



**NORWALK
CHARTER SCHOOL
FOR EXCELLENCE**

**Application for the Development of a State Charter School
Connecticut State Department of Education
August 15, 2017**

Submitted by founding members:

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Charter School Application Summary

This application summary will be used by the CSDE for a quick analysis and administrative processing of the applications received. The information provided must be an accurate representation of the application and must correspond to the information provided in the body of the application.

Norwalk Charter School for Excellence
(Proposed Charter School Name)

Norwalk, CT
School Location (City, Town)

September, 2019
Proposed Opening (month, year)

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Returning Applicant: Yes NO

TYPE OF SCHOOL	
Local charter school	
State charter school	X

FACILITY	YES	NO
Do you presently have access to a facility suitable for a school?		X
If yes, when will you be able to take occupancy?	Date	

PROJECTED STUDENT ENROLLMENT															
	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Year 1	56	56	56												168
Year 2	56	56	56	56											224
Year 3	56	56	56	56	56										280
Year 4	56	56	56	56	56	56									336
Year 5	56	56	56	56	56	56	56								392


Signature (Charter Applicant Representative)

8/16/17
Date

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SECTION I: SCHOOL VISION AND DESIGN**1. Mission and Vision Statements**

a. *Describe the mission of the school. Define the core purpose and key values of the school, including the school model and the students served. The mission should be consistent with high academic standards, succinct and meaningful, and reflected throughout all sections of the application.*

The Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will prepare young people in Norwalk, Connecticut to compete for admission to and succeed in top public, private, and parochial high schools by cultivating their intellectual, artistic, social, emotional, and ethical development. The Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will accomplish this by offering a challenging and rigorous academic curriculum – which at the earliest grades will have an eye toward college preparation. The Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will accomplish this in a supportive and caring environment that has high expectations for all students.

The Norwalk Charter School for Excellence (NCSE, Norwalk Excellence) aims to provide the families of the Norwalk region with a high-quality educational option that elevates every student, family, and the surrounding community. The mission, vision, and programs of Norwalk Excellence were developed based on the simple, yet profound principle that *every* child has the ability to succeed. Norwalk Excellence will offer a challenging yet supportive learning environment with a rigorous curriculum, data-driven differentiation for individualized instruction, high expectations for all students, and a culture of caring. The school will utilize a holistic approach to cultivate lifelong scholars equipped with the skills, knowledge, and habits for success in high school, college, and chosen careers.

Norwalk Excellence is proposing a comprehensive PK-5 program, with a potential request for expansion to include a middle school model upon renewal. While serving as an independent and self-sufficient public charter school entity, Norwalk Excellence will be affiliated with the Stamford Charter School for Excellence (SCSE, Stamford Excellence) as both schools will be modeled after the highly successful Bronx Charter School for Excellence (BCSE, Bronx Excellence), named a 2012 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. Norwalk Excellence will also be informed by the two years of operation and lessons learned by Stamford Excellence of implementing the model successfully in Connecticut. Norwalk Excellence will enrich this model to one that is more relevant to the students and families of Norwalk, while offering the community an enhanced educational option based on a nationally recognized, evidence-based, and successful program. Norwalk Excellence will duplicate many of the key design elements, strategies, and best practices that have proven successful, particularly for students who have struggled in traditional district schools. The program is designed specifically to address the individualized needs of the students and promote maximum achievement.

b. *Present the vision of the school. The vision should align with the mission and provide an image of the school once it is operating. It should articulate what the school will achieve for students, parents, teachers, and the community.*

Preface

Connecticut currently has 23 state charter schools and 1 local charter school in operation. Of the total 24 approved charter schools, there is only one in Norwalk, which serves grades Pre-K to 8. The Norwalk School District hosts 12 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, 5 high schools, and one district Early Childhood Education Center, which opened in August of 2016. This means

that there is currently only one elementary charter school option for the families of the Norwalk region and only two public school options that include a pre-kindergarten program.

As the state prepares to transition into the era of the Every Student Succeeds Act, there appears to be a renewed emphasis on accelerating the reversal of persistent achievement gaps. In a press release dated July 14, 2017¹, Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE's) Education Commissioner, Dr. Dianna Wentzell shared her assessment of the preliminary results from the 2016-17 Smarter Balanced state tests. While statewide math proficiency rates increased by 1.6 percentage points to 45.6%, ELA scores dipped 1.4 points to 54.2%. This means that about half of Connecticut's students are not yet demonstrating grade level proficiency. In a separate statement from December of 2016 regarding student growth gains from the previous school year, Dr. Wentzell stated, "Our promise to children is that we will give them an education that prepares them to pursue their own dreams and achieve their own life goals. While we are making progress, we must work to accelerate the pace of change so that all students – especially those from historically underserved groups including students of color and student living in poverty – graduate from our schools with the skills and knowledge to succeed."² Governor Dannel P. Malloy added to the statement saying, "Together, we are making real progress in our mission to close achievement gaps and give every student a shot at success in life. Now we must continue the momentum with great urgency until we ensure all children in the state have access to an excellent education."³

The Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now (ConnCAN), a movement to improve educational outcomes for Connecticut's children, also published an analysis and response to the preliminary release of 2016-17 scores. Jennifer Alexander, CEO of ConnCAN, stated, "While there were some bright spots and some modest improvements, the real headline from the 2016-17 SBAC scores is that Connecticut continues to leave far too many students unprepared for college or careers. This is especially true for children of color, who will soon be the majority of our state's workforce. To build a brighter future for our children and a strong economy for Connecticut, we must do better, and we must move faster."⁴ Alexander continues, "At this growth rate, it would take almost 30 years for the majority (80%) of Connecticut's Black, Hispanic/Latino, English Learners, and students eligible for free or reduced priced lunch to reach proficiency in math." She concludes, "We must do more, faster, to ensure that our children are ready to succeed. Our students and our economy cannot wait decades. Fortunately, we know what it would take to deliver a quality public education to every student in Connecticut. We call on our state and local leaders to accelerate progress and make bold strides to deliver a high-quality education to all children."⁵

Norwalk Public Schools also released a statement announcing that their schools, "closed the achievement gap compared to the state in reading (English Language Arts) and math..."⁶ While

¹ Connecticut State Department of Education. (2017, July,14). *State test scores up slightly in mathematics*. [Press Release]. Retrieved from http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/smarter_balanced_results_2016-17_press_release.pdf

² Connecticut State Department of Education. (2016, December 8). *State department of education announces significant student growth in reading and math*. Retrieved from http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/2016_12_06_final_growth_release.pdf

³ Ibid

⁴ ConnCAN. (2017, July 19). *Latest achievement results reveal slow progress, students unprepared for the future*. [Press Release]. Retrieved from <http://www.conncan.org/Community/press-releases/2017-07-latest-achievement-results-reveal-slow-progress-stud>

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Norwalk Public School. (2017, July 28). *An emphasis on tier II supports, increased instructional time and personalized learning combine to make a difference*. Retrieved from <https://norwalkps.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=71681&pageId=32015553>

we commend the district for its progress, Norwalk School District is in its fifth year as an Alliance District, making it one of the thirty lowest performing districts in the state. According to Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE's) 2015-16 District Profile and Performance Report⁷, the following table shows one of the District's Next Generation Accountability indicators for achievement gaps in Norwalk School District:

Gap Indicator	Non-High Needs Rate	High Needs Rate	Size of Gap	State Gap Mean +1 Stdev
ELA Performance Index Gap	75.0	57.9	17.1	16.5
Math Performance Index Gap	67.6	50.7	16.9	17.2
Science Performance Index Gap	64.0	48.7	15.3	17.2

As indicated in the report, if the size of the gap is greater than the state mean gap plus one standard deviation, the gap is an outlier, thus indicating an achievement gap. As shown in the table above, the district's ELA Performance Index Gap size exceeds the state's mean gap plus one standard deviation. By definition, this illustrates that an achievement gap exists for students in the Norwalk School District.

The next table compares the 2015-16 District Performance Indexes (DPIs) between Norwalk's aggregate and subgroups for ELA, Math, and Science. Connecticut's target DPI is 75. The only subgroup to meet Connecticut's target is Non-High Needs students in ELA:

Population	ELA DPI	Math DPI	Science DPI
District	64.7	57.4	55.1
Subgroup Performance			
American Indian or Alaska Native	*	*	N/A
Asian	74.3	68.8	65.2
Black or African American	55.9	47.7	47.8
Hispanic or Latino	60.5	53.4	51.2
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	*	*	N/A
Two or More Races	69.6	63.2	61.0
White	73.8	66.5	63.0
English Learners	51.8	46.5	41.1
Non-English Learners	67.0	59.4	57.0
Free/Reduced Lunch Eligible	58.6	51.3	49.4
Free/Reduced Lunch Not Eligible	71.9	64.6	61.1
Students with Disabilities	46.2	39.6	40.0
Students without Disabilities	68.0	60.6	58.0
High Needs	57.9	50.7	48.7
Non-High Needs	75.2	67.6	64.0

The table shows a clear distinction in many areas with subgroups of minority, English learners, low income, disabled, and high need students achieving well below their peers. These facts highlight the need for more equitable and high quality options for the families of Norwalk.

⁷ Connecticut State Department of Education. (2016). District profile and performance report 2015-16. Retrieved from http://edsight.ct.gov/Output/District/HighSchool/1030011_201516.pdf

On August 1, 2017, CSDE announced results from the second administration of Connecticut School Day SATs for 11th graders. Results showed a statewide increase of 0.4 percentage points from 65.0 to 65.4 percent meeting or exceeding the standard for ELA, and 2.0 points from 39.3 to 41.3 percent for math. The release also revealed, “While black and Hispanic students showed improvement in both subjects, achievement gaps persist. Only 36.8 percent of black students and 39.6 percent of Hispanic students met or exceeded the achievement standard in ELA, compared with 78.5 percent of white students. In math, 12.5 percent of black students and 16.5 percent of Hispanic students met or exceeded the achievement standard, compared with 53.4 percent of white students.”⁸ Commissioner Wentzell stated that while overall improvements were encouraging, “To accelerate the improvement of all students, but especially our most vulnerable students, we need to ensure that their diverse needs are supported. Schools cannot do this work alone, so they must continue to engage stakeholders in real and meaningful ways in all aspects of this work.”⁹

A closer examination of SAT results¹⁰ showed that Norwalk students did not fare as well as their statewide peers. In Norwalk, 56.6% of 11th graders met or exceeded the standard for ELA, compared to the state’s 65.4%, while 31.8% demonstrated proficiency in math, compared to the state’s 41.3%. If we interpret these scores to indicate readiness for college, this year’s SAT scores show that almost half of Norwalk students are not college-ready in ELA, and less than one-third are ready for math. These are just some of the many challenges that the residents of Norwalk face.

It appears clear that the data supports that schools need to work harder and with greater urgency to provide equitable educational opportunities that close achievement gaps. Norwalk Excellence is proposing a nationally recognized and proven approach to preparing scholars for high school, college and chosen careers, and we hope to develop meaningful partnerships with the families, district, and community to raise the bar. Governor Malloy stated in the SAT score press release, “...We know we have more work to do to ensure every student has what it takes to succeed in college and career. When we raise the bar for our students and for ourselves, we rise to the challenge together and push for a brighter future for all.”¹¹

The Norwalk Excellence Proposal

Norwalk Charter School for Excellence reflects the mission and vision of its founders to transform the educational landscape of the Norwalk region with a school that will elevate every child, family, and the community. The school will adopt a model that has proven successful in closing achievement gaps in New York and Connecticut, and provide a positive, supportive, and challenging learning environment where *every* child will succeed. With an eye towards college and career readiness, Norwalk Excellence will utilize a holistic approach to cultivate scholarly habits, 21st century global thinkers, and offer a broad liberal arts curriculum to promote students’ intellectual, artistic, social, emotional, and ethical development. The school will also establish a highly accountable culture where all stakeholders are dedicated to the success of the students.

⁸ Connecticut State Department of Education. (2017, August 1). SAT scores up in english language arts and mathematics. [Press release]. Retrieved from http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/sat_results_2016-17_press_release_08012017.pdf

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Connecticut State Department of Education. (2017). CT school day SAT, 2016-17: Norwalk school district, all subjects, all students. [Database]. Retrieved from <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>

¹¹ Connecticut State Department of Education. (2017, August 1). SAT scores up in english language arts and mathematics. [Press release]. Retrieved from http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/sat_results_2016-17_press_release_08012017.pdf

Norwalk Excellence will cultivate a close-knit professional learning community with a rich and rigorous curriculum, high expectations for all children, data-driven individualized instruction, and evidence-based best practices. Modeled after the highly successful Bronx Charter School for Excellence and its sister school, the Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Norwalk Excellence will benefit from the shared, research-based resources that its model schools provide. NCSE's program is reflected in twelve key design elements, which are the hallmarks of the school and will provide the families of the Norwalk region with an innovative, highly accountable, and transformative educational option that improves student achievement for all learners. They are:

- High academic standards
- Data-driven instruction and flexible groupings
- A broad liberal arts education
- Foundational academic and critical thinking skills that expand to a 21st century global perspective
- A longer school day
- Performance-based compensation for staff
- Clearly articulated standards for students that encourage holistic growth
- School uniforms for students
- A commitment to academic performance accountability
- Parent engagement
- Open collaboration with the community of educators and external stakeholders
- Organizational commitment to life-long learning and to the professional development of all staff

These core tenets have been carefully established to provide an educational program relevant to the Connecticut Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and the diverse student population Norwalk Excellence will serve.

Norwalk Excellence will attract, enroll, and retain a diverse population of learners. As a school of choice, Norwalk Excellence anticipates that our program will appeal to families seeking another public school option. Upon approval, the school will launch a well-devised recruitment plan to establish a demographic profile reflective of the Norwalk region. The recruitment plan will include outreach in communities populated by families of lower socio-economics, English learners, and families of children with special needs. NCSE anticipates that students will enter the school from an array of backgrounds and with a spectrum of learning needs. The model was deliberately designed to address the needs of diverse learners entering the program with a variance in skills, knowledge, strengths, and deficits. NCSE will embrace a culture that celebrates the diversity of its students, staff and community, while cultivating a unified vision for the school.

At NCSE, *all* students will be held to high performance expectations. As a PK-5 school, Norwalk Excellence will be able to reach students at an early age when fundamental and rudimentary skills are acquired. The school will develop a matrix of school-wide standards and performance benchmarks to guide instruction and monitor student progress throughout the course of their enrollment. The matrix will be designed to ensure that students are making adequate progress throughout the year, and comprehensively articulated to ensure progress as they advance to subsequent grade levels. These standards for student achievement will align to the CCSS to secure a solid foundation upon graduation from the school's program, and will encompass and incorporate all facets of student learning to ensure the holistic growth of each child.

The academic program will be rigorous and nurturing to support every child to achieve his or her maximum potential by targeting students' needs in their Zone of Proximal Development.¹² NCSE's program is designed to challenge every student with highly supportive and sophisticated differentiation. Flexible instructional groupings uniquely tailored for every child's needs will be available daily and based on ongoing real-time data. Instructional practices, technology, and 21st century learning strategies will foster deeper levels of critical, innovative, and creative thinking, with activities that connect classroom learning to global perspectives. Teachers will also utilize cooperative learning and multisensory, hands-on, and inquiry-based activities to support varying modalities of learning. A longer school day with additional instructional blocks allow for differentiation, remediation, and enrichment activities to take place daily. Each of these components will allow NCSE to maximize resources to promote appropriately rigorous and supportive learning for every child. (Evidence of the success of the model school is included in Section I.4b.)

The school will advance student achievement by creating a culture that inculcates positive work habits and develops lifelong scholars. Students will feel safe, interconnected, and empowered to take educational risks to stretch the boundaries of their learning. The school will foster character development and encourage students to continuously "RISE UP" and demonstrate the virtues of Responsibility, Integrity, Success, Etiquette, Unity, and Pride. NCSE will also emphasize the values of Respect, Citizenship, Teamwork, and Honesty with a College-Bound Attitude. These virtues and values will provide a common vocabulary for school-wide expectations and permeate the daily nurturing interactions within the school community. Additionally, NCSE will utilize the 16 Habits of Mind¹³, which teach the essential skills, habits, and positive attitudes that cultivate lifelong scholars and success in middle school, high school, college, and chosen careers.

Norwalk Excellence will deliver a unified and affirming message for the expectations for school-wide conduct. Students will be held to expectations set forth in the Family Handbook, Discipline Code, and Code of Conduct. These documents will describe the roles and responsibilities of students to maintain a safe and productive learning environment to promote a strong culture of respect and rapport among all stakeholders. The school's uniform policies will remove socio-economic barriers and pressures that detract from an academic focus, and provide a visible and public symbol of the school community, pride, and expectations. Concurrently, a smaller school setting, reduced student-to-teacher ratios, and close professional relationships will help to strengthen the bonds between stakeholders and establish a school-wide family/community atmosphere.

NCSE will recruit passionate and highly qualified teachers with a "whatever it takes" attitude to help the students of Norwalk Excellence succeed. The school's teaching model is based on the collaboration and teamwork of lead teachers, education associates, learning specialists, and specials teachers. At capacity, each PreK-1 classroom will have one Lead Teacher and one Education Associate, both of whom are certified instructors, whereas initially and for grades 2 and up, each grade will share education associates across grade levels. Some classrooms will also include a special education teacher for students whose Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) mandate a higher level of intervention. The reduced student to teacher ratio will facilitate more

¹² Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2010). Scaffolds for learning: The key to guided instruction. In *Guided instruction: How to develop confident and successful learners* (chapter 1). Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/111017/chapters/Scaffolds-for-Learning@-The-Key-to-Guided-Instruction.aspx>

¹³ Costa, A., & Kallick, B. (Eds.). (2009). *Habits of Mind Across the Curriculum: Practical and Creative Strategies for Teachers*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/Publications/Books/Overview/Habits-of-Mind-Across-the-Curriculum.aspx>

targeted and differentiated small group instruction. All teachers will be responsible for individual students and their grade level cohort performance. Common planning periods will allow each team to plan together, analyze data and its implications, share resources, and conduct peer reviews to promote professional growth. Each teacher will receive support from his or her team, a Grade Level Chair, specialists, and the school's leadership for ongoing professional development and individualized professional growth plans.

A Principal with an outstanding record of accomplishment will spearhead the school's programs. The Principal's collaboration with the secondary leadership team, that includes an Academic Dean, Dean of Students, a Learning Specialist (Special Education Coordinator), and Grade Level Leaders, will endorse a more effective instructional model that accelerates student achievement with every lesson. The seasoned leadership team will also build capacity among the staff and provide ample opportunities for professional growth. NCSE plans to provide performance-based compensation for teachers who assume additional responsibilities, tuition reimbursement for those who wish to pursue advanced degrees, and bonuses for outstanding performance and student achievement.

Parents will be true partners in their child's education, not just in token, but in actualization. Norwalk Excellence will offer workshops and trainings to help parents support their child on their educational journey. They will receive frequent reports about their child's progress, and have abundant opportunities for engagement through conferences, dialogues, school-wide events, parent focus groups, a Parent Association, and a reserved seat on the Board. The community at large will play a role as NCSE develops partnerships with organizations to rally in support of the school. Norwalk Excellence hopes to develop collaborations with the district, other schools, higher educational institutions, and local, regional, and national organizations to share resources and promote best practices to improve the educational quality for all children.

NCSE will establish a clear organizational structure of staff, systems, and procedures to support the daily operations of the school and ensure that the terms of the school's mission, vision, and charter are strictly upheld. Each stakeholder will have clearly defined roles, regulating policies and procedures, and mechanisms for evaluating effectiveness. A committed Board of Trustees (BOT, Board), the school's governing council, will be the steward of the school's charter and the presiding body of the academic, organizational, and fiscal programs and policies of the school, while the Principal will oversee the daily management of the school's programs. The Board will be comprised of 5-20 dedicated volunteers with the expertise and fortitude to ensure the success of the School. Loaning their vast expertise, the BOT will provide oversight of the school to support its educational, financial, and organizational integrity. Norwalk Excellence will maintain a respectable track record of compliance with timelines, reporting, and all applicable municipal, charter, state, and federal regulations. The Board will remain vigilant of the school's academic performance, as well as NCSE's overall health and act proactively to any potential areas of vulnerability. Through their effective oversight, the Board members will ethically and responsibly safeguard the school's fidelity to its mission, vision, and charter.

Working with the Board's Finance Committee, the Principal and Finance & Operations Manager will oversee and ensure the school's responsible and ethical financial and operational management. Appropriate internal and external controls will be stringently monitored to maintain the school's financial and operational security. NCSE will invest time, resources, personnel, and training to promote a highly collaborative, motivated, and inspiring professional environment. Teachers will be provided with ample access to curriculum resources, participation in collaborative professional learning communities, and frequent, differentiated, and ongoing professional development. Every aspect of the school's programs and professional staff will work cohesively to provide students with a learning environment that is focused on the healthy academic, social, emotional, and physical development of the students.

Norwalk Excellence strives to be a high-quality school for the students, families, and community of Norwalk. By developing a culture of caring, collaboration, and accountability that embraces diversity and provides equitable opportunities for excellence for every student, NCSE will deliver a premiere education that removes the longstanding narrative of inequality for those most vulnerable. Specifically, NCSE intends to eliminate the disparities in student achievement among its economically disadvantaged, English learning, special needs, and minority student populations. The transformative power of education and the high quality instruction that students will receive at NCSE, coupled with strong partnerships with our parents and greater community, has the power to eliminate the economic isolation that many families of Norwalk endure. This can only be achieved through the high expectations, support, and collaboration of the key stakeholders all in service to the success of the every child. Together, NCSE will bring together families of diverse backgrounds in a unified cause of transforming the educational landscape of Norwalk and Connecticut. Collectively, the staff, students, families, Board, and community members of Norwalk Excellence will unite to bring the vision to a reality.

2. Educational Philosophy

The educational philosophy should address the diverse needs of the student population and should be founded on an understanding of effective, research-based educational practices and high standards for student learning. The educational philosophy should serve as a basis of the school's pedagogical approach, curriculum, assessment, culture and other elements that create a comprehensive educational program.

a. Describe the founding group's core beliefs and values about education.

The founding group's core beliefs and values about education are summarized in the following six statements. The mission, vision, and programs of Norwalk Excellence have been inspired by and are rooted in these fundamental beliefs.

1. Every child has the ability to succeed.

The mission, vision, and programs of Norwalk Excellence were developed based on this simple, yet profound principle. A child's success is not determined by his/her race, gender, cultural background, creed, history, native language, ability/disability, or zip code. The founding group of Norwalk Excellence believes that every child can achieve to his or her maximum potential given the appropriate support, challenges, resources, and learning environment. Every child at NCSE will be supported by individualized instruction uniquely tailored to promote optimal growth. The school will utilize ongoing real-time data to drive instruction and performance. NCSE will cultivate a safe and highly accountable learning environment that equips students with the academic and behavioral skills necessary for success. Students will also be prepared with positive attitudes and habits that foster resilience and strengthen their abilities to solve problems. NCSE is committed to providing all scholars with the tools they need to succeed without exception or excuses.

2. Every child should have access to free, high-quality educational options.

The founders believe that this is not just an option, but a moral obligation to future generations. Success should not be confined or restricted by an absence of quality options based on socio-economic instability, geographical restrictions, or district feeding patterns. Education is one of society's great equalizers. It has the power to take a child from socio-economic, academic, and emotional poverty to success in achieving lifelong goals. It has the capacity to alter the trajectory of children's lives from cyclical and habitually dangerous behaviors, to positive and productive habits. Quality educational environments also have the power to bring together

families and generations to transform entire communities where every individual is focused and invested in safeguarding future generations. Additionally, innovations in technology allow students and individuals from across the globe to share commonalities and embrace diversity. In order to furnish students with the tools they need for success, students must have access to such programs, and these options must be available, particularly in high-need communities. NCSE proposes to provide a high-quality option to the families of the Norwalk community based on a research-based, nationally recognized, and field-tested model.

3. Education is about creating scholars for life.

The 21st century global society is inundated with technological advances and virtual access to information that is constantly changing, sometimes at a feverish pace. What was once considered state-of-the-art last year, is immediately antiquated and replaced by an upgrade or new advancement. Because of this principle and in order to prepare students for college- and career-readiness, Norwalk Excellence must prepare students for this high-paced culture, to continually improve, adapt, and evolve to maintain success. Education does not stagnate after a test is passed or upon graduation from high school. Learning must continually take place to enrich lives and maintain success. NCSE will cultivate the desire, motivation, and ability to become lifelong learners. NCSE will cultivate the will to strive, achieve, and succeed throughout life and promote a quest for further knowledge by teaching students to be conscientious about the learning process, seek opportunities for further development, and how to best achieve learning objectives. NCSE will use the 16 Habits of Mind (Costa & Kallick, 2008) and challenge students to continuously RISE UP, by emphasizing **Responsibility, Integrity, Success, Etiquette, Unity, and Pride**. The school will inculcate the core values of **Respect, Citizenship, Teamwork, and Honesty with a College-Bound Attitude**. In this process, students will be inspired and motivated to learn and experience the joys and success that education affords. In doing so, students will develop a love of learning.

4. Great education is about the quality of learning.

Norwalk Excellence scholars will be provided with a holistic, challenging, and supportive curriculum. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment go hand-in-hand to promote student achievement. The founding group believes great education is not just about “what” is taught, but also “how” it is taught. At NCSE, students will learn through research-backed best practices that foster student engagement and achievement at the highest levels. Instruction will be data-driven, differentiated, and uniquely tailored to each student to promote the ongoing development of lifelong scholars. NCSE will offer classes in the arts, physical education, and foreign language and integrate instructional technology whenever possible to expand upon the academic program. The school will foster social-emotional growth by cultivating core values, virtues, positive attitudes and habits for success through nurturing dialogue and support. Students will be pushed to think creatively and access higher order thinking skills through rigorous stem questions, inquiry-based activities, and interdisciplinary learning.

5. Success is a moving target focused on continual improvement.

The founding group believes that there is always room for improvement. Success is not determined simply by passing a test or meeting the minimal standards. It is determined by striving for excellence, setting progressively higher goals, and achieving them incrementally. Students at NCSE will be taught in such a way to maximize their potentials. As scholars continually grow and evolve through the school’s rich curriculum, so, too, will their needs and potentials. NCSE will continually raise the bar and maintain high expectations for all students.

6. All stakeholders must collaborate and do “whatever it takes” to support students on their pathway to success.

In order to support every student on their pathway to success, students must receive as much support from the staff and community as possible. As Norwalk Excellence cultivates a highly accountable environment, the responsibility for learning and developing responsible and productive citizens relies on the collaboration between the students, staff, families, governing council, and community. The NCSE staff will be dedicated and committed to providing every support possible, within ethical and professional standards, to defy the achievement gap and break the cycle of socio-economic isolation that exists in the community of Norwalk. Teachers will unrelentingly pursue continually improved methods for supporting student achievement and provide “whatever it takes” to help students succeed to the highest expectations. This may include devising additional strategies for teaching content, providing additional support measures such as tutoring or counseling, creating workshops to help parents support their children with learning, or conducting daily “check-ins” with students who are struggling. The leadership team will support teachers in their endeavors through professional development and provision of resources as they endeavor to promote maximal achievement and character development in the students they serve. NCSE is committed to this collaboration, and will expect all stakeholders to invest time, energy, and resources in the students’ best interests. Furthermore, Norwalk Excellence is committed to community engagement. In order to truly elevate a community, we believe must establish true partnerships with our families, our district neighbors, local organizations, and businesses. Through our collaborations and shared visions, we believe that we can establish a true community school that engages all stakeholders.

b. Demonstrate that the philosophy will serve the diverse needs of individual students.

The educational philosophies detailed above have inspired the school’s strategies for serving the diverse needs of individual students. NCSE has adopted a curriculum deliberately developed to advance the achievement of every student. The curriculum goes hand in hand with instructional strategies that encourage and challenge every student to achieve maximum potential. Critical to NCSE’s program is the use of differentiation through dynamic and flexible instructional groups based on ongoing, real-time assessment data. Using frequent formative assessments, teachers will be able to determine each student’s developmental needs and design instruction that specifically targets those needs. Regardless of whether a student is identified as abled or disabled, an English learner, performing below grade level, or accelerated, instruction will be grounded in the standards and tailored to build upon students’ current capacities to challenge him or her to achieve the high expectations designed by the school. To the maximum extent possible, NCSE will provide push-in support services in students’ classrooms with specialists, such as those qualified to support English Learners (ELs) or Special Education, so that students receive support in addition to, rather than in lieu of, regular core instruction. Rather than diluting content, all students will have access to the same challenging curriculum with varied levels of support and scaffolding with additional opportunities for remediation, growth, and enrichment outside of core classes.

NCSE will cultivate a team approach for instruction. Two certified lead teachers will be supported by at least one Education Associate at each grade level, and will provide instruction in all general education classrooms during core instruction. The Lead Teacher is distinguished from the Education Associate based on established track records for effective instruction and improving student achievement. Daily, uninterrupted flexible reading groups allow grade-level teachers to provide support focused in smaller groups for struggling readers while offering enrichment activities for more accelerated learners. NCSE is also prepared to offer classes that include a Special Education teacher for students whose Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs)

require more intensive support throughout the day. Similarly, the school intends to provide a nurse, an Academic Dean, a Dean of Students/Social Worker, and additional support personnel as the school grows to capacity to safeguard the development of students comprehensively. The school's smaller learning environment coupled with reduced student-to-teacher ratios will facilitate more individualized instruction.

NCSE will cultivate a highly accountable environment, not just for students, but for teachers as well. Instruction will be purposeful, relevant, challenging, and supportive. The leadership team at NCSE will provide ongoing support and professional development through weekly meetings and daily classroom visits to review assessment data and help teachers understand the implications thereof to inform instruction and develop flexible groupings. Instructional staff will have individualized growth plans for professional development and will receive ongoing support every week. Teachers will also be provided with common planning periods that allow for collaborative and strategic lesson planning, sharing resources, and opportunities for coaching and mentoring. The leadership team will create several opportunities for leadership development and building capacity. Additionally, collaboration, the assumption of additional leadership roles, and high student achievement will be rewarded with discretionary bonuses. Each of these components allows the school to establish a sense of urgency with student learning to ensure that instruction continues to advance progress towards excellence.

In order to ensure every student's success, NCSE will engage the entire school community. Parents will be given opportunities for active partnership in their child's success and have direct input in shaping the programs at the school. The Board will maintain oversight of the school's programs to ensure fidelity to the school's mission, vision, and philosophies, and allocate resources accordingly. NCSE will also develop partnerships with local, state, and national organizations to support student achievement and enhance school programs. Every stakeholder will have an active role and investment in improving educational outcomes for the students at the school.

NCSE will take a holistic approach in providing students with a safe and nurturing, yet rigorous learning environment. Students will be encouraged to develop creative and innovative solutions through lesson activities that foster critical-thinking, productive work habits, and creative problem solving. In addition to a general liberal arts education, students will participate in classes such as art, physical education, and foreign language instruction to enrich and enhance their knowledge and skill base. NCSE will cultivate 21st century global perspectives by developing students' technological skills, celebrating diversity, and exposing students to various cultural heritages and traditions worldwide. In order to affect changes and improvements to the educational landscape, NCSE must help students gain a stronger understanding of themselves, the lasting affects that education brings to enhance the quality of life, and foster stronger perspectives to their civic responsibilities and impacts on their families, local community, and global society.

c. Explain how the philosophy will lead to student academic achievement.

In accordance with the school's mission to provide "a challenging and rigorous academic curriculum" in "a supportive and caring environment that has high expectations for all students", NCSE's underlying philosophies were vital in developing programs that would promote academic achievement. By virtue of challenging students outside of what they are already capable and given the right supports, students will be pushed to their maximum potentials. Instruction will be grounded in the standards, and flexible grouping will be based on real-time data. Instruction will be accessible with multiple points of entry for students, but every child must be challenged and pushed to think deeper and more critically in order to authentically grow.

Success is born from a persistent need to continuously improve, consistently challenge, and favor ambition and determination over complacency. The educational theory that best

encapsulates how NCSE will advance student achievement is described in Lev Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD is most readily described as, "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers."¹⁴ Put simply, the ZPD is what a student is capable of learning and achieving given the appropriate support or scaffolding. Thus, although the curriculum will be standards-based and aligned, the standards serve merely as the "ground", not the "ceiling" for learning. The school's high expectations and academic rigor are reflected when students are consistently and appropriately challenged. Mastery of objectives and content standards is important, but NCSE believes that even when those standards have been achieved, all students can be further accelerated to a greater and deeper level of learning. When students are challenged and supported, this is when the acquisition of new skills and knowledge is optimized and students discover the extent of their true potentials.

NCSE will also encourage students to develop the 16 *Habits of Mind*, developed by educational practitioners around the world whose strategies have been compiled and presented in a book edited by Arthur Costa and Bena Kallick. The 16 *Habits of Mind* describe how an individual behaves when pragmatically and intellectually solving a problem, dichotomy, dilemma, or other source of uncertainty when solutions are not readily apparent. They are:

1. Persisting
2. Managing Impulsivity
3. Listening to Others with Understanding and Empathy
4. Thinking Flexibly
5. Thinking About Our Thinking (Metacognition)
6. Striving for Accuracy and Precision
7. Questioning and Posing Problems
8. Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations
9. Thinking and Communicating with Clarity and Precision
10. Gathering Data Through All Senses
11. Creating, Imagining and Innovating
12. Responding with Wonderment and Awe
13. Taking Responsible Risks
14. Finding Humor
15. Thinking Interdependently
16. Learning Continuously

By developing these attributes in students, NCSE will cultivate conscientious and critical thinkers, capable of problem-solving in academic studies as well as with life encounters, and building resilience and strategies for success¹⁵.

Another theory that has influenced the design is that of Bloom's Taxonomy, whereby learning and the assessments thereof can be categorized into six levels that describe the depth of cognitive engagement. The six levels are: Remember, Comprehend/Understand, Apply, Analyze, Evaluate,

¹⁴ Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds.). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. Retrieved from <http://research.kinasevych.ca/2010/05/vygotsky-1978-mind-in-society-the-development-of-higher-psychological-processes/>

¹⁵ Costa, A., & Kallick, B. (Eds.). (2009). *Habits of Mind Across the Curriculum: Practical and Creative Strategies for Teachers*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/Publications/Books/Overview/Habits-of-Mind-Across-the-Curriculum.aspx>

and Create/Synthesize. Referencing these categories, teachers at NCSE will help students build rudimentary skills and knowledge prior to engaging students in more complex treatments of content matter. Carefully designed lesson planning and questioning strategies allows students to grow from basic and foundational knowledge, to much deeper, higher-order thinking skills that are essential for creativity, innovation, and advancement as 21st century global thinkers.

Based on these underlying philosophies, NCSE will employ instructional strategies and pedagogy that will maximize students' potentials. Higher-order and critical thinking skills will be inculcated using strategic classroom activities, inquiry-based projects, and guided questioning strategies. Students will benefit from daily, uninterrupted blocks of differentiated instruction using data-driven flexible groupings. Common planning periods and an expanded staffing plan will allow teachers to share resources and develop activities collaboratively. An extended school day will also provide additional opportunities for growth, remediation, and enrichment.

3. Curriculum

Charter schools have the freedom to choose and/or develop curriculum models that best reflect the mission and educational philosophy of the school, and that best serve the needs of the anticipated student population. The curriculum must align with the Connecticut Core Standards (CCS) for English language arts and mathematics and the recently approved Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for Science, and the Connecticut State Frameworks for all other areas of study.

a. Explain the process utilized to identify or develop the curriculum and provide the criteria for selecting the curriculum.

NCSE offers a holistic liberal arts education to cultivate students' intellectual, artistic, social, emotional, and ethical development. NCSE has a comprehensive set of specific performance standards, organized by grade and core academic subject areas. The curriculum is aligned to the CCSS for English language arts and mathematics, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for science instruction, and CSDE Frameworks for all other content areas.

As the mission statement asserts, NCSE will provide a rigorous and supportive educational program to prepare all students to compete for success in top public, private, and parochial high schools, colleges, and chosen careers. NCSE will accomplish this goal by offering a challenging and robust academic curriculum and creating a sense of urgency whereby learning is a continual process of furthering students' potentials. Rather than promoting mastery of standards as a "finish line", NCSE believes that true learning and rigor occur when students are continually encouraged and challenged to exceed their current levels of development. Thus at NCSE, the standards and expectations are the "floor", not the "ceiling" for learning.

The educational program at NCSE is based on the simple, yet powerful principle that every child can successfully achieve to his or her potential given the appropriate support, challenges, resources, and learning environment. While the teaching strategies employed by the staff play a critical role, the written curriculum must provide sufficient resources to enable effective teaching to take place. In order to provide instruction that is uniquely tailored to the needs of each student, the curriculum must provide the instructional staff with the flexibility to challenge, differentiate, and support scholars at their individual developmental levels to meet and exceed the school's high performance standards. As such, in order to authentically meet the needs of all learners, curriculum development must remain an ongoing process to adjust the instructional program to the changing needs of the students served.

The founding group benefited from the resources shared by its model schools of Bronx and Stamford Excellence, and worked with educational experts and practitioners to research and identify a comprehensive curriculum to accelerate student achievement. Upon its charter approval and with the support of the school's Principal (once hired) and an Educational Advisory

Committee of the Board, NCSE will use its planning year to finalize the development of a curriculum for implementation starting in the school's inaugural 2019-20 school year.

The founding group has established a set of criteria to identify and develop the NCSE curriculum. Resources will be carefully vetted to ensure that the written and taught curriculum is:

- Research-backed
- Aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and Connecticut State Frameworks
- Relevant to the school's mission, vision, and rigorous expectations for student achievement
- Allowing multiple points of entry and provide flexibility to allow teachers to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners
- Designed to develop a strong foundation of knowledge to ensure rudimentary skills are intact prior to more complex treatments of content matter
- Comprehensive and rigorous
- Providing opportunities for ongoing monitoring and assessment
- Appropriate for the developmental needs of the student population
- Coherent with articulation within and between grades
- Supportive in preparing students for Smarter Balanced Connecticut state exams content and testing processes

Curriculum identification requires an assessment of resources against these criteria. Although many commercially available curriculum resources purport comprehensive programs and standards alignment, NCSE takes measured precaution of the dangers of simply adopting a prescribed curriculum for its advertised benefits without carefully researching the risks and values of those resources. Vetting programs will entail online research, presentations by publishing companies, analyzing outcomes and reviews by other schools that have adopted the material, and soliciting the support and perspectives of the model schools, as well as professional colleagues within district, private, parochial, and charter schools. The founding members may also visit other schools to observe curriculum implementation or choose to pilot units from programs prior to full implementation. Additionally, NCSE benefits from the years of knowledge and experience offered by its model schools, which provides an additional layer of field-tested assurance.

