**Curtis-Sharif STEM Academy Charter School**

**Responses to Tier 2 Questions**

**Section 1.1: Parent and Community Engagement/Need in Targeted Community**

Curtis-Sharif S.T.E.M. Academy Charter School has spent countless hours searching for a facility in which to open a charter school in the Chicago Lawn Community. We have been successful in finding two suitable facilities: one on 87th and Kedzie and the second on 79th and Western. The facilities are located in the Ashburn Community. Ashburn is contiguous with Chicago Lawn. The 79th Street Facility would house Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and 1st grade. The 87th Street facility would house grades 2nd through 8th. In 2014, CSSA will offer Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades and add one grade per year until we reach 8th grade in year four. The school will be a Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade school.

Curtis-Sharif S.T.E.M. Academy Charter School has received parental, community and stakeholder support from the Chicago Lawn Community and the Ashburn Community. Curtis-Sharif S.T.E.M. Academy intends to focus its recruitment efforts on students from the Chicago Lawn Community. CSSA will provide busing to Chicago Lawn students to the school. It will also recruit from the Ashburn Community. Ashburn was also designated a priority community for the 2013 RFP for New Charter Schools. Alderman Lona Lane is the Alderman for both communities. Alderman Lane supports having CSSA in her Ward. Based on the readiness of the facility, CSSA can open the school in the fall of 2014.

Curtis-Sharif S.T.E.M. Academy Charter School (CSSA) is fortunate to have the support of Alderman Lane, the Greater Southwest Development Corporation (GSDC), Instituto del Progreso Latino, Ada S. McKinley Community Services and Soy Familia.1 These partnerships were formed because CSSA shares their vision and mission for improving the educational outcomes of students who reside in the Chicago Lawn and Ashburn Communities. (See Addendum A – Community Support Letters.)

**1.1a Parent and Community Engagement (Preparation of Proposal)**

CSSA met with residents of the Chicago Lawn and Ashburn Communities prior to and during the development of the charter school proposal to discuss the school’s mission, vision, educational philosophy and its S.T.E.M/Arts Integration Model. Their input was invaluable in preparing the proposal. The Design Team and CSSA supporters also canvassed both communities speaking with residents individually and in small groups about the proposed school and what CSSA has to offer the families and their children. We have spoken with individuals and families about the school and listened to their concerns about the kind of education they would like for their children to have. We designed a survey to ascertain parent’s reflections on what a great school looks like, what kinds of classes it should offer to the children and to their parents, and in what ways the school should engage the community. The survey was written in both English and Spanish. CSSA held information sessions in the community at the local library and went into places where people hangout to get their feedback. (See Addendum B – Community Meetings and Addendum C - Survey Questions.)

The comments offered by parents were in-line with matters that had already been incorporated into the proposal. Our vision is aligned with their vision. One case in point was a parent who expressed her concern about how we would help a child transition from their former school into a new learning environment. The proposal has a section that talks about the CSSA transition plan. It includes the N.A.S.A. Space Camp that takes place prior to the first day of school. This camp provides an opportunity for students to get to know their peers in a problem-based learning, adventure filled environment before school begins. In addition, CSSA hosts a carnival for students and their families and staff and their families on the Saturday before school begins. These two events allow teachers to work with and observe students in a fun learning environment and a festival environment, providing educators with valuable insights into the ways in which the student processes information and responds to academic and social stimuli.

CSSA has secured the signatures of hundreds of residents and those who work, shop and utilize services in Chicago Lawn and Ashburn as a show of their support for the school opening to work with students in Chicago Lawn and Ashburn. (See Addendum D – Additional signatures.) CSSA has also shared it vision, mission, and educational philosophy with a number of the stakeholders in both the Chicago Lawn Community and the Ashburn Community. CSSA’s commitment is to work with Alderman Lane, the Greater Southwest Development Corporation, Instituto del Progreso Latino, Ada S. McKinley Community Services, Soy Familia and the University of Illinois Extension 4-H Program and their members. The priorities in GSDC’s education plan are to build and strengthen parent associations, provide a community space, end school overcrowding, establish and achieve educational goals and increase opportunities for pre-school education programs. Alderman Lane and the community are interested in the quality of educational opportunities for the students that reside there. CSSA’s goals and objectives align with the communities’ desires. (See Addendum A – Community Support Letters and Addendum E – Individual Support Letters.)

**1.1.b. Description of Need in Targeted Community**

When one contrasts Chicago Lawn and Ashburn, one finds Chicago Lawn--a community in transition with crime and poor performing, overcrowded schools, compared to Ashburn—a community in which a particularly heinous crime encroached and only one of its seven schools is experiencing success. Both communities stand to benefit from a school with a curriculum to prepare the students for academic, social and ethical success.

