the Design Team will transition to the Founding Board of Directors. The Board will have a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of seven (7) Directors and will serve a term of three (3) years from the date of the appointments, or until their successors are seated. After election, the term of a Director may not be reduced, except for cause as specified by the by-laws.

#### Question #4: Selection

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

Members of the Design Team have been identified to transition to the Board of Directors upon receipt of the charter. These individuals were recruited specifically because they possess the diversity of skills and professional experience necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of a Governing Board. We will continue to utilize our community supports and wide professional network within Chicago to recruit additional outstanding members for the governing Board, and we will focus strongly on ensuring that we have the necessary professional skills and community representation that will support the school's organizational success and hold it accountable to its mission. We will be ongoing building relationships with individuals that exemplify their commitment to the community, and understand the importance of creating opportunities through STEM education for our future generations. We will invite individuals to attend our events, meetings and volunteer, so that they learn firsthand the positive impact that they can have being involved with SPEA charter school. As board members, we will always discuss possible candidates that can enhance our board. Our bylaws will be our guide in our decisions in moving our mission forward.

#### 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.*

The members of our Design Team will meet immediately to become the Governing Board. The committee structure has been outlined and decided on, so at the first meeting the Board is able to initiate those structures and all committees can begin their work; particularly the Governance Committee which will be tasked with finding the individuals who will best complement the skill sets already present on the Board. We are fortunate to have this commitment from our Design Team members; it will ensure that the transition after authorization is stable, there is no knowledge lost in the transition, and invaluable time between authorization and opening will not have to be spent finding and orientating a full Board.

The Board and its committees will meet to adopt the by-laws and establish the rules and procedures within them, the Board then will elect officers and adopts policies including those concerning students, personnel, conflict of interest, ethics, financial responsibilities and the workings of the Board. In the time period between application submission and authorization, the Design Team will discuss these policies so that policy adoption goes swiftly in that critical time period. The Board will work between authorization and opening to ensure the school is prepared to open successfully and will work on expanding the Board to full size, preparing for student enrollment, continuing community outreach, establishing strong financial systems and controls and fulfilling any other necessary responsibilities. Once SPEA receives its

charter approval, the Board will initially meet on a weekly basis for the first three months (October – December), then biweekly for the next three months (January – March), then monthly in full compliance with open meeting law, posting all meeting dates and times at the beginning of the fiscal year, and all agendas no later than 24 hours before the meeting, ensuring that academic results are on-track to goals, finances are sound and SPEA is thriving.

#### Question #6: Training

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

SPEA will collaborate with the Illinois Association of School Boards located at One Imperial Place, 1 East 22nd Street, Suite 20 Lombard, Illinois 60148 Phone 630.629.3776 Website <http://www.iasb.com/>. SPEA Board members will be required to attend “NEW BOARD MEMBER WORKSHOPS”. Workshops beginning May 8 and concluding July 11. These one- and two-day training events are designed to meet the needs of board members elected in 2015. Participants will be able to fulfill their mandatory board training on Friday. The Saturday sessions will provide board members with the essential information they need to understand and fulfill their governance role. Board Members will visit <http://www.iasb.com/training/events.cfm> to schedule a session as soon as possible after SPEA receives approval for its charter.

In addition, the option to build strategic development through retreats, local workshops, online seminars and shared readings/discussions as appropriate. An annual Board retreat at the conclusion of each academic year facilitates reflection and action on the ways the Board was able to positively impact SPEA over the past year, and looking forward to ways that momentum can be continued and the work of the Board can be magnified even more.

All Governing Board members will receive a minimum of four hours in training for financial oversight. Training will cover basic accounting information such as how to read balance sheets. Training will also cover specific information concerning handling and expenditure of funds. The board recognizes that in general, many non-profit organizations look to the Board treasurer to review the financial documents. However, it is important that all members of the Board are able to read and understand documents that relate to the financial soundness of the school. Training regarding financial oversight will enable every Board member to perform their responsibility to ensure that the school is implementing financially sound practices and following policies that have been implemented by the Board. All Board members will have the right to review all financial documents of the school at any time. We will implement measures that will ensure SPEA is financially accountable, deterring the improper use of funds.

In addition, Board development will be facilitated by the president of the Board, working closely with the Executive Director. Development is tailored to the needs of Board members and includes annual trainings and strategic development retreats from Building Excellent Schools, local workshops, online seminars and shared readings/discussions as appropriate. In addition, an annual Board retreat at the conclusion of each academic year facilitates reflection and action on the ways the Board was able to positively impact SPEA over the past year, and looking forward to ways that momentum can be continued and the work of the Board can be magnified even more.

The first Board retreat, facilitated by Building Excellent Schools, occurs immediately after charter authorization, allowing for full gear-up for and alignment between governance and management during the critical start-up year. SPEA will continue to access the resources of Building Excellent Schools to support the ongoing training and needs of the working Board.

SPEA will continue to access resources to support the ongoing training and needs of the working Board.