NCSE's curriculum will be an amalgamation of commercial and proprietary materials, and staff-developed resources. Any potential gaps in the commercial curriculum will be amended by supplemental or internally created supports. Additional resources may also be adopted or developed to address specific needs of the student population. When instructional units are adopted or created for a specific group or subgroup of students (i.e. students identified as EL, Special Education, etc.), the leadership team will coordinate with instructional support specialists to ensure that appropriate supports and considerations are included within the curriculum units.

The NCSE staff will use Wiggins and McTighe's *Understanding by Design* model to develop the curriculum framework. Wiggins and McTighe state, "curriculum selection and development begins with identifying what students should know, understand, and be able to do with content, course, and grade level targets".¹⁶ Through a careful examination of and alignment to the Connecticut CCSS, NGSS, and State Frameworks, NCSE has established school-wide and grade level goals. Next, NCSE will utilize a comprehensive assessment program to measure and monitor achievement and progress towards goals. Finally, the instructional activities are developed to facilitate students' achievement and surpassing of standards and targets. The use of commercial and proprietary resources requires a thorough analysis to ensure that it will support

¹⁶ Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by Design* (expanded 2nd edition). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

100% attainment of standards and instructional targets. Additionally, curriculum development must also include alignment to the school's mission, vision, and instructional philosophies. Internally created student-centered lessons and instructional units will be developed following the backwards design process with consideration to year-end goals. As instructional units are implemented, teachers will utilize frequent assessment and analyses thereof to monitor student progress, common planning periods to collaboratively plan and adjust daily lessons, and cumulative summations for strategies to improve curriculum effectiveness.

b. Demonstrate that the curriculum is aligned to the CSS for English language arts and mathematics and NGSS for Science. In addition, please provide research on the curriculum, including citations, that demonstrates the potential of the curriculum to result in high student achievement.

All identified curriculum resources were selected based on the criteria indicated in Section I.3a. Specifically, Norwalk Excellence requires that ELA and math resources are research-based and aligned to the school's mission, vision, and model. The curriculum development process at NCSE will ensure alignment to the CCSS for ELA and math, and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for Science, utilizing various tools and strategies that include the K-12 Publisher's Criteria for CCSS Revised, the K-12 Tri-State Rubric for CCSS, proprietary publishers' documents, and internal unpacking of standards. The following paragraphs describe the resources that are currently under consideration. As noted previously, NCSE will utilize its planning year to finalize research, identification, and development of a curriculum for implementation starting in the school's inaugural school year. NCSE will notify the CSDE should any major changes to the curriculum be required prior to implementation.

English Language Arts

NCSE will provide a balanced literacy program that supports the development of rudimentary skills and knowledge necessary for proficient reading. These include: alphabetic principles; understanding how phonemes are connected to print; the ability to decode words and read fluently; background knowledge and robust vocabulary to foster comprehension; development of active strategies to construct meaning from print; building academic vocabulary within and across disciplines; and development and maintenance of a motivation to read. NCSE has determined that Houghton Mifflin Harcourt *Journeys Common Core* and *Story Town Splash* have met the criteria utilized to identify and develop the curriculum for ELA instruction. Both support explicit and systematic instruction and offer a platform for ongoing professional development for teachers in the critical elements and methods of instruction for phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, building academic vocabulary, and comprehension strategies. The programs also include assessment components that provide appropriate measures for screening, progress monitoring, and achievement outcomes. These programs will be supplemented by Guided Reading and Literature Circles based on students' learning needs. Students will regularly be exposed to rich, authentic, and complex texts and provided with supportive, challenging, and intensive guided instruction. Teachers will use multiple levels of Bloom's Taxonomy question stems to promote critical thinking and provide strategies to guide students in developing evidence-based responses. All instructional staff will participate in professional development workshops, as well as differentiated and ongoing modeling and coaching throughout their tenure to enhance their instructional effectiveness, particularly as it relates to curriculum implementation and the CCSS.

Studies demonstrate that core reading programs for Kindergarten and First-grade that are aligned with scientifically based reading research had five reading components (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies). These successful core programs also provide teachers with explanations of why explicit and systematic teaching is

necessary. There was a clear scope and direction for instruction, links across pedagogy, and lastly “consistent and student material to support instruction” (Al Otaiba, Kosanovich-Grek, Torgensen, Hassler & Wahl, 2007, p. 393)¹⁷.

The Harcourt *Journeys* and *Story Town Splash* curriculums both have programs outlined to adhere to these best practices determined by Al Otaiba et. al. (2007) and NCSE instructors will use the balanced literacy approach to successfully teach reading. That is, the *Journeys* and *Story Town Splash* curriculum will be used to guide work with phonics, reading comprehension, speaking, and writing. A report by the National Reading Panel (2000) found that when teaching students to read alphabets (including phonemic awareness and phonics), fluency, and comprehension (including vocabulary text comprehension), they are more successful. The quality and nature of these components are particularly salient for bringing about desired results. For example, the panel found that phonemic awareness instruction needs to be direct and explicit. And, that phonemic awareness “contributes to children’s ability to read and spell for months, if not years, after the training has ended.”¹⁸

The report also found that effective phonics instruction is systematic and involves explicit instruction where students are being introduced to pre-determined letter sounds and are able to practice decoding words. NCSE will use a balanced literacy approach that focuses on direct, explicit instruction because internal data shared by its model schools, Bronx and Stamford Excellence, has also substantiated research. As similarly supported by literature (Heydon, Hibbert and Iannacci, 2005; Kamps, Abbott, Greenwood, Arreaga-Mayer, Wills, Longstaff, Culpepper, & Walton, 2007), NCSE will use small group instruction for work with ELs for intervention and primary grade students’ instruction¹⁹.

The implementation of the reading program will be effective largely due to NCSE’s uninterrupted, consistent, daily flexible reading groups that will focus support in smaller groups with remediation for struggling readers and enrichment activities for more proficient and accelerated readers. Small group instruction will allow teachers to design versatile, daily guided activities that augment the larger scope of the curriculum uniquely tailored to students’ needs based on a data-driven model. Teachers will incorporate authentic and complex texts to develop comprehension strategies, build vocabulary, illustrate habits of good readers and writers, and inculcate an appreciation for literature.

Composition and writing skills are also promoted from the earliest stages and supported by the workshop approach. The writing program at NCSE will employ the basic components of the Writers Workshop model of Columbia University. The Writers Workshop is a framework for students to develop: writing fluency; effective communication; students’ knowledge of the English written language system with an emphasis on syntax and discourse; an understanding of the connections between reading and writing, as well as the reader and the writer; facility in writing across various genres; a love of writing; and evidence-based texts. As students advance in grade level, they will build upon prior knowledge through an articulated instructional program that enhances skills in creating a diversified repertoire of substantive, craft rich pieces that are functional, narrative, persuasive, informational, and poetic. Together, the reading and writing

¹⁷ Al Otaiba, S., Kosanovich-Grek, M. L., Torgesen, J. K., Hassler, L., & Wahl, M. (2007). Reviewing core kindergarten and first-grade reading programs in light of No Child Left Behind: An exploratory study. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 21(4), 377-400.

¹⁸ National Reading Panel (US), National Institute of Child Health, & Human Development (US). (2000). *Report of the national reading panel: Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction: Reports of the subgroups*. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health.

¹⁹ Heydon, R., Hibbert, K., & Iannacci, L. (2004)/2005). Strategies to Support Balanced Literacy Approaches in Pre-and Inservice Teacher Education. *Journal of adolescent & adult literacy*, 48(4), 312-319.

programs at NCSE will be designed and delivered such that the six instructional shifts of the CCSS are fully incorporated and developed. Additionally, the curriculum will provide students with the requisite skills for the speaking and listening, language, reading, and writing strands and anchor standards, crossing multiple disciplines and preparing them for success in middle school, high school, college, and chosen careers.

Research: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt *Journeys Common Core K-5*²⁰

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, the publisher, provides extensive information on their website regarding the benefits of the program, including instructional, planning, and assessment resources aligned to the standards. The program purports that it was designed based on the CCSS with instruction integrated across all strands. The publisher also provides documentation of correlations between the program and the CCSS, as well as scope and sequence documents at every grade level. As the website asserts, “Like the Common Core State Standards themselves, *Journeys Common Core* reflects an integrated model of literacy. Instruction and application in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language are linked to the complex texts and topics with which students engage.” The program also offers: exemplar and extended texts with reading and writing extensions focused on repeated reading of complex text (literature, informational, and trade texts); developing academic vocabulary and close-reading skills; and a text complexity rubric for text selection. Language instruction incorporates sequenced spelling, grammar, and writing activities with emphasis on discerning correct sentence structure, proofreading, and identifying segmented sounds. Word studies are also availed to build students’ academic vocabulary, with daily conversations to practice clear expression of ideas, and effective speaking and listening. The publisher continues to assert that, “*Journeys Common Core* provides instruction for the full range of foundational skills in the Reading Standards: Print Concepts, Phonological Awareness, Phonics and Word Recognition, and Fluency.” Distributed practice throughout the units of instruction allows students to review previously taught concepts and build upon prior knowledge to progress towards more complex treatments. Each lesson targets a fluency skill that is to be modeled by the teacher and practiced by students. Harcourt *Journeys Common Core* also provides resources for technological integration, scaffolded and differentiated activities, comprehensive assessment tools, and intervention strategies.

In an independent, two-year, randomized control trial conducted by the Planning, Research, and Evaluation Services (PRES Associates, Inc.) studying the effectiveness of Journeys Common Core 2012 reading program, PRES Associates, Inc. analyzed the results of 1,046 students across six schools in four geographic locations. The study found that, “First year results showed significant gains in word recognition, reading comprehension, spelling, and vocabulary.²¹” Additionally, the report states, “Several increases in average test scores for *Journeys* classrooms were recorded, including significant gains in word recognition (15 percentiles), reading comprehension (8 percentiles), spelling (6 percent), and vocabulary (6 percentiles) as compared to control groups. In all analyses performed, *Journeys* students out-performed students in the control groups.²²” Of further note, analyses of subgroup performance showed greater learning gains for students using Journeys than those from control groups, including students who are

²⁰ Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. (2013). *Why journeys common core*. Retrieved from <http://www.hmhco.com/shop/education-curriculum/reading/core-reading-programs/journeys/why>

²¹ Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. (2012). Gold Standard Study Shows Houghton Mifflin Harcourt’s Journeys Common Core 2012 Reading Program Significantly Boosts Student Achievement in Kindergarten, First, and Second Grades: First year of two-year pilot highlights significant gains in word recognition, reading comprehension, spelling, and vocabulary. [Press release]. Retrieved from <http://www.hmhco.com/media-center/press-releases/2012/october/journeys-boosts-achievement>

²² Ibid

free/reduced lunch eligible, African Americans, Hispanics, special education students, and students with limited English proficiency. “In sum, all statistically significant differences found between treatment and control conditions across multiple subgroups were in favor of the Journeys program. Such consistency in findings across different subgroups and outcome measures combined with the fact that all effects observed were in favor of Journeys lend credence to the conclusion that Journeys is an effective program which positively impacts student reading, spelling, vocabulary and word recognition skills.²³”

All of these components align well to the instructional goals of NCSE to provide a solid foundation of skills and content knowledge with flexibility for more complex treatments. Teachers will employ the various activities and extensions that are embedded in *Harcourt Journeys Common Core* to provide accessible and appropriately challenging instruction. As curriculum resources go hand-in-hand with instructional strategies and ongoing assessments, *Harcourt Journeys* will support the development of foundational skills while providing the flexibility to differentiate instruction to challenge students and monitor progress with assessments. Moreover, the use of a commercially developed curriculum implemented throughout the entire grade span supports consistency in strategies, vocabulary, and instruction for articulation across and between grade levels.

Research: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt *Story Town Splash into Pre-K*²⁴

According to the *Story Town* publisher’s website, this program is built on non-fiction and fictional text, including news articles, narratives, poems, plays, biographies, research, and fantasy. Instruction for PK (*Splash into Pre-K*) is organized into rich thematic content for developing language and early literacy skills. Its comprehensive and integrated approach connects ELA with concepts across disciplines including math, science, and social studies. The program includes Big Books for shared reading, oral language development, skill modeling, listening comprehension, interactive digital resources, and building vocabulary. The series also includes pre-decodable and decodable books for high frequency and phonics instruction, as well as leveled readers to practice fluency and decoding. The Pre-K curriculum was designed to promote significant growth, particularly for high-needs children, English learners, and students with disabilities, with added support in the Essential Domains of School Readiness. *Splash Into Pre-K* is also aligned to the standards for the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), whose accreditation we will seek in accordance with Connecticut mandate. *Story Town Splash* is also published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, serves similar benefits and research-backed data as *Harcourt Journeys*, and provides a seamless integration of resources.

Research: *Writers Workshop*²⁵

The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) was founded and is directed by Lucy Calkins. Calkins is the author of several books, including the *Art of Teaching Reading* and the *Art of Teaching Writing*, and is the Robinson Professor of Children’s Literature at Teachers College of Columbia University in New York. TCRWP is a research and professional development organization, as well as a think tank supporting literacy reform. The mission of TCRWP is, “to help young people become avid and skilled readers, writers, and inquirers...

²³ Resendez, M., Azin, M., & PRES Associates Inc. (2012). A study on the effects of houghton mifflin harcourt’s journeys program: Year 1 final report. Retrieved from http://www.curiousgeorge.com/~media/sites/home/educators/education-topics/hmh-efficacy/journeys_research_rct_efficacy_study_grades_1-3_2011-2012.pdf?la=en

²⁴ Harcourt School Publishers. (2013). *Storytown*. Retrieved from <http://www.harcourtschool.com/storytown/>

²⁵ The Reading and Writing Project. (2010). The reading and writing project. Retrieved from <http://readingandwritingproject.com>

through research, curriculum development, and through working shoulder-to-shoulder with students, teachers, principals, and superintendents.” The program supports instructional tools and methodologies as well as performance assessments and learning progressions to advance student achievement.

Fluency in the CCSS requires schools to provide a coherent and systematic approach to teaching writing skills. Although the workshop model is not a curriculum, there are vast resources available by the TCRWP that will be used within the framework of the workshop model. As students differ in their skill sets and needs, the Writers Workshop does not determine a single document or text, such as the Gettysburg Address, that will be used as a model to guide students to become proficient writers. Instead, the Writers Workshop provides a structure for lesson delivery that can be used with a variety of resources to promote mastery of writing skills. It provides a pathway for students to advance their writing skills to meet and exceed standards.

Using this model, teachers at NCSE will provide opportunities for students to collect information, draft, revise, edit, and publish crafted narrative and expository texts. Lessons begin with direct instruction of a mini-lesson. Teachers identify explicit skills and objectives that are targeted in the lesson, model the skill, and then provide guided instruction. Students are given time to write and practice the skill, applying what they have learned independently. During this time, teachers confer with students individually and in small groups to provide guidance and feedback. One-on-one conferences, anecdotal records, and published products become forms of assessing students in an ongoing manner. Calkins has also developed *Writing Pathways* to guide assessments of student work. According to the TCRWP website, “Three intertwined PreK-6 learning progressions, one each in opinion, information, and narrative writing, are at the center of this system. These learning progressions are aligned to the Common Core State Standards and to... the teaching of writing. These writing pathways provide a system to engage in formative assessment, provide high-level actionable feedback to students, and support student self-assessment aimed at accelerating progress.”

The Writers Workshop model has been adopted by hundreds of thousands of educators in over 40 cities. TCRWP has conducted research on the outcomes of the programs, particularly in New York City, Chicago, Seattle, and in other cities, which revealed the following results:

- “Data from 31 Project schools with continually high levels of involvement in TCRWP across the past decade show students in Project schools in New York City tend to score significantly higher than their peers in other city schools;
- The English Language Arts proficiency rate of students in all grades in New York City schools working with TCRWP increased by 18 percent from 2007 to 2009;
- In 2009, 73.5 percent of fourth grade students in all TCWRP schools scored in the highest brackets on English Language Arts test scores, versus 69 percent of the rest in New York City”²⁶

These success stories have been reported at both the elementary and middle school levels and support the rationale for NCSE to adopt this model.

Mathematics

The balanced math curriculum will emphasize the core tenets of mathematical instruction, such as computational fluency, multiple processes for developing solutions, and conceptual understanding, to support and facilitate success with authentic problem solving activities. The curriculum will foster mathematical practices, such as making sense of problems and persevering in solving them, reasoning abstractly and quantitatively, and constructing viable arguments and

²⁶ Teachers College Columbia University. *The tc reading and writing program*. Retrieved from <http://www.tc.columbia.edu/news.htm?articleID=7498>

critiquing the reasoning of others. NCSE will use *Math in Focus: Singapore Math by Marshall Cavendish*²⁷, which is a research-backed program that provides instruction on core skills, integrates intervention, and helps all students master the standards and prepare for high-stakes assessments. *Math in Focus* emphasizes problem-solving as a focus in mathematical learning. This program balances conceptual understanding using a concrete to visual to abstract progression anchored in real-world hands-on activities. *Math in Focus* offers an array of activities that support best practices and differentiation to increase the depth and breadth of studies. The program aligns to the goals of the CCSS and provides seamless integration of technology to support learning. NCSE's enriched curriculum will include making connections between past experiences and new activities; sharing ideas through discussions using mathematical vocabulary; cooperative learning through partner and small group activities; developing concept readiness through hands-on activities and explorations; and playing mathematical games. Students will be asked daily to demonstrate their mastery of basic concepts to build automaticity with fundamental skills, allowing teachers to dedicate more time on robust and challenging mathematical questions and complex treatments of concepts. The focus is promoting fluency in mathematics as evidenced by their ability to tackle concepts from a variety of angles.

Research: Math in Focus: Singapore Math by Marshall Cavendish

After undergoing a series of revisions to its curriculum, the Singapore math program was revised in 2006 for a stronger focus on developing mathematical concepts and fostering the ability to apply them in mathematical problem-solving situations. In addition, the new guidelines:

- Emphasize computational skills along with more conceptual and strategic thinking.
- Cover fewer topics in-depth and are carefully sequenced grade by grade.
- Cover concepts in one grade and in later grades at a more advanced level.
- Ensure that students master prior content, not repeat it.
- Encourage representing problems mathematically, using reasoning, and communicating mathematical content.²⁸

Each of these new guidelines provides alignment to the CCSS. According to Achieve, a nonprofit educational reform organization that partnered with NGA [National Governor's Association] and CCSSO [Council of Chief State School Officers] on the CCSS Initiative, "Overall, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are well aligned to Singapore's Mathematics Syllabus. Policymakers can be assured that in adopting the CCSS, they will be setting learning expectations for students that are similar to those set by Singapore in terms of rigor, coherence, and focus" (2010).²⁹

Math in Focus was developed in 2007 and branded as the U.S. version of Singapore math's *My Pals Are Here!* currently the most widely used and highly rated textbook series in Singapore. The program was designed to ensure children's ability to achieve mastery of mathematics concepts, computational skills, problem solving skills, and application of mathematics to daily life activities. *Math in Focus* utilizes the same curriculum syllabus and pedagogy as the Singapore program, but includes additional resources, differentiated instruction, and technology for U.S. classrooms.

²⁷ Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. (2013). *Math in focus: Singapore math by marshall cavendish* Retrieved from <http://www.hmhco.com/shop/education-curriculum/math/math-in-focus-singapore-math>

²⁸ Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. (2013). *Math in focus by marshall Cavendish*. Retrieved from http://www.hmhco.com/~media/sites/home/education/global/pdf/white-papers/mathematics/elementary/math-in-focus/MIF_2013_History_Flyer_LR.pdf

²⁹ Achieve. (2010). *Comparing the common core state standards and Singapore mathematics syllabus*. Retrieved from <http://achieve.org/files/CCSSandSingapore.pdf>

As described in the *Singapore Math Research and Efficacy Overview*, published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company (2013), “Singapore math emphasizes problem solving and positive attitudes toward mathematics, while focusing on student development of skills, concepts, process, and metacognition. Students are encouraged to reflect on their thinking and learn how to self-regulate so that they can apply these skills to varied problem-solving activities” (2013, p. 1).³⁰ These principles coincide well with the instructional shifts inherent to the CCSS, as well as NCSE’s use of the 16 Habits of Mind, emphasizing positive attitudes, self-regulation, problem solving, and metacognition. *Math in Focus* is ideal for embedding applications of flexible problem solving strategies to mathematical knowledge. The program uses concrete to pictorial to abstract pedagogy reflecting a natural progression of concept acquisition, from simpler and tangible to more abstract and complex treatments.

Math in Focus allows accessible learning for an array of students to allow for differentiated and small group instruction that targets students’ needs. The program also incorporates technology as extensions for greater applications and connections to multiple representations and situations.

Singapore math is an internationally recognized and acclaimed program, which has propelled Singapore to one of the top ranking countries in the world for performance on the Trends in International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Singapore outranked the U.S. by 70 points on the TIMSS in 2007, and had a difference of 75 in scale scores on the 2009 PISA. Several schools and districts have adopted Singapore math and have experienced strong gains.

- New Jersey state test score analysis of student performance on the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) for 2010 in Old Bridge, NJ shows that students who were taught using *Math in Focus* improved an average of 12.4 points versus the control group, which advanced only 3.5 points. *Math in Focus* students had over three times greater gains than their peers. Fourth grade students scoring at the test’s highest level, advanced proficient, increased by 22% for *Math in Focus* students, while the control group increased by 4%.
- Grade 4 students’ performance was also compared to the performance of peers who were taught using constructivist and explicit math programs. All three programs were taught concurrently, in the same school, and by similar teachers. *Math in Focus* students posted gains of 34%, while explicit program students posted a 23% increase, and constructivist students posted a 16% gain.
- Results on Kentucky’s Thinklink Benchmark Tests comparing 2010 results to 2011 reflect similar results, with performance increasing from 57% at Distinguished level, the highest performance level, to 91%.³¹
- The Southern Valley Schools District in Oxford, Nebraska also reported the impact that Math In Focus had on student achievement between 2014, the year prior to program implementation, and 2015, the first year of use. A comparison of achievement scores showed an increase in students scoring at Levels 2 (meeting) and 3 (exceeding), with an

³⁰ Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. (2013). *Singapore math: Research and efficacy overview*. Retrieved from http://www.hmhco.com/~media/sites/home/education/global/pdf/white-papers/mathematics/elementary/math-in-focus/MIF_Research_Efficacy_LR.pdf

³¹ Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. (2013). *Singapore math: Research and efficacy overview*. Retrieved from http://www.hmhco.com/~media/sites/home/education/global/pdf/white-papers/mathematics/elementary/math-in-focus/MIF_Research_Efficacy_LR.pdf

average gain of over 23%³².

Science

As the state is aware, the National Research Council (NRC), the National Science Teachers Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and Achieve, Inc. worked collaboratively with states and science and education experts to develop the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Based on the NRC's *Framework for K-12 Science Education* and through extensive research and field trials, the NGSS were released for adoption in April of 2013.

The NGSS articulates the instruction of scientific concepts across an articulated spectrum. Each standard is composed of three dimensions: Disciplinary Core Ideas, Scientific and Engineering Practices, and Cross-Cutting Concepts. The impactful nature of the standards relies on how science and engineering are practiced in the real world – through the integration of content and application – delivered in a dynamic and coherent progression of building knowledge. The focus of alignment on the K-12 spectrum is to prepare students for college and chosen professions. Therefore, the NGSS are a series of performance expectations that describe how students demonstrate proficiency in science. As indicated in the NGSS Executive Summary, “Coupling practice with content gives the learning context, whereas practices alone are activities and content alone is memorization. It is through integration that science begins to make sense and allows students to apply the material.³³” Because the NGSS heavily support the acquisition of scientific knowledge, application, and integration, Norwalk Excellence will be implementing the Full Option Science System, known as FOSS, to promote college and career readiness in the field of science for our scholars.

Research: FOSS (Full Option Science System) – Next Generation Edition

FOSS is a research-based, K-8 science curriculum that combines research, analysis, and active learning practices. The Next Generation elementary edition, which NCSE intends to adopt, provides a series of 18 instructional modules designed to meet the Next Generation Science Standards. Each module includes toolkits, resources, guidance books, literature, and equipment, as well as online multimedia. Through creative, analytical, and hands-on explorations, students are provided with the tools and activities that allow them to think critically and engage in learning experiences for a deeper and broadened understanding of scientific concepts. It combines scientific knowledge with discovery through meaningful experiences and dynamic scientific practices. As indicated in the NGSS introduction, “Students cannot comprehend scientific practices, nor fully appreciate the nature of scientific knowledge itself, without directly experiencing those practices for themselves.³⁴” Therefore, the NGSS promotes a “learning by doing” approach, which the FOSS program embodies. With FOSS, students learn through an ongoing exchange of receptive knowledge, experiential learning, hypotheses, critical thinking, problem solving, discovery, and reflection. As a program that is aligned to the NGSS, FOSS

³² Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. (2015). *Singapore math: Research and efficacy overview*. Retrieved from http://www.hmhco.com/~media/sites/home/education/global/pdf/white-papers/mathematics/elementary/math-in-focus/179345/revised_mif2015_researchandefficacy_brochure.pdf?la=en

³³ Retrieved from: https://www.nextgenscience.org/sites/default/files/Final%20Release%20NGSS%20Front%20Matter%20-%206.17.13%20Update_0.pdf

³⁴ Retrieved from: https://www.nextgenscience.org/sites/default/files/Final%20Release%20NGSS%20Front%20Matter%20-%206.17.13%20Update_0.pdf

provides critical and integrated connections with science and engineering, as well as CCSS for ELA and Math.³⁵

The FOSS K-8 program was developed at the Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California, Berkeley. The program offers an extensive research database³⁶, as well as testimonials on its publisher's website³⁷. FOSS Next Generation integrates the three dimensions of the NGSS: Disciplinary Core Ideas, Science and Engineering Practices, and Crosscutting Concepts. "FOSS Next Generation... is crafted with a teaching philosophy that embraces the 21st-century skills: collaborative teamwork, critical thinking, and problem solving that applies the content of science and engineering. FOSS Next Generation curriculum design promotes a classroom culture that allows both teachers and students to assume prominent rolls in the management of and responsibility for the learning environment."³⁸ These statements are in direct alignment to the NGSS and the mission and vision of our proposed school.

In an article published in the Berkeley Science Review, Sharmistha Majumdar discusses how the FOSS program has addressed the shortcomings of elementary science education in California, specifically in response to a report entitled, "High Hopes – Few Opportunities: The Status of Elementary Science Education in California" (High Hopes). In the article, Majumdar describes how the report highlighted the scarcity of quality educational opportunities in science, particularly for students in low-income communities. Majumdar states, "Rather than having students listen passively to a teacher's lectures, FOSS emphasizes active learning, whereby students learn science by doing science. This inquiry-based approach strikes at the heart of the shortcomings found in High Hopes, and has been demonstrated to be more engaging for students than a textbook-based curriculum."³⁹ Majumdar further asserts, "By all accounts, FOSS students *are* on track. The High Hopes report found that the best prepared teachers were using FOSS modules in their classrooms and the most successful school districts offered professional development based on FOSS resources."⁴⁰

While the use of the FOSS curriculum has been in practice with our model schools as well as some Connecticut district schools, FOSS Next Generation is quickly becoming a prominent program in the state of Connecticut. The Stamford Board of Education recently approved the purchase of the curriculum to align to the NGSS⁴¹. Additionally, the Development Department of LEARN, a Regional Educational Service Center, offers professional development related to the FOSS program⁴². While our commercial curriculum resources are not unique to our model, we believe what distinguishes Norwalk Excellence is our implementation, pedagogical practices, and learning culture that we will cultivate throughout our school based on our models.

As our mission statement purports, Norwalk Excellence will cultivate students' intellectual, artistic, social, emotional, and ethical development within a broad, liberal arts curriculum. In

³⁵ Retrieved from: <https://www.fossweb.com/what-is-foss>

³⁶ Retrieved from: <https://www.fossweb.com/research-database>

³⁷ Retrieved from: <http://www.deltaeducation.com/foss/results-testimonials>

³⁸ FOSS Next generation K-8 is here: Three-dimensional learning for all! (n.d.). *FOSS Newsletter, Spring 2017*, (No. 49), p. 2. Retrieved from

http://www.deltaeducation.com/SSIDEL/media/Downloads/FOSS/Newsletters/newsletter_49_spring_2017.pdf

³⁹ Majumdar, Sharmistha. (Fall 2012). Higher hopes: FOSS improves California's science education. Berkeley Science Review. Retrieved from: <http://berkeleysciencereview.com/read/fall-2012/higher-hopes/>

⁴⁰ Majumdar, Sharmistha. (Fall 2012). Higher hopes: FOSS improves California's science education. Berkeley Science Review. Retrieved from: <http://berkeleysciencereview.com/read/fall-2012/higher-hopes/>

⁴¹ Retrieved from

https://www.stamfordpublicschools.org/sites/stamfordps/files/uploads/170609_delta_education_foss_kits.pdf

⁴² Retrieved from

<http://www.learn.k12.ct.us/?PN=Pages&SubP=Level1Page&L=2&DivisionID=9116&DepartmentID=9594&PageID=14799&ToggleSideNav=ShowAll>

addition to CCSS-aligned ELA and math curriculum and NGSS-aligned instruction in science, the school will offer coursework in, social studies, visual arts, music and dance to foster the skills of cooperation, perspective, appreciation, and interpretation. Physical education will combine with a health program that balances physical well-being with healthy choices. Reading, writing, and problem-solving will be integrated across content areas to allow students to make connections across disciplines and foster a deeper understanding of content.

c. Explain why the curriculum is appropriate for the students the school intends to serve as well as students with disabilities, English learners, students below or above grade level, and other at-risk students.

As listed in the school's criteria for resource identification and development, NCSE's curriculum is deliberately selected and designed to address the needs of all learners. As NCSE seeks and anticipates the enrollment of a diverse student population, children will likely enroll with skills and knowledge along a wide spectrum, including students who are at risk, struggling, reluctant, accelerated, have special needs, and English learners. Because the school is building a program based on existing and successful models, NCSE has the benefit of selecting, developing, and implementing a curriculum that has already been field-tested and proven effective for similar demographic populations. However, it is important to note that the curriculum and instructional strategies employed at NCSE will be specifically tailored to the needs of the students served.

The founding group understands that while all students are capable of achieving success, not all students are the same, learn the same way, or have the same needs. This is a critical factor of NCSE's model to individualize and tailor instruction to the needs of the students. Rather than constructing lessons for the sake of following a commercial program, at NCSE, the curriculum has deliberately been identified and developed to allow flexibility and versatility for adjustments based on the students' needs. This includes the commercially developed ELA, math, and science programs (*Journeys, Story Town, Writers Workshop, Math in Focus, FOSS*), which were selected based on meeting the criteria outlined in Section I.3a, as well as internally developed instructional units used to augment learning.

In accordance with the school's philosophies, teachers will provide instruction uniquely tailored to each child that will challenge and support students in their zone of proximal development to meet the school's high expectations. The curriculum at NCSE will be accessible to all students and allow multiple points of entry. In order for teachers to authentically promote every child's growth, the curriculum must allow teachers the flexibility to differentiate instruction with ongoing, real-time data, while securing foundational knowledge prior to progressing to more complex treatments of content. For example, the ELA programs focus heavily on developing the foundational skills necessary for proficient readers, writers, and communicators. Components of the curriculum include emphasis on pre-reading strategies, decoding, vocabulary development, making connections between visual, verbal, and print cues, and project-based assignments. Similarly, the math program also provides an array of supports for understanding concepts through academic vocabulary, manipulatives, visual aids, hands-on problem solving, and multiple approaches for finding solutions. For students who are struggling or have special needs, strategies may include more individualized scaffolding, concrete applications, word studies, collaborative learning projects that promote peer support, and accommodations, such as preferential seating for visually impaired students or behavioral plans for students who struggle to stay on task. In addition to two grade level lead teachers, NCSE is prepared to offer a special education lead teacher providing instruction in classes with students whose IEPs require more intensive support. For English learners, teachers may utilize strategies such as visual aids, word studies, repeated read alouds and guided reading, providing instructions in incremental steps, building on terms within the student's current level of comprehension, and providing opportunities for students to

collaborate with peers to develop listening and speaking skills. All programs provide extensions and resources to support specialized needs that include word strategies to build vocabulary and conceptual understanding, developing content knowledge from concrete, visual and tangible expressions to more abstract concepts, cross disciplinary learning to foster connections and deeper understanding, and alternate teaching strategies specific to populations of higher needs. NCSE will ensure that the staff is proficient within the curriculum and that specialists provide adequate support to classroom teachers to increase proficiency and effectiveness.

Although many schools focus only on the student who is on or below grade level, NCSE recognizes the importance of addressing the needs of more accelerated learners as well. Once students have mastered basic concepts, the curriculum will open doors to more complex treatments of content. Students will be able to embark on studies of greater depth and breadth within smaller groups creating enrichment activities that access more critical thinking and higher order levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. These activities may include inquiry- and project-based extensions that cross into other subject areas. Technology will also be integrated into all core subjects for all learners, providing further vehicles for augmentations.

d. Describe a plan that will facilitate ongoing development, improvement, and refinement of the curriculum. Please also explain the process that will be used to evaluate whether the curriculum is effective and successfully implemented.

As discussed in Section I.3a, one of the key criteria for identifying and selecting the curriculum is the requirement that resources must provide teachers with the flexibility to inculcate foundational knowledge, while offering adaptability to target students' diverse needs. Those needs will evolve as students progress in their learning throughout the year, and from year to year. In order to provide instruction that is consistently challenging, supportive, and uniquely tailored to promote maximum growth, NCSE will facilitate ongoing development, evaluation, improvement, and refinement of the curriculum.

For the school's planning year, NCSE will have access to both model schools' resources, and modify their successful programs for alignment to the Connecticut CCSS, NGSS, and State Frameworks as needed. The leadership team of NCSE will develop curriculum maps, scope and sequences, and unit outlines designed to provide challenging, supportive, and standards-aligned instruction. All instructional staff members will participate in two full weeks of pre-service training prior to the commencement of the school year when school leaders will introduce teachers to the school's high expectations and orient the staff to the culture and design of the school's programs. Teachers will use the guiding documents and curriculum resources to design purposeful, rigorous, and outcome-driven instructional lessons and units. Learning objectives will be student-oriented with actionable and measurable outcomes that reflect the standards. Learning standards will be prioritized with consideration to foundational skills and prevalence to ensure that necessary skills and concepts are mastered in a systematic and timely manner. Instructional units will be grounded in the standards and designed with flexibility and adaptability to support and challenge every student. These units will be backwards designed to ensure that students develop sufficient foundational knowledge and tailored to students' needs for remediation and enrichment. Once the school begins operation, teachers will implement the lessons and units they create, and incorporate ongoing assessment data to inform instruction and any necessary short-term revisions or improvements.

Throughout the year, teachers will be provided with ongoing, embedded professional development, as well as frequent observations and feedback from the leadership team and grade level peers. The daily schedule will provide common planning periods for teachers to collaborate in small Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at each grade level. Teachers will collaborate to plan and review lessons, analyze data to guide instruction, develop activities for

flexible groupings, and make any necessary adjustments or improvements to lessons based on students' performance on formative assessments. Throughout their tenure, teachers will be trained on how to continually improve upon effective curriculum implementation and how to teach through team planning. Depending on the teacher's individual growth plan, additional support may be provided after school. In order to promote successful development of students, NCSE is committed to providing the necessary resources and supports for the continual development of its staff.

The School's implementation of the CCSS will facilitate a more deliberate approach for teachers to use the curriculum to promote the instructional shifts in ELA and Math with strategies that include: the incorporation of informational and literary texts; sourcing evidence from text to support responses; cross-subject integration to promote deeper understanding of content; scaffolded support for students to advance from foundational knowledge to deeper levels of complexity; richer and deeper evidence-based dialogue for reading and writing; building fluency; increased opportunities for balancing content knowledge and applications; and metacognitive practices to guide students in understanding multiple approaches in problem-solving. Literacy and writing will also be implemented across the content areas, including the use of both authentic literature and informational texts. NCSE will focus on building pedagogical fluency and effectiveness within the CCSS using curriculum resources and instructional approaches. Teachers will learn effective strategies for implementation to increase the depth and breadth of learning. As with all training, the leadership team will monitor the staff's implementation of these items and gauge the effectiveness with student outcomes, observations, and teacher feedback. Accordingly, teachers will receive ongoing support from their grade level peers and leadership team to improve facility within the shifts. Support will be provided to teachers from their peers during peer lesson reviews, collaborative planning strategies, and observations, and from feedback from the leadership team after formal and informal observations and discussions. Any necessary short-term revisions to the curriculum such as lesson or unit revisions will be the responsibility of the grade level team.

Once in operation and as the school grows professional capacity, the NCSE leadership team will enlist the instructional and support staff to frequently monitor and refine the curriculum as needed, based on regular assessments, to address the needs of the students. NCSE's assessment program will provide frequent and ongoing real-time data to measure student performance against state and school standards. The leadership team, lead teachers, and support staff will analyze student data during weekly meetings and carefully examine curriculum resources to ensure alignment with the state and school's high standards. Based on performance patterns, any areas of weakness or deficiencies will be identified and augmented by additional resources and staff-developed materials. Concurrently, the Principal will furnish the Board and its committees with student achievement data at each meeting to ensure appropriate oversight of student progress towards academic goals and to allocate appropriate resources and personnel accordingly. Analysis of student achievement, as in the case of state exams and norm-referenced assessments, will also play a critical role in measuring the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction.

At the conclusion of each year, Deans, Grade Level Chairs, leadership team members and members of the Education and Accountability Committee of the Board will meet to review students' progress as measured against performance goals, and utilize the information to measure program effectiveness. Any short-term modifications are completed during the summer for implementation for the subsequent school year. Throughout the school year, teachers will continue to monitor ongoing student data and revise the curriculum as needed. While Norwalk Excellence will use data to ensure that our programs are effective for all learners, because Norwalk hosts a relatively higher population of residents who speak languages other than English in the household, this process will be particularly crucial for measuring effectiveness of our

programs for English learners. After the school has had the opportunity to implement and refine any curriculum resources, if an item is deemed ineffective, the staff and leadership team begin seeking alternative resources using the school's intensive vetting process. The Board and its committees will provide final approval of curriculum resources and revisions based upon recommendations from school leadership and personnel. As described in subsection (c) of C. G. S. § 10-220, the Board will annually submit a comprehensive school profile to the Commissioner of Education that includes data reflective of the effectiveness of NCSE's curriculum model.

4. Instruction

a. Describe the instructional methods or techniques that will be used in the proposed school, including any specific requirements for implementing a particular pedagogical approach (i.e., co-teaching or aides, technology, physical space, etc.).

Our mission, vision, and programs have specifically been designed to provide the necessary supports, challenges, resources, and learning environment to ensure that *every* child has equitable opportunities for success. With an eye towards college and career readiness, Norwalk Excellence will utilize a holistic approach to cultivate scholarly habits, 21st century global thinkers, and offer a broad liberal arts curriculum to promote students' intellectual, artistic, social, emotional, and ethical development. Our school will also establish a highly accountable culture where all stakeholders are dedicated to the success of the students.

