***What is your elevator speech?***

Intrinsic Schools is re-imagining middle and high school for Chicago students. We have created a new model that leverages both the experience of great teachers and the precision of technology to personalize education for each student. Our goal is to prepare all students for four-year college success as demonstrated by standardized tests, products that students create and “non-cognitive” factors such as empathy, student independence, perseverance, and intellectual curiosity. We are committed to change at scale via our own growth and, more importantly, by methodically documenting and sharing everything we learn with others – most specifically Chicago Public Schools.

1. ***How will the schools address the needs of kids with various levels of knowledge and abilities per grade?  Besides the typical average students, there are kids that are gifted, advanced in knowledge, ELL and those who have IEPs.***

As we stated in our Tier 1 Application response to question 2.4.c., Intrinsic Schools is committed to empowering all students to reach their fullest potential, including students receiving special education services, classified as English Language Learners (ELL), and/or accelerated students. We believe every student should receive support based on his/her specific and individual need. Our technology tools make this easier than in a typical classroom. We are able to collect data and use it to adjust instruction in real-time. In addition, every student has an advisor who works with students on an individual basis to set and monitor goals that push each student to his/her potential.

**Gifted & Advanced in Knowledge**

We are very committed to working with families of gifted and advanced students to make sure that students are being challenged and are creating a portfolio that will help them gain admission into highly selective colleges and universities. We utilize different strategies across subjects to provide students with challenging and rigorous content. For example, students that have placed out of algebra will take geometry as ninth graders. In other courses, they will be given extension work, additional projects and more difficult texts to read and analyze. Further, our adaptive, on-line programs provide an excellent opportunity to extend learning for students. Finally, we will challenge students via extra-curricular clubs and programs and partnerships for gifted and talented students.

**ELL**

As stated in the Tier 1 Application, the curriculum and structure at Intrinsic Schools are well suited to address the specific needs of ELL students. ELL students will receive support from teachers that are trained in the Quality for Teaching English Learners (QTEL) model that has been proven to improve the language skills of ELL students.

**Students with IEPs**

We work closely with our families and feeder schools to review the details of IEPs for incoming students and allocate appropriate resources to meet their individual needs. We offer the full continuum of services for students with disabilities and have hired a highly qualified staff to meet the requirements of each student’s IEP. Our technology tools provide additional support for accommodations, modifications, and differentiation. Please see our response to question 3 of the Tier 2 proposal for additional information.

1. ***How will you incorporate extracurricular programs with focus on the following areas which are increasingly in demand to develop higher level thinking and to provide working skills for the future: Robotics, Science, Chess, Programming, 4-H Leadership Theatre, Performance, Athletics, Debate Club, Public Speaking, Foreign Language (reading and writing) - Spanish, Mandarin, German, Polish***

Intrinsic Schools was designed in order to equip students with academic preparation, knowledge and skills for success in the 21st century. We believe that the core academic program is only one part of a student’s middle and high school experience and we are very committed to offering a host of extracurricular activities that will engage and challenge students. Because the school will start small and grow with additional students each year, extracurricular offerings will grow and become more robust over time. In the first year of our first school we have been able to offer the following experiences via outside partners and extracurricular clubs:

* Chess
* Joffrey Ballet
* Public Speaking – via LEAP LEARNING and required of all students
* Drama via Lookingglass Theater
* Engineering Club
* Cooking Club
* Running Club
* Football Club
* Student Council
* Ultimate Frisbee
* Glee Club
* Japanese Culture Club

As we plan for next school year, we will poll students and parents to determine the athletic and non-athletic extra-curricular activities that we will add to our current offerings.

1. ***What do you plan to implement in terms of college application support for students***

Please refer to our response to question 2.1.d. in our Tier 1 application.