<i>Title</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Sample Agenda Items</i>
Professional Development Leadership Training (PDLT) - The course that satisfies Public Act 97-8	October	Instruction in education and labor law, financial oversight and accountability, and fiduciary responsibilities. In addition, it includes training on Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) evaluations for school board members who will participate in a vote on a dismissal based upon the Optional Alternative Evaluation Dismissal Process.
Open Meetings Act Training for Board Members - The course that satisfies Public Act 97-504	October	Focuses specifically on the law as it applies to school board meetings and members.
Founding Board Retreat I	November	Discussion of articles on corporate and non-profit governance; Comprehensive training on the core elements of high performing charter schools studied within the INCS Fellowship; Exercise on what will define STARS Project Engineering Academy; Study of charter school budgets and finance; Discussion of various management and governance scenarios; Discussions of tools and resources high performing charter school boards use to impact student achievement
Orientation to Excellent Schools	December	Visit to excellent schools including conversations with leadership at all levels, teachers, parents and students; Study of academic achievement in high performing charter schools;
Orientation to the Community	January	Studying the achievement gap on the Far West Side, Meetings with local leaders in the faith, non-profit, and education community; Canvassing neighborhoods.
Training in Accountability & Authorization: Board role in understanding, overseeing and upholding promises of charter application	February	Approving bylaws; Discussing essential processes such as committee formation, conflict of interest policy, the Call for Quality Schools process, application, application rubric and interview.
Individual coaching	March	Individual coaching on issues of governance, organizational management, financial policy, academic policy, and common charter school board scenarios.

#### 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 Board will have responsibility for the academic performance, operational capacity, legal compliance, and financial matters of the school. The Board monitors the school's performance by analyzing data presented during committee and staff meetings; which will also indirectly determine the Boards effectiveness with policy decisions. The Executive Director prepares a Board packet which includes information that helps Board members monitor the health of the school on a monthly basis. Information

includes enrollment, academic benchmarks, and financial state of the school, fundraising, staff performance, human resources, Board development, and other critical information as needed. Additionally, each committee receives a committee-specific Dashboard that goes into detail for that committee's responsibility area.

The Board will meet as outlined in the by-laws. The executive director will be evaluated by the Board annually. The Founding Board members continually meet with community members and supporters of SPEA as we continue to connect to new Board members. SPEA will ensure that the Board has representation from all stakeholders to include community members, parents and professional educators. As we continue to reach out to potential Board members and supporters to strengthen our mission.

The Board will be regularly evaluated for effectiveness. The Board will conduct an annual evaluation of its own work. Evaluations will include self-assessment and assessment from administration, staff, and parents. The evaluation process will include individual Board member self-evaluations regarding their contribution. The Governance Committee will conduct the evaluation. This Committee should include a formal written evaluation. The evaluation process should be created to encourage constructive feedback from all members of the Board and professional growth. An evaluation tool can be located in (See Appendix EE: 3.2.b. Board Self-evaluation).

The Executive Director shall be annually evaluated by a minimum of two Board members. The Board will create a committee whom the Board Chair and two other directors will serve on this committee. The evaluation should be based on a performance agreement and Board policies with measurable outcomes clearly established in advance of the evaluation period. The written evaluation report shall be reviewed with the executive director prior to the report to the Board. The Board president obtains input from all other members on Board approved performance measures. The executive director shall have the right to submit a response or self evaluation report to the Board. An evaluation tool can be located in (See Appendix FF: 3.2.b Executive Director Evaluation)

When it is the judgment of the majority of the Board of Directors by a vote that a director is not serving in the best interests of the Corporation, the Board may remove the director from office. No director shall be removed unless written notice of such meeting is delivered to all directors, at least seven (7) days before the scheduled meeting. Such notice shall state that a purpose of the meeting is to vote upon removal or one or more directors named in the notice. Only director or directors named in the notice may be removed at such meeting.

### Section 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.*

SPEA believes that an open, honest and accountable Governing Board is the cornerstone of trust with the community and can be achieved only through the free and open exchange of information between the Board and the public. SPEA endeavors to open the workings of the Board to the public, shed light on actions and, in the process, strengthen our relationships. It is the public policy of this State that public bodies exist to aid in the conduct of the people's business and that the people have a right to be informed as to the conduct of their business pursuant to the Illinois Open Meetings Act, 5 ILCS 120/1. Such access is necessary to enable the people to fulfill their duties of discussing public issues fully and freely, making informed decisions and monitoring the Board to ensure that it is being conducted in the public interest (Illinois Freedom of Information Act, 5 ILCS 140/1).

Board meetings will be open to the public. Dates of the meetings along with agendas will be posted at least 7 days in advance of meetings on the SPEA website. The community is welcome to comment during the session available at every meeting. Participants will be able to interact with the Board members by asking questions. Any member of the community who wish to make requests, proposals, or presentations to the Board should direct any inquiry to the Executive Director, who will respond according.

All decisions by the Board of Directors and the administration should be made within the parameters of the mission and vision of the SPEA. The following objectives will guide the Board in its decision making process:

- Ensure progress towards the mission and vision and faithfulness to the charter
- Establish broad support and future partnerships to further the school's mission
- Ensure effective organizational planning
- Ensure adherence to all state and federal requirements
- Provide support and assistance in all fundraising efforts, and other areas as needed
- Ensure the long term financial stability of the school
- Hire and annually evaluate the Executive Director and hold him/her responsible for meeting the academic and fiscal goals of the school.

(See Appendix GG: 3.2.c Board Calendar)

(See Appendix HH: 3.2.c. Charter Proposal Assurances Statement)

(See Appendix II: 3.2.c. SPEA 501(c) (3))

**Note:**

- *Board meetings are closed to the public while in an executive session. An executive session may be called only upon the affirmative vote of a majority of the quorum present. An executive session will meet to discuss matters not appropriate for public discussion.*

**Question #2: Ethics Policy**

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

The Board recommends policies and the COO and Principal create procedures. Policies signify what should be done and procedures signify how something should be done. The Board does not get involve in developing administrative procedures. There are four types of policies a charter school governing Board should consider:

- Policies required by law (e.g. sexual harassment, discrimination)
- Policies required by contract or charter application
- Policies that demonstrate and exemplify the definition to the vision/mission
- Policies that communicate Board decision

The Board is responsible for modifying or abolishing policies for SPEA. Action by the Board shall be accomplished as set forth in the bylaws.