Literacy is the core competency that is emphasized, and our model reflects a dedication of time and resources to reading, writing, and math — with approximately two hours spent daily on ELA and math. The longer school day will allow our school to also offer science and social studies, as well as several specials classes that complement the academic programs (i.e. Spanish, music, computer science, art, etc.). In general, the school will aim at teaching reading two levels beyond current grade. The school will also supplement with other resources as is necessary, such as the use of targeted reading materials for intervention. These strategies will be particularly crucial in Norwalk, wherein the district is exhibiting achievement gaps in ELA. At Norwalk Excellence, all teachers will teach reading.

The instructional program is designed to challenge every scholar with highly supportive and sophisticated differentiation. Flexible instructional groupings uniquely tailored for every child's needs will be availed daily and based on ongoing real-time data. The co-teaching and Grade Cohort Model will distinguish our instructional delivery and "the pod." The teaching pod is essentially a grade-level team of teachers, specialists, and therapists that are collectively responsible for all students in that grade. While each grade level teacher is assigned a classroom of students, they will also know the performance of students outside of their homeroom roster since a large percentage of instruction occurs via leveled small groups. Students will benefit from more individualized instruction that fosters deeper levels of understanding through intensive discussions and interactions. Because our collaborative approach ensures that each grade level "pod" is accountable for the achievement of the entire grade level cohort, differentiation occurs not only within one classroom, but across classrooms in order to address a broader spectrum of needs. Teachers will also utilize technology, cooperative learning and multisensory, hands-on, differentiated strategies, and inquiry-based activities to support varying modalities of learning.

The pedagogical tool of the teaching pod and the inherent, intense teacher collaboration, are key ingredients to model schools' academic success. With support from the leadership team, teachers will work in a tight unit to mentor each other, to improve the curriculum, to analyze data, and to address each child's individual needs. Through this methodology, remediation will be offered in real-time with rapid response based on ongoing data collected from a robust assessment program. The teaching staff and instructional leadership will work collaboratively to carefully analyze data and lesson plans, and ensure the effectiveness of targeted interventions.

Norwalk Excellence will offer a highly accountable and collaborative model to addressing students' needs. NCSE's team teaching approach affords two grade-level classes, each composed of 28 students, which will be heterogeneously grouped with one Lead Teacher and one shared Education Associate, facilitating a reduced student-to-teacher ratio. While both lead teachers and education associates will be certified instructors, the Lead Teacher will be distinguished with a track record of accomplishment in driving student achievement. For classes with students whose IEPs stipulate more intensive interventions, a third special education teacher will join the general education classroom teachers to provide appropriate support and accommodations as indicated in students' IEPs, further reducing the student-to-teacher ratios.

Working collaboratively, the team of teachers will be accountable and responsible for individual students as well as the entire grade level cohort. Frequent assessment of student progress will inform and facilitate flexible small group instruction, whereby teachers on each grade level will be responsible for providing data-driven lessons that target specific areas of need. Teachers will meet during common planning periods to analyze ongoing and real-time data, design and adjust lessons, and coordinate instructional groupings accordingly. The team approach to data-driven flexible groupings will facilitate small group instruction differentiated to target students' needs during ELA and Math instruction. In all other content areas, differentiation will occur within the homeroom.

Using the backwards design model, lessons will be developed to align with curriculum documents and frameworks, and reviewed on a weekly basis. Lessons will typically begin with a whole-group mini-lesson to introduce or review content matter. Students will, then, be divided into smaller groups for guided and independent practice based on students' needs. NCSE founders believe that true rigor and learning occur when students are encouraged to exceed and excel to their maximum potentials. In accordance with Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development, small group activities will be designed to provide appropriate scaffolding to build student knowledge from what they already know or are able to do independently, to more complex treatments with more challenging activities. While mastery is critical, it is equally important to encourage students to delve deeper into content. This approach aligns well to the CCSS in promoting studies of greater depth and breadth.

NCSE will also inculcate the 16 Habits of Mind, which essentially describe the key components to successful problem solving and learning. Teachers will model appropriate strategies and use research-based best practices to facilitate maximum growth for all learners in cognitive, social, and emotional domains. These skills extend beyond academics and students will learn to utilize the 16 Habits of Mind to think creatively and critically to identify solutions to any problems they may encounter.

When supporting all learners on a wide spectrum of development and skills, teachers will be prepared to employ Bloom's Taxonomy. Grade level teams will plan lessons collaboratively with consideration to the developmental needs of the students and the six levels of Bloom's Taxonomy to advance students from basic, foundational knowledge, to activities that require higher-order thinking skills. As with all instructional practices, teachers will receive intensive and ongoing support from colleagues and the leadership team to continually develop and improve effective strategies. Students will be encouraged to transition from the basic, lower levels of the Taxonomy, to the higher levels to drive creativity and innovation.

In order to prepare students for 21st century learning and global perspectives, instruction will be supported by technological integration. NCSE staff will use Smartboards, Chromebooks, iPads, data management software, and ereaders, as well as graphic arts and computer science classes for older students. Teachers will also use technology to make connections between the school and home. Students will be able to log onto computers to access programs and curriculum connections at home or on other publicly accessible computers, such as those found at libraries or

community centers. Parents may also log in to review their child's assessment data and receive regular reports on performance. During the school's planning year, NCSE will identify the resources to be utilized to advance students' technological skills and awareness.

The technology department at NCSE will be modeled after the Bronx Charter School Excellence technology department, which focuses on teacher and student technical knowledge and development. For Norwalk Excellence's younger scholars, this means building a foundation for more complex applications in the older grades. For teachers, it connects the dots between implementation and thinking of technology as a pedagogical instrument. For students, the technology program supports the delivery of media rich content, while enforcing student achievement with flipped learning at home. By embracing various Web 2.0 technologies, our practices better serve students in a blended learning environment. The underlying program view is that technology is a pedagogy for teachers, not an over reliance on the particular devices. Teachers create content with a blended mindset, then support their curriculum designs with available cloud technologies and devices. Using cloud technology, classroom sites become their own learning environment capable of delivering media rich content and interactions with students.

Teachers' lessons also follow the pedagogical tenets established by International Society for Technology in Education - National Education Technology Standards (ISTE.NETS-T) for effective teaching:

- Facilitate and inspire student learning and creativity
- Design and develop digital age learning experiences and assessments
- Model digital age work and learning
- Promote and model digital citizenship and responsibility
- Engage in profession growth and leadership

Teachers will be trained on the importance of creating relevant data points. These data points are specifically designed to promote best practices in spiraling, content enforcement, and enrichment. Each subject program design allows for a specific structure to data capture points, which in turn, informs dynamic student groupings. The results of these data capture points provide readily amiable data for the subscription and targeted approach of blended and adaptive learning services and content support or enrichment.

Students at Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will be trained to work with technology by embracing self-paced adaptive online learning. The technology objectives include exposing students to basic computing, digital citizenship, and academic support using technology. They will create, respond, and share all in the cloud. NCSE technology students will become technology literate students that can be creative in the use of technology in academics.

Adaptive learning centers for upper elementary grades will spearhead independent student learning towards discovery and self paced content mastery. Teacher-created units of instruction will be pushed out to student devices for students to gain initial exposures. Independent work will take place at various student centered lab stations. During instruction, students will learn and construct content knowledge with technology, with the use of a specific Universally Designed Learning Lab (UDL). Students will become part of the lessons as they synthesize multimedia contributions and participate in data capture points that will check for understanding simultaneously as the lesson proceeds. A record of these infused lessons will be made available for parents via a parent learning web portal.

In addition to push-in models, NCSE may provide Academic Intervention Services (AIS) for small groups, especially those qualifying for special education, English learners and students who are struggling in ELA and Math. General education teachers will consult regularly with the Learning Specialist (Special Education Coordinator, SEC) to discuss best practices in

differentiating instruction for students with IEPs and students who are at-risk. The SEC will also be able to model effective strategies for general education teachers and provide resources and assistance in creating academic intervention plans for students. Moreover, there will be additional blocks of instruction built into the schedule for remediation. The founders also hope to provide an array of enrichment activities after school.

A Grade Level Chair will represent the team during higher-level meetings with administrative staff. Again, these individuals will be distinguished by a strong track record of performance as well as a willingness to contribute and participate in more leadership capacities. Additionally, a seat on the school's Board of Trustees will be reserved for a teacher representative, most likely an individual who is also a Grade Level Chair. This allows a direct exchange between staff representatives, school leadership, and the Board during critical discussions and decisions that impact instruction.

The founding group is in the process of identifying potential sites and facilities in which the school will reside. The facility will be constructed or remodeled to ensure appropriate and safe access for all students, and adequate square footage to support the educational program. The facility will have dedicated classrooms, resource rooms, office space, and common areas. The building will be safe, secure, and conducive to learning. As well, the facility will provide adequate space for IDEA accessibility and mobility and sufficient classroom space to facilitate small group instruction. With high academic expectations, rigorous and differentiated instruction, and support in developing successful habits, students of NCSE will be prepared for and successful in their transitions to middle school, high school, college, and chosen careers.

b. Describe how these instructional methods support high standards of achievement and are accessible and appropriate for all students at all levels, including English learners, special education students, students who enter below grade level, and other at-risk students.

At Norwalk Excellence, we will hold all scholars to high expectations and offer the same rigorous, inclusive curriculum to our entire student body. Rather than dilute the curriculum or lower expectations for specific populations, Norwalk Excellence will challenge and support every scholar, whether they are included in the general education population, students with disabilities, or English learners, to ensure all students are provided with equitable opportunities to excel. What varies from student to student is the level of support each scholar receives through dynamic small group and individualized instruction.

As the school name purports, NCSE strives for excellence for all students. Every student will benefit from highly supportive and intensive individualized instruction through NCSE's small learning environment, with reduced student to teacher ratios, differentiated instruction facilitated through flexible groupings, additional time for learning with longer a school day/year, and individualized learning plans for each student. By virtue of providing highly differentiated instruction that is uniquely tailored to each child's learning needs, in essence, NCSE will be providing Tier I Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI)/Response To Intervention (RTI) support to its entire student body. Thus, whether struggling, reluctant, accelerated, at-risk, on grade level, or with special needs or limited English proficiency, every child receives uniquely tailored instruction. Frequent assessments provide ongoing real-time data for teachers to adjust instruction to optimize student learning within each child's zone of proximal development and implement instruction that is rigorous yet supportive. Teachers will also utilize Bloom's Taxonomy to help students delve deeply into instructional content and access higher levels of cognitive engagement. Whenever possible, lesson activities will integrate multiple disciplines allowing students to make connections between subject areas. Inquiry-based projects and real-world connections allow students to approach and interact with content in purposeful and meaningful contexts. Diversification of instructional approaches and employing multisensory

tactics enable students to interact with content and develop skills that might have otherwise been lost in traditional instructional methods. Likewise, collaborative and cooperative activities allow students to learn from one another, experience learning together, and can help students understand that there is more than one way to solve a problem.

The enrollment plan is deliberately designed to attract students at a younger age, starting in pre-kindergarten. NCSE intends to begin with students in grades pre-kindergarten through first grade. Typically, this is when students are still developing foundational language and literacy skills. As the American Council on The Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) purports, students begin acquiring language through listening and speaking prior to developing reading and writing skills. Enrolling students at the beginning of their academic careers and retaining students as they progress in grade levels allows NCSE the opportunity to provide a strong foundation for basic skills that are necessary for all students to develop good reading and writing skills, and continue to build upon those skills with consistently supportive and challenging instruction as students advance in grade levels. This is also beneficial for math and all other content areas.

The enrollment plan also helps to facilitate a smoother transition to a structured immersion model for ELs. As with their English-speaking peers, ELs typically have yet to master reading and writing skills in the earliest enrollment grades. The EL student, thus, has the benefit of learning subsequent reading and writing skills along with their peers as they advance through the program. Although the school anticipates that it will enroll students in the early grade levels and retain the majority of its students as they progress through grade levels, there is the possibility of students enrolling at an older grade level having minimal to no exposure to the English language. In such events, NCSE will develop learning plans for students and provide supports on a case-by-case basis and is prepared to provide a deeper level of support, depending upon the child's needs. NCSE is prepared to provide as much support as needed to help such students succeed. Provisions will be provided to support the whole child in addition to, rather than in lieu of core instruction. Students will receive additional accommodations such as repeated instruction, visual cues, multisensory approaches, and enhanced conversational practice to ensure that instructional content is not diluted, but rather the strategies for engaging students is modified to meet and improve the linguistic capabilities of the students. Students' strengths and areas of weakness will be identified and incorporated into individualized learning plans.

Similarly, the enrollment plan for admitting students at a young age allows NCSE to identify needs at a younger age, and immediately institute interventions to support students academically and behaviorally. This includes Child Find screenings for students who have potential special or even existing needs and students who enter with skills below grade level. By identifying students' needs and employing interventions early, NCSE has the potential to prevent barriers at a later stage when a student might have otherwise already developed unproductive work habits or spent years being unsuccessful in a traditional school.

As a school that is modeled after Stamford Charter School for Excellence and its predecessor, the Bronx Charter School for Excellence, we have been able to compile data, which shows the success of the programs for all scholars, including English learners, special education students, students who enter below grade level, and other at-risk students. The tables below compare the demographic composition of Norwalk School District and Norwalk Excellence's model schools of Bronx and Stamford Excellence. As Norwalk Excellence anticipates enrolling a population reflective of the community, we anticipate a similar demography to that of the district.

Demographic Comparisons – Norwalk SD, BCSE, and SCSE			
Category	Norwalk SD PK-12	Bronx Excellence K-8	Stamford Excellence PK-2
District Data	2015-2016 ⁴³	2016-17	
Total Enrolled	11,409	804	207
Free/Reduced Lunch	50.4%	77.6%	71.0%
English Learners	13.9%	8.1%	6% (15-16)
Students with Disabilities	12.8%	9.1%	3.4%
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Asian (Pacific Islander)	4.9%	23.8%	15.9%
Black/African American	17.4%	41.8%	60.4%
Hispanic	43.5%	34.3%	23.2%
Pacific Islander	0.1%	-	-
Two or more races	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%
White	32.0%	0.1%	0.5%
Total Minority	68.0%	99.9%	99.5%
Other Statistics			
4 Yrs. Graduation Rate (14-15)	89.6%	N/A	N/A
Per Pupil Expenditure (2014-15)	\$17,220	\$14,027	\$11,000
Priority/Alliance District (Y/N)	Y	N	N
Citywide Data ^{44,45}			
Poverty Rate (2011-15)	8.4%	30.2%	9.4%
Educational Attainment, Age 25 years+ (2011-15)			
High School Graduate	25%	70.6%	21%
Associate Degree	6%	N/A	5%
Bachelors degree or higher	41%	18.9%	47%
Median household income (2011-15)	\$76,987	\$34,299	\$79,359

As illustrated, Bronx and Stamford Excellence served higher percentages of minority students, as well as students eligible for free or reduced priced meals. Both Bronx and Stamford Excellence operate in communities with higher poverty rates and lower per pupil rates. Additionally, the Bronx community shows a lower percentage of residents with a Bachelors degree or higher, and a significantly lower median household income.

Stamford Excellence scholars do not yet qualify for statewide exams. The following table compares the percentage of scholars at Bronx Excellence and Norwalk School District achieving a Level 3 or 4 on state exams based on the Common Core State Standards according to the most recently available data. As in Connecticut, students who perform at a Level 3 are considered proficient and meeting grade level expectations, while students who achieve a Level 4 are

⁴³ Connecticut State Department of Education. (2016). *District profile and performance reports for school year 2015-16* [Data files]. Retrieved from <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>

⁴⁴ The CT Data Collaborative. (2017). *CERC town profiles* [Data files]. Retrieved from <http://profiles.ctdata.org/profiles/download>

⁴⁵ US Census Bureau Quick Facts (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/bronxcountybronxboroughnewyork,stamfordtownfairfieldcountyconnecticut/SBO030212>

exceeding expectations:

Aggregate Performance Comparisons – % At or Above Level 3⁴⁶		
Subject	Bronx Excellence (15-16)	Norwalk (16-17)
Reading	64.4%	48.4%
Math	69.3%	39.3%

BCSE's programs, after which Stamford Excellence and Norwalk Excellence will be modeled, have resulted in strong outcomes, particularly with minority and at-risk students. The founding group is confident that Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will provide scholars with programs that have proven successful for all scholars, including those deemed high needs.

The following table illustrates the model school's aggregate performance on state exams as compared to its host district and statewide peers for 2015-16, the most recently available data:

2016 NYS ELA and Math Exams - Comparisons^{47,48}							
	ELA 3	ELA 4	ELA 5	ELA 6	ELA 7	ELA 8	ELA 3-8
BCSE	59.6	73.3	60.0	70.8	57.8	65.4	64.4
Bronx 11 (Host District)	32.2	31.7	24.0	22.8	28.6	33.5	28.9
NYC Region Host Districts' Aggregate Percent Proficient							35.8
NYC Region Charter Schools' Aggregate Percent Proficient							43.0
NYS Charter Schools							40.3
NYS Charter School Host Districts							32.9
NYS Public Schools							37.9
	Math 3	Math 4	Math 5	Math 6	Math 7	Math 8	Math 3-8
BCSE	75.3	60.0	67.4	92.1	54.4	65.4	69.3
Bronx 11 (Host District)	29.8	31.2	26.7	25.8	21.8	18.6	25.9
NYC Region Host Districts' Aggregate Percent Proficient							33.2
NYC Region Charter Schools' Aggregate Percent Proficient							48.7
NYS Charter Schools							45.4
NYS Charter School Host Districts							30.6
NYS Public Schools							39.1

As indicated in the table, Norwalk Excellence's model school's performance clearly exceeds district and statewide peers by at least 20-40 percentage points.

⁴⁶ Wentzell, D. (July 14, 2017). *State test scores up slightly in mathematics [Press Release]* Retrieved from http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/smarter_balanced_results_2016-17_press_release.pdf

⁴⁷ Northeast Charter Schools Network. (2016). New York state ELA exam results: 2015-2016 Percent proficient in grades 3-8. Retrieved from https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/necharters/pages/1047/attachments/original/1470143062/2016_ELA_Final.pdf?1470143062

⁴⁸ Northeast Charter Schools Network. (2016). New York state math exam results: 2015-2016 Percent proficient in grades 3-8. Retrieved from https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/necharters/pages/1047/attachments/original/1470143058/2016_Math_Final.pdf?1470143058

In addition to taking New York's statewide exams for grades 3-8 in ELA, Math, and Science, Bronx Excellence scholars participate in High School Regents Exams while still enrolled in middle school. These exams are designed to assess student mastery of content by subject area based on coursework normally expected at the secondary level. The following table shows Bronx Excellence middle school students' performance on the 2016-17 High School Regents Exams:

Bronx Excellence 1: 2016-17 High School Regents Exams			
CONTENT AREA	# STUDENTS TESTED	% PASS - SCORING 65 OR ABOVE	% COLLEGE/ CAREER READY (85 OR ABOVE)
Spanish SLP LOTE	8	88%	-
Algebra I Common Core	11	100%	91%
Geometry	2	100%	50%
US History	18	100%	89%
Combined Physical Setting/Earth Science	8	100%	50%
AVERAGE		98%	66%

A score of 65 on these exams indicates that a student has passed the exam, while a score of 85 or above indicates that a scholar has achieved the college and career ready target. As indicated in the table above, 98% of Bronx Excellence scholars who took the exams passed, and 66% demonstrated college and career readiness – again, while still enrolled in middle school.

As shown, the Bronx Excellence model has proven successful for scholars. Graduates of Bronx Excellence have been accepted to prestigious and noteworthy high schools, colleges and universities. Approximately one-fourth of the 2017 Bronx Excellence graduates were accepted into selective high schools, which require competitive admissions testing and criteria. College acceptances for alumni include: University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business; Cooper Union; Washington University – St. Louis; Emory; UNC-Chapel Hill; Rutgers; Wesleyan; Loyola University – Maryland; Rochester Institute of Technology; Seton Hall University; Penn State University; University of Bridgeport; Clarkson University; Johnson and Wales; Culinary Institute of America; St. John's University; and University of Connecticut.

For scholars who are not yet eligible to sit for statewide exams (grades PK-2), both Bronx Excellence and Stamford Excellence use a variety of measures to monitor student progress. One tool is the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) to measure progress in reading skills. DRA performance measurement is based on the recommended grade level targets determined by the assessment developers, and the advanced model targets – that is, accelerated targets established by the model schools - set on average at two levels above grade level expectation. The following table illustrates scholarly performance on the DRA, as measured by the percentage of scholars meeting or exceeding both the DRA targets and the higher model standard at the beginning of each school year (BOY) and the end of the school year (EOY):

2016-17 Bronx Excellence and Stamford Excellence DRA Performance									
GRADE	Target	Bronx Excellence (K-2)				Stamford Excellence (PK-2)			
		BOY Target Level	% Met	EOY Target Level	% Met	BOY Target Level	% Met	EOY Target Level	% Met
PK	DRA Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Model Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	A	68%	4	77%
K	DRA Target	A	100%	3	99%	A	98%	3	100%
	Model Target	2	89%	10	83%	6	10%	10	78%
1	DRA Target	4	100%	16	90%	4	98%	16	92%
	Model Target	14	57%	24	73%	14	38%	24	71%
2	DRA Target	18	88%	28	80%	18	81%	28	88%
	Model Target	28	56%	34	53%	28	55%	34	80%
All	DRA Target	N/A	96%	N/A	90%	N/A	92%	N/A	93%
	Model Target	N/A	67%	N/A	70%	N/A	43%	N/A	77%

The composite scores at the conclusion of the 2016-17 school year show that 90% of Bronx Excellence scholars and 93% of Stamford Excellence scholars are meeting or exceeding the DRA targets. Additionally, 70% are meeting or exceeding the model's more advanced target at Bronx Excellence, while 77% are meeting or exceeding at Stamford Excellence. Most notably, whereas the DRA does not establish reading goals for Pre-K, 77% of the Stamford Excellence Pre-K scholars are reading well above grade level expectation.

These preliminary results are promising for a few reasons. First, it illustrates that scholars are on track towards achieving grade level targets. Second, it shows that efforts to replicate the quality of the model are proving effective, even across state lines. Third and most importantly, in the Stamford community, which was also identified as a priority district due to persisting achievement gaps, it demonstrates that the model is successfully closing those gaps with over a 99% minority population and nearly three-quarters of the student body qualifying for free and reduced lunch. As NCSE programs and strategies will be modeled after Bronx and Stamford Excellence, this demonstrates the instructional programs that Norwalk Excellence proposes will likely result in similarly successful student achievement outcomes, including those for English learners, special education students, students who enter below grade level, and other at-risk students. This is particularly significant in the Norwalk community where an ELA achievement gap is apparent. It also exemplifies the level of rigor and support that students at NCSE will receive to propel them towards college and career readiness.

c. Describe how the proposed school will create a data-driven culture to meet a wide range of student needs using differentiated instruction.

The manner in which NCSE will use data to drive instruction have been documented throughout the narratives. This reflects the important role that data plays in all facets of the school's programs. The founders recognize that curriculum, instruction, and assessments go hand-in-hand. As such, NCSE will establish a highly accountable and data-driven culture. The instructional model of flexible groupings and differentiation will depend heavily on the provision of ongoing and real-time data. Frequent formative and summative assessment cycles will enable the staff to utilize student data to inform curricular and instructional decisions. This data will be used to design instructional lessons that target students' strengths and areas in need of improvement. Teachers will create and develop flexible small group activities, especially for reading, to address students' needs and target instruction in their zone of proximal development. Teaching schedules will include common planning periods to compile and analyze data, and discuss its implications on learning. The leadership team will begin by facilitating weekly

discussions in order to train grade level teams, specifically Lead Teachers, to gain fluency so these meetings can later be conducted at any time with or without a school leader present. Student achievement will be one of the biggest variables for successful evaluations of teacher performance. As such, teachers will receive ongoing professional development on designing appropriate assessments and utilizing data to promote optimal achievement.

Norwalk Excellence recognizes the critical role that data plays in informing daily instruction, student achievement, curricular decisions, and program evaluations. Based on test scores from formative and summative assessments, teachers are able to make informed instructional and curricular decisions. These decisions are not taken lightly, as they may require revisions to lesson plans, adjustments to instructional approaches, or modifications to the available curriculum resources, all of which impact student learning. As teachers collect assessment data, the school leader presents reports to the Board for appropriate oversight. This helps to drive programmatic policies and decisions at the Board level. Through subsequent years, the data may either affirm curriculum alignment to the students served, or it may exemplify a need for modifications. Curriculum revisions may also impact instructional strategies and hiring practices. The Board will maintain constant short-term, intermediate, and long-term planning that includes curricular and instructional decisions. The Board will ensure that all critical decisions will be based on the needs of the students, the effectiveness of the teaching staff, the goals and benchmarks for monitoring adequate progress, student achievement outcomes, and financial stability.

d. Explain how the proposed school will ensure that teachers are proficient in delivering the chosen instructional method to their students.

Ongoing professional development is vital to ensuring that students benefit from improved instructional practices. Every school year begins with a two-week orientation to the program, followed by continual coaching and development throughout the year. All teachers will have their own professional growth plans to ensure that professional development is differentiated and individualized for maximal growth. Teachers at NCSE will be expected to complete 200 hours of professional growth each year. One hundred of those hours can be allocated towards graduate coursework, online courses, and external workshops, or staff may submit proposals for alternative plans, such as additional degree or license programs. The remaining 100 hours are dedicated towards building leadership capacity in the staff, qualified through activities such as mentoring other teachers, providing workshops for parents, creating exemplar units, creating an enrichment club for students, and planning activities to increase parent engagement. Such activities may be coordinated individually, or as a grade level team. Teachers will meet individually with the leadership team specific to their personal growth plans to establish goals towards individual students, grade level, and school-wide achievement. In addition to school-wide goals based on the SEED model for educator evaluations, teachers will also have specific and individualized instructional and learning goals. For example, if a staff member needs help with teaching how to write persuasive essays, s/he will collaborate with the school leader to create a plan for improvement, which may include attending workshops, team teaching, or observing a master teacher. Goals and progress are carefully monitored and documented on each teacher's growth plan and compiled into a portfolio. As the year progresses, the teacher and leadership team meet formally two more times to review portfolios, assess the teacher's progress towards established goals, and formulate a plan to ensure success. Teachers' progress towards goals in the professional growth plan will add to their summative evaluations.

NCSE will utilize a team teaching approach. The underpinnings of this approach are to optimize student achievement. Students will benefit from a co-teaching model for core instructional content. For classes with students whose IEPs mandate a higher level of intervention, there will be a third special education teacher to help facilitate instruction. Each

classroom will minimally have one Lead Teacher and a shared Education Associate, both of whom are certified professionals. The Lead Teachers are the school's master teachers, and will be distinguished by a track record of accomplishment, years of experience, and expertise in an array of fields, which may include strong pedagogy, excellence in differentiation, specialization in curriculum and instruction, and the ability to develop strong relationships with parents and colleagues. Education Associates are those individuals who have less experience, but demonstrate promise as they gain experience. The Lead Teacher will be a primary source for ongoing development for the Education Associate. Together, these individuals will be responsible for cultivating a positive learning environment within their respective classrooms.

Novice teachers will be hired at the Education Associate levels, where they will work with and receive support from their grade level Lead Teachers, the grade level chair, and the grade level team. Thus, with at least two teachers per grade level and two classes per grade, the novice teacher will receive ongoing coaching and training from a minimum of 4 to 5 individuals, including the school's instructional leaders and support staff. All teachers will benefit from feedback from their respective grade level peers, as well as from the leadership team.

Teachers on each grade level will all be responsible for their cohort and their cohort's achievements. As such, they will be expected to work as a team to support students on their grade level. The leadership team will strive to establish grade level teams with complimentary skills to enhance their overall performance as a grade level unit. Teachers will have common planning periods to cooperatively develop lesson plans, implement instruction collaboratively, analyze data together, and formulate plans for improvement based on the data implications. Teachers may also utilize hours after school or on weekends for these purposes.

Norwalk Excellence will not rely on a series of isolated workshops that will have little to no sustainable effects on instructional practices. Instead, NCSE will promote continual improvement through ongoing professional development, coaching, mentoring, modeling, feedback and subsequent assessments. For the first year, the leadership team will establish a framework for guiding documents that inform instruction. Once the school is in operation, teachers will have common planning periods built into their daily schedules, which will allow time for collaborative planning, sharing of resources, informal peer reviews, lesson critiques, inter-visitations and observations, data analysis, and other key exchanges to facilitate effective teaching. These planning periods also provide time for lead teachers to consult with grade level colleagues and administrators for ongoing feedback for improvement. Each grade level team will receive constant feedback from the school's leadership. On a weekly basis, the leadership team will train grade level teams how to maximize the curriculum resources and utilize data to inform instruction. Although Education Associates receive critical feedback from Lead Teachers, and all teachers receive feedback from grade level teams, the school Principal is responsible for conducting formal evaluations at least three times each year with support from an Academic Dean and Dean of Students. As the staff leaders visit classrooms daily, teachers will benefit from informal observations with real-time feedback that can be immediately implemented. This ongoing exchange and delivery of professional development will help to ensure that NCSE delivers an instructional quality of the highest standards.

5. Student Assessment

a. Describe the proposed school's comprehensive assessment system, including formative, benchmark, and summative assessments. Please ensure that the assessment system is aligned to the curriculum and educational philosophy.

Data plays a critical role in the educational program at Norwalk Excellence. The founders recognize the interconnectedness of curriculum, instruction, and assessment and have developed a robust program for gathering, analyzing, and understanding the instructional implications of data.

In order to provide a truly supportive and challenging curriculum with rigorous instruction for all students within their zones of proximal development, teachers must continually assess students' knowledge and skills, establish growth targets, and frequently monitor and promote progress towards established goals and objectives.

NCSE identified and developed its assessment tools based on alignment to the learning standards, the curriculum, the school's performance goals, and predictive value for performance on accountability measures such as the Smarter Balanced Assessments. Every item provides meaningful and purposeful information. An articulated assessment calendar ensures that data is collected systematically throughout the year. NCSE will incorporate an amalgamation of formal and informal benchmark, formative, and summative assessment, statewide measures, interim assessments, diagnostic and predictive evaluations, commercially developed unit tests, internally designed supplemental assessments, norm-referenced measures, and informal measures such as portfolios, observations, and interviews. Data garnered from these multiple measures will be used for purposes that include: monitoring individual student, cohort, and school-wide progress towards established benchmarks and standards for achievement; informing instructional pacing and flexible groupings; allocating appropriate resources and personnel to maximize students' success; providing diagnostic, identification, and prognostic indicators, particularly for students who may require special services, are at-risk, or exhibit limited English proficiency; ongoing professional development of staff; and evaluating program, instructional, and curriculum effectiveness. As the state assessments measure students' mastery of grade level learning standards at the conclusion of each year, they also provide a vehicle for determining students' readiness for grade level promotion and graduation from the school's program.

Teachers will maintain ongoing anecdotal records for each student and store quantitative data in a school-wide data management program that will provide quick and manageable access to compile data reports, aggregate and disaggregate information, and conduct various analyses thereof. The leadership team will conduct weekly meetings with staff to increase proficiency in the use of data, develop expertise in monitoring student learning, and informing all relevant stakeholders of students' academic achievement. The leadership team will coordinate with the school's Board of Trustees to monitor school-wide achievement, evaluate instructional, curricular and assessment programs, and make any necessary decisions for modifications. This will also allow the Board to maintain appropriate oversight of the school's educational programs.

As a school that intends to open with grades PK-1 and grow one grade level each subsequent year, NCSE will not have students eligible for the third grade Smarter Balanced state exam until the 2021-22. The school is preparing to provide an assessment program that is aligned to the CCSS, the curriculum and educational philosophies, and will prepare students for success on the Smarter Balanced assessments. The assessment program will also include appropriate measures to prepare students for the computer-adaptive testing model, with coinciding training for teachers and staff. Between now and 2021, NCSE will continue to closely monitor the CSDE's guidance and regulations to ensure that the educational program will lead to successful outcomes and authentic measures of student achievement. The school's initial year's testing data from statewide mastery exams will allow the school to consider results in a statewide and district-wide context when comparing NCSE's student performance with that of their peers. Subsequent years will provide data over a period of time to identify performance trends from year to year. These will provide particularly valuable data as it relates to performance and program evaluations.

The assessment table provided in Section I.5e provides a list of the assessments that NCSE is considering for implementation, as well as information on the administration calendar. As illustrated, the items include a vast array of purposeful and informative measures that provide real-time data to drive instructional decisions. These include ample measures to guide intervention and remediation of students who are not meeting established achievement targets.

b. Explain how the assessment system ensures the participation of all students, including those students identified as requiring special education, in the appropriate Smarter Balanced Assessments, Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) Science and SAT and/or other alternate assessments for students through the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) process.

Norwalk Excellence will comply with all policies, procedures, and guidelines for administering Connecticut's state examinations, including the appropriate assessments and accommodations for students with disabilities per the Smarter Balanced assessment guidelines, students' IEPs and the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) process. These include the use of the universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations permitted by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium's "Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines"⁴⁹ protocols and in accordance with students' IEPs and the PPT. NCSE will continue to monitor these guidelines as they may be revised based on state experience and research findings.

As the current guidelines stipulate, all students will be held to the same participation and performance expectations on the state exam. Embedded and non-embedded universal tools will be available to all students, designated supports will be made available when indicated by an adult or team, and accommodations will be provided to students pursuant to students' IEPs or 504 plans. For students with special needs, these decisions will be made by the PPT. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet specific criteria may be permitted to take an alternate assessment for ELA and/or math based on alternate achievement standards. Exceptions will also be made for English learners who are enrolled in their first year of school in the United States. NCSE will follow the state's guidance for alternate assessments based on modified achievement standards (AA-MAS) and participate in any training the state or consortium offers.

As NCSE proposes to open with grades PK-1 in its inaugural year and add a grade level in each subsequent year, the school will not have a third grade class eligible for the Smarter Balanced Assessments until the year 2021-22. This will allow the school to make any necessary adjustments to the assessment program in order to ensure all students are adequately prepared for the exam and testing format. NCSE is preparing to provide an assessment program that is fully accessible in accordance with state guidelines and will prepare students for success on statewide assessments. The assessment program will also include appropriate measures to prepare students for the computer-adaptive testing model, with coinciding training for teachers and staff.

While statewide mastery exams will provide performance data at the end of each year, NCSE will employ an ongoing assessment model that allows the school to provide immediate remediation and ongoing monitoring of progress. Norwalk Excellence will use real-time data to identify the instructional needs of students, develop flexible daily small group configurations to target instruction, and provide comprehensive Tier I interventions to all students. NCSE will utilize all requisite statewide assessments as well as other items from the school's catalog to target concepts and skills for remediation. Groupings are based on student profiles created from the various assessments, as well as item-analyses to target specific instructional content. NCSE will also implement diagnostic tools to identify specific student needs for supportive services such as ESL, Title I, or Special Education services. Results from these assessments provide key indicators of student progress in areas such as English language proficiency, achievement of IEP goals, and targeted needs for differentiated instruction. The school will continue to work with the PPT to ensure that adequate provisions are aligned to promote and monitor student achievement.

⁴⁹ Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. (2013). Smarter balanced assessment consortium: Usability, accessibility, and accommodations guidelines. Retrieved from http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/SmarterBalanced_Guidelines_091113.pdf

Support staff members, such as the Learning Specialist or special education teachers, use data to identify the particular needs of the students they serve and adjust instruction to accommodate special needs. Data will also be shared with the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) to ensure that students are identified for special services, making progress towards IEP goals, and to evaluate the school's special programs. As a member of the leadership team will play a role in the PPT, this data will also be shared with the Board to ensure that students are receiving adequate support in compliance with their learning programs.

c. Explain how the assessments will be used to determine, monitor, and report individual student, cohort, and school progress over time. In particular, please describe a purposeful approach for measuring student progress toward achieving academic and non-academic goals tied to the school's mission and educational priorities.

As a school that utilizes a data-driven approach to instruction, information collected from the school's various assessments play a vital role in the educational programs. NCSE will utilize multiple measures to monitor and report individual student, cohort, and school progress over time. The school will administer a variety of formative, summative, informal, formal, diagnostic, and prognostic assessments. Data garnered from these assessments will be used to inform instruction, monitor individual, cohort, and school-wide performance, allocate resources and personnel, direct any special services that individual students may require, and guide any adjustments to the curriculum and instructional program of the school. All teachers will maintain anecdotal records that document student performance on classroom assessments. Quantitative data will also be recorded in the school's data management system. Data is analyzed by item, in the aggregate to gauge school-wide performance, and disaggregated by student, class, cohort, teacher, and subject. Grade level teams will be responsible for individual student performance as well as grade level cohort achievement. Data gathered from various assessments and evaluations will be analyzed by the Principal and discussed with grade level teams and instructional support personnel during weekly meetings to monitor individual and cohort performance, provide differentiated instruction for all content areas, and develop flexible groupings in reading and math. In order to provide truly challenging and rigorous instruction within the zone of proximal development, teachers must assess students' current knowledge and skills and establish growth targets. Subsequent assessments will be administered to ensure adequate progress and inform next steps of instruction. During common planning periods, teachers will also analyze the instructional implications to optimize student learning. This allows teachers to consistently monitor individual and cohort progress towards established goals and uniquely tailor instruction to support student success.

Within each classroom, teachers use a variety of informal assessments to check for students' understanding and attainment of lesson objectives. These include conferencing with individual students, Exit Tickets which help teachers gauge mastery of lesson objectives, projects, science fairs, essays, oral presentations, writing assignments, and unit tests. The instructional staff will develop powerful and rigorous grading rubrics for less formal assessments, such as presentations, projects, and writing assignments. Teachers will review data and recalibrate these grading rubrics as needed each summer to ensure that they not only meet, but also exceed state standards.

An added benefit of maintaining ongoing real-time data is the ability for leadership to identify where any instructional or curricular gaps occur, and to implement corrective measures immediately. For example, if a classroom data profile shows that all students have mastered the week's objectives except for one student, then it is possible that the gap is associated with the individual student. From here, the teacher can investigate if the gap is due to absences, learning differences, or other contributing factors and provide remediation accordingly. An item analysis for the class may reveal that a group of students did not acquire a particular skill or concept.

Thus, the teacher must revisit the topic to ensure that all students master it. However, if the gaps persist over time and/or within the same subject material or subgroup, this would indicate a more profound issue involving the curriculum. In this case, the leadership team would work with the instructional staff to make any necessary adjustments. Further, the data can also help to identify areas of strength where individual students or classes might pursue deeper investigations into the content. But unless a school fully utilizes and understands the implications of such analyses, instruction is merely subject to follow a schedule without ensuring that students truly master the content.