In addition, we utilize the student-led parent/teacher conferences as an opportunity to communicate with both parents and students about their preparedness for college. For students who are demonstrating high academic success, we discuss the opportunities that they may have to attend the nation’s most competitive colleges and universities and the path that they will need to take to get there. Or, for students who are failing to meet their goals and academic growth targets, we use the student-led conferences as an opportunity to discuss what they must do to ensure that they are college ready. The administrative team actively participates in these discussions with students and parents.

1. ***How does the board engage and participate in day-to-day operations?***

The role of the Intrinsic Board is to set strategy, hire and evaluate senior leadership (CEO), monitor the academic progress of students, and ensure the financial health of the organization. The board does not engage in day-to-day operations of the school. Even so, the board is very engaged with the school. Melissa Zaikos, our CEO, is in constant communication with the board to ensure that they are informed of the progress of the school. On average, at least one board member speaks with or communicates via email with Zaikos daily. On average, at least one board member is physically present at the school once a week. The Board also provides support to the senior leadership in a variety of areas including: facilities acquisition and construction, public relations, and fundraising.

1. ***How do you support staff in reaching their goals?***

The principal is responsible for meeting with staff to develop goals to improve instructional practice. The principal observes classrooms weekly and reviews all lessons, assessments and performance tasks. Based on this data, each teacher sets individual goals and identifies areas of support needed from the administration to meet his/her goals. In addition to the principal, teachers receive support from the curriculum coordinator and data strategist. The curriculum coordinator provides ongoing guidance and coaching to teachers to support them in the development of high quality student assignments, performance tasks, and assessments aligned to standards. The data strategist works with teachers to analyze student-level data and design appropriate extension and remediation strategies.

In addition to support from the principal and curriculum coordinator, new teachers are matched with master or experienced teacher mentors. This enables new teachers to refine instructional strategies while co-teaching along with someone more experienced.

Teachers participate in weekly professional development that is tailored to meet the individual needs of each teacher as he/she works to meet his/her goals. Professional development is based on proven instructional strategies such as the 90/90/90 research of Doug Reeves and insights from the Chicago Consortium on School Research. During the weekly professional development, teachers present their upcoming modules and strategies to peers for review. In addition, time is allocated to address any issues identified via student data that week.

Teachers are given two formal evaluations each year. While this official and formally documented communication only happens twice a year, Intrinsic Principals are expected be in classrooms observing teaching and culture every day. Given this, statements made in formal evaluation documents will reflect the culmination of ongoing dialogue throughout the year, both with peers and school leaders.

Non-teaching staff set goals and meet with either the principal or the CEO one-on-one to discuss how the organization can support them in their professional development. These meetings occur on a monthly basis.

1. ***Regarding the conflict of interest policies - there is concern with the "self-disclosure".  Do board and staff have to list all activities to the organization so there is accountability from outside of themselves in the event of conflict of interest?  Please list the number of times a member has had to recuse themselves due to conflict of interest.***

We have retained independent council from Moser & Associates to develop our board bylaws including the conflict of interest policy. Michael Moser has significant experience in helping non-profits and charter schools to develop robust policies that ensure ethical practices. “Self-disclosure” is the standard means of collecting conflict of interest information for both non-profit and charter school boards.

To ensure that there was no possible or perceived conflict of interest, we had one instance when a board member recused himself from a vote. In this case, the board member offered to make a loan to the school at a below-market rate with no prepayment penalty for a facility investment.

1. ***Board of Directors has no community members.  Are you willing to change and accept community members on the Board?***

We believe strongly in community support and would be open to having a community member join the board so long as the community member can support the organization as a whole including all Intrinsic campuses.

In addition, our board enthusiastically welcomes input and participation by the community. All board meetings are open to the public and board members plan to develop vehicles for direct interaction with the community such as focus groups, planning sessions and social events.

1. ***They say we will be looking at a 5 year plan.  There is supposed to be a 2 year check in place.  What happens to kids if at either of these points the school is closed?  Is there a plan in place that helps to reassign them to other schools?***

We are confident in our ability to provide a high quality option for students and do not anticipate there being any issues with any interim checkpoints by CPS. Should the CPS board decide to revoke or fail to renew our charter, we will make every effort to work with each family to identify high quality options for Intrinsic students.