The Board should work cooperatively and diligent to draft and adopt all of the necessary policies. It is the Board's first priority to adopt these policies that are required by the articles of incorporation, charter school application, charter contract and Illinois law. The second priority is to establish policies that demonstrate and exemplify the vision and mission of the school. Once the policy is established, the COO and principal create procedures.

The Board may also adopt policies throughout the year to make necessary accommodations. The Board should research efficiently the policies already established at other schools to avoid illegal policies. Once the Board has recommended and adopted policy, it shall be noted the date. If a policy has to be amended by required from federal and state law, state Department of Education rules, or district policies may, the date should be noted.

Modifying or abolishing policies for SPEA may be made in writing by any member of the Board or by any parent or student submitted through an administrator of the schools. Policy change proposals will include adequate information concerning potential fiscal impact on the school.

The members of our Design Team will meet immediately to become the Governing Board. The committee structure has been outlined and decided on, so that at the first meeting the Board is able to initiate those structures and all committees can begin their work. The Governance Committee will be tasked with finding individuals who will best complement the skill sets already present on the Board. After authorization, the Board and its committees will meet regularly, at a minimum of once per month, in compliance with Illinois Open Meetings Act, ILCS 120/1. After adopting the by-laws and establishing the rules and procedures within them, the Board then will elect officers and adopts policies including those concerning students, personnel, conflict of interest, ethics, financial responsibilities and the workings of the Board. In the time period between application submission and authorization, the Design Team will discuss these policies so that policy adoption goes swiftly in that critical time period. The Board will work between authorization and opening to ensure the school is prepared to open successfully and will work on expanding the Board to full size, preparing for student enrollment, continuing community outreach, establishing strong financial systems and controls and fulfilling any other necessary responsibilities. When SPEA opens, the Board will continue to meet monthly in full compliance with open meeting law, posting all meeting dates and times at the beginning of the fiscal year, and all agendas no later than 48 hours before the meeting, ensuring that academic results are on-track to goals, finances are sound and SPEA is thriving (See Appendix JJ: 3.2.c Ethics Policy).

### 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*

It is important for the Board of trustees and staff to be aware that the appearance of conflict can be troublesome even though there seems to be no conflict. The Board President must be informed at all times when circumstances might create appearances of conflict. The Board of Trustees of SPEA is guided by this conflict of interest Policy whenever they are representing. Each Board member has a duty of loyalty to SPEA. The duty of loyalty generally requires a director to prefer interests of SPEA over director's interests of others. Every Board member is responsible to inform to the Board any potential conflict of interest.

Board members will serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for any necessary expenses incurred by them in performing their duties as members of the Board. Any payment, salary received from the school by ex-officio Board members shall not be considered a conflict of interest for the purposes of this policy. Importantly, ex-officio members should restrain from votes involving the level of payments.

Our Board members may be involved in other organizations or have potential ownership or investment interest with any entity whose business or operation has been or will be directly affected by a decision or action of SPEA:

1. Each director should perform and maintain highest level of conduct and should exercise highest standard of care, prudence when conducting any activity on behalf of
2. If a Board member or member of his/her immediate family has a personal or business interest in, or is involved in any with an organization with which the Board is considering a business contract, such interest should be discussed to the Board.
3. The minute of the meeting should indicate that the interested Board member disclosed the interest or involvement in the matter being considered by the Board, Can abstained from the voting matter.

(See Appendix KK: 3.2.c Conflict of Interest Policy agreement)

### 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.*

The primary responsibility of the Board is to govern SPEA. The primary responsibility of the Executive Director is to manage SPEA. The Board takes responsibility for the financial health and viability of the school, the overall strategic direction of the organization and the hiring, support, and evaluation of the Executive Director. The Board takes a meaningful, impactful role in governing the school strategic planning as well as approving fiscal policies, establishing financial controls and approving policy, among other responsibilities. The Executive Director reports directly to the Board and takes responsibility for hiring staff, managing staff, and overseeing the day-to-day operations of the school. (See Appendix LL: 3.2.d. Organizational Chart)

#### Question #2: School Leader Evaluation

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

The Board will ensure the development of quality Academic Leaders as it relates to instructional leadership capacity before holding them accountable for the quality of their leadership. Successful Academic Leaders must draw on a wide range of knowledge, skills, and attributes that include both instructional leadership and management. Effective Academic Leaders ensure schools allow both adults and children to put learning at the center of their daily activities characterized by basics like safety and orderliness, as well as less tangible qualities such as a "supportive, responsive" attitude toward the children and a sense by teachers that they are part of a community of professionals focused on good instruction. To ensure the Academic Leader meets the needs of SPEA and the community, s/he will be monitored on a quarterly basis in order to ensure SPEA is in line with its mission and Vision. The quarterly reviews will be utilized to praise successful implementation or to address areas where we need to refocus efforts to ensure fidelity of the core principles. A final review will be administered on June 30<sup>th</sup> of each calendar year. The final review will be utilized by the Board to assess continued employment of the Academic Leader (See Appendix LL: 3.2.d Organizational Chart).