The Chicago Lawn community is situated on Chicago’s southwest side. This is a family oriented community that has higher population density than other Chicago communities. Although its demographics for income suggest that it is a stable community, it ranks in the top third of Chicago neighborhoods for violent crimes. The community’s household size and households with children are both 30% larger than the Chicago median. This has led to significant overcrowding in area schools, some of which are 83% overcapacity. There are 15 elementary schools within its borders that provide educational services to 15, 945 students. The number of students who qualify for free or reduced lunches is 93%. This is a significant number. On a scale of one to ten, the Great Schools Advisory, a national school evaluation service, reports that the best school in this area rates a five, while the others earn threes and fours. The community struggles with abandoned homes, gangs and an influx of new residents; although, it is encouraged by new housing stock and employment opportunities in the region. The Greater Southwest Development Corporation, working with community organizations and residents, has developed eight strategies to ensure that the community does not continue to deteriorate. The eighth strategy focuses on education. The priorities in GSDC’s education plan are to build and strengthen parent associations, provide a community space in the school, end school overcrowding, establish and achieve educational goals and increase opportunities for pre-school education programs. The community is interested in the quality of educational opportunities for the students that reside there.

The greatest asset in Chicago Lawn is its residents. Chicago Lawn has families, community organizations and social service agencies committed to changing the cultural milieu from one of increasing poverty, crime, overcrowded schools that perform poorly, and few educational opportunities for adult learners to a vibrant community in which every stakeholder wins. The Greater Southwest Development Corporation brought together a group of residents, businesses and community organizations to rally around their collective desire for community improvement. Together, they clearly delineated the challenges and joined forces to develop a strategic plan to save their neighborhood. This alliance of residents, businesses and community organizations took a long hard look at the challenges the community was facing and took a stand to turn things around. This kind of community development has had a positive impact on the community and residents are increasingly committed to having a community that is a model of what happens when there is a collective determination to change the trajectory of a neighborhood. The Greater Southwest Development Corporation worked with the stakeholders to formulate a multi-level plan that identified the specific areas of concern and how the stakeholders could take the bull by the horn and turn things around. As one drives or walks through the community, you can see the signs of improvement. Businesses are flourishing, families are thriving and social service agencies are working with residents. Chicago Lawn has further intensified its commitment to improving the educational outcomes of its residents. Chicago Lawn continues to focus on the need to improve its schools, offer early childhood opportunities for its residents, and continuing education opportunities for its adult population. CSSA is the kind of school that supports the community’s strategic plan. GSDC supports CSSA’s proposal to open a school for its neighbors.

The Ashburn community is also situated on Chicago’s southwest side. This is a family oriented community that has a 21% higher household size than the Chicago median and households with children that are 38% larger than the Chicago median. This has led to overcrowding in two of the schools. There are seven elementary schools within its borders. On a scale of one to ten, the Great Schools Advisory, a national school evaluation service, reports that one school in this area earned a nine (this is a city-wide magnet school), two were rated five, while the others earned threes and fours. Two of the schools are on academic probation. The number of students who qualify for free or reduced lunches is 94%. This is a significant number. When the community is broken down into smaller segments its racial make-up ranges from 67% to 85% African-American and 4% to 25% Latino depending on the four block radius being examined. Compared to Chicago, educational attainment in Ashburn is as follows: 38% of Ashburn’s residents have less than a high school education compared to 20% in Chicago; 10% have a high school equivalent compared to 24% in Chicago; 10% have earned a bachelor’s degree compared to 22% in Chicago; 6% possess a master’s degree compared to 9% in Chicago. The percentage of foreign born residents is 24% compared to 21% in Chicago. There is a need in the Ashburn community to improve the educational outcomes for both its youngest and adult residents. CSSA’s mission, vision, educational philosophy, parent involvement and community engagement decrees align with efforts to work with the community to affect change and improve the educational outcomes for a greater number of its residents.2

**Section 1.2 Evidence of Parent and Community Support in Targeted Community**

CSSA has reached out to parents and community organizations to share with them the school design and its commitment to both the Chicago Lawn and Ashburn communities.

**1.2a. Evidence of Parent Support in Targeted Community(ies)**

CSSA has the support of parents to open a charter school in the Chicago Lawn and Ashburn Communities. This is evidenced by the number of individuals who signed the petitions, giving their commitment and support to the opening of the Curtis-Sharif STEM Academy Charter School. Parents also exhibited their support of CSSA by writing letters saying that they support the opening of the school. See Addenda D and E.)

**1.2.b. Evidence of Community Stakeholders Support in Targeted Community(ies)**

CSSA has received letters from the following stakeholders: Alderman Lona Lane, the Greater Southwest Development Corporation, Instituto del Progreso Latino, Instituto Health Sciences High School, Ada S. McKinley Community Services, University of Illinois at Chicago’s Urban Health Program Undergraduate Programs Office, University of Illinois Extension 4-H Program, State Representative Mary E. Flowers, Metropolitan Family Services-Midway, and Marquette Bank. This represents substantive support from community stakeholders. (See Addendum A.)