At Norwalk Excellence, data will be collected and analyzed on multiple levels and used in conjunction with the curriculum framework to ensure that instruction is responsive to students, while also addressing the learning standards and objectives. Data analysis can also provide information, not just about the “what”, but the “how”. For example, teachers may use informal assessments to develop daily small group configurations within the classroom, while the Learning Specialist might use data to facilitate remediation that crosses grade levels. We also know that students learn and express themselves in various modalities, so the data may indicate that a teacher needs to take a new approach to delivering the content. Furthermore, the analyses might reveal common mistakes that are repeated by certain individuals, resulting in a greater need to focus on test-taking strategies or vocabulary.

Parents will also be regularly informed of their child’s progress through report cards, progress reports, conferences, and other means of communication. Report cards are a direct reflection of student progress based on data and provide a quantitative snapshot of students’ performance. They provide an excellent tool for parents to gauge and monitor their child’s progress. Report cards will be distributed at the conclusion of each trimester, accompanied by parent and teacher conferences. Parents will also receive progress reports every two to four weeks to provide ongoing information. This way, there are no surprises when report cards arrive, and families can monitor their child’s ongoing progress and collaborate with teachers to ensure that students receive the support they need. Teachers will also be responsible for communicating with parents on a regular basis through communication folders, email, phone calls, and face-to-face meetings. These communications help to foster a collaborative approach to supporting scholars.

Prior to each meeting of the Board of Trustees (BOT, Board), the school’s governing council, the Principal will compile school-wide data reports to share with the Education and Accountability Committee of the Board and the Board at large. These data reports will help the leadership team and Board monitor the school’s ongoing progress towards academic and non-academic goals in relation to the school’s mission and educational priorities. Norwalk Excellence will utilize its school-wide standards and performance benchmarks matrix to measure student progress throughout the school year. Based on student performance, the leadership team and Board of Trustees will make decisions about resource allocations, curriculum, and instructional strategies that will be implemented school-wide.

In addition to academic data, NCSE will collect and monitor other statistics to measure progress towards non-academic goals. These include: daily attendance records; enrollment figures; attrition and retention rates; financial statements; disciplinary referrals; family survey results; parent engagement rates; community partnerships; fifth grade graduation rates; admission rates to next-tier schools; and records of compliance. These are critical for ensuring appropriate oversight and governance by the Board of Trustees. The leadership team will prepare comprehensive reports prior to each Board meetings that includes both academic and non-academic data to keep the Board apprised and ensure that the school is implementing sound educational, operational, and financial practices with fidelity to the school’s mission and vision.

d. Describe how the school will use student assessment data to improve curriculum and instruction.

In addition to the descriptions in previous sections that describe how data will be used to develop, improve, and revise curriculum and instruction, NCSE will use data to manage and monitor the school’s overall performance. The school’s leadership team will use data with other stakeholders, such as the Board of Trustees and its Education and Accountability Committee, to ensure adequate gains toward school-wide goals. During the school’s planning year and in subsequent operational years, NCSE may refine and/or modify its assessment program in accordance with SDE’s guidance to ensure progress is effectively monitored towards and prepares students for the computer-adaptive testing model. In addition to the assessments, parents will also receive regular reports of their child’s progress throughout the year. Further, NCSE will administer annual surveys, create parent focus groups, form a Parent Association, maintain an open door policy for parents to speak with school leaders and staff members, reserve a seat on the Board for a parent representative, and monitor statistical data such as attendance and retention rates to assess parent satisfaction. These strategies provide a valuable exchange of information to maintain open dialogues with the families of Norwalk Excellence, and also provide another indicator of the school’s program effectiveness.

The teaching faculty will analyze data during weekly meetings with the leadership team to inform classroom instruction and flexible groupings. Short-term adjustments may be made to the curriculum units in accordance with students’ progress and needs. The leadership team will compile school-wide data to report to the Board and analyze its implications towards curriculum, instruction, and personnel decisions. Based on students’ performance towards school-wide goals, the Board and leadership team may also implement short-term adjustments. At the conclusion of each year, all data will be thoroughly vetted by grade level chairs and school leaders to evaluate the curriculum and instructional strategies. Based on student achievement data, NCSE will devise improvement plans for implementation the following school year. Moreover, staff may also need to modify curriculum units and resources over the summer. Any adjustments made will be reflective of students’ needs, the state standards, the Smarter Balanced assessments, CSDE’s guidelines, and the pursuit of continual improvement.

e. Provide an assessment calendar and explain how the calendar provides opportunities for remediation. Please include a plan to address the needs of students who do not meet established achievement targets.

The following table describes the types of assessments and its uses that will be considered to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning:

Type of Assessment or Evaluation	Curriculum and CCSS Alignment	Frequency	Accessibility & Communication to Stakeholders (Staff, students, parents, and Board)	Evaluating & Reporting Program Effectiveness (Accountability Goals)	Influencing Program Design Decisions	Influencing Instructional Decisions
Connecticut Smarter Balanced for ELA and Math	X	Annually	X	X	X	X
Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments	X	Three – Four times per year	X	X	X	X

Type of Assessment or Evaluation	Curriculum and CCSS Alignment	Frequency	Accessibility & Communication to Stakeholders (Staff, students, parents, and Board)	Evaluating & Reporting Program Effectiveness (Accountability Goals)	Influencing Program Design Decisions	Influencing Instructional Decisions
Connecticut Alternate Assessment	X	Annually (as needed)	X	X	X	X
English Language Proficiency: LAS-Links	X	Annually (as needed)	X	X	X	X
NGSS/ CMT/CAPT Science Test	X	Annually	X	X	X	X
MAP (Measures of Academic Progress)	X	Twice per year	X	X	X	X
DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment)	X	Four times per year	X	X	X	X
Locally Developed Assessments	X	Weekly	X		X	X
Commercially Developed Assessments, Units Tests, Quizzes	X	Every 2-6 Weeks	X		X	X
Informal Teacher Assessments: Check for Understanding	X	Daily: Every Lesson	X		X	X
Benchmark Assessments	X	Three times per year	X	X	X	X
Writing Assessments	X	Every 2-6 Weeks	X		X	X
Early Childhood Outcomes, Child Find, and other Diagnostic Screenings	X	Annually	X	X	X	X

As indicated in the table, Norwalk Excellence will use a variety of measures to monitor student progress annually and throughout the year. The use of various measures provides multiple data points and allows us to examine each scholar's progress from multiple perspectives. The assessments provide key indicators to inform instruction and individualized differentiation. Our plan to address the needs of students who do not meet established achievement targets are discussed throughout the narratives, including Sections I.4b and 5c.

f. Describe the proposed school's plan to share student learning practices and experiences with the local or regional board of education of the town in which the proposed charter school is to be located.

Educating children and wanting the best for our children is not unique to Norwalk Excellence. We believe in a collaborative approach to education – one that involves all stakeholders: the children, parents, extended families, and the broader community. One school cannot do this alone. This is why we believe in extending hands to our district and community partners for collaboration and support.

Much like our model schools, we will seek opportunities for collaboration. From 2013-2016, Bronx Excellence participated in a three-year, New York state-funded partnership with a local priority struggling district school through a state Dissemination Grant to share best practices and resources for improved literacy instruction in the early childhood grades. Additionally, the staff also engaged with fellow charter schools and charter organizations to advance the movement by sharing charter-specific knowledge and best practices at statewide and national conferences, as well as participating in a variety of advocacy events. Moreover, Bronx Excellence and Stamford Excellence welcome visits from prospective parents, legislators, funders, community members, and existing and potential school operators to observe practices firsthand and learn about the services we provide to our families.

Our model is deeply committed to evidence and research-based innovative practices as a component of educational reform. Dr. Charlene Reid, one of our founders and the chief designer of the model, frequently publishes and shares her findings in educational journals. She recently collaborated with her former Director of Research and Evaluation to publish in the Spring/Summer 2017 issue (Vol. 27, No. 1) of the School Community Journal for their article titled, “A Case Study of Elementary School Parents as Agents for Summer Reading Gain: Fostering a Summer Leap and Holding Steady”. The article provides an in depth analysis of the benefits of partnering with parents to continue to promote reading development during the summer months and to prevent the summer slide. While this was not a direct collaboration with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, closure, or restructuring, it does illustrate one of the ways she is committed to developing and disseminating an evidence-based body of research to support the improvement of struggling schools.

Our proposed and model schools are organizations of excellence. We have a deep desire to constantly improve our academic model and operations. We will adopt a “test and learn” approach or R&D methodology that is guided by rigorous research designs, which we will use to innovate our academic model regularly. This approach to R&D allowed Bronx Excellence to test innovative ideas in a controlled manner. At the smaller scale, this creates an immediate impact upon practices, informs policy decisions, and confirms the validity of best practices. It has a more widespread and potentially national impact on teacher pedagogy and practices, and a distal impact with scaled school-wide implementation. At a larger scale, research findings may be disseminated in presentations at regional and national conferences, and through publications in education and academic journals. While our immediate concern is in improving our model at our schools, through publications and presentations we will also be able to have a more global impact on other schools, higher education, and other educational partners.

We are deeply committed to collaborating with both our public and non-public peer schools in order to share best practices and afford all families with high quality educational options, regardless of their child's school of enrollment. Our model schools target communities that host several priority, struggling, persistently struggling, and persistently dangerous schools, some of which are on the brink of shuttering or conversion. Despite their efforts and best intentions, these schools have continued to struggle to meet the needs of their children, their families, and their communities. Because we believe that every child deserves access to high-quality educational

programs, we consider it our civic duty to extend a collaborative hand to our local and regional boards of education in an effort to share practices that have proven successful for the children and families we serve. We will also share our best practices through our annual state reporting, as is customary of all public charter schools in the state of Connecticut. Norwalk Excellence is committed to the relentless pursuit of excellence and intends to seek opportunities to share best practices that will allow all children to flourish, particularly those who are educationally disadvantaged. We also hope to engage other schools and partnerships that will enhance the services we provide to our scholars. As a true community school, we look forward to building meaningful partnerships within Norwalk School District and state to improve the educational outcomes for all children.

SECTION II: STRENGTH OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORT**1. Experience and Expertise of Founders**

a. *Provide a list of the founding group members that developed and designed the application for the proposed school, as well as resumes detailing the background, relevant experience, knowledge and expertise, and/or qualifications of each founding member.*

The founding group is comprised of 3 diverse individuals who are committed to the establishment, mission, and vision of Norwalk Excellence, as well as the collective experience and expertise that shaped the model schools. Together, the founding members represent over 50 years of professional and educational experience. Each individual contributes specialized expertise in the fields of Education, Administrative Leadership, Policy, Development, and Research to enhance the school model. The founders are listed below along with a brief summary of their qualifications. Resumes and Curriculum Vitae are included as Appendix A.

Quentin Phipps, Director of Advocacy and Policy. Quentin “Q” Phipps is a lifelong Connecticut resident. After graduating from the Middletown Public School system, Quentin attended Bryant University of Smithfield, Rhode Island. Shortly graduation, Quentin worked in community banking in Hartford’s Northend. In 2012, “Q” embarked on a new professional career path in not-for-profit management and was named Executive Director of the Middletown Downtown Business District. As director for the DBD, he launched Middletown’s first Middletown Restaurant Week. Currently, Quentin serves Excellence Community Schools as their Director of Advocacy and Policy. In this role, “Q” works as a registered lobbyist, recruits students, and most importantly empowers Excellence Community School families through advocacy, community organizing, and strategic partnering.

Quentin was named “40 Under 40” in Fairfield County Business Journal (2017) Hartford Business Journal (2015) and Connecticut Magazine (2013) for his professional and volunteerism achievements. “Q” was a American Council for Young Political Leaders Russia Delegate (2016). Quentin takes great pride in his involvement with numerous charitable and service organizations. He serves on the Young Elected Official Network Black Caucus Treasurer, Oddfellows Playhouse Youth Theater Board of Directors, Middlesex United Way Board of Directors, Middlesex Substance Abuse Action Council Board of Directors and as an active member in Cross Street Zion A.M.E.Church, Middletown Young Democrats, The Community Foundation of Middlesex County Live Local Give Local 365 Fund, and the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals Alliance (steering committee). Quentin is a former Columbus House (formerly Red Cross) Chocolate to the Rescue event Chair. “Q” has also served on the board of directors for Middlesex Historical Society and Mount Saint John Academy and president of Connecticut Young Democrats.

In 2007, Quentin filled a vacancy on the Planning & Zoning commission. In 2009, he was unanimously elected Chair of the Planning & Zoning Commission. Quentin was first elected as City Treasurer in 2011 and was most recently re-elected in 2015.

Charlene Reid, Executive Director. Dr. Charlene Reid is the Executive Director for the Stamford Charter School for Excellence. Dr. Reid is entering her 20th year as an educator. After earning a BA in Political Science and an Ed.M. in Elementary Education from UCLA, she began her career as a teacher leader in South Los Angeles. Dr. Reid also earned an M.Ed. in Educational Leadership from Columbia University, Teachers College before serving as an assistant principal and principal in the Bronx and Harlem. In 2007, Dr. Reid became the Principal and Head of School at the Bronx Charter School for Excellence (BCSE), where she spearheaded the turnaround of a school on the brink of closure. BCSE was subsequently recognized as the highest

performing K-8 non-magnet public school in New York State, and in 2012 was distinguished as a U.S. Department of Education National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. Dr. Reid was awarded a Cahn Fellowship for outstanding New York City principals at Columbia University, Teachers College in 2011, and later earned a Doctorate in Education, Ed.D. in 2016 from the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education.

Tanya Pierre, Chief Academic Officer. Tanya Pierre has over 20 years of professional experience in the education field as a teacher and teacher leader. After receiving her Bachelor of Arts from Rutgers College, she was accepted into the Teach For America program. Later she earned a Master's Degree in Education from Teachers College at Columbia University. Ms. Pierre has taught students in kindergarten through eighth grade and achieved some of the highest performance scores in New York State. She has also served as a Grade Leader, Literacy Coach, Academic Dean and Director of Teaching and Learning. Currently, she is the Chief Academic Officer for Excellence Community Schools where she supports the network in developing and implementing high quality educational practices and programs.

Monica Rios, Regional Director of School Operations. Monica Rios began working at Bronx Charter School for Excellence as an Office Assistant in November 2006. Within a relatively short period of time, Ms. Rios moved up in rank becoming the Office Coordinator, Office Manager, Operations Manager and now our current Regional Director of School Operations. As Regional Director of Operations, Ms. Rios' primary responsibilities include managing the Bronx and Stamford school lottery and admissions process, State and Charter compliance reporting, student transportation and student lunch program. Ms. Rios is a graduate of the State University of New York College at Oswego. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration.

Aya Wakamatsu, Director of Development. As Director of Development for Excellence Community Schools, Ms. Wakamatsu leads and executes the organization's fundraising and marketing strategies. Her primary initiatives include broadening the network's donor programs, developing marketing materials, providing direct school support, and writing grants, reports, and charter applications. With over 20 years of experience in education, she also served as the Director of Special Projects providing school-based and network support. Prior to joining the organization, Ms. Wakamatsu was the Program Coordinator for the Northeast Charter Schools Network, providing operational and administrative support to the Connecticut office branch. Here she was responsible for tasks that included budget development, grant writing, event coordination, and advising school leaders within New York and Connecticut. She was also a consultant for eight years serving independent charter schools and organizations throughout New York, Connecticut, New Jersey and North Carolina. Ms. Wakamatsu's services included authoring charter applications, assessment development, data analysis, staff recruitment, site visits and reporting, school performance solutions, gap analysis workshops, and professional development presentations. Ms. Wakamatsu earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and completed the teacher preparation program for art education at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, PA. She later attended graduate courses towards her Masters in Elementary Education at Wilmington College. Ms. Wakamatsu obtained dual certification in both Elementary and Art Education. She taught at two urban charter schools and has over eleven years of teaching experience working in early, elementary, and adult-based education.

b. Identify which members intend to serve on the governing council of the proposed school. In addition, please describe whether members of the founding group anticipate moving into

another role or relationship (employee, consultant, etc.) with the proposed school and, if so, how many.

Norwalk Excellence will be governed by a Board of Trustees (BOT, Board, the governing council for the school) comprised of 5-20 members, which will establish policies and provide oversight in collaboration with the school's leadership team to manage and provide oversight of the school's operation. Norwalk Excellence will be in compliance with C.G.S. Section 10-66mm-3, which prohibits the sharing of Board members with other charter schools. Although the founding members will continue to provide support to the school, particularly during start up, at this time, none of the founding members will serve on the NCSE Board and none intend to be employed in a position within the school. Founding members will continue to support Norwalk Excellence by providing their expertise until the BOT is officially elected and constituted. As NCSE believes in providing total transparency with the authorizer, the following table lists each founding member and their affiliations with the model schools.

Founding Member	Title/Affiliation
Quentin Phipps	Director of Policy and Advocacy – Excellence Community Schools Community Relations Manager - Stamford Charter School for Excellence
Charlene Reid	CEO Excellence Community Schools Executive Director, Founding Member - Stamford Charter School for Excellence
Tanya Pierre	CAO Excellence Community Schools Founding Member – Stamford Charter School for Excellence
Monica Rios	Regional Director of Operations - Excellence Community Schools Founding Member – Stamford Charter School for Excellence
Aya Wakamatsu	Director of Development – Excellence Community Schools

c. Identify any organizations, agencies or consultants that are partners in designing or establishing the proposed school. Please include a brief description of their role and any resources they have contributed or plan to contribute to school development. If the founding team is partnering or planning to partner with an organization, please include evidence demonstrating the organization's record of student achievement and ability to operate a high-quality school.

Although NCSE has been modeled after the Bronx Charter School for Excellence and shares that model with Stamford Excellence, NCSE will be a separate and self-sufficient entity. While both have graciously shared resources and documents that have aided in the founding group's understanding of their model, NCSE has not partnered with any organizations, agencies, or consultants to design or establish the school. During NCSE's planning year, the founding Board may consider establishing a relationship with other organizations to share resources such as Board or professional development and back office support. These contracts will only be cemented after careful screening and examination of the potential partner.

Mr. Quentin Phipps is a lifelong resident of Connecticut and proponent for school choice. He has played an active role in engaging with community members and in outreach in Norwalk. Mr. Phipps has been involved in advocacy and frequently works with parent groups to provide guidance to ensure their voices are heard by their state and local representatives. For this application, Mr. Phipps is the primary contact, and conducted outreach to local Norwalk organizations and prospective parents, to include the Norwalk Housing Authority, members of the local board of education, and residents.

Mrs. Tanya Pierre was a founding teacher and administrator at Bronx Excellence, and a

member of the founding team for Stamford Excellence. She has played a prominent role in shaping the academic program upon which Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will be based. Mrs. Pierre's contributions informed the academic portions of the application.

Ms. Monica Rios was also an original staff member of Norwalk Excellence's model school, and was a founding member of the Stamford Excellence applicant team. Ms. Rios has extensive knowledge of operational management for both New York and Connecticut, and has supported this proposal by providing her expertise.

Ms. Aya Wakamatsu is also a proponent for providing access to high-quality educational options, particularly for families residing in high-needs communities. As a former educator, she now works in support of a growing network of schools aiming to uplift communities and provide students with pathways to college and chosen careers. Ms. Wakamatsu has worked with several groups in compiling charter applications, including those for Bronx Excellence replications and Stamford Excellence. She is the primary narrator for the model upon which Norwalk Excellence is based.

Dr. Charlene Reid has acted as a lead contributor to the design and application of the proposed school. Dr. Reid was originally hired in 2007 as the Principal of BCSE, which, at the time, was in its third year of operation and struggling to meet accountability goals. Dr. Reid played a pivotal role in establishing the systems and programs that transformed BCSE from a struggling school to a 2012 National Blue Ribbon Award recipient. The changes and improvements she instituted were immediately apparent upon her appointment. Dr. Reid was later promoted to Head of School and is currently Executive Director for Stamford Excellence. All resumes are incorporated in Appendix A.

2. School Governance and Management

Pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-66aa, a charter school is organized as a nonprofit entity operated independently of any local or regional board of education, in accordance with the terms of its charter. The responsibilities of the charter school's governing council include, but are not limited to: developing and implementing policies; hiring qualified personnel to manage the school's day-to-day operations and holding them accountable for meeting established goals; and establishing a long-range plan that will ensure the school's continued stability and financial viability.

- a. Indicate the structure of the governing council, including officers, members (distinguish between voting and non-voting ex-officio members), and length of terms and committees (denote the officers or members on each committee). Please include an organizational chart that encompasses the governing council, council committees, and employees of the proposed school.*

Norwalk Excellence will establish a clear organizational structure of the Board of Trustees (governing council), staff, systems, and procedures, compliant with its charter, applicable laws and regulations, which support the daily operations of the school. Each stakeholder will have clearly defined roles, regulating policies and procedures, and mechanisms for evaluating effectiveness. All aspects of these components will work cohesively to provide students with a learning environment aligned to NCSE's mission and vision, and that is focused on the healthy academic, social, and physical development of the students.

Upon receiving its initial certificate of approval and pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) § 10-66a, NCSE will obtain federal recognition as a non-profit entity. NCSE will be governed by a Board of Trustees, comprised of 5-20 volunteers with expertise in a variety of fields that will contribute to the effective oversight of the school and its programs. Parent and teacher representatives will be non-voting members serving one-year terms. The term for all

other members will be three years, and staggered to prevent simultaneous term expiration for all members. Formation of the Board will take into consideration the student population and the needs within the community of the school's location. Therefore, its formal composition will commence after the school's initial charter certificate has been approved, and, in part, as the school begins recruitment and facilities construction. The founding Board will not include any of the founding members. The Board will target the following approximations for composition:

- Up to 15 voting volunteer members of the Norwalk community representing a vast array of expertise and constituents that will contribute to and enhance the Board's effective governance. Areas of expertise that the Board will seek include, but are not limited to: Education, finance, marketing, real estate, development, and law.
- 1 non-voting parent representative (likely the President of the school's Parent Association, once formed)
- 1 non-voting teacher representative, likely a grade level leader, once staff is hired
- 1 Representative of the Norwalk Board of Education, or designee thereof

The Officers of the Board will consist of a Board Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and a Treasurer. The Board may also elect additional Officers for ad hoc committees and task forces as needed. The Chair will nominate and the Board will elect the Officers annually, or as vacancies occur. Each Officer will serve at the pleasure of the Board, holding office until resignation, removal, disqualification from service, or until a successor is named.

The Board will maintain four standing committees that include Executive, Education and Accountability, Development, and Finance Committees. (Section II.2e provides further elaboration on the roles of each committee.) Each standing committee will be comprised of at least 3-5 Board members. The Executive Committee will include all Board Officers as well as ex officio members that represent the school's leadership team. The Education and Accountability Committee will include Board members whose expertise include an understanding of the school's educational programs, student achievement data, and its implications on the school's academic goals. The Development Committee will include Board members whose expertise are within real estate, law, and community relations. The Finance Committee will minimally include the Board Treasurer. As additional needs arise, the Board will create additional ad hoc committees and task forces. Non-Board members may also be recruited to support these task forces as non-voting members, to include additional parent, staff, and community members. This allows for the Board to include individuals with particular fields of expertise to contribute their skills to enhance the functions of the task force. It also allows the Board to build interest for future and potential additions to the Board.

NCSE's organizational chart, attached as Appendix B, illustrates the defined accountability and reporting lines for the Board, its committees, and staff. All Trustees and employees will abide by the terms of NCSE's governing documents and applicable laws and regulations that govern the operation of a charter school. For the Board of Trustees (BOT), this includes the By-laws, Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest policies, and Open Meetings Law. For employees, this includes employment offer letters, financial policies and procedures, and Personnel Manuals/Staff Handbook. The Board and leadership team will remain cognizant of their responsibilities to oversee the School's operation in accordance with the approved charter and regularly consult with the School's independent legal counsel, CT SDE, and other local charter support entities in every effort to maintain compliance. A draft of the proposed By Laws has been attached as Appendix C.

b. Describe the criteria for selecting officers and members of the governing council.

The founding members will strive to recruit mission-aligned volunteers whose fields of expertise will enhance the Board's effective oversight of the school. Initial members will be recruited and appointed by the founding members through professional and personal affiliations, and recommendations from local and community networks. Every member will possess and contribute a range of expertise, skills and experience to oversee the academic, organizational, and fiscal performance of the school. Their professional and voluntary leadership experiences may include: charter schools, elementary education, law, public policy, financial management, marketing, school administration, data analysis, real estate/facilities development, community relations, and fundraising. The Board will routinely assess its capacity for providing effective oversight. When a Trustee resigns, the Board will recruit, nominate, and induct the new member in accordance with the Board election and orientation process described in the draft Bylaws. New members of the Board will, similarly, be recruited through professional, personal, and network affiliations based on the Board's needs-assessment. Minimally, the Board will seek to recruit individuals who exhibit the following characteristics:

- A commitment to providing a high quality charter option for the families of the Norwalk community
- Mission- and vision-aligned
- Prepared to attend and contribute to all Board meetings
- Invested in supporting school-wide efforts, to include developing resources, attending major events, researching community-based partnerships, and fundraising
- Ability to contribute to one or more functions of the committees and make decisions that serve the best interests of the students, staff, and organization, to include analysis of student achievement data, financial reports, and real estate developments
- Committed to advocating on behalf of students, families, staff, community, and charter schools
- Dedicated to elevating the quality of education for every student, family, and the community

Once the initial Board of Trustees is constituted, members will finalize the Bylaws and other governing documents, and will develop a strategic plan for further development of the Trustees, staff, policies, and school. The Board will also participate in Board development trainings and retreats to optimize capacity.

The Officers of the Board will consist of a Board Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and a Treasurer. The Board may also elect additional Officers for ad hoc committees and task forces as needed. The Chair will nominate and the Board will elect the Officers annually, or as vacancies occur. Officer roles will be determined based on each individual's experience, expertise, and ability to execute the duties of each role. Each Officer will serve at the pleasure of the Board, holding office until resignation, removal, disqualification from service, or until a successor is named.

- Chair . Subject to Board control, the Chair has general supervision, direction and control of the affairs of the organization, and such other powers and duties as the Board may prescribe. If present, the Chair shall preside at Board meetings.
- Vice Chair . If the Chair is absent or disabled, the Vice Chair shall perform all the Chair's duties and, when so acting, shall have all the Chair's powers and be subject to the same restrictions. The Vice Chair shall have other such powers and perform such other duties as the Board may prescribe.
- Secretary . The Secretary shall: (a) keep or cause to be kept, at the organization's principal office, or such other place as the Board may direct, a book of minutes of all

- meetings of the Board and Board Committees, noting the time and place of the meeting, whether it was regular or special (and if special, how authorized), the notice given, the names of those present, and the proceedings; (b) keep or cause to be kept a copy of the organization's Charter and Bylaws, with amendments; (c) give or cause to be given notice of the Board and Committee meetings as required by the Bylaws; and (d) have such other powers and perform such other duties as the Board may prescribe.
- Treasurer . The Treasurer shall: (a) keep or cause to be kept adequate and correct accounts of the organization's properties, receipts and disbursements; (b) make the books of account available at all times for inspection by any Trustee; (c) deposit or cause to be deposited the organization's monies and other valuables in the organization's name and to its credit, with the depositories the Board designates; (d) disburse or cause to be disbursed the organization's funds as the Board directs; (e) render or cause to be rendered to the Chair and the Board, as requested but no less frequently than once every fiscal year, an account of the organization's financial transactions and financial condition; (f) prepare or cause to be prepared any reports on financial issues required by an agreement on loans; and (g) have such other powers and perform such other duties as the Board may prescribe.

Additionally, the school will maintain legal representation on retainer as needed. Once the school is in operation and the staff and Parent Association (PA) have been established, the Norwalk Excellence Board will nominate and appoint one parent representative for membership. The Board will ask the PA President, or designee thereof, to represent the parent constituency as a non-voting member. The Board will seek an individual who is invested in the continual improvement of the school and its programs, but who also has relevant knowledge and experience that can enhance Board membership. The PA President will serve at the Board's pleasure for approximately one-year terms, which may be extended to two years to coincide with the term of PA President.

A teacher representative will also be nominated and appointed with consultation from the Principal. This individual will likely represent a secondary leadership role, such as a grade level leader or Learning Specialist. The candidate must demonstrate proficiency and experience within the academic model, and the ability to represent his/her peers. Additionally, as board meetings may also entail discussions of sensitive matters, it is crucial that the teacher candidate demonstrate the ability to model the highest levels of professionalism and discretion. As with the parent representative, the teacher must have relevant knowledge and experience that will enhance the role of the board. This individual will serve at the Board's pleasure for approximately one-year terms. As the Board of Trustees is constituted and evolves over the years, it will continually ensure that a broad range of skills and expertise are represented for effective oversight and stewardship of the school.

- c. *List the individuals who would serve as officers and members of the governing council; include their names, relevant experience, and/or qualifications for serving on the council, as well as their relationship to the community in which the school would be located. Please note that the council should include the involvement of teachers, parents, and the chairperson of the local or regional board of education of the town in which the proposed school would be located, or the designee of such chairperson, provided such designee is a member of the board of education or the superintendent of schools for the district or his/her designee.*

As Norwalk Excellence is proposing to open in the fall of 2019, Board members have not yet been appointed. Presently, the founding members do not intend to serve on the Board, but have committed to identifying members who will. The founding members are listed in Section II.1a,

along with a brief summary of their qualifications and their affiliations to the school community. Their resumes and Curriculum Vitae are included as Appendix A.

Initial Board members will be recruited and appointed by the founding group through professional and personal affiliations, and recommendations from local and community based networks, such as ConnCAN, the Northeast Charter Schools Network, the Urban League of Southern Connecticut, Hispanic Advisory Council, the Norwalk Housing Authority, and the local chapters of the NAACP. The founding members have been working to develop further interest and relationships within the Norwalk region to establish a pool of candidates for Board recruitment. Upon initial charter approval and during the school's planning year, founding members will recruit and appoint the Board's Trustee members and Officers. Additionally, the school will elicit the support of the Chairperson of the Norwalk Board of Education, or a designee thereof, to serve as a member of the school's governing council.

Once the school becomes operational, the Board will recruit parent and teacher representatives. Members and Officers will be targeted based on the criteria listed in Section II.2b and recruited, nominated, and appointed in accordance to the draft and finalized Bylaws.

d. Describe the plan to appoint subsequent officers and members to the governing council.

Please detail the recruitment, selection, and removal procedures.

The Board will strive to maintain consistency and stability in its membership. As vacancies arise, the Board will conduct a needs assessment to determine what fields of expertise, personal qualities, and criteria need to be fulfilled. The Board will identify candidates through personal and professional affiliations, and through recommendations by local and community networks. The processes for recruiting and selecting subsequent officers and members will be similar to those described in Sections II.2a-c. Representatives of the Board will meet with the potential candidate, and if the person exhibits the desired characteristics, the individual's resume and qualifications will be reviewed and carefully vetted. The Board will nominate and vote for the individual's election based on the person's eligibility as measured by the criteria listed in Section II.2b. If needed, the Board will create a committee for recruiting and nominating candidates. This screening process will be facilitated democratically and the responsibility for vetting will similarly be allocated to the entire Board.

Trustees will be elected by the vote of a majority of Trustees then in office. The Board may elect any person who in its discretion meets the criteria and will serve in the interests of the students and organization faithfully and effectively. All Trustees must also willingly subject to essential background checks, release forms, and complete conflict of interest documents to full satisfaction and compliance. All members must minimally be 21 years of age. No more than 49% of the persons serving on the Board may be "interested persons", indicating any individual (or familial relation thereof) who is currently or within the previous 12 months has been compensated for services by the organization.

When a Trustee resigns or a term expires, the Board will recruit, nominate, and induct the new member in accordance with the Board election and orientation process outlined in the draft Bylaws. New members will be provided with an orientation process that includes a copy of the school's charter, a school tour, a copy of the Bylaws and other governing documents, and CT charter law. Additional supportive documents such as policy manuals and handbooks, data dashboards, and annual reports may also be furnished to familiarize the inductee to the school's model and current performance. In order to build capacity within the Board, the BOT will participate in one or several Board Development trainings as well as strategic planning sessions.

Officer positions will be determined as the Board begins to compose its members. The Board Chair will nominate and the Board will elect officers annually or as vacancies occur. A Trustee may hold any number of offices, except that neither the Secretary nor Treasurer may serve

concurrently as the Board Chair. Each Officer shall hold office until resignation, removal, disqualification from service, or until a successor is elected. Nominations to the Board Offices will be determined from within the Board's composition and based on the individuals' ability to serve in each capacity as described in the draft Bylaws and Sections II.2a-c of this narrative.

In the event that an individual must be removed from the Board outside of normal term expiration, the removal will be a Board decision. If the disqualification from service is related to a legal or ethical infraction, the Board will immediately suspend all privileges and powers held by that member and hold an emergency meeting in consultation with legal expertise to determine the next course of action. The removal of such Board member will be voted upon in emergency executive session, and the person shall likely be counseled to resign unless other legal ramifications are required. The Board reserves the right to remove any Officer or member at any time in accordance with Education Law. Such removal will not prejudice the individual's rights. Similarly, a Board member or Officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board Chair, with resignation taking effect upon receipt of the letter or at a later date specified by the notice.

e. Describe how the governing council will exercise oversight and responsibility for the overall operation of the school, including, but not limited to, educational programs, governance and fiscal management, personnel, facility maintenance, and community outreach. In addition, please explain how the governing council will hold the proposed school accountable to both parents and other stakeholders.

The Norwalk Excellence Board of Trustees (BOT, Board) is the steward of the school's charter and the governing body of the academic, organizational, and fiscal programs and policies of the school. The BOT's primary responsibility is to develop the policies and framework for the school, while delegating the school's day-to-day decision-making and supervision to the school's leadership team. The Board will remain fully compliant with all applicable laws, regulations, and governing documents, including its By-laws, Conflict of Interest policies, and the Open Meetings Law. The Board will perform its primary functions in committees, and each committee will be responsible for reporting to the full Board. All reports will be included in the living documents that record the Board's ongoing documentation of activities and decisions.

Standing committees include an Executive, Education and Accountability, Finance, and Development Committees. Each standing committee will be comprised of at least 3-5 Board members. As needs arise, the Board will create additional ad hoc committees and task forces. Non-Board members may also be recruited to support these task forces as non-voting members, to include additional parent, staff, and community members. The authority of the standing and special committees and their respective roles and responsibilities are described as follows:

Authority of Committees

The Board may delegate to a Board committee any of the authority of the Board, except with respect to:

- a) The election of Trustees;
- b) Filling vacancies on the Board or any committee of the Board;
- c) The fixing of Trustee compensation for serving on the Board or on any committee;
- d) The amendment or repeal of Bylaws or the adoption of new Bylaws;
- e) The appointment of other Board committees, or the members of the committees, and
- f) The amendment or repeal of any resolution of the Board, which by its terms shall not be so amendable or repealable.

Executive Committee

An Executive Committee shall consist of not fewer than five (5) Trustees who shall consist of the Chair, Vice Chair, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and such one or more other members of the Board as may be elected by the Board of Trustees. The Chair shall chair the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall have full authority to act between meetings of the Board of Trustees, except to the extent as limited by law or specified by the Board of Trustees. A majority of the members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of its business. The Executive Committee shall oversee operations of the school, with the assistance of the Principal. The Executive Committee shall also make recommendations with respect to internal governance of the Corporation by providing a review of the adequacy of the Certificate of Incorporation and the By-Laws of the school and recommending to the Board, as conditions dictate, amendments to the Certificate of Incorporation and By-Laws for consideration by the Board. The Executive Committee shall also be responsible for the periodic evaluation of the performance of the Principal and be responsible for recommending to the Board reasonable compensation and benefits for the NCSE's leadership team. In addition, the Executive Committee shall be responsible for the receipt, retention, investigation and action upon complaints and concerns of Trustees, officers and employees.

Education & Accountability Committee

The Education and Accountability Committee will have and exercise authority of the Board with respect to all academic aspects of the school including, but not limited to, the school's accountability plan and the school's adherence to state academic standards.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall exercise general supervision over the financial affairs of the school including consideration of all proposals referred to the Finance Committee by the Board of Trustees regarding the revenue or the property of the Corporation. The Finance Committee shall exercise supervision over the state of the assets, the debt, the revenue and the receipts and expenditures of the Corporation; report the conditions thereof and render opinion and advice thereon; and also appoint subcommittee(s), if necessary, to carry out any of the Committee's responsibilities and duties. The Finance Committee shall also review the annual budget prepared by management and recommend such budget to the Board of Trustees for approval by the Board; authorize the giving of appropriate receipts for property delivered or debts or moneys paid to the school; and authorize the sale, assignment, transfer or other distribution of any stocks, bonds, mortgages or other securities in the name of the school upon such terms and in such a manner as may be deemed advisable. The Finance Committee shall prescribe from time to time the place and manner of safekeeping of the investments of the Corporation, including the manner of access thereto and withdrawal thereof; authorize the deposit of moneys in banks or trust companies approved by the Committee and to prescribe the manner of withdrawals of such moneys; and to authorize the borrowing of money by the Corporation.

Development Committee

Development committee will guide the schools' fundraising goals based on an annual strategic plan. The strategic plan can include a capital plan to lease, purchase or renovate facilities, establish goals to supplement operating revenues to enhance programming, and prepare events to actively fundraise.

Special Committees

The Board may appoint special committees. Special committees will have only the powers specifically delegated to them by the Board. The members of special committees shall be appointed by the Chair of the Board with the consent of the Board. In the absence or disqualification of a member of a special committee, the member or members thereof present at any meeting and not disqualified from voting, whether or not such person or persons constitute a quorum, may unanimously appoint another trustee to act at the meeting in place of any such absent or disqualified member.

Once the founding Board is established, members will develop a metric of accountability goals and benchmark targets throughout the year. The Board will utilize a schedule of deliverables used to measure and monitor progress towards monthly, quarterly, and annual performance benchmarks. The Board will convene formally at a minimum of six times per year, and through its committees and subcommittees, a minimum of each month, to discuss the school's academic, organizational, and fiscal progress, as well as long- and short-term goals and priorities for resource allocation. At each meeting, the Principal will provide a comprehensive and detailed report that covers all aspects of the school's operations. Additionally, each committee will report on their respective activities. Based on the information and data that is compiled for the meetings, the Board will collaboratively review the school's academic, organizational, and fiscal performance, discuss the implications, and develop or adopt recommendations for improvement. For example, the school's Finance Committee and the Finance & Operations Manager (FOM) will provide information regarding the school's financial performance in accordance with the school's policies through statements, comparing the approved budget to actual year-to-date and year-end projections, enrollment and marketing data, cash flow projections, and audits. The Board will also hire an independent auditing firm to review the school's financial status at the conclusion of each fiscal year. The Education and Accountability Committee will present student achievement data, analyze progress against year-end goals, and discuss those implications to the Board. Based on these discussions, the committee will provide recommendations to the Board to ensure further improvement and resource allocations. The Principal and FOM may discuss issues in Personnel or Facility improvements, while the Development Committee may report on community outreach efforts. Each of these committees and task forces will be responsible for keeping the Board apprised of the school's ongoing performance. Any deliberations that require Board decisions will be conducted through a majority vote, which will represent a quorum, at Board meetings. Board decisions, whether held openly, in committees, or in executive session, will be recorded in the meeting minutes, approved by the Board, and posted on the NCSE website.