Core areas monitored will consists of:

1. Academic Performance
2. Financial Management
3. Academic Program Fidelity

4. Parent/Teacher/ Student Satisfaction

5. Community Relations

(See Appendix FF: 3.2.b Executive Director Evaluation)

## Domain 4: Economic Soundness

### Dimension 4.1: School Budget

#### Section 4.1.a. Financial Forms and Budget Narrative

##### Question#1: Budget

*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.*

(See Appendix MM: 4.1.a Completed Budget Workbook.)

STARS Project Engineering Academy (SPEA) has prepared a pre-operational budget, as well as a five-year operational budget projection to show SPEA's finances at full capacity. Revenue and expenditure projections are based on information drawn from multiple sources, which include federal, state, and district funding sources. A significant amount of funding is allocated to engineering and technology equipment for student/teacher, which is essential to being perfectly aligned with SPEA's mission, vision, philosophy, and development. We are providing a balanced budget based on information known at this time and what can be assumed.

##### **Revenue Sources and Revenue Assumptions.**

For our per-pupil funding, we have relied on the formulas provided by CPS for Title funds, Supplemental General State Aid funds, the Small Schools supplement and other funding sources. Our Free and Reduced lunch as well as our diverse learner projections are based on the averages of neighborhood schools from Little Village, which is where most of our students will be coming from.

The Little Village Special Service Area #25 (SSA-25) is willing to donate \$5,000 every year of SPEA's operation to help offset the cost of student programs. SSA-25 supports programs that help improve the community. Their requirement is that the money donated will benefit the community by keeping youth off the streets and away from destructive activity. We will use these donated funds to help offset the cost of SPEA's Experiential Learning. Since the STEP-UP program and summer school classes also fulfill SSA-25's requirements for funding, we can direct these donated funds towards the summer sessions when we see fit. The STEP-UP program is an academic "boot camp" for incoming freshman, which will take place before the academic year begins. \$20,000 is allocated for the expenses of this 3-week summer program.

We believe that it is imperative for our students to learn that they are responsible for their own success, regardless of their current socio-economic status.

- A keystone habit that will be instilled in our students' lives is the habit of being punctual. To help develop this habit, we will charge the student's parents \$1 for every minute that their son/daughter is late to school. This policy will also help us develop and maintain constant communication with parents. The purpose of this fee is not to include it as a main source of revenue, but instead to create an additional incentive for parents to be actively involved in their children's education and character formation. The additional revenue raised from this tardy fee

will be used towards student direct costs. We will put a maximum cap of \$10 per day per to avoid creating a financial strain on parents.

- Student fees are a total of \$175 per student. This includes the cost of uniforms and helps offset the cost of technological equipment used by students. We are assuming a collection rate of 75%. Parents who cannot afford to pay student fees will still be required to invest in their child's education by volunteering hours at SPEA. Taking this approach will not only engage parents, but it can help in reducing employee cost.

### **Fundraising Efforts.**

From 2013-2015, SPEA's fundraising efforts had two purposes: 1) raise funds for operational expenses during the preparation of our RFP, and 2) to expand SPEA's support network.

- **Weffer Recognition Luncheon.** On August 29, 2013, SPEA had a fundraising event to reunite graduates from the STEP (Students Teachers Educators Parents) DePaul program (an academic enrichment program) and honor two individuals: 1) Dr. Rafaela Weffer who created the program and was its director for 20 years and 2) Mr. Felipe Weffer, an electrical engineer and the program's mathematics teacher. Both, Yolanda Sanchez (Executive Director) and Gladys Lomeli (Board Treasurer) are STEP graduates. At this event, we honored Dr. Weffer and Mr. Weffer for their extensive work and introduced SPEA to attendees, who mainly consisted of STEP graduates.
- **Other Fundraising Events.** For the rest of our fundraising events, we were able to capture donations from Mesirow Financial<sup>79</sup>, William Blair<sup>80</sup>, Exelon<sup>81</sup>, and Cargill<sup>82</sup>, and The Resurrection Project (TRP)<sup>83</sup>.

### **Expense Information.**

- **Incubation Year.** The pre-operational budget carries SPEA from authorization until the start of the SPEA's STEP-UP program in July 2016. To be financially conservative, we have taken the following steps: Salaries for the planning year are budgeted for 0.35 for the Executive Director, 0.4 for the Academic Leader, 0.4 for the Operational Leader, 0.4 for the Business Manager/Human Resources, 0.4 for the Director of Development, and 0.5 for an Administrative Assistant.
- **Teacher Salaries.** During our first two years of operation, we will only be hiring certified teachers. We expect to hire a mix of seasoned and recently certified teachers, which reflects in the teacher salary of \$55,000. During the first two academic years, each department will have common planning periods in order allow teachers to collaborate and develop their curriculum and lesson plans. By Year#3, we will begin to hire professionals who are experts in their field, but may not be certified to teach. These professionals new to teaching will be mentored by the certified teachers.
- **PLTW (Project Lead The Way).** The engineering curriculum, equipment, and supplies provided by PLTW is what identifies SPEA as an engineering academy. Therefore, we have allocated a substantial amount each year for PLTW.