CSSA has reached out to community organizations, churches, health care facilities, libraries and businesses in the Chicago Lawn and Ashburn Communities to make them aware of the proposal to open a charter school in the community. The responses have been very favorable. The families really want to improve the educational outcomes for their children and support CSSA’s commitment to providing an outstanding educational environment. The only individuals who exhibited consternation about the opening of a charter school were individuals who worked for the Chicago Public Schools. They feel that the charter school movement is responsible for the school closings. CSSA always takes the high road in these situations and reminds the individual that we should put the children first and want every child to have the opportunity for a better education. We were also informed that because the parochial schools in Chicago Lawn are struggling to retain their enrollment, Catholic churches could not partner with a charter school, because it might negatively impact their enrollment. Nonetheless, CSSA has the support of a number of stakeholders in the community(ies). Through CSSA’s support from Alderman Lane, the Greater Southwest Development Corporation, Instituto del Progreso Latino, Ada S. McKinley Community Services and Soy Familia, it will expand its circle of friends.

**1.3 Future Plans for Parent and Community Engagement and Partnerships**

CSSA plans to expand the relationships it currently has with Alderman Lona Lane, the Greater Southwest Development Corporation, Instituto del Progreso Latino, Instituto Health Sciences High School, Ada S. McKinley Community Services, Soy Familia, University of Illinois at Chicago’s Urban Health Program Undergraduate Programs Office, University of Illinois Extension 4-H Program, Metropolitan Family Services-Midway and Marquette Bank.

* + 1. **Key Community Partnerships**

The current Key Community Partnerships include the following governmental officials and agencies: Alderman Lona Lane, the Greater Southwest Development Corporation, Instituto del Progreso Latino, Instituto Health Sciences High School, Ada S. McKinley Community Services, Metropolitan Family Services-Midway, Soy Familia, and Marquette Bank. CSSA will work with the Greater Southwest Development Corporation to implement the eighth strategy in its community improvement plan. The priorities in GSDC’s education plan are to build and strengthen parent associations, provide a community space in the school, end school overcrowding, establish and achieve educational goals and increase opportunities for pre-school education programs. CSSA’s education plan includes a parent organization that works with parents to empower the entire family. The parent organization is a network of resources to support parents in raising successful children. Parent Network meetings provide parents with an opportunity to affirm CSSA’s Mission and Vision. There is information about CSSA’s programs, progress and issues that impact learning; parent education workshops; parent leadership workshops; age-focused developmental parenting workshops; college readiness workshops; Family Math Workshops; tips for having meaningful parent/teacher conferences; computer literacy classes/information; ESL classes/information; resources for continuing education; financial planning workshops; funding a private high school education; financial aid for college, college readiness workshops, etc. Parents are required to volunteer at the school at least five times a year. Parents also fundraise for the school. Every family has a college scholarship fund for their child(ren).

The Parent Network hosts a number of activities to support families:

\* a book club that exposes parents to various authors and subject matter that will support their being the best parent they can be;

\* a discount shoppers’ bureau to help parents save money on purchases;

\* holiday celebrations providing students with historical information about the various ways the holiday or similar ones are celebrated around the world;

\* ethnic/gender history month celebrations/fairs (African American, Latino, Women’s), honoring national, local, historical and contemporary heroes;

\* an annual talent show, showcasing the many talents of CSSA students;

\* the annual CSSA Scholar’s Day Festival, which includes community engagement initiatives, a parade, a carnival, a celebration of student achievement, teacher recognitions, parent recognitions, etc.

\* Reclaiming Our Children (described in the proposal)

\* The Oak and the Acorn (described in the proposal)

\* Healing Generations of Pain (described in the proposal)

All of these initiatives strengthen parental engagement.

The opening of the Curtis-Sharif STEM Academy will alleviate the overcrowding of schools in the Chicago Lawn and Ashburn Communities. CSSA will provide a new school to enroll many of the students who currently sit in overcrowded classrooms. To address the need to improve the quality of educational opportunities and the need for additional pre-school programs, the CSSA education plan clearly addresses the improvement of educational outcomes for students. CSSA’s curriculum begins in preschool providing students with an academic program that is outstanding. CSSA is working with the Minister of Education of Singapore and will utilize the Singapore educational system. Singapore is the top nation in the world when one measures multiple indicators of student educational attainment and academic success. The study looked at 67 nations from around the world. This is a system that is aligned with the Common Core, yet surpasses Common Core in its design.

* + 1. **School Involvement in Community**

To involve, engage and retain the support of the community, CSSA will provide space for community organizations to hold meetings. CSSA and its partners will also provide opportunities to improve the educational, financial and social attainment of community residents. Children and families who reside in Chicago Lawn and Ashburn will be able to participate in the following workshops, seminars, classes, summer programs, and initiatives offered by CSSA. They include, but are not limited to: money management workshops (Marquette Bank), violence prevention initiatives, college readiness workshops (Ada S. McKinley & Instituto del Progreso Latino), literacy workshops (Soy Familia), English language classes (Instituto del Progreso Latino), financial aid workshops (Ada S. McKinley & Instituto del Progreso Latino), entrepreneurial development workshops (Southwest Development Corporation and Instituto del Progreso Latino), adult leadership development workshops (Soy Familia) youth leadership development summer programs (Soy Familia and UIC), science summer camps, career exploration summer programs, college tours, robotics classes (4-H), math, technology and engineering seminars, Family Science Night (4-H), Family Math Night (4-H), a Community Garden (4-H), Family Reading Program (4-H), Blood Donation Drives (UIC), biomedical research opportunities and other programs as the communities needs develop.