Norwalk Excellence is cognizant and embraces its accountability to a variety of constituents. NCSE will establish a clear organizational structure of the Board, staff, systems, and procedures, compliant with its charter, applicable laws and regulations, which support the daily operations of the school. Each stakeholder will have clearly defined roles, regulating policies and procedures, and mechanisms for evaluating effectiveness. All aspects of these components will work cohesively to provide students with a learning environment aligned to NCSE's mission and vision, and that is focused on the healthy academic, social, and physical development of the students. The Board will maintain oversight of the school's overall performance and establish clear policies and procedures, while delegating the implementation and management of day-to-day operations to the school's leadership. In turn, the leadership team and FOM will be directly accountable to and responsible for providing comprehensive reports to the Board to keep members apprised.

In accordance with Connecticut's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Open Meetings Law, NCSE will ensure appropriate access to information and notice of public meetings as permitted by law. The Board will ensure that it provides public notice of all scheduled meetings and posts meeting minutes and agendas to the school's website. Board members and contact information will also be provided on the school's website. The school will reserve a seat on the Board for a parent to provide a vehicle for the exchange of valuable insight. Additionally, the Board will develop a means to survey parent satisfaction and opportunities to elicit feedback. The school will be responsible for reporting student progress and keeping parents apprised through a series of scheduled report cards, progress reports, and conferences, as well as through phone calls, emails, flyers, mailers, and other forms of communication. The school's leadership team and parent Board representative will provide a means for communication between the Board and parents and Parent Association. There will be a clear system for parents to file grievances. As described in subsection (c) of C. G. S. § 10-220, the governing council will annually submit comprehensive school profile and progress reports to the Commissioner of Education.

The school will have legal representation on retainer to assist in all legal matters and to review all policies and procedures. Additionally, the Board will have parent and teacher representatives to ensure that all perspectives are taken into account.

The Executive Committee will meet as needed to reflect upon the Board's overall performance in areas that include the quality of information garnered from various reports by the principal and committees, Board member engagement, progress toward accountability goals, and any potential areas of vulnerability. Trustees will also conduct needs assessments as vacancies occur in seats to maintain a Board that reflects sufficient skills and expertise for effective oversight. Board representatives will maintain frequent and regular dialogues with the principal to ensure adequate support measures are intact. Board members will also visit the school site to gauge the overall school climate, and attend celebratory events that highlight students' achievements. The Board's governing documents and effective oversight are designed to ensure the success of Norwalk Excellence, and fidelity to the mission and vision of the school.

f. Describe the authority the governing council will delegate to the school's administrator. Explain the process by which the council and administration will make decisions and provide evidence of the distinct roles and responsibilities of council officers, members, committees and school administration.

The BOT is the steward of the school's charter and the governing body of the academic, organizational, and fiscal programs of the school. The BOT's primary responsibility is to develop the policies and framework for the school, while delegating the school's day-to-day implementation, decision-making and supervision to the school's Principal. The Board will be responsible for hiring and evaluating the Principal. Under the general direction of the Board, the Principal will be responsible for the development, operation and the general management of the activities and services of Norwalk Excellence, as well as community and public relations. Specific duties and responsibilities will include the following:

1. Give direction and leadership to the achievement of the organization's mission and the formulations of its annual goals and objectives
2. Work with the Board of Trustees and staff to develop and implement policies, procedures, and long-range strategic plans
3. Oversee and manage the leadership team and staff
4. Oversee administrative and financial operations, and all personnel matters (design of staff and organizational structure, hiring and firing responsibilities, etc.)
5. Prepare and, following Board approval, administer the annual budget
6. Ensure compliance with the NCSE charter

7. Oversee the management of the overall operation of school facilities
8. Pursue and secure private revenue sources through a variety of fundraising mechanisms to ensure a balanced budget
9. Develop and maintain a working partnership with representatives of the Norwalk business community
10. Keep informed of trends, issues, events and developments within the local city, state, and national charter school field through professional peer contacts, conference attendance, and other networking opportunities and affiliations
11. Participate in an annual performance evaluation process established by the Board of Trustees
12. Ensure the safety and well being of the children and staff of the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence

The Principal will be responsible for ensuring that all policies and systems are effectively implemented for the school's daily operation. S/he will have the authority to hire or remove staff to effectively run the school and will work with the Board and its committees to ensure the educational and operational programs result in achievement of the school's goals. The Principal will also be responsible for ensuring that all educational and operational programs are implemented with fidelity to the school's mission, vision, and philosophies. The Principal may delegate responsibilities to the school's secondary leadership, which includes Deans, Grade Level Chairs, Finance & Operations Manager, and the Learning Specialist (Special Education Coordinator). The school's administrators collectively manage the performance of students and staff and report progress to the Board.

The BOT maintains oversight and remains apprised of the School's daily operations through reports from the Principal and Board Committees distributed for each Board meeting, school visits, emails, phone calls, and regular dialogue. Prior to each Board meeting, the Principal will prepare detailed dashboard reports providing comprehensive data on the school's academic, operational, and fiscal health. This includes student achievement data, personnel matters, and enrollment revenue. As necessary, the Principal also works with the FOM and Finance Committee to prepare, review, and analyze monthly financial reports for presentation to the Board that illustrate the school's fiscal performance including financial statements, budgets, audits, cash flow, and P&L reports. The Principal and FOM will attend all Board meetings and at the Board's discretion. This regular exchange of information will guide the Board and administration in making informed decisions about resource allocations and policy revisions to support the school's fidelity to its mission and vision, and successful achievement of school-wide goals.

The delineation of roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder (Board officers, members, committees and administration) are clearly articulated in the governing documents to which each stakeholder must abide. For example, the Board, its committees and officers will abide by the Bylaws and Conflict of Interest policies, while the school staff will adhere to the Staff Handbook and respective job descriptions. Drafts of these guiding documents have been attached (Appendix C – Bylaws, Appendix D – Conflict of Interest policies, Appendix E - Key Personnel Job Descriptions, Appendix I – Sample Financial Policies and Procedures Manual).

The Board will be responsible for developing and adopting the academic, organizational, and financial policies for establishing the systems for the school's success. The Board will also establish performance goals and benchmarks for the school, monitor and evaluate progress towards targets, and allocate resources for successful progress. The Committees will compile data and reports as evidence towards established goals and report to the Board at large. Additionally, the Committees will be responsible for researching and identifying resources to promote optimal growth. The Officers of the Board will preside over the general actions of the

Board and its committees to ensure that all projects and initiatives are carefully recorded, managed and resolved. The school's administrators will be responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of the policies and systems on a day-to-day basis and report to the Board and its committees. The leadership team will include the Principal, Deans, and the Finance & Operations Manager. These individuals will also have delineated roles and be responsible for managing, supervising, training, and evaluating their respective staff members who operate under their supervision. (The organizational chart is attached as Appendix B). The Board will be responsible for recruiting, screening, hiring, and evaluating the school leader. In turn, the school leader will recruit, screen, hire, evaluate, and develop staff members.

Decisions will be made in a similar fashion. The Board will establish the guidelines while the school leader will make day-to-day management decisions within these guidelines. Further descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of key personnel, to include the school leadership team, are included as Appendix E.

g. Describe the criteria and process by which the governing council will hire and evaluate the school's administrator(s).

During NCSE's planning year of 2018-19, the Board of Trustees may establish a contract with a hiring firm to screen and develop an initial pool of candidates, and may also elicit the support of the school's founding members and community affiliations to support the search for the school's lead administrator. Once the initial candidates are identified, the Education and Accountability Committee of the Board will assume the responsibility of performing the initial round of screening. This may include phone and face-to-face interviews, researching the candidates' credentials, and performance tasks or scenarios that reflect how the candidates would manage specific responsibilities in their roles. The Committee will, then, present its recommendations to the full Board, which will vote by majority to hire the incumbent. Ideally, the appointee will be hired by January of 2019.

In accordance with Connecticut's System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED), NCSE's Board will conduct a formal performance evaluation of the Principal annually. Based on the SEED model, the Principal's evaluation will include an orientation to the process, a goal-setting conference, evidence collection, observations of performance, a mid-year formative review, and an end-of-year summative review. The Principal's summative rating will be a composite of the following components:

- Multiple student learning indicators – Student performance or growth (45%)
 - Student performance or growth on state-administered assessments (22.5%)
 - Student performance or growth on locally determined indicators (22.5%)
- Teacher effectiveness outcomes (5%)
 - Improving the percentage of teachers who meet the student learning objectives or other locally-determined measures
- Leadership practice evidence (40%)
 - Based on evidence collected about leadership practice as described in the Common Core of Leading: Connecticut School Leadership Standards (Vision, Mission, and Goals; Teaching and Learning; Organizational Systems and Safety; Families and Stakeholders; Ethics and Integrity; The Education System)
- Feedback from stakeholders (10%)
 - Annual Teacher, Parent, and Students (5th grade) Surveys

The Board may also add additional feedback that corresponds to the performance expectations outlined in the job descriptions, to include: School/Organizational Morale, School/Organizational Improvement, Personnel Management, Student Management, School or Community Relations,

and Professional Growth and Development. The Board will ensure that the evaluation process is SDE approved and meets the guidelines for Educator Evaluation and Development. The Board will utilize the model to determine the Principal's goal setting, ongoing development, and contract renewal or termination.

h. For applicants planning to partner with an organization: Detail any plans to contract with an organization and explain why the organization was chosen to assist with the proposed school.

If the governing council of the proposed charter school intends to contract with a charter management organization for whole school management services, include a description of the following:

- A. Evidence of the charter management organization's ability to (i) serve student populations that are similar to the student population that will be served by the proposed charter school, (ii) create strong academic outcomes for students, and (iii) successfully manage nonacademic school functions.*
- B. A term sheet that sets forth (i) the length of the contract for whole school management services, (ii) the roles and responsibilities of the governing council of the proposed charter school, the staff of the proposed charter school and the charter management organization, (iii) the scope of services and resources to be provided by the charter management organization, (iv) the performance evaluation measures and timelines, (v) the compensation structure, including a clear identification of all fees to be paid to the charter management organization, (vi) the methods of contract oversight and enforcement, and (vii) the conditions for renewal and termination of the contract.*
- C. Evidence of compliance with the provisions of C.G.S. § 10-66tt.*

Currently, Norwalk Excellence does not plan to partner with an organization, but after the Board of Trustees is established, the members will decide if partnering with an organization would be beneficial for its academic and organizational success. In addition, as opportunities for growth and improvement arise, the Board may see fit to collaborate on special projects, such as professional development, financial consulting, real estate development, after-school programs, or research studies, for greater efficiency, improved resources, and economies of scale. Likewise, additional collaborations may be developed with local advocacy groups, state and national charter associations, non-profit organizations, and community-based organizations. If the Board determines that the school would benefit from support services from another organization, upon initial charter approval and establishment as a non-profit incorporation, NCSE will consider a collaboration and amend its charter to reflect any potential contract or letter of understanding that will define the services, responsibilities and fee structure of the relationship. In all respects, the Board will ensure that any future contracts with organizations are carefully vetted, ethical, and serve the best interests of the students, school, and community.

3. School Leader

a. For applicants with an identified school leader: List the name of the individual who would serve as the lead administrator of the proposed school as well as his or her qualifications, experience, certifications and education. In addition, please provide evidence that demonstrates whether the individual has a record of leading a high-quality school.

Norwalk Excellence has not yet identified a school leader.

b. For applicants without an identified school leader: Present a plan for attracting and hiring a lead administrator with a proven track record of success. Please describe the characteristics and skills that the proposed school will look for in recruiting and selecting a leader.

NCSE will hire a Principal within 6 months of the school's opening in the fall of 2019. The school will contract with a hiring firm and seek support from founding members and network affiliations to identify the initial pool of candidates. However, the Education and Accountability Committee will screen the Principal candidates through a series of interviews, credential reviews, and performance tasks. Minimally, the incumbent must demonstrate and/or possess the following attributes:

- CT-092 School Leader License
- Master's Degree in Elementary Education, or comparable field
- Minimum 1 year of previous experience as a school-based leader (i.e. Principal, Assistant Principal, Academic Dean, etc.)
- Minimum of 7 years of successful teaching experience at the elementary level
- Track record of accomplishment and achievement
- Aligned to NCSE's mission, vision, and philosophies
- Experience with and commitment to improving the quality of urban education, specifically for economically disadvantaged and minority students
- Demonstrates ability to manage, lead, and foster collaboration with professional staff, students, and the community
- Ability to collaborate and build relationships with parents and community stakeholders
- Exemplifies and upholds professional standards of conduct
- Organized, resourceful, and able to manage multiple tasks and deadlines
- Relentless pursuit to foster and promote excellence in academic and conduct
- Strong knowledge of curriculum and instruction
- Ability to evaluate instructional program and teaching effectiveness
- Ability to manage budget and personnel
- Ability to coordinate campus functions
- Ability to interpret policy, procedures, and data
- Strong organizational, communication, public relations, and interpersonal skills

Once the ideal candidate is identified, a final recommendation will be made to the Board for approval of the Principal's appointment. The evaluation process will follow the SEED model, and may include additional feedback reflective of the Principal's performance expectations outlined in the job description attached in Appendix E.

4. Evidence of Support

a. Illustrate the scope of community support for the proposed school. Please provide evidence through letters of support, surveys, petitions or other means, the endorsement of teachers, parents, students, business, community members and/or institutional leaders; such evidence of support must be current or recent.

Letters of endorsement and evidence of community support have been attached as Appendix F.

SECTION III: STUDENT COMPOSITION, SERVICES AND POLICIES**1. School Demographics**

a. *Describe the community and the student population to be served by the proposed school and the needs of the population.*

Norwalk Charter School for Excellence (NCSE, Norwalk Excellence) seeks to provide the families of the Norwalk region with a high-quality educational option that unites all stakeholders in its vision of transforming the educational landscape and providing more equitable opportunities for all students. Norwalk School District currently has 12 elementary schools and one early childhood center, which opened in 2016 and consolidated eight pre-kindergarten programs at five schools into one. Norwalk also hosts one other charter school for grades PK-8. This means that there are currently only two pre-K public school options for the families of the Norwalk region. Norwalk Excellence has received tremendous support from several community members, some of whom have graciously provided letters of endorsement, which are included as Appendix F.

On October 26, 2016, the Norwalk Board of Education presented a School Facilities Feasibility Study⁵⁰, in part to determine if existing and planned school facilities and educational program capacities would sufficiently address the projected population growth in the district. The most likely projections forecast an overall population growth of 3% by 2025-26. In order to support the equitable distribution of students in the district, the study actually recommended the expansion, renovation, and opening of new PK-8 schools to alleviate enrollment pressure and overcrowding, particularly in South Norwalk. Our proposed launch of Norwalk Excellence in 2019-20 would minimally help to bridge capacity shortfalls in the short-term, and support the growing need for more high-quality, equitable PK-8 program options in the long-term.

Additionally, several of our strategies and goals are directly aligned to those outlined in Norwalk Public Schools' "2016-19 Strategic Operating Plan: Working Together to Raise the Bar and Close the Gap"⁵¹. These include increased focus on K-3 literacy initiatives, ensuring all students are on track to graduate through personalized instruction, purposeful use of assessments, and high quality pre-kindergarten. Our proposal also addresses two specific strategies mentioned in the Plan of creating educationally robust choices for parents and students to meet diverse needs and interests: Developing more schools of choice and the contemplation of a charter school proposal. As Norwalk Excellence seeks to develop a positive relationship with the host district, we believe that our school can work within the greater scope of the district's growing need for high quality options.

As described in Section I.1b, the CSDE has identified Norwalk School District as a Priority/Alliance School District for its fifth year, making it one of thirty lowest-performing schools in the state. The district met its DPI target for the 2015-16 administration of the Smarter Balanced state exam for ELA for non-high needs students, but fell short of Connecticut's targets for minority, low-income, disabled, and non-English proficient students. The district also demonstrated a disparity between high needs and non-high needs performance that exceeded the state mean gap plus one standard deviation in ELA, thus making it an outlier. This highlights the achievement gap that persists in the Norwalk School District, which NCSE intends to address. While the school does not intend to grant enrollment preferences to any particular subgroup,

⁵⁰ Norwalk Public Schools Board of Education. (2016, October 26). Modern schools for a growing city school facilities feasibility study – 2016-17 project planning. [Presentation]. Retrieved from https://norwalkps.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_71596/File/departments/Facilities/October%2026,%202016%20Meeting%20at%20Nathaniel%20Ely%20Center.pdf

⁵¹ Norwalk Public Schools. (2016). *2016-19 Strategic operating plan: Working together to raise the bar and close the gap*. Retrieved from https://norwalkps.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_71596/File/Strategic%20Plan/FINAL%202016-2019%20Strategic%20Operating%20Plan%2008162016.pdf

NCSE anticipates a student population that is reflective of the community it will serve and will concentrate particular efforts to attract and retain comparable or greater percentages of children whose needs have not been met by district schools.

The following tables illustrates the demographic composition of Connecticut and Norwalk city:

Demographic Composition – Connecticut and the City of Norwalk⁵²		
Category	CT	Norwalk City
Population, 2016 estimate	3,576,452	88,438
Population, 2010	3,574,114	85,622
Persons under 5 years, percent 2010	5.7%	6.9%
Persons under 18 years, percent 2010	22.9%	22.0%
White alone (2010)	77.6%	68.7%
Black/African American alone (2010)	10.1%	14.2%
American Indian, Alaska Native alone (2010)	0.3%	0.4%
Asian alone (2010)	3.8%	4.8%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander alone (2010)	--	0.1%
Two or more races (2010)	2.6%	2.8%
Hispanic, Latino (2010)	13.4%	24.3%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino (2010)	71.2%	55.7%
Foreign born persons (2011-2015)	13.9%	25.7%
LOTE at home, percent ages 5+ (2011-15)	21.9%	35.5%
HS grad or higher, % persons ages 25+ (11-15)	89.9%	88.5%
Bachelors degree or higher, ages 25+ (11-15)	37.6%	41.0%
Median household income (11-15)	\$70,331	\$76,987
Persons below poverty level, % 07-11	10.5%	8.4%

As illustrated in the above table, Norwalk represents a higher population of minority and foreign-born residents who speak a language other than English in the household than statewide averages. The city also shows a higher median household income than state averages and a slightly lower percentage of persons living below the poverty line.

The next table illustrates the demographic composition of Norwalk School District for 2015-16 as compared to state averages:

Demographics – Norwalk School District 2015-16⁵³			
Category	Norwalk SD (PK-12)		State
	#	%	%
Total	11,409	100%	--
American Indian, Alaska Native	12	0.1%	0.2%
Asian	563	4.9%	4.9%

⁵² United States Census Bureau. (2016). *Quick facts: Norwalk city* [Data files]. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/norwalkcityconnecticut/SBO030212>

⁵³ Connecticut State Department of Education. *District profile and performance report for school year 2015-16: Norwalk School District*. Retrieved from http://edsight.ct.gov/Output/District/HighSchool/1030011_201516.pdf

Black/African American	1,989	17.4%	12.8%
Hispanic or Latino	4,958	43.5%	23.0%
Pacific Islander	10	0.1%	0.0
Two or more races	221	1.9%	2.7%
White	3,656	32.0%	55.9%
English Learners	1,585	13.9%	6.4%
Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Meals	5,752	50.4%	38.0%
Students with Disabilities	1,466	12.8%	13.7%

Here, we observe a higher percentage of minorities, English learners, and students eligible for free or reduced priced meals than state averages. As noted, NCSE will expend every effort to enroll comparable percentages of low-income, minority, disabled, and English Learners that are reflective of the community. Upon approval, NCSE will launch a well-devised recruitment plan that will target families in these underserved communities. This plan is described in greater detail in Section III.4b.

CSDE's District Profile and Performance Reports for 2015-16 (the most recently available for all districts) and the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, Inc. Town Profiles for 2017 provide data for the following demographic comparisons between Norwalk and the 4 border towns directly surrounding Norwalk. They include: Darien, New Canaan, Wilton, and Westport.

Demographic Composition – Norwalk and Bordering Towns					
Category	Norwalk	Darien	New Canaan	Wilton	Westport
District Data (2015-2016)⁵⁴					
Total Enrolled	11,409	4,884	4,227	4,173	5,714
Free/Reduced Lunch	50.4%	1.7%	0.0%	1.3%	4.0%
English Learners	13.9%	0.2%	1.1%	0.4%	0.7%
Students with Disabilities	12.8%	12.8%	9.9%	13.5%	10.5%
Race/Ethnicity					
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Asian	4.9%	4.2%	5.6%	9.1%	6.3%
Black/African American	17.4%	0.7%	1.3%	1.0%	1.7%
Hispanic	43.5%	4.4%	3.9%	3.3%	4.6%
Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Two or more races	1.9%	1.7%	1.9%	2.5%	3.2%
White	32.0%	88.8%	87.0%	83.7%	84.1%
Total Minority	68.0%	11.2%	13.0%	16.3%	15.9%
Other Statistics					
4 Yrs. Graduation Rate (14-15)	89.6%	96.7%	99.0%	96.1%	98.7%
Per Pupil Expenditure (2014-15)	\$17,220	\$18,918	\$20,138	\$19,253	\$20,217
Priority/Alliance District (Y/N)	Y	N	N	N	N
Citywide Data⁵⁵					
Poverty Rate (2011-15)	8.4%	5.4%	2.5%	3.1%	4.7%

⁵⁴ Connecticut State Department of Education. (2016). *District profile and performance reports for school year 2015-16* [Data files]. Retrieved from <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>

⁵⁵ The CT Data Collaborative. (2017). *CERC town profiles* [Data files]. Retrieved from <http://profiles.ctdata.org/profiles/download>

Educational Attainment, Age 25 years+ (2011-15)					
High School Graduate	25%	8%	8%	6%	11%
Associate Degree	6%	3%	4%	5%	3%
Bachelors degree or higher	41%	80%	76%	77%	77%
Median household income (2011-15)	\$76,987	\$208,906	\$168,311	\$172,095	\$162,907

This table illustrates that Norwalk educates significantly higher percentages of minority, low-income (free or reduced lunch eligible), and non-English fluent populations, and yields slightly lower graduation rates than those of the surrounding communities. Norwalk residents' median household income is two to three times less than those of its neighbors, and the community has a higher poverty rate and lower percentage of residents with a bachelors degree or higher. The district also receives less funding per pupil to educate its students. This table illustrates the drastic shifts that occur demographically within a 20-mile radius, and further exemplifies the racial/ethnic and economic isolation of Norwalk, which NCSE strives to improve for future generations. These efforts are further described in Section III.4c.

The next table illustrates the aggregate performance by students in each district on the 2016-17 SBAC as compared to statewide averages.

Aggregate Performance Comparisons – Percentage of Students Performing At or Above Level 3⁵⁶						
Subject	CT	Norwalk	Darien	New Canaan	Wilton	Westport
Reading	54.2%	48.4%	84.7%	87.9%	75.9%	80.7%
Math	45.6%	39.3%	80.9%	85.1%	69.1%	74.3%

As depicted, Norwalk School District posted the lowest percentages of students performing at a level 3 or 4 on the test for reading and math. This means that there are fewer students in Norwalk meeting grade level expectations than their peers in the surrounding communities. Coupled with the tables in Section 1.1b illustrating the achievement gaps in Norwalk School District, this table illustrates the need for better outcomes and more equitable opportunities for Norwalk's children.

Norwalk students have universal needs, which must be addressed to improve outcomes, which NCSE intends to provide. They include:

- A safe, reliable, learning environment that embraces diversity and alleviates social, media, and economic pressures that can distract and prove harmful to students
- Nurturing, responsible, and holistic support
- A highly accountable culture so no students slip through the cracks
- A rigorous curriculum and individualized instructional strategies that foster high achievement for all students
- Determination for continuous improvement
- Social-emotional and character development that inculcate core values, resilience, acumen, positive attitudes, productive work habits, and effective problem solving
- Opportunities for creativity, innovation, artistry, and enrichment
- A small learning environment where all stakeholders build lasting relationships that support student success

⁵⁶ Wentzell, D. (July 14, 2017). *State test scores up slightly in mathematics [Press Release]* Retrieved from http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/smarter_balanced_results_2016-17_press_release.pdf

- Coordination and mobilization of efforts from all stakeholders to empower students to succeed

By developing a culture that embraces diversity and provides equitable opportunities for excellence, NCSE will deliver a premiere education grounded in research-based best practices and modeled after a nationally recognized and field-tested program that eliminates the disparities in student achievement among its special populations, economically disadvantaged and minority students.

b. Describe how the educational program provided by the proposed school will address the needs of the student population.

NCSE strives to be a high-quality public school option for the students, families, and community of Norwalk. Unlike the performance trends of current public school options that have revealed achievement gaps for traditionally underserved populations, success at NCSE will not be determined by race, native language, socio-economic status, or disability. NCSE will offer a comprehensive PK-5 program that utilizes a holistic approach to cultivate lifelong scholars equipped with the skills, knowledge, and habits for success in high school, college, and chosen careers.

Upon approval, NCSE will launch a well-devised recruitment plan to elicit the enrollment of a diverse population reflective of the Norwalk region. The recruitment plan will include outreach in communities populated by families of lower socio-economics, English language learners, and families of children with special needs. NCSE anticipates that students will enter the school from an array of backgrounds and with a spectrum of learning needs. The school has deliberately been designed to address the needs of diverse learners, entering the program with a variance in skills, knowledge, strengths, and deficits.

Similarly, NCSE will optimally recruit and employ a staff with records of promoting student achievement, and complimentary skill sets that will enhance the programs of the school. While NCSE will seek the most qualified candidates based on experience and potential, the school hopes to attract a faculty that will also reflect diversity of race/ethnicity, gender, cultural backgrounds, professional experience, educational levels, and expertise.

The educational program at NCSE has been specifically designed to allow multiple points of entry, providing accessible and supportive, yet challenging and rigorous instruction that targets every student's needs. The success of NCSE will rely heavily on the versatility of the curriculum and instructional strategies that are tailored to maximize students' learning potentials. At NCSE, students will learn through research-backed best practices that foster student engagement and achievement at the highest levels. Each classroom will have certified and highly qualified teachers, with reduced teacher-to-student ratios. As indicated throughout the application (specifically Sections I.4 and I.5), instruction will focus on the use of real-time data to inform flexible, differentiated, instructional groupings uniquely tailored to each student. Every child will have a personalized learning plan that provides evidence of the student's achievements, strengths, areas in need of improvement, goals, and progress. This applies to the most accelerated learner in the class, to the most reluctant and struggling student, to the student who is learning English, and the student who has special needs. The heterogeneous classrooms will provide an inclusive environment that supports the needs of all learners using sophisticated approaches and abundant resources to diversify learning experiences for all scholars. Additionally, NCSE will alleviate racial, social, and economic pressures that detract from learning and healthy development with comprehensive programs and strategies, including a uniform policy, character development, celebration of cultures, and supportive resources. Those resources will include counseling, health management, and interventions for special needs. NCSE will utilize and continue to develop upon the knowledge and experience of Stamford and Bronx Charter Schools for Excellence's

programs, as well as its fellow Blue Ribbon schools, district and charter peers, and the broader educational community.

NCSE will offer ongoing and embedded professional development for teachers to maximize their use of data and continually improve instructional effectiveness. Much focus will be dedicated to differentiating instruction to optimize students' potentials and using research-based best practices and educational philosophies, such as Bloom's Taxonomy and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, to increase the depth and breadth of learning. A smaller school and class setting will allow NCSE to provide intensive support to the students and families of the school. NCSE will also promote a welcoming, safe, and nurturing, yet highly accountable culture that fosters the development of professional relationships between students and teachers to increase the direct contact teachers have with their students, thereby promoting student accountability for learning and conduct. Increased instructional hours and dedicated blocks for remediation and enrichment all provide additional time on task for students to benefit from direct instruction from teachers. Whenever possible, the liberal arts curriculum at NCSE will provide opportunities for interdisciplinary instruction and enrichment that promotes creativity, innovation, and artistry, further concretizing students' understanding of instructional content.

The school will be responsible for providing children with a quality instructional program that results in high student achievement. However, the responsibility for supporting the children as they grow and learn will be that of *all* stakeholders. NCSE will cultivate interconnected partnerships among all of its constituency groups and cultivate a community of collaboration. Each group will have guiding documents (such as Board Bylaws, Family Handbooks, and Staff Handbooks) that delineate a clear set of responsibilities for each group, be it students, staff, families, Board members, or community members, and provide a multitude of opportunities to actively engage in the school community. NCSE will ensure that all constituents work cohesively in the unified vision of delivering a premier program for the children that transforms the educational landscape of Norwalk.

c. Describe the grade range and ages the proposed school will serve, including grade levels upon opening and the growth plan for each year covered by the desired charter. Please provide a rationale for the enrollment plan, including reasons for choosing to serve the specified grades.

NCSE is proposing a comprehensive PK-5 program for its initial charter term. The school will begin its inaugural year in 2019-20 with 168 children in grades PK-1, and add one grade level each subsequent year until the school grows to capacity by Year 5 as a PK-5 program. Each grade level will consist of two classes per grade with approximately 28 students in each class totaling 56 students per grade level. Pursuant to the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section 10-15c, all students entering kindergarten must be five years of age on or before January 1st of that school year. Therefore, NCSE will open pre-kindergarten enrollment to all children who will reach the age of four on or before January 1st. This will ensure that NCSE maintains compliance with age and grade eligibility as students naturally advance chronologically in age as they progress to subsequent grade levels. With the average age of Pre-kindergarten students being 3-4 years of age, and the normal progression of one year per grade level thereafter, NCSE students' ages range in typical manner as with their traditional public school peers in grades PK-5. The following table illustrates the school's projected growth plan reflecting the grade range and ages proposed:

Grade	Ages	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
PK	3-4	56	56	56	56	56
K	4-5	56	56	56	56	56
1	5-6	56	56	56	56	56
2	6-7		56	56	56	56
3	7-8			56	56	56
4	8-9				56	56
5	9-10					56
TOTAL	3-10	168	224	280	336	392

The conservative growth plan will allow time for the school to solidify school operations during start up, but will afford some growth with cost containment. These figures were determined after careful consideration to optimize the instructional program, staff, facility, and budget. Careful analysis of enrollment revenue supports the full functions and operations of the school, while still allowing for reduced student-to-teacher ratios, optimal use of facility space, and small group/individualized time with students. Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-66bb(c), NCSE submits Appendix J to request a waiver of the charter school total enrollment limit.

Although the school anticipates that attrition rates will be nominal, NCSE is prepared to fill any vacancies left open by students lost through attrition at all grade levels from the applicant waiting list.

As established in Section I.1b, Norwalk is in need of high quality educational options, particularly at the elementary school level, to mitigate the risk factors that have led to achievement gaps that have permeated Norwalk's district schools. Norwalk currently hosts only one other elementary charter school option for the families in the surrounding communities. The rationale for the enrollment plan coincides with the advantages of providing an educational program that reaches children at an early age, which are multifold.

There is abundant research that supports the benefits of providing quality educational programs for children at an early age. The Center on the Developing Child (the "Center") of Harvard University reports, "The analysis of... data by child development researchers, education specialists, and economists has shown that it is possible to improve a wide range of outcomes for vulnerable children well into the adult years, as well as generate benefits to society far in excess of program costs."⁵⁷ The basis of NCSE's rationale for offering instruction at an early age is grounded in the implications of this statement, and the belief that education has the transformative power to change the trajectory of vulnerable students.

Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten instruction provide critical skills that are the foundation for acquiring and developing proficiency in later grades. As the Center states, "Early experiences determine whether a child's developing brain architecture provides a strong or weak foundation for all future learning, behavior and health."⁵⁸ This is particularly crucial when targeting students who have suffered from an academic, social, or emotional poverty prior to entering school. NCSE strives to ameliorate the achievement gap for students who have been underserved by traditional instructional programs. Therefore, early education, recognition, and intervention are critical.

When discussing the current condition of Connecticut's options for early childhood

⁵⁷ Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University. (2014). Retrieved from http://developingchild.harvard.edu/topics/understanding_intervention/

⁵⁸ Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University. (2007). A Science-based framework for early childhood policy: Using evidence to improve outcomes in learning, behavior, and health for vulnerable children. Retrieved from <http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu>

educational programs, the Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet purports, “The quality of the learning experiences that children receive varies widely, and the state’s broad achievement gap is reflective of the state’s preparation gap.”⁵⁹ This suggests that students are entering traditional school programs inequitably prepared. The provision of early childhood education can also mean early intervention, which might in effect ameliorate achievement gaps that could potentially have occurred later in the student’s academic tenure. The sooner any learning differences are identified, the sooner students can begin receiving interventions and special support services that may help them overcome the difference and improve the achievement prognoses for later years. For a child who is at-risk or requires special educational services, this could be the difference between a lifetime of academic, social, and emotional damage, and no longer requiring or relying on special support services for success. Similarly for the English Learner, students will be matriculated at NCSE at an early age when all children are developing and acquiring language skills. Because grades PK-1 is a stage when all children are still developing foundational language skills, NCSE’s ELs will be faced with less challenges of language acquisition with a program that initiates instruction at an early stage that is deliberately language enriched.

As a charter school, NCSE embraces greater accountability in exchange for the flexibility that an autonomously operated school affords in order to provide the services that are greatly needed in the Norwalk region. NCSE’s smaller scale expedites greater facilitation in mobilizing and coordinating the efforts and innovative programs that will be availed by the school. This includes the enculturation of students and families to the high expectations for academic performance and conduct. Rather than having to break unproductive habits or remediating instructional gaps that were learned from prior negative school experiences, students who enroll at NCSE will be initiated into the school’s culture at an early age and grow within the school’s programs and high expectations. With an eye towards college and career readiness, NCSE may potentially propose an expansion to include a middle school program (like its model school) upon charter renewal should community support and endorsement be sufficiently compelling. This will help to further prepare students for the rigors of high school and college. However in the case of NCSE students, scholars will have benefited from the school’s rigorous and supportive instruction from the start of their academic careers.

d. Describe the procedures to be used to encourage involvement by parents and guardians of enrolled students in student learning, school activities, and school decision-making.

The founders recognize that establishing a solid relationship with the families of NCSE is critical. Parent engagement is a crucial design element for Norwalk Excellence. At NCSE, parents will be true partners in the education of the children. As such, NCSE provides multiple avenues for parents and guardians to engage with the school community.

As noted in previous responses, a Parent Association, parent task forces, parent workshops, and a reserved seat on the Board are just a few of the ways that NCSE will engage families. NCSE will also maintain ongoing and open communication with the families through report cards, progress reports, emails, phone calls, meetings, and communication folders. Additionally, parents will be invited to participate in school-wide activities and opportunities to volunteer. NCSE will encourage parents and guardians to voice their ideas, and will provide the means for expression. This includes the administration of a parent survey, which will carry weight in evaluating our programs, as well as in teacher and school leader appraisals.

The founders believe that providing a small learning community allows students to build more

⁵⁹ Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet. (2012). *The governor’s state advisory council needs assessment*. Retrieved from http://www.ctearlychildhood.org/uploads/6/3/3/7/6337139/cabinet_needs_assessment.pdf

meaningful relationships with the staff who is charged with their academic, social, and emotional well-being. Similarly, a smaller community will allow the families greater access to the staff, Board, and other community members who will join forces to support every child. NCSE will maintain an open-door policy for the families of enrolled scholars. The school leaders will emphasize the importance of working together in support of the children from the beginning. When parents “buy into” the school’s programs, they will trust and believe that the school will always hold the students’ best interests as paramount. A positive rapport with families will also facilitate even the most delicate and difficult conversations so that any obstacles can be overcome proactively and collaboratively. As families grow and siblings matriculate in the program, NCSE will build relationships with entire family units, which will further strengthen over time. Our vision is to create a true community school and our partnership with parents and guardians is central to our values. We will continue to foster these vital partnerships by providing multiple opportunities for families to actively engage and participate in the school community. (Please refer to Section III.2d for additional methods.)

2. Special Education and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Charter schools in Connecticut are public schools that typically enroll students through a free and open lottery process. Therefore, the proposed school must be prepared to enroll students with diverse learning needs including students with disabilities. This section of the application should describe how the school will meet the needs of special education students and those students qualified under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

a. Describe the proposed school’s plan to meet the needs of students with disabilities who require a range of special education supports and related services, as required, pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504.

NCSE’s plan to address the needs of its students with disabilities (SWDs) has been carefully designed and aligned to Connecticut’s Framework for Response To Intervention (RTI) and Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI). The school also has the benefit of implementing a field-tested program mirroring Stamford Charter School for Excellence and modeled after the highly successful Bronx Charter School for Excellence, which has demonstrated Adequate Yearly Progress in aggregate and for every subgroup population, to include SWDs, each year. NCSE will instill the tools that every child needs to achieve excellence in order to elevate Norwalk’s educational landscape and close persisting achievement gaps.

Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will achieve these goals for its students with disabilities in an inclusive environment, where students receiving IDEA or Section 504 services are provided those services in the least restrictive environment and in compliance with their IEPs or Section 504 plans. The school will also serve students who have other special learning needs, and will provide comprehensive services that include:

- Team -Teaching methodologies that support diverse learning needs
- Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) with direct and indirect instruction,
- Resource room as indicated in IEPs
- School health services
- Counseling
- Speech, Occupational, and Physical Therapies
- Implementation of testing modifications

Norwalk Excellence will coordinate with the local district to outsource for Speech, Occupational, and Physical Therapy services, which will be provided on site to the maximum extent possible.

As an inclusive model, Norwalk Excellence will utilize SRBIs for *all* learners in order to maximize student achievement. Each classroom will have one certified lead teacher and at least

one shared, certified education associate. This provides more individualized support in a smaller learning environment. With two classes per grade level and approximately 28 scholars in each class, this staffing plan reduces student-to-teacher ratios and allows us to facilitate small group and individualized instruction. For students whose IEPs mandate, NCSE will provide a third, special education teacher for the classroom or grade level as needed. Norwalk Excellence will assign one special education teacher to act as the Learning Specialist/Special Education Coordinator (SEC). This individual will be the main point of contact with district personnel particularly as it relates to the Planning and Placement Team (PPT), and will assume responsibilities in addition to teaching, such as compliance monitoring, student observations, and consultation with general education teachers.