1. ***What are procedures are in place to deal with problematic organization wide issues (scandal)?***

Should the school experience a problematic organization wide issue; the board would hold an emergency meeting in compliance with the Open Meetings Act to initiate an appropriate and transparent investigation into the issue. Action to remediate the issue would be swift and under the direction of the CEO and board chair. Such action would be made very transparent to the public.

1. ***What are the attendance boundaries?  What will parking be?***

Charter schools have citywide attendance boundaries unless an overlay boundary has been approved by the Chicago Public Schools. Intrinsic is willing to collaborate with the community and the district on an overlay boundary should it be desired by the community.

Intrinsic plans for every facility to have at least one parking space per employee. For its first school, the permanent property located at 4540 West Belmont will have 60 parking spaces for 60 employees. In addition, the property has a designated drop-off and pick-up turnaround located on the school property with 18 loading parking spaces.

1. ***What specific community organizations have you spoken with?  Which ones do you plan to reach out to?***

Please refer to question 1 of the Tier 2 questions for a detailed response.

1. ***Parent involvement and association?  What do you envision for this?  Is parental input welcomed?***

We believe that parents are each child’s first teachers and that we must partner with families to help students succeed. Parents are highly encouraged to become involved in the school and to provide feedback on how we can improve. Involvement can be either informal or formal depending on the parent’s time.

Informal feedback on the school is collected via email and phone calls. Parents have our principal’s cell phone number and can call her directly with any questions, concerns or feedback about the school.

At a minimum, all parents are expected to attend their child’s student-led conference twice each year (we had over 90% of parents participate in our first conference). Parents also receive calls from teachers or the administration if there are issues with their child’s academic performance or behavior at school in order for us to work together to solve issues quickly. There are several other mechanisms for parents to become involved, including:

* Volunteering to support extra-curricular activities
* Chaperoning field trips
* Tutoring and mentoring students
* Attending parent connection workshops, technology workshops and/or parent college workshops
* Participating on ad hoc committees as designed by the principal
* Attending college visits

More formal parent leadership is structured through the Parent Advisory Council (PAC). Our first parent meeting was held in October and we had over 50% of our parents attend. During the meeting we informed parents of various school policies, led them through our approach to each core subject, and elected the Parent Advisory Council officers. The Parent Advisory Council has since surveyed parents about potential parent education classes and committees. Both of which are forthcoming.

We expect the PAC to provide input into our strategic plan for the school and to help us shape our involvement in the greater community. We see parent involvement as not only welcome but critical to the success of our students.

1. ***You currently pay $1500 per student that you enroll for the lease program to Canyon Agassi.  Is this a one time commitment or an annual obligation?***

Intrinsic explored the option of establishing a lease with Canyon Agassi (CA) as a means of financing the construction of its first permanent facility at 4540 West Belmont. CA provides real estate development services to charter school operators across the country. These services include:

* Site identification
* Development of building plans
* Project financing
* Project management

In CA’s model, CA internally finances the project cost and leases the property to the charter school. The lease payments are structured on a per pupil basis so that the charter school is able to pay rent based on enrollment, which allows for lower facility costs before the school is fully enrolled. Intrinsic negotiated an amount of $1,500 per pupil for lease expenses, which would allow for significantly lower facility costs in Academic Years 2014-15 and 2015-16 than if Intrinsic had a traditional mortgage for the property. After three to five years, Intrinsic would have the option to purchase the property from CA.

Ultimately, Intrinsic found a more cost effective financing mechanism and did not work with CA for financing its first school. However, it is a viable financing option for the proposed school and Intrinsic has used the specifics from the proposed lease with CA to model out assumptions for future school projects. In this case, Intrinsic assumed a per pupil lease cost of $1,500 per student. At full-enrollment, Intrinsic’ school operating model can service debt or a lease of $1,500 per student while still maintaining the necessary staff and resources for implementing its academic model.