**Section 2.2.a Roles and Demonstrated Experience**

CSSA Design Team members have an average of two decades of experience and success in driving student academic achievement. They have worked with students at various levels along the educational pipeline from Pre-kindergarten through the completion of doctorate degrees in colleges and universities in the Chicago area. As the CSSA Design Team contemplated the future of Chicago Lawn and Ashburn Communities students, we focused on the need for higher education attainment, the importance of literacy, and the need for students to acquire skills that have utility in the 21st Century. Being proficient in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics is essential for developing students who have the capacity to become leaders and contributors in a global economy. The arts, humanities and world languages provide essential ways of exploring the world that are foundational to leadership development. CSSA’s Design Team believes that the foundation for academic, social, and ethical success is built during the formative years. This is the impetus behind designing an elementary school that begins its work with students in preschool.

CSSA’s Design Team asked the question, “What does it mean to be truly educated?” Our responses came from an awareness of the end goal: preparing students to be successful in post-secondary environments and careers and to be leaders and contributors in a global economy. The skill sets needed include critical thinking, problem solving, mathematical acumen, an appreciation of culture, high ethical standards, character education, and literary in more than one language. CSSA’s Design Team’s role is aligned with their areas of expertise. The Team is comprised of individuals with backgrounds in higher education (a retired college president, a retired college vice chancellor, a former college health science/STEM education administrator, and adjunct professors in education and engineering), technology, engineering and mathematics specialists, a science specialist, a pre-school and primary school education/literacy specialist, a character education/school counselor, a cultural/visual/performing arts specialists, and a parent who is a community resident. We also consulted with a math and science specialists who is well versed in the Singapore method. The Team’s collective expertise and commitment to academic success is an asset to the school.

The CSSA Design Team has had incredible success in driving student achievement. The students with whom we have provided academic programs demonstrated academic attainment as follows:

* 87% were admitted to selective enrollment high schools
* 100% graduated from high school
* 97% of the students went to college
* 3% of the students entered the military or postsecondary training programs
* ACT scores ranged from 17 to 34; the average ACT score was 23.5
* The average high school GPA was 3.34
* 77% of the students attended colleges in the state of Illinois
* 20% of the students attended colleges around the nation
* The Baccalaureate degree completion rate was 4.6 years
* The average college GPA was 3.06
* 45.30% were pre-health professions majors (22% medicine, 20% applied health and social science, 6.3% nursing, 4% pharmacy, 3% dentistry)
* 10.8% majored in other STEM disciplines
* 7.2% were business majors and 1% chose education

In addition to the Team’s expertise in education, Team members have raised millions of dollars for various agencies. They intend to utilize their connections to support CSSA in its fund raising and friend raising initiatives.

**Section 2.2.c School Leadership**

The CSSA Board of Directors oversees all aspects of the school. The Director (Principal) is the educational leader for the school and reports directly to the Board. The proposed director, Dr. Deborah Umrani, is a very capable educational leader with over 17 years working with elementary and high school students to prepare them for careers in STEM disciplines. She has worked with several CPS schools and thousands of students from public, private, parochial and charter schools providing STEM education and arts education learning environments that utilized problem based learning. Students experienced improvements in their academic performance and their attitudes toward science and mathematics. One’s attitude towards STEM subject matter and content is an essential element in one’s ability to achieve success in courses that require one to think critically and problem solve. She has implemented interventions for special education students that were so very effective that students moved from academic failure to scoring in the 80th and 90th percentile on standardized tests. These students are now in college majoring in science with college GPAs that range from 3.4 to 3.6. The impact of the learning environments she developed helped students to achieve mastery of the content, which is foundational to success in school and students becoming life-long learners. Dr. Umrani’s work with elementary school children has changed the educational trajectory of countless students, removing them from the pipeline to prison and placing them solidly on the path to a career in the health sciences, engineering or biomedical research.

Umrani has prepared students for enrollment in selective enrollment and/or private high schools and to go to college and experience success from the very beginning. She has a college readiness program that arms students with the skill sets they will need to earn their bachelor’s degree, but also to pursue post-baccalaureate work in professional and graduate schools. She has experience working with parents and other stakeholders and building lasting alliances with groups that contribute to a positive school culture and advance student learning. The child comes first and his/her needs are a priority. She understands that it takes a healthy village to raise a healthy child. Umrani has had a positive impact on the educational outcomes of literally thousands of Chicago area children. As the educational leader at CSSA, we anticipate that the outcomes will be outstanding.