### **Plans for when funding surpasses necessary expenses.**

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<sup>79</sup> An independent diversified financial services firm. [www.mesirowfinancial.com](http://www.mesirowfinancial.com)

<sup>80</sup> William Blair is a global investment banking and asset management firm. [www.williamblair.com](http://www.williamblair.com)

<sup>81</sup> Exelon is one of the largest competitive U.S. power generators. [www.exeloncorp.com](http://www.exeloncorp.com)

<sup>82</sup> Cargill provides food agricultural, financial and industrial products and services to the world. [www.cargill.com](http://www.cargill.com)

<sup>83</sup> The Resurrection Project's mission is to build relationships and challenge people to act on their faith and values to create healthy communities through organizing, education and community development. [www.resurrectionproject.org](http://www.resurrectionproject.org)

As additional funds are available, we plan to apply these funds towards:

- **Technology.** Updating and acquiring technology equipment for student and teacher use.
- **Staff Incentives/Recognition.** At this point we have not included any bonuses for any of our staff. As we have funds available, we will explore performance-based bonus incentives for our teachers. At SPEA, we believe in recognizing our staff for outstanding performance. Every quarter, we will recognize students and teachers who have demonstrated exceptional performance since “Exceptional” is one of SPEA’s core values. With additional funds available, we will consider showing special recognition by awarding either plaques or trophies to recipients.
- **Professional Development.** Currently, we’ve budgeted for \$890 per employee for professional development. As we continue to increase our funds, we will increase our monetary investment in our staff. Our goal is to reach a minimum of \$1,500 per employee.

#### Section 4.1.b Development Plan

##### Question# 1: Development Plan

*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.*

SPEA’s budget does not include any fundraising revenues from our Director of Development, who will work part-time during the incubation period and transition into full-time once our first academic year begins. Considering the resources and talent that we have available within the current network of our Board of Directors, Design Team Members, and grant writer consultants (which we intend to continue expanding), we expect our Director of Development to raise a minimum of \$500,000 per year.

SPEA will apply for Walton Family Foundation’s start up grant in the amount of \$250,000 upon charter approval. After authorization, we’ll immediately apply for more funding from various foundations, organizations, and companies that support STEM education and healthy living initiatives.

Our Director of Development will begin on a part-time level during incubation period and transition into a full-time position on Year#1. To be conservative, we have not included any fundraising revenues from that position. We will give our Director of Development an incentive to increase his/her income through bonuses, which will be based on performance. The Board of Directors will decide when and how much the bonuses would be appropriate for this position after evaluating total revenues raised by the Director of Development.

Because of our fundraising efforts between 2013-present, we have already established a relationship and received funding from Exelon and Cargill. In fact, Cargill donated \$770 at our 2nd Annual Gala (December 2014), \$10,000 at our 1st Annual Casino Fundraiser (March 2015), and is willing to donate an additional \$5,000 before the end of their current fiscal year. We’ve also received financial support from the non-profit sector. TRP donated \$1,000 for our 1st Annual Golf Outing (October 2014).

We’ve been in communication with Ernest R. Sawyer, from Ernest R. Sawyer Enterprises Inc. (ERS, Inc.) regarding applying for TIF (Tax Increment Financing) funding. ERS, Inc is an experienced, multi-disciplinary consulting firm offering professional services in the fields of Urban Planning, Development Consulting, Community Planning, Project Management and TIF Consulting. ERS, Inc. has assisted the City of Chicago with the implementation of more than 20 Tax Increment Financing Districts.

The Director of Development will enhance these current relationships and establish new ones with foundations (local and national), corporations, and organizations that have funded other charter schools,



STEM schools, healthy-living initiatives, and other educational efforts. Below includes a list we have identified as potential donors/funders to pursue since they have a history of supporting efforts such as SPEA's.

- A Better Chicago
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Cargill
- Chicago Community Trust
- Chicago Public Education Fund
- Crown Family Philanthropies
- Exelon (Constellation E2 Energy to Educate)
- Field Foundation of Illinois
- Ford Motor Company Fund
- Mayer and Morris Kaplan Family Foundation
- Michael and Susan Dell Foundation
- Motorola Solutions Foundation
- New Schools for Chicago
- Osa Foundation
- Piper Jaffray Companies Contribution Program
- PPG Industries Foundation
- Pritzker Traubert Family Foundation
- SAP America, Inc Corporate Giving Program
- The Donald P. and Ada L. Rice Foundation
- The Rauner Family Foundation

Although the Director of Development will be the primary person responsible for applying for grants and seeking additional revenue for SPEA, the parent liaison will assist with organizing parents and students to conduct fundraising events. To further diversify our revenue sources, the Board of Directors has committed to raising a minimum of \$10,000 per year. In the event that developmental goals are not realized, SPEA will evaluate which non-essential expenses could be removed or decreased. However, since we've already had success with our fundraising efforts without hiring a fundraising coordinator or paying for any development/fundraising consultation/service, we don't anticipate a shortage of revenue knowing that we will have a Director of Development and parent liaison on staff (in addition to the support of our Board of Directors).

### **Grant Writer Consultants**

At this point we have not included any grant monies other than the Walton Family Foundation grant, which we are confident that we will receive. We are also confident that we will be able to receive grant money from other sources since we have already received funds from companies such as Cargill and Exelon at our fundraising events. Our grant writing team strongly believes in our mission and vision. A brief background of our grant writer consultants is provided below:

**Donors Forum** is a membership association of grantmakers, nonprofits, and advisors. It serves its constituents by promoting an effective and informed philanthropic and nonprofit sector.

