Executive Summary

**Applicants are required to submit an Executive Summary with their Tier I Application. The Executive Summary should be a stand-alone document that provides a succinct narrative overview of the application. It should be no longer than two pages and include the following components:**

* **Name of the proposed school(s)2;**
* **Number and type of proposed school(s);**
* **Mission, vision, educational philosophy and model, and culture;**
* **Demonstrated capacity to open and manage a high-quality school, including a brief  explanation of how the proposed school type and model will drive success for the  targeted student population; and**
* **A list of the targeted communit(ies) and intended student recruitment boundaries, the  rationale for proposing to open a new school in the targeted communit(ies), and an overview of parent and community engagement and support.**

We are pleased to submit the following Tier 1 Application for a new charter school option for Chicago Public Schools.  Our proposed school is Illinois Prep. Illinois Prep is a full-time virtual school option, with blended learning support services.

The mission of Illinois Prep is to prepare all students for 21st century post-secondary success through an innovative model that leverages virtual learning options to allow for a global learning community enabled, empowered and connected through digital technologies.   Illinois Prep would serve k-12 students. To achieve this, we will create a new model that leverages technology to personalize learning while stressing project based and applied learning. The Illinois Prep Academy seeks to serve underserved students seeking a full-time virtual option.  In a district of over 350,000 students located in the third largest city in the US, there is currently only one virtual option that is located in the West Loop with a once a week attendance requirement. This option leaves hundreds of students in need of a full time virtual school without an attendance option.  Illinois Prep would co-locate its site-based blended support services center at the Daley College campus on 75th and Pulaski and it’s satellite campus, The Arturo Velasquez Institute, located in the Little Village Neighborhood.

Unlike schools that target a specific geographic area, Illinois Prep offers a city-wide, virtual option that meets the needs of a targeted population/needs.  The population of students will include:

* Students for whom attending a traditional school is not possible due to health issues
* Students who have school refusal issues resulting from social emotional, mental health and/or bullying issues
* Students who have life circumstances that make attending a traditional school difficult/impossible (i.e. students who travel extensively for competitive sports, students who are parenting full time, students who are working actors/performers)
* Students who are historically underserved by virtual and 21st Century options

The Illinois Prep school model is based on active and applied personalized learning in a virtual school setting.  Our design team are leaders in the development, design and implementation of personalized, blended and online learning models.  We have taken our years of experience to craft a new model for virtual learning that fully employs new technologies to provide a more robust and engaging learning experience for virtual students. Key features include:

* An authentically engaging curriculum that combines online learning courses with **project based and applied learning options**
* High-touch and **daily live learning** to foster relationships between teachers and students and peer to peer collaboration
* An emphasis on the whole-child through an embedded school-wide **Social Emotional Learning Mode**l
* A **personalized learning framework** that guides all facets of teaching and learning

What is new and innovative about our model is that we are proposing a new approach to virtual school that combines the best of solid pedagogical approaches (applied learning, project based learning, MTSS) with a clear emphasis on REAL-TIME instructional supports coupled with new capabilities in providing authentically personalized learning paths and plans.

The Illinois Prep design team is committed to partnering and engaging with community in the design, launch and operations of our school.  Our approach to community engagement is to meet with local alderman, leaders, community members and stakeholders as a first step in each local community.  We have found that this is critical to building a broad base of support from multiple neighborhood stakeholder groups including parents, faith based organizations, cultural institutions, businesses and other members of the community.

We understand the critical importance of not only garnering community support for this unique option, but also measuring the authentic need for a virtual school program in CPS.   
  
To date we have conducted the following activities:

* Meetings with City Colleges of Chicago
* Meetings with the President of Daley College (Eduardo Garza)
* Meetings with Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council
* Meetings with program directors at hospital-based school refusal treatment centers

In addition, in order to yield critical data regarding actual student/parent need for this option we coordinated with the existing sole provider of full time virtual learning in Illinois (Chicago Virtual Charter Academy which is a K12 Inc School).

Through k12 Inc. we were able to obtain the following information:

* Current total of full time virtual learners at CVCA  - 652
* Current wait-list at CVCA - 204
* Current family inquiries about a full time virtual option for their child over the past three year period - 3,874

Our application design team is comprised of education experts from Zia Learning, a Chicago-based education consulting company whose founder served as the Director of Blended and Online Learning for CPS.  Our team is comprised of leaders, innovators and pioneers in the space of personalized, blended and online learning. . As a nationally recognized pioneer as well as innovator in the field of 21st century education, Zia is proud to have developed models that are in use across the nation to deliver highest quality, successful distance learning options.

Our selected management organization is A3 Education.  A3 has demonstrated excellence in managing virtual school models that meet the specific needs of the districts they serve.  This innovative team has worked together to craft a new vision for virtual school to better serve students who require a full-time virtual option.

It is evident from our community engagement and research that in a district and city the size of Chicago that there is not only additional need for full time virtual options to serve students for whom a virtual option is their best learning environment, but also a need for a more effective approach to truly engaging virtual/online learning.  We seek to not only meet this need, but to also put forth a virtual learning model that provides students a more engaging learning environment and yields higher levels of student success. The following application outlines our experience, model and commitment to providing an authentically personalized, 21st century virtual school model to serve the students of CPS.