CSSA has begun soliciting resumes from individuals to work in the school once it opens. The School’s Leadership Team is comprised of the Director (Principal), Dean of Students, Business Manager, and the Curriculum and Assessment Coordinator. We have received resumes from individuals who have expressed an interest in working with CSSA. These individuals are currently employed at other institutions in the Chicago area. A full recruitment drive will begin once the school has been approved by the Board of Education.3

**Section 3.2.c Board Experience**

Once the school opens, approximately 45% of the CSSA Design Team members will transition to the CSSA Board of Directors. Other members of the Design Team will continue to support CSSA by offering their expertise to the school as either employees, consultants or volunteers. The officers for the CSSA Board of Directors have been identified. The Board will recruit additional individuals from the community to serve on the Board. It will also recruit individuals with connections that will benefit the school to become Board members. Many of the current Board members have years of experience as Board members for other organizations. Currently, Design Team members have experience with the following organizations as founders, presidents, and board members: National College Board, Association of Black Women in Higher Education, Trinity Higher Education Corporation, Alpha Kappa Alpha Chicago Chapter, League of Black Women, Illinois Committee for Black Concerns in Higher Education, Elliot Donnelley Youth Center, the United Way, 5th Congressional District Education Committee, Henry Booth House Families with a Future Network, National Technical Association, UIC Minority Engineering Advisory Board, Technical Advisory Board, Xavier University Model Institutions for Excellence, Ada S. McKinley Community Services, Hales Franciscan High School, Pearson Technology, and the Legacy Academy of Excellence Charter School.

They have decades of experience in leadership roles in education-related institutions in the Chicago –area, are members of local and national organizations, and they are committed to opening an exceptional school to service the Chicago Lawn and Ashburn Communities.

**4.1.c. Development Plan**

CSSA has established the following two part Development Plan. Part One of the Plan deals with raising funds to support the school during the incubation period and the first year, when start-up costs are large, one-time expenses. Part Two of the Plan deals with annual fund/friend raising activities.

Part One: The Capital Campaign for Start-Up Expenditures involves seeking funders who target new charter schools to support during their incubation and initial year. CSSA has identified the following resources:

U. S. Department of Education

Walden Family Foundation

Partners for Developing Futures

Next Generation Learning Challenge

National Science Foundation

Chicago Community Trust

Carnegie Foundation

Gates Foundation

Individual Donations

To fund the lease/purchase/upgrade of the facility, CSSA will apply to the following funding/grant agencies:

The Charter School Revolving Loan Fund will allow a $250,000 maximum loan amount over the lifetime of a charter school, with repayment periods of up to five years.

The Charter School Facility Grant Program (Senate Bill 740), passed in 2001, helps charter schools with rent or lease expenses. To be eligible, a charter school must have at least 70% of its pupils eligible for free/reduced-price meals or be located in an attendance area with the same kind of student population. CSSA’s target populations are 93% free and reduced lunch eligible.

The federal Credit Enhancement for Charter Schools Facilities Program provides competitive grants to organizations that are willing to guarantee loans and leases that charter schools pursue.

The CSSA Design Team is reaching out to each of these entities to obtain funding for the school. The Team will host a Friend Raising Event in February. The details of the event will be available once the charter school has been approved. CSSA will market the event using its partners, friends, families and supporters of CSSA to raise funds to support the build out of the structures.

Part Two: CSSA has established an Annual Fund/Friend Raising Campaign called, “The Big Ask Development Campaign.” The details of the Campaign are as follows:

**Curtis-Sharif STEM Academy, Inc.**

**The BIG ASK Development Campaign**

The Curtis-Sharif STEM Academy, Inc.’s has set lofty goals as an educational institution. These big goals have flooded its commitment to think big in every area of its existence: academic excellence, administrative excellence, social and ethical excellence, fiscal management, school culture, professional development, parent engagement and community outreach. Funding from the Board has to be augmented to ensure the school’s capacity to provide a world-class learning environment for its students.

Curtis-Sharif STEM Academy, Inc. has extended its lofty goals to include its Development Campaign. CSSA has established a “BIG ASK Campaign” with a goal of raising $350,000 each year to support the school’s capacity to accomplish its mission, vision and educational philosophy and achieve exceptional ratings in every area of evaluation. To do this, CSSA needs to raise funds to support its many initiatives. One of the major tenets of successful fundraising is to ASK. Studies have shown that people will support worthwhile ventures, if someone asks them to. CSSA will be persistent, tenacious, and gracious in its efforts to obtain the financial, material and in-kind support of individuals, corporations and foundations.

The BIG ASK Campaign will be administrated by the CSSA Board of Directors. The BIG ASK Campaign will include every stakeholder of the institution. The CSSA Board has established a timeline and methodologies based on best practices in institutional fundraising to achieve its goals. Website like Help for Non-Profits, Help 4 Non-Profits and Tribes, Simone Joyaux, Ahern Communication, afpnex.com and Fundraising for Social Change are helpful resources. The BIG ASK Campaign involves several steps: How much money and/or in-kind services do we want to raise/acquire? Who will the stakeholders ask for money, goods and/or services? What will be the motivating factor for stakeholder to get involved in the campaign? What kind of contributions will CSSA accept? Why should individuals, corporations and foundations give to support CSSA? When do we ask? What methods will be used to obtain contributions? Who will oversee the fundraising processes? Who will monitor donations to keep stakeholders informed of progress and thank donors? Who will oversee the management of donations?

**How much money?**

The CSSA Board will be engaged in the enterprise of raising funds for the school. Board members will seek donations from individual donors, corporations and foundations that share and/or support the vision and mission of the school. At the beginning of each fiscal year, the Board will determine the fund raising goals for that year and set a time line for the achievement of the goals. The School’s Director in consultation with the Leadership Team will provide the vision for the year and a detailed budget depicting the financial, material and human resources needed to achieve the vision. The Board will prioritize the resources list and develop a strategic plan to attain the resources needed. The Board will make budgetary projections for two, five and ten years and revisit them annually to assess the campaigns’ success and to make adjustments, as needed.