**Juan Calixto** is the Vice President of External Relations at Chicago Community Loan Fund where he manages all of the organization's day-to-day fundraising, marketing and communications activities of the organization. He is a co-owner of *Ideation First*<sup>84</sup>, which offers fundraising and organizational

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<sup>84</sup> The Ideation First Co-Owners represent more than 75 years of fundraising and non-for-profit management experience in Chicago and the Midwest. [www.ideationfirst.com](http://www.ideationfirst.com)

development consulting for non-profit organizations. Ideation First has been in operations since 2007. Mr. Calixto has more than 21 years of experience in resource development and management in the not-for-profit sector. In addition to serving as an instructor at *Donors Forum* for five years, he was also the Development Director for *Mujeres Latinas en Acción*<sup>85</sup> for 11 years. Juan Calixto is co-founder of *Latinos in Development*, a professional association that empowers Latinos fundraising professionals and he served as its president for 13 years.

**Dr. Rafaela Weffer** is the former Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs at DePaul University and currently sits on the Board of Trustees of St. Augustine College as the Vice Chair. Dr. Rafaela Weffer has a long track record that demonstrates her commitment to education and solid experience in grant writing. She created and developed the STEP (Student Teachers Educator and Parents) DePaul program, which provided academic enrichment courses to students from Benito Juarez H.S. and multiple other high schools in Chicago. Dr. Weffer successfully ran the STEP program for 20 years and was responsible for all the grant-writing necessary in order to fund the program. Dr. Weffer also has the *Dr. Rafaela Weffer Scholarship for Bilingual Educators*, which awards scholarships to graduate and undergraduate students who are fluent in a foreign language, which is typically needed or used in bilingual education programs in the United States.

**Renee Holloway** is an accounting and financial professional with over 25 years of experience in grant processing, tax accounting, and not-for-profit filing. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Roosevelt University. Ms. Holloway worked at the Voucher Audit Section of the Comptroller Office for the City of Chicago where she prepared and processed vouchers. Her 30+ years of tax preparer experience includes 25+ years of tax filing for Non-for-Profit organizations. She has 16+ years of Board member experience in addition to having 4 years' experience on a budget committee for a non-profit organization that managed a \$1.9M budget.

## Dimension 4.2: Financial Controls and Monitoring

### Section: 4.2.a Financial Controls & Monitoring

#### Question #1: Policies & Procedures

*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.*

(See Appendix NN: Section 4.2.a Financial Reports)

(See Appendix PP: Section 4.2.a Fiscal Policies)

The Board of Directors assumes complete responsibility for the financial oversight of the school. The Board has agreed to meet monthly, ten (10) times per year in full accordance with public meeting law. A subset of the Board of Directors will serve on the Finance Committee, which will be composed of a team with experience in finance, accounting, business management, and auditing. For more information on the Board's oversight and accountability (As described in Section 3.2.a.1).

The Business Manager will be responsible of SPEA's daily fiscal functions to ensure fiscal soundness and legal compliance. The Executive Director will closely manage the Business Manager and will provide a layer of checks and balances. The Business Manager will analyze, reconcile, and adjust account balances

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<sup>85</sup> A 40 year old nonprofit organization that empowers Latinas through providing services which reflect their values and culture and being an advocate on the issues that make a difference in their lives. <http://www.mujereslatinasenaccion.org>

to ensure the records are maintained in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and are legally compliant. The Board will select a firm every year to conduct the annual audit, as required by Illinois charter school law.

The major financial controls of the school are listed below (See Appendix NN: Section 4.2.a Financial Reports) (See Appendix PP: Section 4.2.a Fiscal Policies).

### **Financial Statements: Statement of Activity/Balance Sheet/Cash Flow**

#### **Policy:**

The Business Manager will prepare monthly statements of activity, balance sheet, and cash flow projections for the Executive Director and the Board of Directors.

#### **Procedure:**

By the 21st day of each month, the Business Manager runs monthly budget versus actual reports on both the capital and operating budget, balance sheet reports, and a cash flow report to share with the Executive Director. Variances of \$5,000 or more and/or 5% of overall monthly allotted budgeted amount must be explained in the notes section. The Executive Director is responsible for making sure that significant differences are thoroughly researched and ultimately identify variances as permanent or temporary. The Executive Director will provide the statement of activity, balance sheet, and cash flow statement to the Finance Committee of the Board one week before each Board meeting, and will include: (a) the budget versus actual report for the operating budget; (b) the budget versus actual report for the capital budget; (c) the balance sheet; (d) the enrollment budget versus actual report per grade for General Education and Special Education students and (e) the monthly cash flow sheet. The Executive Director will present these reports to the entire Board at each meeting.

### **Financial Statements: Budget**

#### **Policy:**

The Board of Directors will review the annual budget annually.

#### **Procedure:**

The Executive Director develops a proposed budget for SPEA and presents it to the Finance Committee of the Board for annual review. The budget includes the previous year's proposed budget versus actual figures. It is presented to allow adequate time for the Finance Committee to discuss with the Executive Director and present to the Board. The Board approves the budget by June 30 of each year. The Executive Director is permitted to make minor adjustments to the budget throughout the year without changing the overall budget or changing an expense in response to a change in revenue.

### **Financial Statements: Audit**

#### **Policy:**

The Board of Directors will review the annual audit results annually.

#### **Procedure:**

The Finance Committee will recommend an independent audit firm to conduct an annual audit. The Board shall make its selection based on this recommendation by June 30 before the start of the new fiscal year. Annual audits will be conducted in accordance with GAAP. The Board may appoint an Audit Committee to aid with the selection of the audit firm. No person with expenditure authorization or recoding responsibilities for the school shall serve on the audit committee. The audit shall include, but not be limited to: an audit of the accuracy of the school's financial statements; an audit of attendance accounting and revenue accuracy practices; and an audit of the school's internal controls. Financial regulatory forms and reports shall be completed as necessary and filed with the appropriate committees. The Business

Manager and the third party vendor shall work to complete all required forms, which shall be reviewed by both the Executive Director and the Finance Committee of the Board. As required by Illinois state law, a copy of the audit as well as the Form 990 will be filed with the state no later than December 1 of each year.