The curriculum will be developed and refined with the intent to diversify learning experiences to meet the needs of all students on a wide spectrum of development. All teachers will maintain anecdotal records of every student's performance, as well as documentation of achievement on weekly assessments. Teachers will use this ongoing data to modify and differentiate instruction for all students, inclusive of SWDs. Additionally, teachers will provide small group instruction in flexible groupings across grade levels daily during reading and math instruction to facilitate activities and lessons tailored to students' needs. The school's reduced student-to-teacher ratios provide more personalized interactions and opportunities to engage student learning at deeper levels. Strategies that teachers will employ for students who are struggling or have specific learning differences include: repetition and drill of facts and procedures; explicit instruction in procedures; multisensory instruction, including the use of manipulatives, oral and visual presentations of directions; multi-step directions and procedures that are broken down into incremental steps; allowances for breaks and movement; additional time for assessments and classwork; explicit instruction (i.e. modeling) of reading strategies and skills with sufficient time for guided and independent practice; individualized checklists and rubrics for writing; checklists for organization; flashcards for procedures; signed homework planners; color-coded materials; and assistance with organization (peer buddy, teacher, etc.). It is important to note that, while teachers will implement a variety of strategies, accommodations, services, or supplemental curriculum resources, every student will have equal access to the same rigorous curriculum with differentiated levels of support and scaffolding. In this manner, all students receive instruction that is supportive and challenging without dilution of instructional content.

Norwalk Excellence will collaborate with the students, families, specialists, and the PPT for each child who has been identified. Together, the team will have input in the design of an IEP for students, which will be implemented with fidelity at the school. NCSE will provide intensive individualized instruction along the spectrum of services provided in the three RTI tiers, and closely monitor individual, cohort, and school-wide progress to ensure students are making adequate progress. IEPs will be reviewed annually in cooperation with the districts' Planning and Placement Teams. NCSE will maintain compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations that include IDEA, FAPE, FERPA, students' IEPs, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Connecticut SDE and Bureau of Special Education (BSE) regulations. The school will also routinely consult with the CSDE, BSE, the Departments of Special Education of the districts in which students reside, the PPTs of each student, and the Connecticut Alliance of Regional Educational Service Centers (RES-C) for additional guidance and support. As a community that is dedicated to supporting every student to the maximum extent possible, Norwalk Excellence will ensure that the program to address students with special needs is comprehensive, effective, inclusive, and compliant.

Norwalk Excellence and its scholars are all held accountable to the same learning standards as their statewide peers. Therefore, all students at the school will be held to the same high academic and behavioral standards to promote excellence for all children. NCSE does understand that a

student's disability may be reflected in their performance and will take into consideration that the student has an IEP/504 plan. NCSE will utilize these documents as guidance for supporting children to attain excellence by way of differentiation, individualized scaffolding strategies, and accommodations pursuant to IEPs/504 plans. This strategy of holding students to the same high expectations and providing the intensive supports they need to achieve the standards has resulted in success at Stamford Excellence and our model school, whereby every cohort, in aggregate and subgroup, has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) every year. The model school has also had a large number of students who were declassified by the district from requiring special services to attain success. Regardless of whether or not a student qualifies for an IEP/504 plan, or if a student has been declassified as requiring special services, Norwalk Excellence will ensure that every child receives the support they need within the purview of the school to promote maximum success.

b. Clearly indicate that the proposed school understands its responsibility to meet the requirements of individualized education programs and Section 504 plans, and has a detailed plan for the provision of certified personnel, receipt and retention of appropriate documentation, student assessments, classroom adaptations, and sufficient professional development for staff.

Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-66ee, Norwalk Excellence recognizes its responsibility, the significance, and value of meeting requirements for the provision of services mandated in students' IEPs and Section 504 plans. In addition to federal and state statutes such as IDEA, FAPE, and FERPA, as a service provider of young and school-aged children, NCSE will also ensure compliance with Child Find regulations under the IDEA. The school will ensure compliance through the provisions listed below:

Certified Personnel – Norwalk Excellence will employ qualified and licensed special education teachers, a nurse, and social worker, and will coordinate with the district to outsource for other services providers, such as Speech, Occupational, and Physical Therapists. NCSE will work with the local district and community-based organization to avail such services by a licensed professional until the school has grown sufficient capacity to offer those services in-house. A full-time nurse will be on staff to ensure the provision of any medical services or screenings that are required. Whenever possible, NCSE will seek teachers with dual licensure, for example certification in both early childhood and special education, or special education and reading specialists. This will be particularly beneficial to provide a wide spectrum of services, especially as the school grows to scale. NCSE will hire approximately one special education teacher for each grade level if needed, and assign one of the special education teachers to act as the school's Learning Specialist/SEC. While the district will be responsible for coordinating the efforts of the PPT, the school will be responsible for ensuring the provision of services and accommodations for each student's IEP and Section 504 plan. The SEC will act as the main point of contact and liaison between the district and school personnel, manage and safeguard the official copies of student documentation pertaining to services, and work with the leadership team to ensure the school's compliance with local, state, and federal regulations. Additionally, the SEC will support the development of a team of teachers, school leaders, and support staff for students who may qualify for 504 eligibility.

Documentation – The school's SEC will maintain all documentation pertaining to students' IEPs and 504 plans in a locked cabinet in a designated office with limited access only to parent and direct service and instructional providers. The SEC will also securely store any revisions or modifications to such documents, as well as copies of materials distributed to parents and staff (i.e. Procedural Safeguards, referral forms, etc.). Upon student matriculation at the school, Norwalk Excellence will request any existing documentation from the district/school/early

intervention programs of previous attendance. The school will maintain strong collaborations with each of the districts to ensure the timely receipt of all documentation that identifies students who require special services so they receive the appropriate services at NCSE without delay. The school will also ask each parent upon enrollment to the school as a secondary measure. Norwalk Excellence will maintain secure communication with the PPT of the districts in which students reside, and will consider using programs such as IEP Direct for the continuous communication and performance monitoring by both entities. Copies of students' documents, such as IEPs, 504 plans, BIPs, evaluations, and RTI/SRBI interventions, will be made available only to those individuals directly teaching and providing services to the student. Norwalk Excellence will ensure that all documentation and communication is held in strict confidence to safeguard every child's right to privacy.

Student Assessments – Norwalk Excellence will ensure that IEPs and 504 plans are implemented with fidelity. IEPs and 504 plans will be reviewed on an annual basis, or when circumstances require consideration for revisions. In the event that a student's IEP or 504 plan no longer reflects the student's needs, NCSE will work with the PPT of the district of the student's residence to reevaluate and revise as needed. Unless otherwise dictated by a child's IEP, all students will be expected to participate in the school's assessment program, to include curriculum based assessments, informal classroom measures, interim benchmark assessments, diagnostic screenings, and statewide performance assessments. For Connecticut's Smarter Balanced state tests, NCSE will ensure that every student is provided with the appropriate assessment, alternative measure, and/or accommodations as mandated in his/her IEP or 504 plan.

Classroom Adaptations – Norwalk Excellence will ensure that the school facility will be appropriately accessible and adaptable in accordance with federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations. The school will be furnished with dedicated classrooms, communal space, and resource rooms to support the educational programs. NCSE will also be equipped with technology that will allow for assistive interventions, such as magnified print or voice command dictation, as well as adaptable furniture arrangements for specific needs such as accommodations for mobility and preferential seating.

Professional Development – All teachers at NCSE will be provided with ongoing professional development that is differentiated to promote maximum growth for each individual. Each teacher will have a professional growth plan, with measurable goals and strategies for achievement. Additionally, each teacher will participate in 200 hours of PD each year. In addition to a two-week pre-service training for all teachers, these hours will be fulfilled by a combination of activities including coursework for advanced degrees, workshops, presentations, or building leadership capacity. Teachers will benefit from common planning periods, weekly meetings with leadership, grade level professional learning communities that include both general and special educators, coaching and mentoring. NCSE will also seek to collaborate with local district and support organizations such as the RESC and local BSEs, as well as attendance at regional, statewide, and national conferences. Special education teachers will work closely with general educators in training and in practice to ensure that every student receives effective support. Finally, teachers and staff will receive training on the school's RTI program, referral process, IEP implementation strategies, reporting requirements, and discipline policies.

c. Describe the policies and procedures to ensure that students who may be eligible to receive special education and related services, under either IDEA or Section 504, are referred to their school district of residence or to the staff of the proposed school for evaluation.

Norwalk Excellence will adhere to all state and federal guidelines pertaining to the responsibility of identifying, referring, and providing services to any student with, or suspected of having a disability or requirement for other special services. Students may be referred by any

professional staff member, the parent/guardian, or a physician. The school will follow Child Find procedures for student referrals.

NCSE will provide SRBI using a three-tiered approach that mirrors Connecticut's RTI framework for the provision of services, solutions, personnel, resources, and strategies to promote maximum success. RTI allows all students to gain access to interventions when they need it. In RTI, a student with academic delays is given one or more research-validated interventions. The student's academic or behavioral progress is monitored frequently to see if those interventions are sufficient. If the student fails to show significant improvement despite several well-designed and implemented interventions, this failure to 'respond to intervention' can be viewed as evidence of an underlying disability. Interventions will be provided by both special and general educators, with direct and indirect instruction (SETSS). They are designed to improve performance relative to specific and measurable goals. Interventions are based on valid information about current performance, realistic implementation and include ongoing student progress monitoring.

As mentioned in Section III.2a, all students will benefit from reduced student-to-teacher ratios, individualized and differentiated instruction within flexible groupings, and will participate in frequent assessments that provide ongoing and real-time data for teachers to monitor progress and inform instruction. Therefore in essence, every student at NCSE will benefit from Tier I interventions that take place throughout the core instructional day. Additionally, the school will utilize a team teaching approach, whereby the grade level instructional team, which may include a special education teacher, will be responsible for individual student performance, as well as that of their entire grade level cohort. This means that every student at NCSE will be supported by a team of 3-5 grade level teachers. The grade level special education teacher will provide the team with valuable feedback, guidance, and resources during weekly grade level meetings, particularly related to strategies to support students who are struggling or have special needs. Therefore, for any student who receives or is suspected of requiring special services will have a dedicated grade level RTI team working in concert to support his/her needs.

At Norwalk Excellence, all teachers maintain thorough documentation of every student's progress that includes anecdotal records and quantitative data. This data will be carefully analyzed and discussed during weekly grade level teams. When a staff member suspects that a student is struggling in one or more academic areas; or exhibits behavior that is disruptive to the classroom or prevents the child from making adequate academic progress, the grade level special education teacher and/or Learning Specialist will guide the team through collecting more specific information pertaining to the concern. Student concerns will be reviewed on a case by case basis with consideration to multiple data points such as: teacher observations conducted by both general and special education teachers; results from universal and school-wide assessments such as the mid-year DRA or Smarter Balanced interim assessments; classroom assessments; frequency of behavioral referrals; frequency of visits to the nurse's office; complaints by the student that s/he "can't see the board" or "doesn't understand" the content. Each of these will be taken into careful consideration, but it is the compilation of all the data that will drive the progression through the levels of the RTI process.

Norwalk Excellence will develop a matrix of performance standards and benchmarks that will help teachers measure and ensure students are making adequate incremental progress throughout the year in order to achieve year-end goals. Similarly, NCSE will identify and quantify the criteria to determine what it means when students are not making sufficient progress in each Tier. The Learning Specialist will lead the grade level/RTI team through developing the criteria and timeframe for students to either demonstrate adequate gains, or qualify for the next Tier of interventions, i.e. the criteria for a student to move from Tier I to Tier II, and from Tier II to Tier III. On a case-by-case basis, interventions will be aligned to each student's needs. If a student continues to demonstrate insufficient progress, that student will require interventions of

the subsequent Tier level. In accordance with the school's RTI practices, prior to any referrals to the PPT of the student's district of residence, teachers must ensure that all other interventions have been identified and exhausted. The following provides an outline of how interventions will be implemented at each Tier level:

Tier I: Effective core instruction implemented by ALL classroom teachers

- General classroom setting - Core classroom instruction and scheduling is used
- Preventative and proactive in approach to meeting needs of students
- Behavioral interventions are proactive and preventative in nature
- General hetero- and/or homogeneous groups are suitable
- General time of core instruction is deemed sufficient to implement
- Stresses the importance of effective core instruction

Tier II: Assessment and placement as per data implemented by Education Associates, Special Education, and Classroom Teachers:

1) Fluency: Foundations, Wilson, and Just Words

2) Comprehension: Storytown Strategic Intervention Kits/EL Kits, guided reading, explicit modeling of strategies and skills

3) Math: Math Navigator, focusMATH, small groups

4) Social/Emotional: Counseling, advisory groups

- Setting can be push-in or pull-out
- The student's response to support is rapid as it is intended to be short-term
- Behavioral interventions are proactive and preventative in nature
- For some students who are at risk (20-30% of population)
- Non-responders (did not respond to Tier 1 intervention)

Tier III: IEP students and/or students severely below grade level; small groups led by special education teachers

- Setting is usually pull-out but can be designed depending on student needs
- The exit and entrance into Tier III is assessment based and support will consist of an increase in intensity, duration and/or frequency
- Behavioral interventions are intensive and individualized
- Supplementary instruction is used in addition to core classroom instruction

Teachers will write a Personal Intervention Plan (PIP) for all students who meet the criteria for tier II and tier III. A sample has been attached as Appendix G. This plan will be discussed and approved by the special education teacher and/or Learning Specialist, as well as principal or academic dean.

The following table represents teacher checklists for academic interventions and for concerns for student behavior. It should be noted that the entire grade level/RTI team will be responsible for monitoring student progress and data that is collected, under the guidance of the grade level special education teacher/Learning Specialist:

Grade Level/RTI Team Checklist for...	
<i>Academic Intervention – When a teacher notices that a student is struggling in one or more academic areas, the teacher should...</i>	<i>Student Behavior – When a teacher notices student behavior that is disruptive of the classroom environment or prevents the child from making academic progress, the teacher should...</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what the child should know and understand, and determine some strategies to differentiate instruction. Consult with other teachers that work with the student to compare observations and collaborate to establish strategies that will most benefit the student. • Determine if the child is in the appropriate reading group. • Notify the parent. • Consult with colleagues. • Consult with Special Education teachers and Specialists for strategies to use to address the academic delay in the classroom. • Develop and document a plan of action in collaboration with specialists for addressing the child’s need in the classroom. Check the plan on a weekly basis to document and determine progress. Change strategies of differentiation, if necessary. • Provide the Special Education Teacher/ Coordinator and supervisor with a copy of your action plan. Collaborate to determine a meeting to review of the action plan over a set period of time. • Communicate with the parent on a weekly basis to notify of progress. Document all conversations on the appropriate form and retain copies of any notes sent home. • Communicate with other teachers that work with the student on a weekly basis to compare observations on student progress. • Consult with the Special Education Teacher/ Coordinator and leadership team after implementing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use nonverbal/ verbal cues to address and cease the undesired behavior. • Have a one-to-one talk to address disruption, when time permits. • Inform the parent of the undesired behavior. • Consult with colleagues. • Use informal strategies to reduce undesired behavior (i.e. change seat, specific nonverbal cues, provide student with incremental responsibilities upon incremental successes.) • Inform the parent and leadership team of the undesired behavior. • Consult with supervisor. • Consult with the Special Education Teacher/ Coordinator. • Schedule a meeting with the parent. Set up a behavior contract with the student and parent. • Set up a formal Behavior Intervention plan (BIP). Consult with the leadership team and the Special Education Coordinator/ teacher on frequency and duration of BIP given age of student and level of undesired behavior. • If the undesired behavior continues or escalates, and all previous interventions have been exhausted, consult with the Special Education Teacher/ Coordinator and leadership team to review evidence of interventions, student progress.
Document every intervention attempted to address the academic delay on the school’s <i>Teacher Academic Intervention</i> form.	Document every intervention attempted to address the undesired behavior on the school’s <i>anecdotal record</i> form.
Document all communication with parents and staff on the school’s <i>Communication Log</i> form.	

When multiple data points indicate that a student is struggling academically or behaviorally, a grade level representative will contact the student’s parent/guardian to discuss the concern. Parent referrals are encouraged when the information provided addresses concrete academic and/or behavioral concerns about their child. Parent meetings are scheduled where teacher, special education support staff, and principal (when needed) attend to discuss areas of weakness, which adversely affect school performance. The parent referral can be written and delivered independently or if desired, can be done using an NCSE student referral form and faxed via the school.

Staff referrals can be made with sufficient documentation regarding areas of concern. There must be evidence of academic and/or behavioral concerns. Additionally, academic and/or

behavior interventions must be implemented and evaluated for student progress prior to a special education referral. Documentation of the above must supplement an initial special education referral. Additionally, each referral must have approval from school leadership prior to submission. The steps for referring a student to the PPT are as follows:

**PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF
AT-RISK STUDENTS FOR SUPPORT AND/ OR SPECIAL EDUCATION
SERVICES**

1. Make/ retain copies of student academic work and/or anecdotal records of student behavior.
2. Alert the parents. Communicate regularly with the parents to notify of actions being taken, support staff involved, and student progress. Keep a record of communications.
3. Involve/consult with grade level team, special education teachers, Learning Specialist, Academic Dean, Dean of Students, and Principal. Keep a record of communications.
4. Alert leadership team of concerns if the scholar has not demonstrated significant improvement.
5. If referring for speech therapy or occupational therapy notify the school leader/Special Education Coordinator to set up an observation with the Speech Therapist or Occupational Therapist.
6. If referring for academic delays, consult with the Learning Specialist/Special Education Teachers, and Academic Dean/ Special Education Coordinator for suggestions on how to address the child's needs in the classroom or initiate other academic intervention.
7. If referring for behavioral support, consult with the school leader or Special Education specialists to develop a behavior intervention plan and/or initiate at-risk counseling.
8. If in-class interventions and other intervention programs have been attempted, but the child does not demonstrate adequate progress, all teachers and specialists involved, as well as the principal, will review data to decide if a special education evaluation is warranted. The parents will be notified of the school's recommendation. Staff members must document all interventions provided. Additionally, a letter must be sent home to notify parents at the initiation of intervention services.
9. The school can refer the student to the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) for formal assessment based on the documentation of inadequate progress by the child. The parent should be notified prior to the submission of a special education referral.
10. With parental consent, the PPT of the district in which a student resides can conduct a formal evaluation. School administrators are responsible for the decision to proceed with the Initial Referral Procedures if the child does not have an Individual Education Program (IEP) or request a modification to add a service to an existing IEP.

Subsequent to an evaluation, if a child qualifies for special services, NCSE staff will work with the parent and PPT to develop an IEP for the student. NCSE will ensure that all services are provided and enacted with fidelity, and in accordance with all local, state, and federal regulations. Student progress will continue to be monitored, documented, and reported to parents and the PPT as needed, with annual reviews of IEPs. If a student does not qualify for an IEP, s/he will continue to receive interventions from classroom teachers and specialists who will maintain collaboration and provide as much support as possible for the child's success. Accordingly, teachers will continue to document interventions to support learning, and maintain communication with the child's parent/guardian.

d. Provide a plan to engage the parents of students with disabilities.

One of the school's core philosophies emphasizes the importance of engaging all stakeholders in the school community. Parent engagement is particularly significant in the case of a child who

is struggling and requires additional support. Therefore, Norwalk Excellence will expend every effort to encourage families to actively participate in all student and school activities.

NCSE will provide ongoing communication with families during all aspects of a student's enrollment, whether the child is or is not eligible for special services. Upon matriculation, the school will provide introductory meetings with every family during initial orientation. NCSE will also provide open houses, conferences, written/personal/verbal communication with families, trimester report cards and interim progress reports every 2-4 weeks, a Parent Association, a reserved seat on the Board as well as any task forces that impact the school. Approximately 4-5 times a year, NCSE will offer parent workshops specifically designed to provide information that impacts their child's education and/or ways for the school and family to work together in support of their child. Subject matter for parent workshops may include information about state tests and how best to prepare their child, or informational sessions about educational options for those whose children are preparing to graduate from the school's program. Topics are determined based on the needs of the parents and availability of staff to provide such information. NCSE will make every effort to avail workshops and open informational sessions outside of traditional work hours to allow the maximum number of families to attend.

In the case of families whose child is eligible to receive special education services or suspected of having a disability, NCSE will provide comprehensive information at the beginning of the school year to help parents understand their rights, the referral and evaluation processes, services that are available, and the school's model for addressing students' needs. Parents will also be furnished with critical information that is available through the CSDE, BSE, and Norwalk Public Schools websites, as well as guiding documents, forms, and Procedural Safeguards.

According to C.G.S. Section 10-66ee, the school district in which a student resides is responsible for convening a PPT and must invite representatives, including the child's legal guardian, from the charter school to participate in the meeting. In turn, the charter school is responsible for the provision of services that are mandated in the student's IEP⁶⁰ and maintaining communication with the parent and PPT. Parents of students with special needs will receive the same information such as report cards, progress reports, and school-wide assessment data, at the same scheduled intervals as all students. However in the case of parents whose children are undergoing the referral and evaluation processes, families will receive communication with reports specific to the process as soon as it becomes available from the PPT of the district in which the child resides.

3. English Learners

Charter schools in Connecticut are public schools that typically enroll students through a free and open lottery process. Therefore, the proposed school must be prepared to enroll students with diverse learning needs, including English learners (ELs), all of whom must be provided with full and meaningful access to the general education curriculum. This section of the application should describe the school's EL programs and services, and how they will be implemented.

a. Describe the proposed school's plan to support a responsive general education classroom that will provide EL students access to the general education program.

Norwalk Excellence will be a learning environment that embraces diversity, celebrating the differences of every individual, and uniting under the same vision – providing a high quality educational program for all learners. As described in Section III.1a, over 35.5% of Norwalk

⁶⁰ CSDE: Bureau of Special Education and Pupil Services. (2003). *Students with disabilities and parental choice in connecticut*. Retrieved from www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/ParentalChoice.pdf

residents speak a language other than English in the household⁶¹, with English Learners comprising approximately 13.9% of Norwalk School District's population.⁶² Unfortunately, as described in Section I.1b, data analysis reports on statewide and national measures indicate that not only is there an existing achievement gap for low-income students, minority scholars, and English Learners (ELs), but that progress towards closing the achievement gap is too slow. The need for more options and better outcomes for the state's ELs is urgent and immediate. As Norwalk hosts a relatively larger percentage of families whose household language is one other than English, this is particularly critical. NCSE intends to close this achievement gap and provide equitable opportunities for every scholar using several CSDE guiding documents that include the English Learner Frameworks to plan, instruct, and assess ELs, *Scientific Research-Based Interventions for English Language Learners: A handbook to Accompany Connecticut's Framework for RTI*, and the State Education Resource Center's (SERC) English Learner Resource Center, as well as the *Administrative Resource Handbook for Coordinators of Programs for English Language Learners in Connecticut's Public Schools* to support student achievement for EL linguistic and academic success.

As described in Section III.1c, the benefits of offering early childhood education in a smaller learning environment are multifold. Norwalk Excellence will provide early education, recognition, and intervention, which has the power to mitigate performance gaps that could potentially have manifested later in a student's academic tenure and improve the achievement prognoses for later years. The sooner any learning differences are identified, the sooner students can begin receiving interventions and special support services that will help them overcome the difference. For the English Learner, students will be matriculated at Norwalk Excellence at an early age when all children are developing and acquiring language skills. Because grades PK-1 is a stage when children are still developing foundational language skills, NCSE's ELs will be faced with less challenges of language acquisition with a program that initiates instruction at an early stage that is deliberately language enriched. Additionally, Norwalk Excellence does not anticipate high levels of enrollment attrition. However, in the event that a student enrolls at a higher grade level (grades 2-5) with limited English proficiency, NCSE will assess the child's linguistic and academic developmental level during intake and create an individualized plan for the child based on the student's needs. The plan will focus on providing a smooth transition to the school with supports that may include access to materials in the student's dominant language to bridge linguistic and academic content.

Norwalk Excellence will strive to employ at least one teacher who possesses dual certification in early childhood/elementary education and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and/or is bilingual. Together with the Principal, this individual will act as the EL Coordinator and assume all necessary responsibilities for consulting with teachers for effective instruction to ELs. The Principal will be responsible for monitoring programs, student achievement, and reporting requirements. Pursuant to Connecticut's Bilingual Statute, NCSE understand its responsibility to provide a bilingual education program if 20 or more speakers of the same native language are identified as ELs and are enrolled in the school's programs.⁶³

Norwalk Excellence will focus on supporting a responsive general education classroom that will provide EL students access to the general education program. The school will utilize

⁶¹ United States Census Bureau. (2016). *Quick facts: Norwalk city* [Data files]. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/norwalkcityconnecticut/SBO030212>

⁶² Connecticut State Department of Education. *District profile and performance report for school year 2015-16: Norwalk School District*. Retrieved from http://edsight.ct.gov/Output/District/HighSchool/1030011_201516.pdf

⁶³ State Education Resource Center. (2010). *Administrative resource handbook for coordinators of programs for English language learners in connecticut's public schools*. Retrieved from www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/curriculum/bilingual/ell_admin_resource_handbook.pdf

structured English immersion in an inclusive general education environment to ensure that EL students have equitable access to the comprehensive RTI program, rigorous curriculum, and strategic instructional programs. Whenever possible, NCSE will deliver EL scholars with support within an inclusive, general education classroom with structured immersion so they are not isolated from their peers, general activities, or content courses. Norwalk Excellence will maintain high expectations for ELs and provide the individualized and differentiated support they need for linguistic and academic achievement through the school's three-tiered RTI program. The level of support and intensity will be determined on a case-by-case basis based on a student's performance on identification criteria and ongoing monitoring assessments. As with all students, ELs will benefit from the school's smaller learning environment and reduced student-to-teacher ratio to promote increased and personalized interactions.

Tier I: Effective core instruction implemented by all classroom teachers for all students

- Structured English immersion for students identified as ELs
- General classroom setting - Core classroom instruction and scheduling is used
- Flexible grade-level small group differentiation based on ongoing assessment data
- All interventions are proactive and preventative in nature
- General hetero- and/or homogeneous groups are suitable
- Daily schedule provides adequate time to implement strategies
- Scheduled blocks for academic intervention for any student who may be struggling

Tier II: Assessment and placement as per data implemented by Education Associates, and Classroom Teachers with direct/indirect consult from ESOL/Bilingual teachers

Supplements to the Curriculum:

1) Fluency: Foundations, Wilson, and Just Words

2) Comprehension: Storytown Strategic Intervention Kits/EL Kits, guided reading, explicit modeling of strategies and skills

3) Math: Math Navigator, *focus*MATH, small groups

- Setting can be push-in or pull-out
- The student's response to support is rapid as it is intended to be short-term
- All interventions are proactive and preventative in nature
- Non-responders (did not respond to Tier 1 intervention)
- Flexible grade-level small group differentiation based on ongoing assessment data
- Higher intensity of support or additional blocks of instruction may be required for students who may be struggling or "not responding" to Tier 1 interventions

Tier III: EL students who have not responded to Tier 2 interventions; small group instruction led by ESOL teachers

- Setting is usually pull-out but can be designed depending on student needs
- The exit and entrance into Tier III is assessment based and support will consist of an increase in intensity, duration and/or frequency
- Supplementary instruction is used in addition to core classroom instruction
- Same or similar curriculum resources with EL extensions and supports so students have access to same content, just modified to support linguistic achievement
- Students who are not making sufficient gains may be considered for referral for further evaluation

As with all students, ELs will be assessed continuously to determine academic and linguistic progress. All EL students will take the LAS Links assessment each year in the spring as an annual measure of student progress and proficiency. NCSE may also administer the LAS Links during the school year as a benchmark measure of proficiency progress. The benchmark results will be used to inform and direct interventions, services, and daily instruction. ELs will also participate

in Connecticut's annual Smarter Balanced Assessments. As Norwalk Excellence grows to include students who are eligible for these exams, the school will be vigilant of all regulations and accommodations pertaining to accessibility for ELs. In addition to state tests, ELs will also be assessed with informal observations and interviews, curriculum-based assessments, norm-referenced measures, internally developed measures, and the DRA to measure academic progress. As with all students, ELs will be assessed frequently, and teachers will analyze data and its implications weekly to adjust and inform classroom instruction and flexible groupings. Based on outcomes from these multiple measures, NCSE will ensure that students receive the resources and interventions they need for achievement and place students into one of the three tiers accordingly.

In accordance with CSDE's requirements, students must achieve the following linguistic and academic criteria in order to exit from services:

1. An overall LAS Links Level 4 or 5
2. End of year grade level performance on the DRA
 - a. K=Level 4
 - b. Grade 1 = Level 18
 - c. Grade 2 = Level 28 Nonfiction selection
 - d. Grades 3-8 = Smarter Balanced Assessments exit criteria to be determined by CSDE

For students who successfully meet the criteria for declassification (EL exits), NCSE will inform parents, the district and the state. The district will communicate with Title III Directors. All EL exit students will continue to be monitored for an additional three years to ensure the student is making adequate progress throughout the year, and from year to year.

Norwalk Excellence will utilize Connecticut's SRBI framework for all students by delivering instruction within the three tiers. NCSE is cognizant that EL qualification does not equate to the need for special education services. However, as for all students, some of the strategies employed to develop proficiency with foundational listening, speaking, reading and writing skills will be similar. As a school that enrolls students at an early age when intervention measures can be employed at the beginning of students' academic tenure, the school anticipates that the needs of most EL scholars will be met through Tier 1 core instruction. For students who require higher tiers of intervention (Tiers 2 and 3), NCSE will provide the appropriate supplemental curriculum materials, resources, and strategies for flexible differentiated individual and small group instruction targeting students' specific needs. The materials and strategies that NCSE intends to employ have been field tested by Stamford Excellence and our model school, and helped to propel Bronx Excellence to become a National Blue Ribbon School, where EL scholars have made AYP and met Annual Measurement Achievement Outcomes (AMAO) targets every year in accordance with Title III regulations. As with NCSE's special education scholars, here again, the programs for ELs - that is effective identification and implementation of curriculum support, individualized education, and building partnerships with stakeholders - are aligned with mission and core philosophies that all students can achieve high expectations with appropriate support, resources, learning environment.

b. Present a comprehensive plan that addresses the proposed school's methods and strategies for identifying and serving EL students, administering the mandated annual Language Assessment Scale Links assessment and how students will exit from the program. In addition, present how data will be used to inform instruction and how the school will monitor the continued progress of exited EL students.

Norwalk Charter School for Excellence shall serve all English Learners using structured English language immersion and use CSDE's guiding documents, particularly the *Administrative Resource Handbook for Coordinators of Programs for English Language Learners in*

Connecticut's Public Schools, released by the State Education Resource Center (SERC) of the CSDE, to ensure all programs to state and federal requirements. NCSE shall comply with all applicable laws including Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the federal Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974.

Identifying EL Students

Unless a student enrolls at the school having previously been identified as an EL, NCSE will identify students in three general steps:

1. Preliminary Assessment of Dominant Language – Home Language Survey

During the annual enrollment period, every student and family will be asked to complete a survey, which is designed to identify students who may have limited English proficiency.

2. Final Determination of Dominant Language – Interview, observations, and possible assessment

If, based on the Home Language Survey, it is determined that the student's native language or the home language is other than English, then appropriate school staff or hired translators will conduct an informal interview in the student's native language and/or English. If the interviewer determines that the student speaks no English, that pupil will be classified as an EL student, and the pupil will be tested using the Language Assessment Scales (LAS Links). In order to qualify as an EL, students must demonstrate both linguistic and academic challenges.

3. Determination of English Language Proficiency – Interview, LAS Links, Observations, Review of Academic History

For students whose dominant language is not English, EL eligibility will be based on three indicators: Proficiency interview, English Language Proficiency Test (LAS Links), and consideration of state test scores and previous academic records, if applicable. (If a student was administered the LAS Links in step 2, those test scores will be used to determine a student's level of English proficiency.) A more formal, diagnostic interview will be conducted to determine a student's level of English language development. Additionally, a student's previous academic records, if such exists, may be reviewed to include previous state test scores and grade-level classroom performance. Teachers/administrators may also conduct observations of students focusing on the quality of interactions with English-speaking peers and staff.

EL students at NCSE will not be regarded as needing special education services because of their lack of English proficiency. Parents whose English proficiency is limited will receive notices and information from the school in their native language to encourage the participation of all parents in the NCSE community.

Teachers at NCSE will receive training on educating EL students and will be responsible for observing each student throughout the day with an eye toward detecting limited English proficiency. Any student suspected of having limited English proficiency will be tested using the LAS Links to determine if and what level of services, if any, are necessary. If the student speaks a language other than English and the student speaks little or no English, then the school should administer the LAS Links. A score below the designated cut score for the child determines eligibility for supportive services.

Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will educate EL students following a model of structured English language immersion. NCSE will provide all needed staff and specialized curricular materials to enable EL students to achieve proficiency. A staff member with expertise in providing services for EL students will be employed at NCSE to monitor EL student progress and ensure that classroom teachers have the tools to provide adequate instruction to ensure student success. A designated EL staff member will meet regularly with grade level teams to discuss strategies, interventions and specific students. Staff members trained in providing services for EL students will also lead push-in and pull-out instruction in each classroom with the goal of succeeding in a structured immersion setting as discussed below. NCSE may also

directly provide or make referrals to appropriate support services which may be needed by EL students in order to achieve and maintain a satisfactory level of academic performance.

EL students will receive the same academic content as those students who are native English speakers. All instruction will be in English, however, the level of English used for instruction - both verbal and written - will be modified appropriately for any EL student. EL students will not be discouraged from continuing to use their primary language while learning English at school. The reading curriculum, Harcourt *Storytown*, has been proven highly effective in educating EL students. The school's daily class schedule includes blocks of time that will be used for more intensive English language instruction for EL students (as well as for other individualized support for students with different needs). Norwalk Excellence will be prepared to address the needs of students who are struggling with the structured English immersion program by providing, if it is determined to be the best course of action, pull-out instruction and/or assignment to an educational associate or teacher who speaks the child's non-English language.

Teachers, especially those of early grade levels when foundational skills are taught, will receive ongoing professional development training on teaching strategies and learning modalities of students designated as ELs by qualified staff. The school will also seek to participate in training resources and workshops at the district and state levels for additional support.

Classroom strategies for intervention include the following:

Vocabulary and language development- Teachers introduce new concepts by discussing vocabulary words key to that concept. Exploring specific academic terms like algorithm starts a sequence of lessons on larger math concepts and builds the student's background knowledge.

Guided interaction- Teachers structure lessons so students work together to understand what they read—by listening, speaking, reading, and writing collaboratively about the academic concepts in the text.

Metacognition and authentic assessment- Rather than having students simply memorize information, teachers model and explicitly teach thinking skills (metacognition) crucial to learning new concepts. Research shows that metacognition is a critical skill for learning a second language and a skill used by highly proficient readers of any language. With authentic assessments, teachers use a variety of activities to check students' understanding, acknowledging that students learning a second language need a variety of ways to demonstrate their understanding of concepts that are not wholly reliant on advanced language skills.

Explicit instruction- Direct teaching of concepts, academic language, and reading comprehension strategies needed to complete classroom tasks.

Meaning-based context and universal themes- referring to taking something meaningful from the students' everyday lives and using it as a springboard to interest them in academic concepts. Research shows that when students are interested in something and can connect it to their lives or cultural backgrounds they are more highly motivated and learn at a better rate.

Modeling, graphic organizers, and visuals- The use of a variety of visual aids, including pictures, diagrams, and charts, helps all students—and especially EL students—easily recognize essential information and its relationship to supporting ideas. Visuals make both the language and the content more accessible to students.

All facilities deemed necessary, such as a pull-out space, by the school for the proper instruction of English Learners will be utilized by appropriate staff members.

Structured English Immersion is based on the theory that children learn a second language best when they are integrated with other children who speak that language with native-speaker ability. The Structured English Immersion model requires daily English Language Development (ELD). ELD is a type of instruction that has as its orientation in the teaching of English language skills to students who are in the process of learning English. It is distinguished from other types of instruction in that the content of ELD emphasizes the English language itself. ELD instruction

focuses on phonology (pronunciation - the sound system of a language), morphology (the internal structure and forms of words), syntax (English word order rules), lexicon (vocabulary), and semantics (how to use English in different situations and contexts). ELD is foundational for English language acquisition work, since listening, speaking, reading, and writing tasks conducted in English are considerably more difficult in the absence of knowledge about how English operates.

Any students identified and receiving educational services as EL students who have reached proficiency in English according to their results on the LAS Links, or other appropriate exams, will be deemed no longer in need of EL services. Students will not be exited from the EL program unless they can read, write and comprehend English well enough to participate meaningfully in the school's program without the previous supports. The LAS Links will be administered annually to each student identified as an EL, and may be administered periodically throughout the year for progress monitoring.

Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will maintain specific efforts to attract and retain a comparable enrollment of limited English proficient students when compared to the enrollment figures for such students in the Norwalk region by including translated applications that will be posted on the school's website and translated documents posted throughout local businesses, organizations, and day care centers. The structured English immersion program will assist in retaining our EL population because students' needs will be addressed throughout the academic day, not requiring their families to seek other academic opportunities.

Norwalk Charter School for Excellence also assures that:

- EL students will not be excluded from curricular and extracurricular activities based on an inability to speak and understand the language of instruction;
- EL students will not be regarded as needing special education services because of their lack of English proficiency,
- Parents or guardians whose English proficiency is limited will receive notices and information from the school in their native language,
- All students, regardless of language proficiency, will be provided the necessary curriculum and instruction to allow them to achieve to the high standards set for all students in the school, and
- A staff member who is certified or licensed to provide services for EL students will be employed at all times.

c. Describe the manner in which the proposed school will ensure that it provides parents and guardians of EL students report cards and progress reports in the same manner and with the same frequency as general education reporting.

Based on the *Home Language Survey*, Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will know which students come from homes in which languages other than English are primarily spoken. NCSE will incorporate several strategies for communicating with parents in the community who are not English proficient by utilizing an inclusive model in all day-to-day activities. For example, any school communication with the parents shall be in the language the parents best understand or otherwise authorize. Translated forms and documents will be distributed by mail and posted on the school website. NCSE will ask one of its bilingual teachers, a fellow parent who speaks the same language, a family member, a community volunteer, or, if all other measures are exhausted, a paid translation organization, to provide clear communication with the parent/guardian in the parent's native language. Public meetings, parent conferences and parent workshops will include translators on an as needed basis. Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will also provide school tours and open houses with school staff or parent volunteers who will

translate on an as needed basis. Student data will be reported in same manner and with same frequency as that of general education students, but NCSE will be sure to indicate availability of this information in a language the parent can understand, or will seek staff members and student family members who may be able to translate the documents directly into the native language. NCSE will seek every opportunity to ensure active and productive dialogue with EL students on a daily basis. Parents will also be asked to participate throughout the screening and evaluation process, in the interviews and survey forms as needed, and will be regularly informed of any changes to the child's support services. Parents will receive trimester report cards, and bi-weekly data updates. Finally, speaking a language other than English should not be perceived as a stigma. Norwalk Excellence will celebrate the diversity in the student body and their families by helping families feel they are part of a welcoming community, and making every possible accommodation to meet their linguistic needs. In turn, these families may one day provide voluntary translation services or act as references for the school for any incoming EL students and their families.

d. Present a detailed plan that addresses how the achievement needs of EL students will be monitored and how that process will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and ensure that the needs of EL students are met.