**Who will the Stakeholders ask for money, goods and/or services?**

With the budgetary projections for two, five and ten years. The Board will set the annual timeline for achieving its fund raising goals. The Board will develop a list of potential donors and establish a marketing plan to reach out to those on the list determining which group of stakeholders will be responsible for certain donor groups. Quarterly, the Board will evaluate the progress it is making on reaching its goals.

**What will be the motivating factor for stakeholder to get involved in the campaign?**

The CSSA Board of Directors will lead the BIG ASK Campaign by preparing a list of its contacts that it will reach out to for donations. Each Board member will be expected to raise a percentage of the dollar amount specified for the fund raising goal utilizing their friends, family, business, foundation and corporation connections to advance the mission and vision of CSSA along with its capital fund raising campaigns.

The Stakeholders for CSSA are the students, parents, faculty, administrators, non-teaching staff, community members, local businesses, community organizations, government officials, funders, and family and friends of each stakeholder. CSSA’s culture of academic excellence is a motivating factor for students and parents and their family and friends to connect with and support the achievements of the school and to advance its mission and vision. The Dean of Students works closely with students and their families. The Dean will be the frontline person in motivating students and parents to get involved in the fundraising activities. The Magic Matrix for Fund Development will be used to determine the utility of choosing a particular fundraising option. The major question it resolves is how much profit will be made from a particular kind of fund raiser; compared to the amount of effort involved in conducting the fundraiser. The focus will be on only utilizing fundraisers that provide a return on the investment of time and resources and the need for/sell-ability of the item being sold. Students and parents will hold two fund raisers each year. The first will be targeted at the friends and family members of students enrolled in the school. The second will be targeted at engaging the community in the fundraising effort.

Faculty, administrators and non-teaching staff are intrinsically motivated to support the school’s capital campaign. The Campaign supports their daily efforts to improve student outcomes and make the school a wonderful place to serve. Faculty, administrators and staff search for funding opportunities through the resources available to them through their circle of family and friends. They may identify a small grant or a corporation willing to donate material resources and/or in-kind services from which the school can benefit.

Community members, local businesses, and community organizations will be asked to partner with the school, adopt the school, display posters about the school in their windows and contribute to the capital campaign. CSSA will leverage the relationships these organizations have and ask them to enlighten their customers, clients, friends, families and partners about the school and to encourage them to make donations to the school.

Why should individuals, corporations and foundations give to/support CSSA?

Government officials, funders, foundations and corporations will be researched and approached to fund CSSA. CSSA will write grants and seek funding for the school, noting the particular area(s) that they are willing to fund and their alignment with CSSA’s mission and vision. The improvement of educational outcomes for students who attend public schools is a major concern for government officials and many funders share this concern. CSSA will seek the support of these individuals and corporations to advance the attainment of its lofty goals.

**How will CSSA solicit funds?**

CSSA will utilize the following methods to seek funding: mail solicitations, email solicitations, personal solicitations, foundation grant solicitations, phone solicitations, accept donations on your website, receive donations from another organization’s website, government grant solicitations, and other methods. CSSA will also go to the Chicago Donor’s Forum to identify grantors.

**What kind of contributions will CSSA accept?**

CSSA will accept donations of vehicles, boats, planes, intellectual property, goods, services, real estate, monetary donations, etc. For rare, exceptional kinds of property, the Board will meet to assess the advantages, disadvantage, and/or liabilities of accepting the donation. A contribution must be made without the expectation of any remuneration from CSSA. CSSA will not be obligated to perform any kind of service in lieu of receipt of any donations. All donations are free-will and tax exempt (upon receipt of 501c3 status).

**When do we ask?**

As CSSA conducts research on foundations, governmental agencies and corporations, it will enter the funding cycle and submissions deadlines of each entity into its fundraising database. Based on the funding cycle, CSSA will submit proposals/requests for funding from the agency. CSSA will establish a timeline that takes into consideration the most advantage times to solicit from individuals and smaller entities; during the holiday giving season and specially designated CSSA Giving Seasons.

**Who will oversee the fundraising processes?** **Who will monitor donations to keep stakeholders informed of progress? Who will thank donors and keep them apprised of the usage of their contributions? Who will oversee the management of donations and order audits of all accounts?**

The Board of Directors will oversee the Development Plan from a global perspective. The Business Manager, who is equivalent to the Chief Financial Officer will oversee the day-to-day administration of the marketing, solicitation, fielding queries from the public, receiving donations, sending out thank you letters once a donation has been received, keeping the website updated with regard to donors, displaying the Brands of donors, reporting to the Board the outcomes of the campaign, reporting to funders the usage of their contributions, managing the books to ensure that funds are deposited and utilized following the mandate(s) for which they were raised or donated. Ordering audits of all funds.

Utilizing the above Development Plan, CSSA will be able to tap into funding opportunities from multiple sources in order to successfully achieve its capital campaign. CSSA has currently identified a number of entities to which it will approach informing them that the 501c3 status has been sought.