### **Bank Account Management: Issuing/Signing Checks**

#### **Policy:**

The staff shall adhere to check signing procedures as established by the Board.

#### **Procedure:**

The Executive Director signs all school checks. Checks below \$10,000 shall require only the Executive Director's signature; checks of \$10,000 or more shall require two signatures (the original signatures of the Treasurer of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director). To avoid a conflict of interest, the Treasurer of the Board of Directors (1) does not have sole control of, or sole access to, the organization's money or funds; (2) will not have sole check signing authority or handle cash; (3) will not make any financial or investment decisions or recommendations other than casting an individual vote on issues; and, (4) will not be the writing or servicing representative or overwrite the writing or servicing representative of any of SPEA's accounts. In the event the Treasurer is not available for signature, the Chairperson of the Board of Directors shall be able to sign checks in the Treasurer's place. The signature of the Executive Director will still be necessary on these checks. Checks shall be issued only with the approval of the Executive Director, and shall be prepared for signature by the Business Manager. The Business Manager will not have check signing authority or withdrawal authority.

### **Bank Account Management: Opening/Closing Accounts**

#### **Policy:**

The opening and closing of all new accounts requires the Board's approval.

#### **Procedure:**

The Board of Directors will discuss in a meeting the reason for opening a new account and determine the purpose of the account, signatories and signatories' authority. The vote to approve and all associated determinations shall be recorded in the board minutes.

### **Bank Account Reconciliation**

#### **Policy:**

Each account shall be reconciled within sixty (60) days of receipt of bank statements.

#### **Procedure:**

The Executive Director will open all bank statements, review cancelled checks and monthly bank statement activity, and compare the cash receipts log to the deposits listed on the bank statement. All bank accounts shall be reconciled monthly by the Executive Director.

### **Petty Cash**

#### **Policy:**

SPEA will not use petty cash. Instead, employees will be reimbursed for pre-approved expenses.

#### **Procedure:**

Not applicable.

### **Contracts**

#### **Policy:**

All contracts with vendors shall be executed within SPEA's mission, goals, and annual plans.

**Procedure:**

SPEA can enter into contracts with vendors for the following reasons: things as professional services, rentals or to perform a function within the school's mission, goals and annual plans. All agreements shall be in writing, signed and dated by the Executive Director. The Board of Directors must approve all vendor contracts of the charter school.

**Purchasing Controls**

**Policy:**

SPEA will use sound business practices when purchasing all goods and services, including price quotes from at least three vendors for contracts greater than \$15,000.

**Procedure:**

Any contract of \$15,000 or more, SPEA will need to seek quotes from at least three different vendors and awards the contract to the responsible vendor offering the supply or service needed for the lowest price. The Business Manager inquires these quotes and the Executive Director approves it. If a vendor with a higher bid demonstrates the best value contracting procedure to SPEA, then it may be awarded over the lower bidder. Should this happen, the Business Manager will need to prepare a justification statement with a brief explanation of the factors leading to such a decision. The Executive Director approves the final bid. All staff members have to complete a Purchase Request form for small purchases. The Business Manager will review and approve the request according to the school's procurement. Executive Director, will grant the final approval for all purchases approved in the budget for up to \$10,000. The Executive Director and the Board Treasurer approved purchases over \$10,000 in the fiscal year budget. The approval of the Executive Director and Board Treasurer will be required if there are any purchases over \$5,000 that were not originally included in the Board-approved budget.

**Financial Oversight:**

Not applicable. SPEA will not be using an Electronic Money Order (EMO).