NCSE will periodically evaluate the effectiveness of its EL program. The school will determine if it is successful in achieving the program's goal of helping EL students overcome language barriers well enough and promptly enough to ensure that EL students can participate meaningfully in the school's programs without prior supports. Student's individual, cohort, and schoolwide progress will be monitored and measured against the school's high standards, benchmarks, and state standards. If NCSE finds that its EL program is not meeting this goal, the program will be modified accordingly.

Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will evaluate its success in serving EL students in various ways, including but not limited to: testing using the LAS Links, standardized tests taken by all students, and the Smarter Balanced Assessments; teacher evaluation of each student's performance in academic content areas to measure the student's progress in core subjects; and, informal teacher observation to determine English comprehension and speaking. If the school qualifies for Title III funding, the school will also monitor if ELs are meeting Annual Measurable Achievement Objective (AMAO) targets. If an EL student fails to show appropriate progress in academic areas measured by these assessments and teacher assessment of classroom work, modifications to the instructional program may be made for individual students. However, if deficits are noted comprehensively for a majority of students, NCSE will determine if the gaps are due to schoolwide curriculum and strategies, and will adjust accordingly. Short-term instructional modifications will be made by the teaching staff and Principal, while more comprehensive adjustments will be made at the leadership and Board level. The Board will rely on data reports and dashboards furnished by the school's principal and Education and Accountability Committee at each Board meeting.

In addition, Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will look at disaggregated data on State proficiency tests for EL students as a group to evaluate whether the students are making progress in the acquisition of the English language as well as progress in core subjects. Linguistic and academic performance will be with that of non-EL students. NCSE will track how many students are declassified as EL and the number of instructional years it takes for declassification to occur. Finally, we will track our students longitudinally throughout their years at Norwalk Charter School for Excellence to determine if there is significant variation in the academic achievement of students who were once classified EL and non-EL students as measured by standardized assessments and non-standardized assessments.

e. Detail how the proposed school will meet the state bilingual education requirements and federal requirements of EL students by including a plan for the provision of certified personnel, receipt and retention of appropriate documentation, classroom adaptations, and sufficient professional development for staff.

NCSE is committed to providing a quality instructional program for its EL scholars that will drive student achievement and close achievement gaps. The school will use all resources, guiding documents, and supports that are available by the district and the state to ensure that the EL program is fully compliant with all local, state, and federal legislation and regulations. NCSE will ensure compliance with the provisions listed below:

Certified Personnel – NCSE will strive to employ at least one teacher who possesses dual certification in early childhood/elementary education and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and/or is bilingual. Together with the Principal, this individual will act as the EL Coordinator and assume all necessary responsibilities for consulting with teachers for effective instruction to ELs. The Principal will be responsible for monitoring programs, student achievement, and reporting requirements. Pursuant to Connecticut's Bilingual Statute, NCSE understands its responsibility to provide a bilingual education program if 20 or more speakers of the same native language are identified as ELs and are enrolled in the school's programs.⁶⁴ This being the case, NCSE will ensure that a teacher who is bilingual in both English and the prevailing language of the students in the class is available to provide instruction.

Documentation – The school's designated EL Coordinator will maintain all documentation pertaining to the school's EL students (to include assessment results, parent notifications, services and interventions, annual assessments, and academic and linguistic progress records) in a locked cabinet in a designated office with limited access only to parent and direct service and instructional providers. Upon student matriculation at the school, NCSE will request any existing documentation from the district/school/early intervention programs of previous attendance. The school will maintain strong collaborations with each of the districts of students' residence to ensure the timely receipt of all documentation that identifies students who require language support services so that they receive the appropriate services at NCSE. The school will ensure that all documentation and communication is held in strict confidence to safeguard every child's right to privacy.

Student Assessments – Unless otherwise indicated in a student's learning plan developed for all Tier 2 and 3 students, every student will be expected to participate in the school's assessment program, to include curriculum based assessments, informal classroom measures, interim benchmark assessments, diagnostic screenings, norm-referenced tests, and statewide performance assessments. NCSE will ensure that every student is provided with the appropriate assessment, alternative measure, and/or accommodations per CSDE requirements once determined.

Classroom Adaptations – The school will be furnished with dedicated classrooms, communal space, and resource rooms to support the educational programs. NCSE will also be equipped with technology that will allow for assistive interventions, such as headphones and microphones for practice with enunciation and formation of linguistic sounds, visual cues and adaptations, as well as adaptable furniture arrangements for specific needs such as individual and small group instruction.

Professional Development – All teachers at NCSE will be provided with ongoing professional development that is differentiated to promote maximum growth for each individual. Each teacher

⁶⁴ State Education Resource Center. (2010). *Administrative resource handbook for coordinators of programs for English language learners in Connecticut's public schools*. Retrieved from www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/curriculum/bilingual/ell_admin_resource_handbook.pdf

will have a professional growth plan, with measurable goals and strategies for achievement. Additionally, each teacher will participate in 200 hours of PD each year. In addition to a two-week pre-service training for all teachers, these hours will be fulfilled by a combination of activities including coursework for advanced degrees, workshops, presentations, or building leadership capacity. Teachers will benefit from common planning periods, weekly meetings with leadership, grade level professional learning communities that include both general and EL educators, coaching and mentoring. NCSE will also seek to collaborate with local district and support organizations such as the RESC, CSDE's State Education Resource Center, and the English Learners Department of Norwalk School District, as well as attendance at regional, statewide, and national conferences. EL and bilingual teachers will work closely with general educators in training and in practice to ensure that every student receives effective support. Finally, teachers and staff will receive training on the school's RTI program, identification process, implementation strategies, reporting requirements, and test administration.

4. Admissions Policy and Criteria

a. Describe the student admissions policy and criteria. Please include a plan for the admission lottery, explaining how the proposed school would enroll students during the year if spaces become available. If necessary, please indicate whether the proposed school is applying to the SBE for a waiver of the requirements of the enrollment lottery in accordance with C.G.S. § 10-66bb(j).

Pursuant to the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section 10-15c, NCSE will maintain an open enrollment policy and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity or expression, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. Although the school will deliberately concentrate recruitment activities to high need communities, the school does not intend to apply to the SBE for a waiver of the requirements of the enrollment lottery in accordance with C.G.S. § 10-66bb(j). NCSE will accept applications from legal guardians of all age and grade eligible students. Applications will be provided in English and Spanish, and available for translation online to the prevailing languages of the community. In the school's inaugural year, NCSE will accept applications for all new students qualifying for grades PK-1. Enrollment will be determined by lottery, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes. In subsequent years, enrollment preference will be given to returning students and siblings of returning students in that order. The school will accept completed applications from mid-January through April 1. (As the approval of our charter is contingent upon funding appropriations by the General Assembly, NCSE will likely accept applications until June of 2019 for our first year of operation, with a lottery taking place upon approval.) Applications may be submitted electronically through the school's website, or in hard copy. Once all vacancies are filled through the lottery, a waiting list will be created. If vacancies arise during the school year, the school will backfill any open seats from the waitlist. Applicants who have siblings already attending the school will be given preference for any vacancies that occur during the school year. Enrollment packets will clearly articulate the documentation that must be submitted, to include appropriate proofs of identification, residency, and health records, etc.

b. Discuss the student recruitment process and timetable to ensure effective public information to attract a diverse student body. In particular, please detail the proposed school's plan to attract, enroll, and retain students from among the following populations: students with a history of low academic performance; students who receive free or reduced-price lunches pursuant to federal law and regulations; students with a history of behavioral and social difficulties; students identified as requiring special education; students who are English language learners; or students of a single gender. Please also specify how the school will

ensure that it complies with the provisions of C.G.S. § 10-15c (see Appendix E) and that it does not discriminate on the basis of disability, athletic performance or proficiency in the English language.

The recruitment, marketing, and outreach process will be staged in three phases:

1. Raising initial public interest and awareness
2. Engaging the community
3. Hosting public forums, announcements, discussions, and meetings to introduce the school's model, programs, and services to the students, families, and community members

Marketing and recruitment efforts will focus primarily within the city of Norwalk, but may expand to include a radius of approximately 15-20 miles from the city to surrounding communities.

Upon approval of our initial charter certificate, NCSE will begin to raise public interest about the school. Starting in the spring of 2018, NCSE will commence the advertising and marketing process. Recruitment efforts will be widespread and include construction of the school's initial website and announcements in local newspapers, social media, and public outlets. Concurrently, NCSE will be formulating the Board, and recruiting key personnel, to include the Principal, Finance & Operations Manager, and office manager over the summer. Once key members of the leadership team and Board are appointed, NCSE will be able to engage the greater community and provide spokespersons on behalf of the school's recruiting efforts. NCSE will utilize a variety of strategies to attract a diverse student body and broaden the scope and depth of recruitment effort with outreach, which may include:

- Meetings with representatives of the local and surrounding districts, as well as community-based organizations to establish a positive rapport and cultivate a collaborative relationship
- Attendance at open houses, public meetings, meet-and-greets, and presentations at various community organizations such as preschools, daycare centers, head start programs (FRPL), ESL programs for adults with school-aged children (ELs), county health centers (FRPL, SWD), doctors' offices, libraries, family service providers (FRPL, SWD), housing associations (FRPL), counseling centers and support groups (history of social/behavioral problems), tutoring groups (history of low academic performance), and places of worship (churches, mosques, temples, etc.)
- Neighborhood canvassing, especially in areas with higher concentrations of public housing developments (FRPL) and multicultural communities (EL)
- Distribution of flyers and mailings in English, Spanish, and prevailing languages (EL)
- Local media stations (radio and internet) that target both English and non-English speaking audiences (EL)

Finally, NCSE will engage the community and host events such as open houses and meetings with the students, families, and community members. As community members play a critical role in the growth and development of the school, NCSE will also strive to develop lasting relationships with members and organizations within the various communities in support of the school's students and programs beyond this initial recruiting year. If possible and during subsequent years, NCSE will also elicit the support of bilingual staff members to support the recruiting efforts for families whose native language is one other than English.

NCSE proposes a program that begins with pre-kindergarten, enrolling students at approximately 3-4 years of age. Although the school's initial year of enrollment will also include grades K and 1, students of this age typically will not have extensive academic or behavioral

records. Some students may have previously received early screening and interventions for academic, social, or behavioral difficulties. NCSE will continually emphasize to all families that the school's policies support open enrollment, non-discriminatory practices, and an inclusive educational model. Targeted outreach to specific populations such as families with children identified with special needs or English learners will receive more specific information about the programs and services that NCSE has to offer. Finally, NCSE will ensure that comprehensive information is always available on the school's standing marketing materials, such as the school's website and social media pages. This will allow families to access the information at any time.

As a school of choice, NCSE recognizes that parent satisfaction is critical for retaining student enrollment. NCSE will be able maintain high levels of satisfaction through means such as excellent achievement outcomes, engagement of families, ongoing communication, individualized instruction, personalized support, and comprehensive services. Parents will not only have an active role in their child's education. They will also be given opportunities to provide feedback and participate in mobilizing school-wide efforts, for example with annual family surveys, fundraising, task forces, parent workshops, Parent Association, and Board representation. NCSE maintains high expectations for all learners, and will support each and every student and family towards attainment of success. Developing a strong partnership and relationship with families not only promotes student growth in the programs, but family growth as younger siblings enroll. Moreover, parents have the ability to attract other students and families to the school, as well as pulling organizations and resources to support the school's programs. The founding group recognizes that the school is a service organization, and embraces its responsibilities to the children, families, and community.

The following table presents an approximate timeline for recruiting and enrolling students:

Activity	Timeframe	Strategies
Phase I: Raising initial public interest and awareness	Winter 2017	Construction of the school's initial website and announcements in local newspapers, social media, and public outlets
Phase II: Engaging the community Hiring key personnel	Summer 2018-Summer 2019 Summer 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with representatives of the local and surrounding districts and community-based organizations • Attendance at open houses, public meetings, meet-and-greets, and presentations • Neighborhood canvassing • Distribution of flyers and mailings • Local media station advertisements
Phase III: Hosting public forums, announcements, discussions, and meetings	Summer 2018-Summer 2019	Hosting open houses and meetings with potential students, families, and community members

Application submissions	January – June 2019 (Jan-April for subsequent years)	Online and hard copy applications will be accepted
Application Reviews	January to Mid June 2019 (Jan-April for subsequent years)	Applications will be reviewed to ensure potential students meet age and grade eligibility requirements
Admissions Lottery	Mid to late June 2019 (Mid to late April for subsequent years)	If the number of qualified applicants exceeds the number of vacancies available, the school will hold a public lottery conducted by an independent third party organization
Enrollment/Orientation	June to August 2019	All enrolled students will go through an orientation process that includes the collection of any previous school records and documents, as well as a family orientation program prior to the first day of attendance
Ongoing Enrollment	August 2019 –August 2020	As vacancies occur during the school year, students on the waiting list, or new applicants if no such waiting list exists, will be admitted on a first-come, first-serve basis. Siblings of enrolled students will be given preference.

c. Describe the efforts the proposed school would make to reduce racial, ethnic and/or economic isolation. Please discuss relevant programs (e.g., curricular and extracurricular and/or student teacher recruitment), if any, the school plans to implement.

As described in previous sections, NCSE strives to transform the educational landscape in the Norwalk region such that students who have been underserved by traditional district schools – that is students with disabilities, English Learners, and students of color – have more equitable opportunities for success throughout and beyond their academic careers. Norwalk’s achievement gap has been documented throughout this application. Section III.1a also presents data that highlights the racial/ethnic and economic isolation that prevails in the city. When compared to cities with centers within a 15 mile radius, Norwalk posts higher percentages of minority, low-income (free or reduced lunch eligible), and non-English fluent populations, lower graduation rates and median household incomes than all of the surrounding communities, lower percentages of individuals with a bachelors or higher degree, and higher poverty rates than all four of its counterparts. NCSE strives to mitigate this isolation for future generations by closing the achievement gaps that are prevalent in Norwalk. As the district seeks to ameliorate these achievement disparities, NCSE promises a new approach to the families through a model that is nationally recognized and field-tested, and proven highly successful for similar demographic groups.

NCSE will accomplish this goal in an inclusive model by implementing programs that deliberately individualizes instruction to meet the needs of every learner. The curriculum will provide instruction in the foundational skills necessary for success in later grades, while supporting learning on a wide spectrum of proficiency levels. Using ongoing and real-time data, teachers and support staff will identify students' current performance levels, advance achievement in their zone of proximal development, and monitor outcomes to inform further instruction. Every child will have a personalized learning plan that provides evidence of the student's achievements, strengths, areas in need of improvement, goals, and progress. This applies to the most accelerated learner in the class, to the most reluctant and struggling student, to the student who is learning English, and the student who has special needs. This allows teachers to uniquely tailor instruction to authentically address the learning needs of every student.

The teaching staff at NCSE will be established through widespread recruiting efforts. Although the school would optimally employ a diverse set of individuals representative of the world's many cultures, NCSE maintains that the school will employ the most qualified candidate for each position. The school will be an equal opportunity employer, abiding by all affirmative action regulations, and providing opportunities without discrimination of race, gender, preferences, orientations, or religion.

NCSE will utilize a holistic approach to teaching students that includes instruction in the core subject areas of ELA, math, science and social studies, as well as classes in music, art, dance, physical education, and foreign language. The school is also contemplating the feasibility of providing after-school enrichment activities through partnerships with local community organizations and leveraging staff interests. Such activities might include: music, art, dance, chess, theater, girl/boy scouts, and sports. Both the holistic approach and enrichment activities provide the children with a well-rounded foundation and serve as a reference point as students embark on learning activities of broader scope. The diverse student body will be introduced to a variety of materials, activities, and experiences to expose students to a wider array of cultures, backgrounds, beliefs, and traditions. NCSE will also provide activities that broaden students' technological skills and awareness with activities that promote global perspectives. The school uniforms help to reduce socio-economic tensions that might otherwise distract students from learning, while providing a public symbol of unity and pride. The small learning environment and reduced student-to-teacher ratios allow more frequent and personalized interactions between students and with staff members. Throughout their daily discourse, teachers will continually endorse the school's core values, such as respect and citizenship, which exemplify NCSE's emphasis on helping students understand that they are valued members of a larger community.

5. Student Discipline Policies

a. Discuss how the proposed school would create and maintain a safe and strong learning environment.

Norwalk Excellence will cultivate a nurturing, yet highly accountable learning environment where all students will be responsible for maintaining appropriate behavior and conduct in accordance with the school's Family Handbook, Discipline Policy, and Code of Conduct. The vision of NCSE is to produce highly motivated and excited scholars who can read, write, communicate, compute, express themselves artistically, use technology, think analytically and critically, and conduct themselves with a strong sense of self, morality and ethics. Students will be nurtured and supported, but expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the school's high standards everyday. Students will be ambassadors representing the various facets of their lives, to include their parents, race, gender, culture, spiritual beliefs, and their school.

NCSE's approach to discipline is rooted in a belief that the learning environment is sacred. The foundation of the school is built upon the strength of relationships with all students. Staff

will embrace a proactive approach that promotes social-emotional growth and utilizes restorative practices to develop character and establish a safe climate. The school's small learning environment and reduced student-to-teacher ratios facilitate more frequent, meaningful, personalized, and thought-provoking interactions among students, and between students and staff members. Each interaction provides daily opportunities for reminders and teachable moments to help students identify, reflect on, and maintain their school conduct. Teachers will dedicate a considerable amount of time to build classroom communities and promote and expect the best of each scholar. Scholars will be provided with guidance and direction for pro-social behaviors. In addition, all classroom rules will be established and followed consistently. Daily routines and discussions will provide positive reinforcement for scholars to demonstrate appropriate behavior.

The school's young learners will be able to depend on predictability and reliability when speaking with adults of NCSE. Their relationships with staff members will create a safe open dialogue to discuss and problem-solve their various needs so that they are better equipped to deal with circumstances. They will be able to count on all adults in the building. All staff members can serve as thought-partners throughout the year in informal and scheduled meetings regarding school-wide discipline and incentives. NCSE will use the resources and intelligence of the staff to model and meet scholars' individual needs. It is not enough to simply have the students stay out of trouble. NCSE will require students to respect themselves, adults, peers, school culture, and property. NCSE requires that students actively participate in class, produce top quality work, help their classmates, come to school every day on time and prepared to learn.

As described in Sections I, III.2 and III.3, students will be given comprehensive support towards academic achievement aligned to RTI and SRBI practices. This includes the use of research-based practices, collective accountability, a relentless focus on continual improvement, early intervention and prevention, high quality curriculum and instruction, responsive teaching, a robust assessment program for progress monitoring, and the use of ongoing real-time data analysis to drive instruction. Because NCSE will be adopting these practices universally for all students in every classroom, all NCSE scholars, in effect, will be receiving Tier I support on a daily basis. Like its model school, NCSE's instructional program will be highly individualized and based on student need.

Similarly, the school's social-emotional and behavioral supports will encompass a systematic approach that is responsive to all students' needs. The leadership team will provide a unified vision and collaborate with personnel to establish a positive school culture that builds self-management, reflection, problem-solving, and relationship building skills. Each of these components is critical in order to promote an appropriate and respectful environment.

NCSE will develop a common language and vocabulary to promote unification in the delivery of healthy messages. Some examples of phrases and terms that will be used to communicate clear expectations and/or directives are as follows:

Motto: Responsibility Integrity Success Etiquette Unity Pride (RISE UP!)

Values

- Respect
- Citizenship
- Teamwork
- Honesty
- College-Bound Attitude

Other key phrases and words that will be frequently used and exemplify the high expectations for behavior to establish good habits:

- Sweat the small stuff.
- Excellent behavior ensures that children are SAFE at school.

- No disruptions in the classroom. This allows teachers to teach.
- Parents should expect frequent phone calls and meetings when necessary.
- For scholars that ride the bus, their school day starts when they get on the bus and vice versa. They must stay in their seat and behave properly.
- The school will have no tolerance for lying, theft, or cheating. It dishonors the school culture, especially if it is done to avoid punishment at home or in school.
- Scholars
 - Take Pride, Take Ownership, Deliver Excellence
 - Criss-cross applesauce
 - Stand up tall and proud
 - Sit up tall and proud
 - The quiet hand gets chosen.
 - Scholars don't slouch.
 - All Greetings (Good morning, Good afternoon, Hello, may I help you? etc.)
 - Use your polite words, or Use your kind words.
 - Choices, decisions and consequences

On a daily basis, teachers engage students via recognition and awards. Values are taught, practiced, and used in class discussions to foster pro-social behaviors and healthy relationships. As thought-partners, teachers reinforce values and highlight model students through classroom recognitions, school-wide assemblies, and informal moments of praise. NCSE aims to foster thought provoking and reflective conversations that will help children: 1) Think through decisions, 2) Be aware of their choices, and 3) Recognize positive and negative consequences from the choice they made or need to make.

b. Describe the acts for which a student may be disciplined, include the consequences or range of consequences resulting from committing such acts.

Norwalk Excellence will maintain a proactive approach to discipline. At NCSE, discipline will be considered a process in which students learn to develop self-control with intrinsic motivation to succeed in a safe learning environment. The classroom teacher is typically the primary moderator for appropriate school conduct. Unless a situation is emergent and poses a risk to the safety of the children, to the maximum extent possible, NCSE prefers behavior management take place within the classroom prior to initiating more serious consequences such as referrals to school leaders, detentions, and suspension. Disruptions are prevented through effective communication, strategic prevention, positive interventions and reinforcements, visual/verbal reminders for students to remain on task, and consistent engagement of students. The following is a list of examples for how a classroom teacher might effectively manage and moderate inappropriate behaviors (in no particular order):

- Anecdotal record of student's behavior by the teacher
- Private thought-provoking conversations with student about undesired behaviors with teacher, Principal, or Dean of Students
- Use of interventions
- Development of behavior modification plan for student and/or change of intervention
- Contact with student's parent by phone or note
- Schedule formal parent-teacher conference/intervention review
- Request meeting with the parent-teacher-Dean/Principal
- Additional referral to Dean/Social Worker/Special Education Team
- Request formal evaluation with review of anecdotal records as evidence of previous

intervention methods used

- Restorative practices
- Intermittent breaks
- Short-term, temporary, timed removal from classroom

All disciplinary infractions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Implementation of appropriate interventions and disciplinary responses take into account several factors including age and maturity of student, and the nature, severity, and frequency of the misconduct. As safety is the paramount, NCSE will prioritize the restoration of order and preservation of the safety of all students.

Upon approval, NCSE will develop, revise, and finalize its written policies for the Family Handbook, Discipline Code, and Code of Conduct. NCSE's policies will reflect the school's high expectations for school conduct with complete transparency. The school will establish a clear, coherent, and logical progression of interventions and the range of possible disciplinary and other responses, as well as how students/families can appeal decisions. It will also include a description of students' roles and responsibilities for maintaining a safe and productive learning environment.

Norwalk Excellence will be guided by the Norwalk Board of Education's (BOE) *Policy Book* (specifically Regulations 5131 and 5114, as it relates to student conduct, suspensions/expulsions and exclusions/removal)⁶⁵ and its revisions, Connecticut Education Laws⁶⁶, NCSE's model school's Family Handbook and policies (including New York City Department of Education's *Citywide Behavioral Expectations To Support Student Learning*, which is used as a guideline for school-wide discipline)⁶⁷, CSDE's *Guidelines for In-School and Out-of-School Suspensions*⁶⁸, and all local, state, and federal regulations that define the appropriate behavior and disciplinary measures for students enrolled in a Connecticut public school. These policies will be subject to approval by the school's Board, as well as the Board of Education of the local district and state. The following present an amalgamation of these documents.

NCSE will have five progressive infraction levels, each containing options for interventions and a maximum range of potential disciplinary responses that may be imposed by a staff member or school leader. The five levels are shown below:

Progressive Infraction Levels⁶⁹	
Level 1	Uncooperative/Noncompliant Behavior
Level 2	Disorderly Behavior
Level 3	Disruptive Behavior
Level 4	Aggressive or Injurious/Harmful Behavior
Level 5	Seriously Dangerous or Violent Behavior

It should be noted that these infractions are not all inclusive. Additionally, depending on the

⁶⁵ Norwalk Board of Education. (2013). *BOE Policy Book 2*. Retrieved from <https://norwalkps.org/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=283962>

⁶⁶ Connecticut State Board of Education. (2017). *Connecticut Education Laws*. Retrieved from http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/publications/ed_laws_2017.pdf

⁶⁷ New York City Department of Education. (2017). *Citywide behavioral expectations to support student learning*. Retrieved from <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/2942494E-7CD8-4CBD-86FC-E34A14FE1852/0/DisciplineCodeK5FINALforPostingaddtledits4517.pdf>

⁶⁸ Connecticut State Department of Education. (2010). *Guidelines for in-school and out-of-school suspensions*. Retrieved from http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/In_School_Suspension_Guidance.pdf

⁶⁹ New York City Department of Education. (2017). *Citywide behavioral expectations to support student learning*. Retrieved from <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/2942494E-7CD8-4CBD-86FC-E34A14FE1852/0/DisciplineCodeK5FINALforPostingaddtledits4517.pdf>

nature and severity of the infraction, NCSE may need to contact local law enforcement or other community-based organizations for support.

The Discipline Code will contain graduated accountability measures for repeated misbehaviors. More severe measures will be imposed on students who demonstrate a pattern of persistent misconduct or demonstrate intent and severe, injurious behavior that harms others. Whenever possible, NCSE will exhaust less severe disciplinary responses and interventions before escalating to those that are more serious. The following table represents a range of prevention and intervention strategies and support services for students during or after school.

Types of Guidance Interventions⁷⁰	
Parent Outreach: School staff should keep parents informed of their child's behavior and enlist parents as partners in addressing areas of concern. Outreach to parents can include, but is not limited to, a phone call and/or written communication.	Short-Term Behavioral Progress Reports: Teachers and/or principals may send behavioral progress reports to parents on a regular basis until they feel that the student is in control of his/her behavior and working in the classroom successfully.
Guidance Conference: Principals and teachers may request a guidance conference with the student and, where appropriate, with the parent. The purpose of the conference is to review the behavior, find solutions to the problem and address academic, personal and social issues that might have caused or contributed to the behavior.	Development of Individual Behavior Contract: The student meets with teachers to create a written contract that includes objectives and the specific performance tasks that the student will accomplish to meet those objectives. The contract is signed by the student and teacher and, where appropriate, by the parent.
Intervention by Counseling Staff: Where available, school-based counseling personnel and/or School-Based Mental Health programs offer a wide range of comprehensive and confidential mental health services and interventions including, but not limited to: assessments, individual, group and family counseling and/or therapy, teacher consultations, and educational strategies for parents and staff.	Referral to PPT (Pupil Personnel Team): Pupil Personnel Teams are school-based teams that utilize a multidisciplinary approach to encourage student success through prevention and intervention strategies and supports. A case manager is identified for each student referral so that an individualized plan can be created to help students overcome his/her academic and/or other challenges.
Restorative Practices Using restorative practices to foster positive interpersonal and intergroup relations and to address inappropriate behavior when it occurs is a cornerstone of a progressive approach to discipline. Restorative practices include collaborative negotiation, circle process, peer mediation, conflict resolution, and formal restorative conferencing.	Collaborative Problem Solving When a student engages in challenging behavior, a trained school staff member can use the collaborative problem-solving process to identify the specific issues that are precipitating the behavior, articulate the adult concerns about the behavior and engage the student in a collaborative process to address the underlying reasons for the behavior and decide upon a plan of action that is both realistic and mutually acceptable to both.
Individual/Group Counseling Individual counseling provides students with an outlet to share issues in privacy that may be negatively impacting their attendance, behavior, and/or academic success. Small-group counseling can address needs such as stress management, anger management, developing effective conflict	Referral to Counseling Services for Bullying, Intimidation, or Harassment When a student or group of students engages in bullying, including cyberbullying, intimidation, or bias-based harassment, of another student or group of students, both the target of the behavior and the student who engages in this behavior should be

⁷⁰ New York City Department of Education. (2013). *Citywide standards of intervention and discipline measures*. Retrieved from <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/188AF3E2-F12B-4754-8471-F2EFB344AE2B/0/DiscCodebooklet2013final.pdf>

<p>resolution and/or communication skills, etc. Students discuss and formulate goals, and learn problem-solving strategies that will enable them to overcome a variety of personal challenges. Counselors will conference with parents on a regular basis to discuss the student’s academic and personal progress.</p>	<p>referred to separate appropriate counseling, support, and education services provided by school staff or a community-based agency. Neither mediation nor conflict resolution is, under any circumstances, appropriate interventions for bullying, intimidation, or harassment.</p>
<p>Referral to Counseling Services for Bias-Based Bullying, Intimidation or Harassment When a student or group of students engages in bias-based bullying, intimidation, or harassment of another student or group of students, both the victim and the student who engages in this behavior should be referred to separate appropriate counseling, support, and education services provided by school staff or a community-based agency. Neither mediation nor conflict resolution is, under any circumstances, appropriate interventions for bias-based bullying, intimidation, or harassment.</p>	<p>Referral to Counseling Services for Youth Relationship Abuse or Sexual Violence When a person uses a pattern of threatened or actual physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse to control a dating partner, the school should refer both the victim and the student who engages in this behavior to separate appropriate school or community-based agencies for counseling, support, and education. Neither mediation nor conflict resolution is, under any circumstances, appropriate interventions for suspected relationship abuse.</p>
<p>Mentoring Program A mentoring program matches a mentor who may be a counselor, teacher, student, and/or administrator with a student in need of additional support. The object of this relationship is to help the student in his/her personal, academic, and social development.</p>	<p>Mentor/Coach Assignment of a trained school staff member to provide transition support for a student returning from a Superintendent’s Suspension or from a prolonged absence.</p>
<p>Referral to a Community-Based Organization (CBO) Students may be referred to a community-based organization for a wide range of services including, but not limited to, after-school programming, individual or group counseling, leadership development, conflict resolution, and academic tutoring.</p>	<p>Referral to Appropriate Substance Abuse Counseling Services In the case where a student is presenting problems with substance abuse, including the use, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, and/or alcohol, referrals should be made to either school based counseling services or to an external agency or community-based organization.</p>

Whenever appropriate, NCSE will utilize a restorative approach as a prevention and intervention measure. These strategies are helpful for several reasons that include fostering positive communication and relationships, conflict resolution, addressing underlying factors, building resiliency, and accountability. Types of restorative approaches include a Circle Process, Collaborative Negotiation, Peer Mediation, and a Formal Restorative Conference. Finally, the following table presents a sample list of infractions, interventions, and Disciplinary Responses⁷¹.

Infractions	Guidance Interventions	Range of Possible Disciplinary Responses
Level 1: Uncooperative/Noncompliant Behavior		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexcused absence • Out of school uniform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent outreach • Intervention by counseling staff 	A. Pedagogical school staff meeting with student to

⁷¹ New York City Department of Education. (2017). *Citywide behavioral expectations to support student learning*. Retrieved from <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/2942494E-7CD8-4CBD-86FC-E34A14FE1852/0/DisciplineCodeK5FINALforPostingadtdtedits4517.pdf>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being late for school • Bringing prohibited items to or using items in school • Failing to be in one’s assigned place on school premises • Disruptive behavior • Verbally rude or disrespectful behavior • Wearing unsafe, disruptive clothing, headgear, etc. • Posting or distributing material on school premises in violation of written Department of Education policy and/or school r • Using school computers, fax machines, telephones or other electronic equipment or devices without appropriate permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance conference • Restorative practices • Social-Emotional learning • Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) • Individual/group counseling • Collaborative problem solving • Peer mediation • Mentoring program • Conflict resolution • Individual behavior contract • S/T behavioral progress report • Referral to Pupil Personnel Team (PPT) • Community service • Referral to community based organization (CBO) • Functional Behavioral Assessment or Behavioral Intervention Plan (FBA or BIP) 	<p>address misbehavior and its consequences</p> <p>B. Student/teacher conference</p> <p>C. Formal meeting with student by appropriate supervisor to address misbehavior and its consequences</p> <p>D. Parent conference</p> <p>E. In-school disciplinary action (e.g. formal restorative conference, etc.)</p> <p>F. Temporary and timed removal from classroom</p>
<p>Level 2: Disorderly Behavior</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoking, possession of lighters, matches, etc. (A-D only) • Gambling • Using profane, obscene, vulgar, lewd language, gestures, or behavior • Lying to, giving false information to, misleading school personnel • Misusing property belonging to others • Engaging in or causing disruptive behavior on school bus • Leaving class or premises without permission • Engaging in inappropriate or unwanted physical contact, touching someone in private part of body • Violating Internet Policy • Engaging in scholastic dishonesty (i.e. cheating, plagiarizing, colluding, etc.) • Inappropriate use of technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent outreach • Intervention by counseling staff • Guidance conference(s) • Restorative practices • Social-Emotional learning • PBIS • Individual/group counseling • Collaborative problem solving • Conflict Resolution • Peer mediation • Mentoring program • Development of individual behavior contract • Short-term behavioral progress report • Referral to PPT • Community services • Referral to CBO • FBA/BIP 	<p>A. Pedagogical school staff meeting with student to address misbehavior and its consequences</p> <p>B. Student/teacher conference</p> <p>C. Formal meeting with student by appropriate supervisor to address misbehavior and its consequences</p> <p>D. Parent conference</p> <p>E. In-school disciplinary action (e.g. formal restorative conference, etc.)</p> <p>F. Temporary and timed removal from classroom</p>
<p>Level 3: Disruptive Behavior</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defying or disobeying lawful authority or directive of school personnel • Using slurs based upon actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, weight, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent outreach • Intervention by counseling staff • Guidance conference(s) • Restorative practices • Social-Emotional Learning • PBIS • Individual/group counseling • Collaborative problem solving • Conflict resolution • Peer mediation 	<p>A. Pedagogical school staff meeting with student to address misbehavior and its consequences</p> <p>B. Student/teacher conference</p> <p>C. Formal meeting with student by appropriate supervisor to address misbehavior and its consequences</p> <p>D. Parent conference</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoving, pushing, engaging in minor altercation or similarly confrontational behavior, throwing objects, spitting on others • Bringing unauthorized persons to school or allowing them to enter • Knowingly possessing property belonging to another without authorization • Tampering, changing, altering record or document of school • Inappropriate or unwanted physical contact, touching private part of body • Gang-related behavior • Vandalism, graffiti, or intentional damage to property • Posting or distributing libelous material or literature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring program • Development of individual behavior contract • Short-term behavioral progress report • Referral to PPT • Community services • Referral to CBO • FBA/BIP • Referral to counseling services for bullying, intimidation, or harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E. In-school disciplinary action (e.g. formal restorative conference, etc.) F. Temporary and timed removal from classroom G. Principal’s suspension (grades 3-5)
<p>Level 4: Aggressive or Injurious /Harmful Behavior</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posting, distributing, displaying, or sharing literature or material containing threats of violence, injury, harm, depicting violent actions against, or obscene, vulgar, or lewd pictures of students or staff • Physically aggressive behavior (not minor) with risk of injury or harm • Coercion or threatening or instigating violence, injury or harm • School bus behavior posing substantial risk of injury • Harassing, intimidating, bullying behavior – includes electronic communication, physical violence, stalking, derogatory language, etc. • Engaging in harassing, intimidating and/or bullying behavior, including using electronic communication to engage in such behavior (cyber-bullying) based on an individual’s actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, religious practices, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability or weight • Sexually aggressive comments, innuendos, propositions, engaging in nonverbal or physical conduct of sexual nature • Possessing controlled substances or prescription medications without 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent outreach • Intervention by counseling staff • Guidance conference(s) • Restorative practices • Social-Emotional Learning • PBIS • Individual/group counseling • Collaborative problem solving • Conflict resolution • Peer mediation • Mentoring program • Formal restorative conference • Development of individual behavior contract • Short-term behavioral progress report • Referral to PPT • Community services • Referral to CBO • Referral for mental health support services • FBA/BIP • Referral to counseling services for bullying, intimidation, or harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Pedagogical school staff meeting with student to address misbehavior and its consequences B. Student/teacher conference C. Formal meeting with student by appropriate supervisor to address misbehavior and its consequences D. Parent conference E. In-school disciplinary action (e.g. formal restorative conference, etc.) F. Temporary and timed removal from classroom G. Principal’s suspension (grades 3-5)

<p>appropriate authorization, illegal drugs, alcohol, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking or attempting to take property belonging to another or the school • Falsely activating fire or other disaster alarm • Making a bomb threat • Creating substantial risk of serious injury • Causing serious injury • Inciting a riot • Possessing or selling any weapons • Using controlled substances or prescriptions medications with appropriate authorization, or using illegal drugs, synthetic hallucinogens, and/or alcohol 		
<p>Level 5: Seriously Dangerous or Violent Behavior</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting a fire • Threatening to or using force to take or attempt to take other’s property • Using force or inflicting or attempting to inflict serious injury upon students, personnel, or school agents • Extreme force against or inflicting or attempting to inflict serious injury upon students or others • Planning, instigating, or participating with others in an incident of group violence • Gang-related behavior • Physical sexual aggression, forcing another to engage • Selling or distributing illegal drugs or controlled substances or alcohol • Possessing or selling any weapon • Threatening to use or using a weapon to attempt to inflict injury upon school personnel, students, or others • Possessing or using a firearm, bomb, or other explosive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent outreach • Intervention by counseling staff • Guidance conference(s) • Restorative practices • Social-Emotional Learning • PBIS • Individual/group counseling • Collaborative problem solving • Conflict resolution • Peer mediation • Mentoring program • Formal restorative conference • Development of individual behavior contract • Short-term behavioral progress report • Referral to PPT • Community services • Referral to CBO • Referral for mental health support services • Referral to counseling services for bullying, intimidation, or harassment • Referral to appropriate substance abuse counseling service • FBA/BIP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Pedagogical school staff meeting with student to address misbehavior and its consequences B. Student/teacher conference C. Formal meeting with student by appropriate supervisor to address misbehavior and its consequences D. Parent conference E. In-school disciplinary action (e.g. formal restorative conference, etc.) F. Temporary and timed removal from classroom G. Principal’s suspension (grades 3-5, grades K-2 with consult from the state)

Once finalized and Board (NCSE, district, and state) approved, the Family Handbook, Discipline Code, and Code of Conduct will be distributed to every family upon enrollment, available to all staff members, and will incorporate the rules and expectations for proper behavior, the resultant consequences to any infractions to the code, descriptions of due process, and student/parental rights.

c. Describe the proposed school's policies regarding student expulsion and suspension (in- and out-of-school) for both general education and students identified as special education, and the educational alternatives available to students who are expelled or suspended. In addition, please include the due process procedures the school would follow in applying the discipline policy for all students, including students identified as eligible for special education.