**Section 4.3 Facilities**

CSSA has identified two facilities: one at 3348 West 87th Street (Kedzie) and the other one at 7939 South Western. The facility on 79th and Western will house the pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and 1st grade. In the first year, the facility on 87th and Kedzie will house students in 2nd through 5th grade, adding an additional grade level per year until the school serves Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade.

**4.3.a. Facility Plan:** Describe the plan to secure an appropriate facility for the school.

If proposing an independent facility, attach a proposed timeline for securing that facility and completing necessary renovations to make the facility suitable for school by the proposed opening date.

CSSA has acquired a letter of intent to lease the aforementioned properties from the properties management companies. The architect has inspected both properties and prepared the ADA compliance documents that specify what it will take to prepare the property for occupancy. The modified timeline for occupancy is attached. (See Addendum F – Timeline for Occupancy and Addendum G – Revised Budget.)

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

Attach detailed space requirements for the proposed school(s) (e.g. square footage, number and type of classrooms, amenities, etc.), including any special features required to properly implement the proposed model.

In the first year, CSSA will require 16 multi-media classrooms with Promethean Boards. (These include three science labs, three technology and engineering labs, and three mathematics labs.) In addition to two multi-media centers (library), two arts studios, two lunchroom/auditorium/physical fitness rooms, administrative offices, teachers’ resource centers, parents’ resource centers, security offices, custodian’s rooms and storage. CSSA will need to add two classrooms each year thereafter. At full capacity, CSSA will require 22 classrooms plus auxiliary spaces.

**c. School Site:** Provide an overview of each proposed site and include the following supporting materials:

(i.)The address and a general description of the property, including its current owner and previous use.

The property is located at 3348 West 87th Street, Chicago, Illinois. The property is a former Bally’s Total Fitness Health Club that occupies the southwest corner of the West Port Commons Shopping Center. It is an open space with 27,000 square feet for usage.

The second facility is located at 7939 South Western Avenue. It is owned by the Ada S. McKinley Community Services. It was previously housed a Head Start Program. It has 13,000 square feet.

(ii.)An Inspecting Architect’s Report completed by a CPS-approved architect.

See Addendum H - Inspecting Architect’s Reports

(iii.) An ADA Compliance Report completed by a CPS-approved architect.

See Addendum I – ADA Compliance Report

(iv.) If the property is not currently ADA compliant, a plan for bringing the building into compliance.

Both properties are ADA compliant.

(v.) Evidence that the site is or will be secured (Letter of Intent or Memorandum of Understanding) and a description of your team’s plan to meet lease or purchase requirements.

See Addendum J - Letter of Intent to Lease from Ada S. McKinley Community Services for 7939 South Western, Chicago and @Properties, Inc. for 3348 West 87th Street, Chicago.

(vi.)A plan detailing how rehabilitation work will address issues raised by the architect, meet applicable building codes, and support the proposed school’s educational program, including:

1. The scope of work to be completed;

See Addendum K – Scope of Work

b. A description of persons/managing parties responsible for project management and related qualifications;

Ariel Architects is the firm managing the project. Their qualifications are attached.

See Addendum L- Project Manager

c. A project timeline for any necessary renovations; and

See Addendum M – Project Timeline

d. A completed Sources and Uses of Funds Report for Facility Development and the planned funding mechanism to cover projected costs.

See Addendum N - Sources and Uses of Funds Report for Facility Development

vii. The address and a general description of a secondary or back-up facility, including its current owner and previous use. After completing all required questions, please review the completeness checklist at the end of the document to ensure your submitted proposal is complete.

The other option is the Emmanuel Christian School located at 8301 South Damen. It is owned by the Emmanuel Church.

**Question # 2**

Provide updates to any section of the RFP that directly ties to parent or community feedback.

CSSA issued a survey in both English and Spanish for parents of school-aged children in the Chicago Lawn and Ashburn Communities. See Addendum C - Survey. The information gleaned from the survey responses was helpful in ensuring that the school represents the interests of the parents and the community.

When asked “What would make a school a great neighborhood school?” Parents responded as follows: Parents particularly wanted the school to have a quality curriculum, parent involvement, community engagement, an excellent teaching staff, to be safe, to be diverse and in a location that reaches over many neighborhoods that is inclusive, interactive and caring.

CSSA’s curriculum is utilized by the number one nation in the world to support academic excellence. CSSA has embedded parent involvement into its professional development plans by offering opportunities for parents to be involved and to enhance their capacity to be better parents and be life-long learners, through workshops, seminars, parent meetings, and skills enhancement classes. There are classes offered just for parents. CSSA will engage the community as partners, friends and well-wishers of the school through its community outreach initiatives. CSSA will hire a diverse, quality instructional staff and maintain a culture of excellence and academic improvement to ensure that students fulfill the vision and mission of the school. CSSA’s school culture promotes safety and deals with bullying from the standpoint of the victim and the victimizer; providing interventions to help both individuals. CSSA will recruit a diverse student body, teaching and administrative staff. CSSA has the support of individuals, the Alderman, businesses and community organizations from both the Chicago Lawn and Ashburn communities. CSSA reaches out to residents in both communities with an educational philosophy that is inclusive, interactive and caring.