1. ***Note that there was no question number 14.***
2. ***Does Intrinsic have the necessary funds for its capital investment in land, building, and equipment?***

Intrinsic has a financial plan for the capital expenditures needed to open a school and for obtaining the necessary funds for financing these expenditures. Overall, our approach is to project needs as accurately as possible with sufficient lead-time for securing the necessary funding.

**Land and Building:**

* Future land and building capital expenditures will be modeled after its first campus.
  + For its first campus, Intrinsic purchased land and is repurposing the existing structure to meet its needs.
  + The project is being financed by a private lender.
  + Intrinsic allowed for two years for site identification, project development, and construction of the project.
* For future projects, Intrinsic plans to allow for two to three years for site identification, project development, and construction.
  + Project development includes due diligence of the site, development of architectural plans, and identification and securing of financing for the project.
  + Working with an organization like Canyon Agassi (discussed in question 13) allows for site identification and project development, most notably identification of financing, to occur in parallel.

**Equipment:**

Capital expenditures, such as furniture and equipment, are paid for using two sources of funding, CPS Startup and Expansion Grant funding, and the federal Charter School Program Grant. Both of these funds are specifically dedicated for startup activities, such as the procurement of furniture and fixtures and will provide sufficient funds to meet the entirety of our furniture and equipment capital needs. The same is true for our proposed second campus.

1. ***Opening 5 schools in less than 10 years is a very aggressive business plan.  How realistic is this plan when you have to take into consideration the hiring of new teachers, enrolling new students, understanding the needs of each of these new students, constantly building new schools, filling those schools with the needed supplies and maintaining the current quality of education?***

We acknowledge that Intrinsic Schools has an aggressive growth plan. Our board and senior leadership team developed this plan over many months of planning. Our board has significant experience starting and growing both private businesses and educational institutions and used its expertise to create a growth plan that optimizes our ability to successfully execute the plan and realize the benefits of scale. We then vetted the plan with several outside organizations including the Boston Consulting Group and the Charter School Growth Fund. We believe this is right growth plan for the following reasons:

* Chicago needs more high quality options in over-crowded neighborhoods. Because we are proposing to find an independent facility for our second school, we believe our growth will help to serve the needs of Chicago students and families.
* Our team was formed based on this model and brings the necessary expertise to execute the plan:
  + Ability to attract strong principals - CEO has led over 100 CPS schools and hired over 50 CPS principals in collaboration with Local School Councils
  + Ability to hire teachers – Our principal and proposed principal have many years working with and hiring teachers. Our network of educators and teacher training organizations is very strong.
  + Ability to attract students – We had 650 applications for 185 seats in our first year and did this without a permanent location and a late start due to the timing of our charter approval.
  + Ability to open new facilities – Our board has expertise in both construction and charter school financing. Our Director of Finance and Operations led a charter school-financing fund prior to joining Intrinsic.
  + Ability to ensure adequate supplies – Our board, senior leadership and principals all have extensive experience in managing budgets
  + Ability to maintain high quality education – Our entire academic team has many years of experience and results with improving outcomes for students in different settings in Chicago. Our results are detailed in response to question 2.2.b. of the Tier 1 proposal narrative.
* Systems and processes for everything in the first school are designed for use in larger organizations. These include things as diverse as protocols for evaluating student work, teacher hiring and accounting.
* Scale will benefit our students. By having more students, we will be able to provide a more robust central team that can support curriculum development, teacher professional development, finance and operations, and social/emotional supports for families.

Finally, we have a rigorous process to evaluate our own growth. Intrinsic Schools Board of Directors and leadership will utilize five criteria to determine readiness for replication:

* Academic Excellence
* Financial Sustainability
* Enrollment Demand
* Availability of a Suitable Facility
* Identification of a School Leader

Should our board determine that we are not on-track to reach our goals or not well positioned to create a high quality school on the initial timeline, the board will delay opening the school.