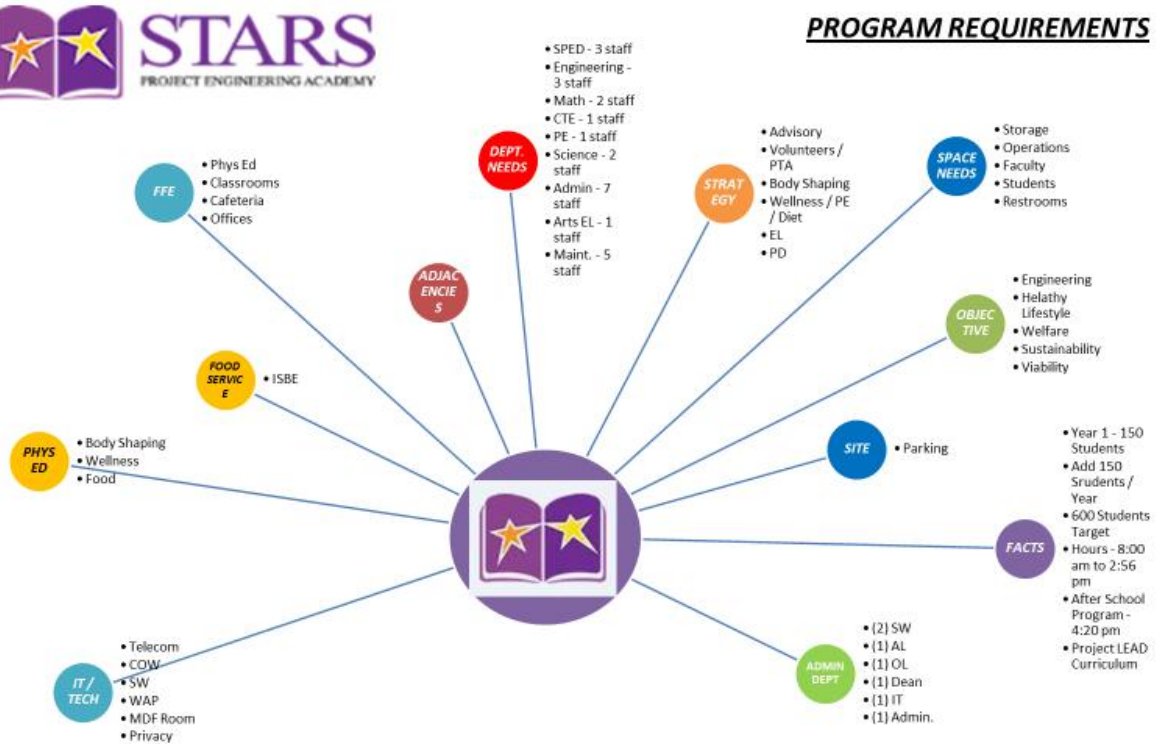
Dimension 4.3 Facilities

Section 4.3.a Facility Option(s)

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.*

STARS Project Engineering Academy Charter School space requirements are pretty modest. It includes classroom space, office space, and a large enough area to be used as a cafeteria, gym, and school assemblies. Please see **Figure 21** for a graphic that outlines our required space needs, among other planned requirements (See Appendix QQ: 4.3.a Space Requirements.)



**Figure 21: Program requirements**

**Question#2: School Sites**

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

We are currently exploring two locations that will allow us to service community students in Little Village and surrounding communities. The immediate temporary location is Assumption Church on 2434 S. California Ave., Chicago, IL 60608. We are going through the process of leasing the 3rd floor (Classrooms) and basement (multi-purpose area). We had an ADA Compliance inspection done in the facility by architect Cesar Santoy, and the area is 24,000 square feet, however, we are using 12,500 square feet that consist of 3rd, partially 1st floor & basement. The basement, which has a very large auditorium, will function as a gymnasium as well as a cafeteria. The 3rd floor will allow access to two administrative offices and 7 classroom (See Appendix AA: Section 3.1.b ADA Compliance Report) (See Appendix RR: Section 4.3.a. Inspecting Architect Report).

The long term permanent location is a warehouse on 2743 W 36th Pl, Chicago, IL 60632. The area is 140,000 square feet in total in a 2 story masonry building. Currently 110,000 square feet are available and the rest is occupied by another tenant whose lease expires later this year. We have also have an ADA Compliance inspection done in this facility by the architect Cesar Santoy. (See Appendix AA: Section 3.1.b ADA Compliance Report) (See Appendix RR: Section 4.3.a. Inspecting Architect Report) (See Appendix SS: Section 4.3.a. Permanent Facility Description).

We are in collaboration with architect Cesar Santoy, Principal of Studio ARQ and The Resurrection Project (TRP) to assist us in solidifying a location for our school. We have been working together to secure Assumption Church location, currently in negotiations with the archdiocese to complete the leasing process to obtain our temporary location. Cesar and TRP are also assisting in finalizing our permanent

located on 36th and California.

Our commitment is to enhance the community by bringing an engineering academy that will prepare students for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) careers. The temporary location will be in Little Village, which is the community we are servicing and the permanent location is in the neighboring community, which will allow us to expand the communities that we are committed to servicing.

As noted in Section 1.1.b, Community Fit, we have the support of the community, as they have shown a strong desire to have a STEM school. We received strong feedback on our educational vision, a model that does not currently exist in the community.

The Rehabilitation Plan and the Sources and Uses of Funds Report will be submitted in Tier 2. The Finance Committee and Facility Committee, along with TRP, Cesar Santoy (Architect), IFF and Ernest Sawyer will continue finalizing the details necessary for our location. (See Appendix TT: Section 4.3.a. Rehabilitation Plan) (See Appendix UU: Section 4.3.a. Sources and Uses of Funds Report). Funding is to meet the needs of the school. As of now we have not had any funding for specific purpose. (See Section 4.1.b Development Plan for more details).

### Question#3: Facility Plan

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

A thorough set of meetings and internal deadlines have been set forth in order to properly address any issues which may arise up to the opening date of the planned school. Among the more noteworthy parties involved are: the immediate temporary facility, The Resurrection Project's Assumption Church, the CPS approved architect, Cesar Santoy, the Board of Education, and STARS leadership staff. Please refer to (See Appendix VV: Section 4.3.a. Timeline) for specific dates and specific groups and individuals involved in the planned meetings.

From the initial formation of the team to bring SPEA to the community, we partnered up with (INCS) Illinois Network Charter School from Dec. 2012 through July 2013, and have maintained an ongoing relationship up to now.

INCS have consulted us, and we have attended as a team, their workshops & conferences to provide us with the resources to continue moving forward with SPEA. Along with INCS, we continue establishing and collaborating with individuals and organizations that will assist in solidifying our location. We are in constant communication with TRP, Cesar Santoy, Archdiocese to obtain our location, as well as developing a development plan, while obtaining consulting by Donors Forum and Juan Calixto, and discussing possible revenue with Ernest Sawyer for TIF, IFF and Chicago Community Trust.

Domain 5: Management Organization (N/A)