When asked to rank the kinds of classes that are important, the top four responses were: Science, reading, healthy living, and mathematics; followed by engineering, technology, the arts, and character education.

CSSA’s curriculum offers these subjects and more to ensure that students are prepared for college, are critical thinkers, problem solvers, and are exposure to a diverse learning environment.

When asked, ‘what would you like to see included in the school?’ Parents responded, current events, special programs for gifted and special needs children, sports, social development classes, gym and recess, creativity, hands-on work, college readiness, an art room, and a science lab.

CSSA provides problem based learning classes for students that enhance the educational attainment for both gifted and special needs students. CSSA offers character education and college readiness classes. CSSA has a fitness room, an arts studio and science laboratories.

When asked, “What are your goals for your children?” Parents responded that they want their children to be well rounded, confident, capable in reading and mathematics, to love learning, to be college ready, and successful in life.

Foundational to the design of the academic and social programs at CSSA is the commitment to prepare students for success in school, college and in life. CSSA is committed to developing life-long learners, who see themselves as leaders in a global economy. CSSA students are confident, yet modest, academically capable, yet socially committed to serving humanity. The school’s social justice and community engagement initiatives prepare them to be involved citizens, who are ready, willing and able to tackle the problems of the 21st Century. CSSA is part of the healthy village that it takes to raise a healthy child.

When asked, “How do you think the school can help you achieve your goals for your child?” Parents responded, keep parents involved, encourage curiosity, have a strong reading and math program, monitor each child’s progress, utilize best practices, promote safety and communicate with parents.

CSSA’s communication system keeps parents informed about their child’s progress. CSSA has multiple opportunities for parents to be involved. CSSA’s curriculum includes the Singapore Method and it utilizes problem based learning, applied math, applied science and applied English language arts, integrated fine, cultural and performing arts, character education and community engagement. The school culture promotes an environment that is physically, emotionally, academically, and socially safe for all students.

When asked, “What kind of parent workshops are important?” Parents responded, college readiness, tips on how to continue the learning environment at home, teaching values to children, and parenting workshops.

CSSA offers a host of workshops designed to help parents be the best they can be as parents, life-long learners, and role models for their children. CSSA encourages parents to improve their own education alongside their children and to support the school at home. The Family Math, Family Science Night and other activities are the kind of activities parents want for their families.

When asked how to involve the community in the school, parents responded that the school should offer extra-curricular activities and celebrations that the community can get involved in, ask community members to volunteer at the school, and ask the community to help in fund raising efforts for the school.

CSSA’s community engagement program includes reaching out to the community and involving the community in its celebrations and workshops, and providing volunteer opportunities for residents. CSSA’s development plan includes a community engagement fund raising opportunity. CSSA partners with some organizations to support its mission.

**Question # 3**

3.) Please respond to the following three additional questions as a supplement to your original response in Section 2.4.c. Specialized Instruction:

* Please describe how the school will provide a continuum of services for students with disabilities.

The full continuum of options will be available for each child. If an option is not available in our school, and the LRE of a child with disability indicates that placement, we will either create the placement or alter an existing one in order to provide the best possible education for that child.

Students joining our academy, who are differently abled, will be educated in the least restrictive environment. Each classroom will make use of holistic instructional practices that take into account the uniqueness of each child. General classroom practices will capitalize on the strengths of the individual student. The classroom as a whole will make room for the strengths of each child, and work to evolve deficits, toward a healthy instruction for all. Students with IEP’s that allow for inclusion in the classrooms of the larger population will have their instruction differentiated in this manner as well. Because of our instructional approach, that embraces the inherent differences in each child, differentiation for differently abled students will not isolate a child in any way.

Instructors will motivate all children in the classroom in the manner that is best suited for that child. Instructors will provide varied assessments that offer engagement through multiple sensory processes. Students will have the ability to conference with instructors toward unique designs, offering autonomy and comfort level that research has shown leads to significantly measurable success.

* How will you ensure that students are properly placed in the appropriate least restrictive environment (LRE)?

LRE provisions will seek first to educate children who are differently abled in general population education environments. A child’s placement in a classroom populated by the larger student body is the first option that the IEP team must consider when determining where a child with a unique set of learning abilities will receive his or her special education and related services.

In some cases the IEP team may determine that the child cannot be educated best in the classrooms of the larger student body, even when supplementary aids and services are provided. An alternative placement must then be considered. At this juncture, the IEP team will determine the best possible arrangement in order to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services. The budget includes staffing and resources to support students with IEPs.

• What strategies will you use and what actions will you take prior to changing a student’s LRE?

The IEP team will make an individualized inquiry into the possible range of supplementary aids and services that are needed to educate the child. If the IEP team determines that the child cannot be properly educated in in their current environment, then a new determination will be made in order to find the best placement for the child.

Endnotes

1. See letters of support from Alderman Lona Lane (18th Ward), the Greater Southwest Community Development Corporation, and Instituto del Progreso Latino.
2. Data provided by Chicago Tribune database.
3. See the revised School Opening Plan.