**Executive Summary**

**Name of the proposed school(s)**

The proposed legal name of this institution is *Kemet Leadership Academy Charter School (KLA)*.

The sponsor is Project Simeon 2000, an Illinois not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization.

**Number and Type of Proposed School(s)**

We are currently proposing one alternative middle school (grades 5th – 8th) to serve boys who are in an at-risk trajectory of dropping out in future years. Kemet Leadership Academy Charter School will open with one school in the Auburn-Gresham community, with a vision of opening additional sites in later years. We anticipate servicing 500 boys a year at this first site.

**Mission, Vision, Educational Philosophy, Model and Culture:**

Kemet Leadership Academy Charter School (KLA) believes all boys are capable of learning, but that African American and Latino boys suffer from living in distressed and trauma-informed communities. To maximize school success, these boys should be in a learning environment that inspires them to see beyond their immediate community and see their potential to become a problem-solving leader that brings positive change to the world around them. Our academic culture utilizes a combination of service/project-based experiential learning and wraparound support services to guide every student on a positive journey of self-discovery.

We anticipate enrolling youth that exhibits three or more of the following criteria: living in a single parent home, in need of a positive male role model, is more than one grade level behind, have experienced a trauma in the family or community, have high mobility due to homelessness, and/or have experience(s) with the juvenile justice system. We believe these criteria constitute an at-risk to high-risk population demanding an alternative learning environment suited to their learning style.  Without an alternative, we project that many of these boys will drop out of high school and this is the current CPS results, where 40% of African American boys never finish traditional high school. Further, only 2% of African American 9th graders secure any post-secondary degree 10 years after entering 9th grade. The result is ever increasing unemployment and incarceration rates. KLA is designed to break this cycle at an early age, middle school, where a difference can be made before reaching an age normally associated with dropouts.

Students enrolled in KLA will participate in service learning-based experiential learning projects throughout each school year that requires them to apply course content to help improve their community. These service learning projects will be wholly integrated into the academic curriculum by grade level, providing students with opportunities to frame abstract concepts into real-world experience. For example, a 5th-grade student at our KLA may be responsible for using content from a biology class to manage our school garden, grow organic foods, and identify local charities where they would like to donate their food. Students will also participate in various formative assessments. Finally, by the 8th grade, every student will participate in an Exhibition of Learning where they will be evaluated on their ability to discuss the academic components of their service learning projects, the impact their project had on the community, and the impact they believe the experience had on them. Every experience at this school will be designed to prepare students to be successful in this final project. We believe this empowerment and knowledge of self will help these boys form their own identities and become a positive member of society.

The KLA will use the common core curriculum as framed by Cross-Cutting Performance Indicators, and Subject Level Performance Indicators to guide and evaluate all instructional experiences. The Performance Indicators will assist in the vertical alignment design for the middle grades, in supporting the transitioning from eighth grade into high school. Lessons will also consider various learning styles and abilities by offering students opportunities to show mastery in at least five different ways. Students will also have opportunities to retake assessments after participating in re-teach activities. Wrap around services will be provided to meet the academic and social needs of students attending KLA. Additional family and community development services will be provided through community partners, as KLA is a Chicago construct, formed by educators and community service providers.

**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**

This proposal is being submitted by Project Simeon 2000 (PS2); a fully vested community development and empowerment organization in the Auburn Gresham community of Chicago. The PS2 was active in the formation, and continues to be active in the development and functions of the new Simeon Career Academy on 81st and Vincennes.  Simeon graduates, former teachers, and community partners formed PS2 and helped Simeon become one of the few CPS level 1 high schools on the south side. The Simeon Alumni Association is the most active alumni association within the CPS system, boasting more than 3,000 members. They support the PS2’s philosophy that young boys need and require a village approach to education and nurturing.  Currently PS2 is operating a Male Mentoring Initiative program at CICS Longwood. KLA design team members include former and current CPS school principals and leaders, university researchers, private business owners, community leaders, and pastoral leaders.

To overcome any documentation and operation issues, PS2 teamed with Youth Connection Charter School (YCCS) as a semi-MBO for KLA. YCCS has the distinction of being a top-rated high school network for students who have dropped out of CPS high schools (or before). Within the Chicago Public Schools 2014 SQRP Academic Performance ratings, 14 of the 20 YCCS’ campuses scored “1+”, top of the scale, and an additional four campuses scored “1”. YCCS has a one-year graduation rate of 90+% and 75% of its graduates go on to postsecondary education, training, and/or employment with a career ladder opportunities. YCCS is a national community-based alternative education model that not only saves students’ lives, but in the long term, will prepare our most vulnerable youth to become tomorrow’s college graduates and community leaders. Their academic record of success with At-Risk students is exemplary. They will be assisting in our fiscal management, professional development services, and technical services as needed to ensure the success of the KLA.

**A list of targeted communities (and intended student recruitment boundaries, the rationale for proposing to open a new school in the targeted communities), and an overview of parent and community engagement and support:**

The primary recruitment communities are Auburn-Gresham, Chatham, Englewood, West Englewood, and Greater Grand Crossing. This coincides closely with the South Side Planning Area, Network 11 of CPS and zip codes 60620, 60628 and 60636.  Recent SQRP ratings demonstrate substantial at-risk populations and a need for intervention. Within these communities, PS2 has established programs in housing and job creation, athletics and community initiatives. We will use similar strategies to continue our efforts at mobilizing local schools, churches, and community organizations to start identifying students and parents. Local elected officials have endorsed this plan, as well as other community organizations and parent groups from Englewood to Roseland. These include Teamwork Englewood, Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation and the Greater Chatham Initiative - the three most abundant planning organizations in the targeted communities. Direct parental support will be identified as part of our Tier II submittal.  Alderman Howard Brookins, Chairman of the Chicago City Council Education Committee, is our most significant supporter and sponsor.