NCSE will support a fully inclusive environment and, as such, will expect all students to conduct themselves in a safe and appropriate manner. Suspensions and expulsions will serve as last resort options for disciplinary actions. NCSE will avoid removing students from the classroom environment whenever possible, and exhaust all other intervention measures unless the child has demonstrated conduct that immediately threatens the safety of the students, staff, property, and other members of the school community (Level 3 or above for grades 3-5, and Level 5 for grades PK-2). This includes, but is not limited to: endangering the safety of others; serious disruptions that impede the school's operation; assault against fellow students, staff, or other members of the school community; felony convictions; possession of a weapon or illegal substance; sexual, racial, or otherwise harassment of a fellow student, staff member or other school community member; committing or threatening to commit physical, sexual, or injurious harm; gang-related behavior; or a longitudinal history of committing such acts. NCSE will review all infractions on a case-by-case basis and respond in accordance with the interventions and disciplinary actions as determined in the school's approved discipline policy and all related laws and statutes to preserve the safety of the school community and restore order. Considerations on each matter will take into account the child's age and developmental level, the intent of the action, and nature, severity, and frequency of misconduct.

Unless conditions do not allow, time spent out of class will be limited and timed. The Principal, Dean of Culture, or designee will use his/her discretion regarding the location and duration of the classroom removal. S/he will determine if the student can remain on school grounds safely for all individuals and school property, or if the misconduct warrants that the child be removed from school grounds during a time of suspension. The decision will be based on weighing the evidence and reviewing mitigating factors. For grades 3 and above, the Principal, Dean of Culture, or designee thereof, has the right to invoke suspension for a period of up to 10 days with or without recommendation for expulsion, or in-school suspension for up to 5 days. For grades PK-2, these measures will be taken in consult with the state and reserved only for the most severe cases in which a child harms, or demonstrates a severe or injurious threat to the safety of another. Except in an emergency situation, prior to making this decision, the principal, or designee will provide verbal notice of the infraction(s), provide an explanation of the evidence if the child denies the infraction(s), and gives the child an opportunity to explain the situation. The parent/guardian will also be notified, and NCSE will take all appropriate measures pursuant to school policies for provisions of continued instruction during the period of suspension.

All students and families will have the right to due process and a formal hearing as a part of the disciplinary process. Students will be immediately notified of the charge and potential evidence. Parents will be contacted by phone if possible, and in writing within 24 hours. The school will set a date for the hearing, and parents will be notified in writing within a reasonable timeframe. After the hearing, the Principal will issue a written decision within 24 hours. Parents may appeal the decision through a hearing with the Board.

In cases where conduct could potentially lead to a suspension of more than 10 days or a recommendation for expulsion, particularly for a student with disabilities, the PPT, parent included, will convene to determine if the cause of the behavior is directly related to the student's disability. Such student may be suspended for up to 10 days pending determination. If the misconduct is not a direct result of the disability, or if the student has not been classified as disabled, the school may proceed with a recommendation for expulsion, and the student will

receive an alternative educational plan in accordance with the IEP. For the nondisabled student, NCSE will coordinate with the local district to identify an alternative setting pending a formal hearing. If the misconduct is directly related to a disability, the PPT shall revise the student's IEP to prevent recurrence and ensure the safety of the other students and staff. If a parent requests a due process hearing, the student will remain in his/her interim placement pending the decision from the hearing and any subsequent judicial review. Students with disabilities may be assigned to a temporary alternative educational site for no more than 45 school days if the conduct involved sale or distribution of drugs or possession of a weapon. The temporary placement will be determined by the PPT.

In accordance with CSDE's recommendations (2010, p. 14)⁷², in-school suspensions will take into consideration the following:

- Staffing of the in-school suspension setting, including academic credentials and qualifications of instructional and administrative personnel;
- Grouping of students by grade level and academic needs;
- Physical location of the in-school suspension setting;
- Instructional content and assignment of classroom work; and
- Teaching social skills, positive behavior and improved decision making.

For students whose conduct warrants a long-term out-of-school suspension or expulsion, NCSE will convene with the host district to determine an alternative educational placement.

In the case of students with disabilities whose misconduct is not a manifestation of the child's disability, s/he will be disciplined in the same manner and duration as his/her nondisabled peers. In accordance with FAPE (Free and Appropriate Public Education) regulations and CSDE's guidelines, in-school suspensions will not count toward days of suspension or absence provided that the student is able to: return to class within the regulated timeframe, continue to participate in the general curriculum, continue to receive services as delineated on his/her IEP, and continue to participate in activities with nondisabled peers to the extent that s/he would have access in his/her regular instructional placement. If the misconduct is a direct reflection of an identified or suspected disability, NCSE will refer to the student's IEP, 504 plan, and/or Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) and the PPT for guidance. A manifestation determination must be conducted for expulsion or suspension for more than 10 consecutive school days, removal to special circumstances, and any other change in placement. NCSE will conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and implement a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP), or review and modify the BIP if one already exists. NCSE will ensure compliance with all federal, state, and local statutes, students' IEPs, 504 plans, and recommendations of the PPT to provide responsive discipline for students with disabilities, to include decisions pertaining to any suspensions and/or expulsions.

NCSE will maintain written records of all infractions, particularly suspensions and expulsions. In cases where a student's IEP includes a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), the student is disciplined in accordance to the BIP. The School coordinates with the PPT of the student's district of residence in cases if, for example, the infractions would mandate a suspension of 10 or more days, if there is cause to consider changes to a student's IEP/BIP, or if the infraction requires the provision of services during the student's removal for such offenses as drug or weapons charges. Parents are provided with the Procedural Safeguards, which inform the parents of their right to due process.

⁷² Connecticut State Department of Education. (2010). *Guidelines for in-school and out-of-school suspensions*. Retrieved from http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/In_School_Suspension_Guidance.pdf

6. Human Resource Policies

a. *Describe the criteria and standards to be followed in the hiring and dismissal process of teachers, administrators and other school staff. In addition, please provide a sample job description for a teacher and a principal.*

NCSE will establish a rigorous recruitment, screening, and selection process to ensure the appointment of highly qualified and passionate professionals who are deeply committed to the school's mission, vision, and philosophy of promoting excellence and providing equitable opportunities for all learners. The leadership team will be comprised of a Principal, Dean of Students/Social Worker, Academic Dean, and a Finance & Operations Manager (FOM). The Board will have hiring, evaluating, and firing power of the Principal. The Principal, with input from the Board, will have authority to select, assess, and terminate the Deans and FOM, who in turn will hold authority to hire, appraise, and dismiss all personnel under their purview with Principal approval. (Please refer to NCSE's Organizational Chart attached as Appendix B).

All applications will be accepted online, in person, and by mail (postal or electronic). As an equal opportunity employer, NCSE will adhere to CSDE's Affirmative Action Plan, with consideration to the state's plan for "Ensuring Equity and Excellence for All Connecticut Students"⁷³, and employ staff on the basis of their qualifications, competencies, education, experience, records of accomplishment, and references from previous employers. All decisions will be based on merit and school needs. In no case will the school discriminate on the basis of race/ethnicity, gender, disability, marital status, sexual preference or identity, religion, or any other factor not directly related to the candidate's ability to perform his/her professional duties. Similarly, any form of discrimination or harassment will not be tolerated at NCSE. Any individual who violates these policies will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, which may include termination without compensation. NCSE will embrace diversity in its personnel and hopes to attract, recruit, and hire candidates with an array of talents, experiences, and backgrounds.

As described in Section II.2g, the Board of Trustees will establish a contract with a hiring firm to screen and develop an initial pool of candidates for the Principal's position. The Board may also elicit the support of the school's founding members and community affiliations to support the search for the school's lead administrator. Once the initial candidates are identified, the Education and Accountability Committee of the Board will assume the responsibility of performing the initial round of screening. This may include phone and face-to-face interviews, researching the candidates' credentials, and performance tasks or scenarios that reflect how the candidates would manage specific responsibilities in their role. The Committee will, then, present its recommendations to the full Board, which will vote by majority to hire the incumbent. In addition to demonstrating the ability to meet the performance requirements listed in Sections II.2f and 2g, the ideal candidate will also fulfill the requirements outlined in the Principal's job description. (Appendix E). NCSE will follow a similar process for developing a pool of candidates for the Deans and FOM positions. Once the candidates are identified, the Principal will perform the duties of interviewing and checking credentials. When a final candidate is selected, the Principal will introduce the incumbent to the Board for input and final approval, and a letter of offer will be submitted.

The Principal will have authority to recruit, hire, train, and dismiss employees for teaching positions. NCSE will use the criteria and qualifications detailed in job descriptions (Appendix E) to assess candidate alignment to expected performance of duties. In subsequent years when a teaching staff is already in place, the Principal may choose to elicit staff support in developing a

⁷³ Connecticut State Department of Education. (2016). *Ensuring equity and excellence for all Connecticut students*. Retrieved from http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/board/five_year_comprehensive_plan_for_education.pdf

staff selection committee. The Principal can select employees with strong qualifications and performance records to assist in the interviewing process. Additionally, as teacher candidates are reviewed for addition to the staff, NCSE will be enrolled with students who are attending class. Qualified teacher candidates may be asked to perform a lesson demonstration with a grade level, content area, or specialization identical or similar to the one for which the candidate applied. The classroom teacher will be asked for the flexibility to allow the teacher candidate to demonstrate the lesson with the students during a pre-scheduled interval. The Principal may also ask existing staff members to join the observation. In addition to qualifications that support student achievement, it is necessary for candidates to demonstrate the ability to collaborate and operate as a member of a team of grade level professionals. Once the Principal has had the opportunity to screen all candidates and makes a determination, an offer letter will be submitted to the candidate. Candidates who are not selected will be respectfully informed as well. Prior to any employee's appointment, NCSE will request the appropriate documentation of licensure and identification, require the appropriate health records, and expect the candidate to submit to a state and national criminal history background check. Pending the approval of all proofs aforementioned, and the acceptance of employment offer, the candidate can begin an orientation process at the school.

NCSE employment will be "at will". Therefore, both employee and employer have the right to terminate employment as needed. Any employee voluntarily terminating employment is asked to submit a letter stating the effective date of resignation to their immediate supervisor and the Principal. It is requested that up to two weeks notice be given prior to the employee's resignation. However, it is at the discretion of the Principal to accept the full notice period or immediately accept the resignation on the date submitted. In the event that a member of the leadership team resigns, a letter should be submitted to the Board, and the Board will have authority to request immediate resignation. Should the Principal decide to resign, it is at the Board's discretion to determine if such resignation is accepted prior to the date indicated in the letter. The employee will be paid for all time worked, and the employee must return all NCSE property upon leaving.

At will employees may be terminated at any time with or without notice. NCSE will exercise this prerogative in the event that there is a breach of any policies, laws, regulations, or standards under which NCSE operates. Situations which may require termination include, but are not limited to: corporal punishment, use or sale of narcotics, repeated poor performance, excessive absence or tardiness, failure to report child abuse, intoxication, theft, fighting, abusive or foul language, insubordination, or any other conduct deemed inappropriate, unethical, or illegal by the school or Board. All employees will have the right to due process and may request a hearing with the Board of Trustees. The Board will, then, return a determination to the supervising authority. In accordance with federal law, NCSE will allow employees and their dependents to temporarily continue health insurance coverage with COBRA. All policies, expectations, and procedures are outlined in the school's employee manual, which is distributed to all staff members upon hire. When employment is severed, whether voluntary or involuntary, the supervising authority will conduct an exit interview to ensure the employee understands the terms of separation, and both parties may evaluate the circumstances for separation. NCSE is highly invested in the success of its employees and will ensure that all members of the leadership team and staff are provided with the necessary support to succeed in their positions so that these situations remain an exception.

b. Describe the targeted staff size and teacher-to-student ratio aligned to the school mission, educational philosophy, students served, and budget.

NCSE will utilize a team teaching approach to instruction. As the budget will reflect in Section IV.2, the school will have two grade-level classes, each composed of 28 students, which, at full capacity, will be heterogeneously grouped with one Lead Teacher and one Education

Associate (or shared grade level associate in the first three years of operation), facilitating a reduced student-to-teacher ratio. While both lead and associate teachers will be certified instructors, the Lead Teacher will be distinguished with a track record of accomplishment in driving student achievement. For classes with students whose IEPs stipulate more intensive interventions, a third special education teacher will join the general education classroom teachers to provide appropriate support and accommodations as indicated in students' IEPs. The school's smaller learning environment coupled with reduced student-to-teacher ratios will facilitate more individualized instruction with more frequent, meaningful, personalized, and thought-provoking interactions among students, and between students and staff members. This will also help to strengthen the bonds between stakeholders and establish a school-wide family/community atmosphere. A staffing plan is provided with the budget in Section IV.2.

c. Discuss how the proposed school will attract, retain, and develop high-quality teachers and school leaders and comply with state requirements regarding teacher certification.

NCSE will establish a rigorous recruitment, screening, and selection process to ensure the appointment of a highly qualified, certified staff with the requisite qualifications to successfully fulfill performance expectations and deliver a premier educational program to the families of the Norwalk region. The process for attracting the Principal is outlined in Section II.2g. To appoint the school's faculty members, NCSE will establish a broad and diverse pool of applicants by recruiting through a variety of means, which may include: widespread media advertisements (electronic, newspapers, flyers, and educational journals); postings at local universities and teacher preparation programs; teacher recruitment fairs; social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.); school website; electronic job search engines; leveraging personal and professional relationships, contacts, and networks (Board members, community members, founding members); district newsletters; radio advertisements; and local, regional, and national charter organizations. Norwalk Excellence will also seek to develop relationships with teacher/administrator preparation programs and alumni/career development departments of regional universities to support a growing pipeline of qualified and certified recruits. NCSE will promote diversity in the applicant pool by advertising in targeted media (e.g. minority newspapers, flyers posted at local markets), networking with minority organizations such as the NAACP, Hispanic Advisory Council and Urban League, and participating in minority recruitment events. NCSE will comply with all federal, state, and local regulations and requirements for hiring staff (including certification requirements) and will not discriminate in hiring, employment, contracting, or retention of staff on the basis of race, sex, age, religion, disability, or other reasons prohibited by law. NCSE will recruit teachers who are passionate about the school's mission, vision, and philosophies and excited at the prospect of being one of the school's founding teachers.

NCSE will provide multiple incentives to retain its faculty. NCSE will cultivate a small professional learning community where every student and staff member is part of a special family. Every staff member will feel valued and supported as they grow personally and professionally. NCSE will provide opportunities to build leadership skills and capacity. Teachers will have opportunities to participate in and develop activities that will help them grow beyond the classroom environment. Whenever possible, NCSE will promote future leaders from within the organization. Additionally, teachers will receive stipends for assuming roles and responsibilities beyond the scope of teaching. The school will also offer fringe benefits such as tuition support and paid registration fees for attendance at workshops and conferences for all staff. Further, employees will be eligible for performance-based bonuses. All of these strategies are designed to provide incentive for every staff member to continually increase and improve their skill sets, which will ultimately benefit the students they serve.

Ongoing professional development is vital to ensuring that students benefit from improved instructional practices. Every school year begins with a two-week orientation to the program, followed by continual coaching and development throughout the year. All teachers will have their own professional growth plans to ensure that professional development is differentiated and individualized for each teacher's maximal growth. Teachers at NCSE will be expected to complete 200 hours of professional growth each year. One hundred of those hours can be allocated towards graduate coursework, online courses, educational conferences, and external workshops, or staff may submit proposals for alternative plans, such as additional degree or license programs. The remaining 100 hours are dedicated towards building leadership capacity in the staff, qualified through activities such as mentoring other teachers, providing workshops for parents, creating exemplar units, creating an enrichment club for students, and planning activities to increase parent engagement. Such activities may be coordinated individually, or as a grade level team. Teachers will meet individually with the leadership team specific to their professional growth plans to establish goals towards individual students, grade level, and school-wide achievement. In addition to school-wide goals, based on the SEED model for educator evaluations, teachers will also have specific and individualized instructional and learning goals. Goals and progress will be carefully monitored and documented on each teacher's growth plan and compiled into a portfolio. As the year progresses, the teacher and leadership team meet formally two more times to review portfolios, assess the teacher's progress towards established goals, and formulate a plan to ensure success. Teachers' progress towards goals in the professional growth plan will add to their summative evaluations. NCSE will utilize the SEED model, and may include additional feedback reflective of the performance expectations outlined in the job description.

d. Describe procedures to documents efforts to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of staff.

As an equal opportunity employer, Norwalk Excellence will employ staff on the basis of their qualifications, competencies, education, experience, records of accomplishment, and references from previous employers. All decisions are based on merit and school needs. In no case do we discriminate on the basis of race/ethnicity, gender, disability, marital status, sexual preference or identity, religion, or any other factor not directly related to the candidate's ability to perform his/her professional duties. Similarly, any form of discrimination or harassment will not be tolerated within our school. Norwalk Excellence will comply with all federal, state, and local regulations and requirements for hiring personnel.

At NCSE, we embrace diversity in our personnel and seek to attract, recruit, and retain candidates with an array of talents, experiences, and backgrounds. NCSE will recruit and identify an initial pool of candidates for all school-based positions. Using the criteria and qualifications detailed in our job descriptions, NCSE will establish a broad and diverse pool of applicants by recruiting through a variety of means described in Section III.6c. While we will hire the most qualified candidates, we will intentionally ensure that our candidate pool reflects a diverse demographic.

As with all of our programs, NCSE will evaluate our processes for attracting a qualified and diverse pool of applicants. Our leadership team will document which recruitment outlets yielded the top talent, particularly those that appealed to racially and ethnically diverse candidates. Because we strive to ensure that our scholars are taught by the most qualified candidates, we also seek to provide role models reflective of our global culture. For these reasons, the founders will emphasize the importance increasing the diversity among the staff, to include those individuals in leadership positions.

To promote retention of effective staff, we will establish a truly collaborative community where every staff member feels valued. Each individual will be part of a larger family that

extends beyond the school community. We will provide clear and high expectations and intensive support for our staff to realize full potential. Additionally, we will develop incentives for staff retention. These include competitive salaries that are slightly higher than host districts, performance-based rewards to promote improvement of effective practices, and a career ladder that includes pathways to leadership. As we support our scholars to Excellence, we likewise must invest substantial resources to ensure that they receive equitable access to high-quality teachers and school leaders through our intensive evaluation and professional development processes. To maintain consistency, we will institute a variety of measures to support developing teachers and retain our highly effective staff. Ultimately, those who benefit the most are those who are most deserving – our scholars.

e. Describe human resource policies governing salaries and fringe benefits, personnel contracts, and affirmative action and benefit packages.

Personnel Contracts: As discussed in Section III.6a, NCSE employment will be “at will”. The offer letters will articulate the terms of employment, position for which the individual is hired, and the proposed salary. At will contracts will be accompanied by job descriptions and employee manuals, which provide more specific information regarding NCSE’s policies and procedures pertaining to employment. At will employment allows both employee and employer the right to sever employment as needed. At will employees may be terminated at any time with or without notice. NCSE will exercise this prerogative in the event that there is a breach of any policies, laws, regulations, or standards under which NCSE operates. Terminated staff members will have the right to a due process hearing with the Board, and all exiting staff may also be asked to participate in an exit interview. NCSE will adhere to all state and federal laws as applicable. All contracts will be reviewed each year, and revised as needed.

Salaries: NCSE salaries will commensurate with experience, education levels, and position. Stipends will be available for teachers who assume additional responsibilities beyond the scope of the instructional program. The salary scale will be transparent and competitive with prevailing rates of local districts, specifically Norwalk School District.

Benefits: Full-time employees working a minimum of 30 hours/week will be offered a benefits package during annual open enrollment periods, including health, vision, dental, long- and short-term disability, and retirement contribution. Details about each policy, including coverage limitations, inclusions, terms, and costs to employee will be available in the insurance documents provided by the carriers. As the school grows to scale, NCSE will also seek to provide support with degree advancement with partial/full tuition reimbursement. Teachers may also qualify for merit bonuses for outstanding performance. These funds will be supported, either through grants or fundraising.

Standard Deductions: As mandated by law, all employees will have the standard requisite deductions from each paycheck that include state and federal income taxes and contributions to Social Security. The budget will reflect other deductions such as FICA (6.2%), Medicare-employer (1.45%), State unemployment (1.5%), state disability (0.8%), and worker’s compensation insurance (1%). Whereas non-certified employees will contribute to Social Security, all certified employees will make contributions to the Connecticut Teacher Retirement System pursuant to C.G.S. Chapter 167a. All deductions will be noted on each paycheck stub that employees receive each pay period, to include elected deductions for benefit programs. The amount of each deduction may vary based on earnings, number of dependents, and exemptions claimed on W-4 forms submitted by each employee. Any court-mandated deductions such as child support payments will be documented on paystubs and those employees with such deductions will be notified.

Affirmative Action – NCSE will be an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Upon approval, NCSE will submit an Affirmative Action Plan Packet to the CSDE and adhere to all local, state, and federal laws governing the fair employment of staff. The school will employ staff on the basis of their qualifications, competencies, education, experience, records of accomplishment, and references from previous employers. All decisions will be based on merit and school needs. In no case will the school discriminate on the basis of race/ethnicity, gender, disability, marital status, sexual preference or identity, religion, or any other factor not directly related to the candidate's ability to perform his/her professional duties. Similarly, any form of discrimination or harassment will not be tolerated at NCSE. Any individual who violates these policies will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment. NCSE will embrace diversity in its personnel and hopes to attract, recruit, and hire candidates with an array of talents, experiences, and backgrounds.

f. Discuss how the proposed school will evaluate teachers and administrators. In particular, explain how the school will implement the Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation by: (1) indicating that the governing council intends to adopt the System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED) model for teacher and administrator evaluation and development; or (2) describing an alternative method for teacher and administrator evaluation and development that meets the "Core Requirements" outlined in the Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation.

The NCSE Board of Trustees will adopt and implement Connecticut's System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED) model to conduct annual appraisals of teachers and school leaders. NCSE's Board will conduct a formal performance evaluation of the Principal, the Principal will evaluate the secondary leadership team, and the Principal, with input from members of the leadership team, will evaluate the instructional staff. Based on the SEED model, evaluations will include an orientation to the process, a goal-setting conference, evidence collection, observations of performance, a mid-year formative check-in, and an end-of-year summative review. The process for evaluating school leaders may be found in Section II.2g and 3b. Summative ratings for teachers will be based on a four-level matrix rating system, and will be a composite of the following components:

- Student Outcomes – Classroom/Cohort (45%)
 - Attainment of student growth goals (22.5%)
 - Attainment of student absolute targets (22.5%)
- Observation of teacher practice and performance (40%)
 - Based on evidence collected during three formal in-class observations using a standards-based observation framework. NCSE will adopt the *Danielson Framework for Teaching*.
- Whole-school measures of student learning (5%)
 - Student Surveys
- Parent or peer feedback (10%)
 - Annual parent/family surveys and with consideration to informal peer observations by grade level team members

NCSE may also add additional feedback that corresponds to the performance expectations outlined in the job descriptions and individual growth plans. NCSE will ensure that the school's evaluation process is SDE approved and meets the guidelines for Core Requirements of Educator Evaluation and Development. Additionally, the school will ensure that key evaluators are appropriately trained, licensed, and supported in the implementation of the school's model for

performance evaluations. NCSE will utilize annual performance appraisals to determine goal setting, ongoing development, and contract renewal or termination.

7. Child Day Care Services

Please note: This section is required, but not subject to scoring.

a. *Indicate if child day care services will be provided (i.e., preschool and/or before and after school services to children). If yes, please indicate the age range of the children the proposed school would serve in the program(s).*

At this time, the applicants do not intend to provide child day care services. During the planning year, the Board will review the school's budget and resources to determine if an after-school program would be feasible. In lieu of a typical after-care program that predominantly focuses on the supervision of children, NCSE will explore options for partnering with local community organizations, as well as leveraging staff interests in providing activities that will support an after-school enrichment program based on student interest, program/personnel availability, and funding. Such activities might include: music, art, dance, chess, theater, girl/boy scouts, and sports. NCSE will also consider including the coordination and operation of an after-school activity towards teachers' professional growth plans.

8. Student Health and Welfare

Please note: This section is required, but not subject to scoring.

a. *Describe the proposed school's plan for the provision of the following services to students: school nurse, C.G.S. § 10-212; vision and hearing screening, C.G.S. § 10- 214; immunization requirements, C.G.S. § 10-204a; and mandatory health assessments, C.G.S. §§ 10-206 and 10-206a.*

NCSE is committed to ensuring the healthy development of all students. Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-212, NCSE will employ one full-time nurse to safeguard and manage all health services to the students. The certified nurse will be employed upon meeting all licensing and background check requirements, and will ensure the school's compliance with all state health services requirements, to include annual vision and hearing screenings (C.G.S. § 10- 214), immunization requirements (C.G.S. § 10-204a), and mandatory health assessments (C.G.S. §§ 10-206 and 10-206a). The nurse will also be responsible for administering all medications pursuant to C.G.S. §10-212a, maintaining and safeguarding all health records, ensuring the safe operation and inspection of all appropriated medical equipment such as defibrillators, blood pressure cuffs, and otoscopes, and first aid and responsive medical care within the scope of the clinician's practices. NCSE will also ensure that at least one other administrator and one staff member is trained in CPR, emergent allergy/asthma treatments (Epi Pen, nebulizer, etc.), and distribution of medications. The nurse will also be responsible for maintaining thorough records documenting activities such as medication dispensing, medical care, screenings, contact with legal guardians, and any other actions under the purview the clinician.

NCSE will provide all families with the appropriate medical health forms as a part of the enrollment packets. Parents will be required to provide proof of proper immunizations and health screenings prior to the start of the school year. The nurse will review all documentation to ensure proper completion and compliance with C.G.S. § 10-204 and 10-206. The nurse will also safeguard all medical records in a locked cabinet in the designated nurse's office. If a student transfers out of the school during the school year, the nurse may also be required to transfer or cause to be transferred medical records to the student's school of transfer with authorization from the child's legal guardian. The nurse will be asked to conduct and coordinate staff training on identifying and reporting suspected abuse and/or neglect. Finally, the nurse may also be asked to

participate in interviewing students should a physically or psychologically damaging event be suspected (i.e. when abuse is suspected). The nurse will play a vital role in the safety and well-being of the students, and will be an essential member of the school community.

SECTION IV: SCHOOL VIABILITY**1. Building Options**

a. Describe present options for a school building, including location, capacity and timeline for identifying and acquiring the facility.

The desired location for Norwalk Excellence is in Norwalk, Connecticut. The founders believe that CSDE's authorizing cycle and the school's proposed opening date of September 2019 will allow sufficient time to secure and prepare a facility for certified occupancy. NCSE will identify board members with expertise in real estate, development, and leasing agreements, who will be charged with identifying a list of potential building options for the school. NCSE will engage realtors and brokers to conduct an initial assessment of suitable locations that could serve as the school's physical plant for the charter term. The school will also reach out to the district, local diocese, and community organizations to support this work.

NCSE will seek at least a 5-10 year lease term for a building that provides ample square footage to meet the needs of the school's programs and maximum enrollment capacity of 392, and optimally will provide additional space for potential expansion in a subsequent charter term. Upon approval of its initial charter, NCSE will begin its search and the process for identifying, financing, acquiring, and renovating the site. Optimally, NCSE targets January to March of 2019 to identify its future site, secure leasing terms by June, and complete renovations by August of 2019. A timeline is provided in response to Section IV.4a.

b. Explain why this facility would be suitable for the proposed school, including any plans and associated timelines to renovate and bring the facility into compliance with all applicable school building codes.

Once the Board is appointed, it will establish a Development Committee that will commission a real estate task force to oversee the process of identifying, financing, acquiring, and renovating the site. The Board will acquire the facility through a long-term lease. The leaser, which will depend on which building the school determines is appropriate, will negotiate a long-term lease with a developer that will include all renovations needed in order for the facility to be suitable to house a comprehensive PK-5 program in compliance with all legal requirements for a charter school facility. NCSE will provide leasing terms that are favorable recognizing that in the early years of operation, NCSE will not be in a position to reap the benefits of economies of scale. Noting that undertaking facility payments in the early years of its operations will be challenging, NCSE will negotiate rental costs that will increase as the school grows to capacity based on square footage. As the building has yet to be identified, the budget currently assumes that the rental costs will approximate 18% of the total yearly per pupil revenue.

NCSE is allowing for programming space of approximately 75 square feet per pupil. This means that a suitable building to house the school would be at least 18,000 square feet by Year 3 and at least 30,000 square feet by year 5. The preliminary space plan for Years 1 and 5 include at minimum: **Year 1:** 2 classrooms for each grade PK-1; 1 Special Education resource room; 1 PK-1 Music Room; Food Prep and Storage area (In PK-1, students may eat in their classrooms); 1 Gym/Auditorium Space; 1 Faculty Room; Administrative Space (includes main reception with separate office for the Principal, shared offices for the Deans, SEC and FOM); Conference Room; Sufficient Storage Space for Supplies; Janitor's Closet; Nurse's Office. **Year 5:** 2 classrooms for each grade PK-5; 2 Special Education Resource Rooms (PK-2 and 3-5); 1 Music Room; 1 Cafeteria with food prep/serving area and storage area; 1 Gym/Auditorium Space; 1 Faculty Room; Admin Space (includes main reception with separate office of the Principal, shared offices for the Deans, SEC, and FOM); Conference Room, Sufficient Storage Space; Janitor's Closet; Nurse's Office; Office for the SEC.

Once the building is acquired and/or leasing terms are determined approximately by June 2019, NCSE will identify a reputable architect to develop floor plans and a developer to assume renovations beginning in

the summer of 2019. The school anticipates completion of renovations by August 2019 with sufficient time for certified occupancy in the summer 2019, and operation beginning in September 2019. A timeline is provided in response to Section IV.4a.

2. Financial Plan

*To assist applicants in responding to the questions below, the CSDE has developed templates for a pre-opening budget statement, a projected five-year budget statement, and a projected cash flow for year one of operation. The templates are available in **Appendix C** as well as here: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/Excel/equity/charter/2016budget.xls>. The templates are designed to keep financial reporting requirements at a minimum, while enabling compliance with monitoring standards and comparability to public school financial data. They are merely sample formats; they may be amended, as necessary.*

The CSDE encourages applicants to seek assistance from their financial adviser and/or Certified Public Accountant in preparing budget statements and in designing a financial plan and control system for a proposed school.

The financial plan must reflect the expenses related to all commitments proposed in this application through the proposed school's fifth year of operation, including the school's mission, education program, expected student population, human resources, professional development, facilities, and growth plan. Financial projections must include total documented sources of revenue including the state per-pupil grant and other grants (federal, state, and private) and fundraising. If relying upon philanthropic support, please indicate the source and amount of such support, and attach a letter of commitment as documentation. When projecting salaries and benefits, please provide supporting evidence, including the title and salary of each position by line item and year.

A detailed enrollment chart along with student population breakdowns can be found within the Financial Plan template (attached as Appendix H) on the 'Enrollment' tab. In addition, a complete list of positions, salaries and benefits can also be found within the Financial Plan template on the 'Staffing & Comp.' tab.

- a. Present a pre-opening budget statement detailing estimated start-up activities that are not reflected in the projected five-year budget statement. To provide a full understanding of the statement, please include a budget narrative explaining the projected amounts reported in the budget by line item and by year.*

The pre-opening budget statement detailing start-up activities in regards to revenues and expenditures can be found within the Financial Plan template on the 'Pre-Opening Budget Statement' tab. Included in the 'Pre-Opening Budget Statement' are detailed line-by-line descriptions to help provide a full and clear understanding of the school's intentions in preparation leading up to Year One of operations.

- b. Present a projected five-year budget statement detailing the estimated financial activity of the proposed school for the first five years of operation. The statement should contain all commitments proposed in the application. To provide a full understanding of the statement, please include a budget narrative explaining the projected amounts reported in the budget by line item and by year.*

The projected five-year budget statement detailing the estimated financial activity of the proposed school for the first five years of operation in regards to revenues and expenditures can be found within the Financial Plan template on the 'Projected 5 Yr Budget Statement' tab. Included in the 'Projected 5 Yr Budget Statement' are detailed line-by-line descriptions to help

provide a full and clear understanding of the school's intentions for the first five years of operation.

c. Present a projected cash flow statement for year one of operation to show the estimated movement of funds in and out of the proposed school for year one of operation. The statement must include a plan for funding cash flow shortfalls. The statement should indicate an understanding of when grant funds will be available.

The projected cash flow statement detailing the estimated movement of funds in and out of the proposed school for Year 1 of operation in regards to revenues and expenditures can be found within the Financial Plan template on the 'Cash Flow Schedule' tab.

d. Present a schedule of borrowings and repayments. Please identify any estimated funds borrowed (loans, notes, mortgages, etc.), including the source of the funds, repayment schedule, and purpose of the borrowing. The schedule of borrowings and repayments should be aligned to the pre-opening budget, projected five-year budget, and cash flow statement.

N/A – Norwalk Charter School for Excellence does not intend to borrow any funds.

e. Explain the structure for managing the proposed school's finances; Please include any fiscal staff positions, required qualifications, and job duties.

School staffing and programmatic needs will be presented by the Principal, Finance & Operations Manager, and Finance Committee and discussed at monthly Board meetings throughout the school year. At each meeting, the state of the school's financial position will be presented to the full Board for review and discussion.

The budget will be monitored for accuracy on a monthly basis by comparing actual expenses to the pro-rated budgeted amounts, and each expense line item is scrutinized for large variances. This process not only provides the Board and school leadership with frequent feedback on current year performance, but it will also allow the school to budget with greater accuracy in future years. If mid-year modifications to a budget are deemed necessary, the Finance & Operations Manager will work to prepare the modified budget, and receive Board approval for the same.

Norwalk Charter School for Excellence has defined a five-year financial plan. Mid-year of each school year, the Board Finance Committee, Principal and Finance & Operations Manager will conduct a series of meetings to analyze the upcoming school year's budget as outlined in the five-year plan. Adjustments to the upcoming school year's budget will be made based on staffing and programmatic needs to achieve the proper balance between financial responsibility and providing the best possible education for the students. In the spring of each school year, a revised budget will be presented to the full Board for discussion. The full Board will vote to approve the budget in the June meeting of each school year. The Finance & Operations Manager's job description is included in Appendix E.

f. Describe the fiscal controls and financial management policies the governing council will employ to provide oversight of the proposed school's financial position. Please be sure to describe a sound financial management system utilizing GAAP with adequate systems of internal controls. Also, please describe how the school will track finances in its daily business operations.

The Board of Trustees of Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will use a Fiscal Policies and Procedures ("FPP") handbook similar to the sample attached as Appendix I that was originally developed by the Bronx Charter School for Excellence. The FPP handbook has helped ensure the model school's fiscal viability and clean audits year after year. Please refer to the handbook for complete details. Lastly, the handbook will be updated once the Norwalk Charter School for

Excellence is chartered to make certain it applies to all laws and standard as they apply to the state of Connecticut.

3. Self-Evaluation and Accountability

a. Describe the proposed school's self-assessment or evaluation system to ensure that it is: (1) demonstrating educational progress of students; (2) meeting its stated mission and goals; (3) making sufficient efforts to attract, enroll and retain students from among the populations described in C.G.S. § 10-66bb(c)(A)(i) to (A)(vi); and (4) making efforts to reduce racial, ethnic, and/or economic isolation.

During the planning year, NCSE will establish an accountability plan of academic and non-academic performance goals with which to monitor the success of the school's educational, operational, and financial programs. The school will also develop a matrix of school-wide standards and performance benchmarks to guide instruction and monitor student progress throughout the course of their enrollment. The matrix will be designed with year-end goals, and benchmark targets to ensure that students are making adequate incremental progress throughout the year towards the summative year-end goals. The performance matrix will also be comprehensively articulated to ensure progress as students advance to subsequent grade levels. These standards for student achievement will align to the CCSS to secure a solid foundation upon graduation from the school's program, and will encompass and incorporate all facets of student learning to ensure the holistic growth of each child.

Prior to each Board meeting, the Principal will develop a data dashboard report with support from the Deans and FOM to provide a current snapshot of the school's performance throughout the year. Various aspects of the school's programs will be captured and incorporated into the dashboard report, which may include: student achievement data on formative and summative assessments measured against the matrix of academic benchmark and year-end goals; data in aggregate and disaggregated by grade level and subgroups (to include students identified as low-income, special education, English Learners, and racial/ethnic groups); enrollment, retention, and waiting list figures (aggregate and disaggregated); average daily attendance rates; disciplinary statistics (suspensions, expulsions); results from student, staff, and parent surveys; staffing figures; compliance measures; financial reports; revenue versus expense reports; fundraising and capital campaigns; and external and community relations. As the school grows to capacity, NCSE will also monitor graduation rates, and rates of admission into competitive middle and high school programs.

On a monthly basis, the instructional staff, Principal and Education and Accountability Committee of the Board, will monitor progress towards academic goals. The FOM, Executive Committee and Finance Committee of the Board (Development Committee as needed) will monitor progress towards non-academic goals related to the operational and financial performance of NCSE on a monthly basis. Teachers will use progress toward benchmark targets to inform instruction and make short-term adjustments to the curriculum and instructional plans. The leadership and Board of Trustees will use achievement data as well as summative analysis of non-academic data to make decisions that include allocations of resources and staff, and programmatic decisions regarding curriculum and personnel modifications.

At the end of the year, the Board will review the data collected throughout the year and analyze its implications to make programmatic decisions. The data will also be used to measure achievement, and/or progress towards established academic and non-academic goals, which will indicate whether or not the programs have been successful. As a child-centered organization, the operational and fiscal performance focuses on making decisions to support the success of all scholars. As the steward of the school's charter, it is ultimately the Board's responsibility to ensure that the school is successfully achieving its mission, vision, and academic/non-academic

goals. As each school year concludes, the Board will participate in strategic planning to objectively assess the school's progress, direction, and future plans.

NCSE will develop a culture that embraces diversity and provides equitable opportunities for excellence for every student intended to eliminate the disparities in student achievement, particularly among its special populations, economically disadvantaged and minority students. Upon approval, NCSE will launch a well-devised recruitment plan to elicit the enrollment of a diverse population targeting families in underserved communities. NCSE will expend every effort to enroll comparable percentages of low-income, minority, disabled, and English Learners that are reflective of the community. The recruitment plan will include outreach in communities populated by families of lower socio-economics, English learners, and families of children with special needs. Disaggregated enrollment and retention rates will inform the school's marketing and outreach plans, helping the Board make determinations about where to focus efforts to ensure equitable enrollment and retention of demographics comparable to the district, and illustrate whether or not those efforts have been successful. Similarly, data collected from staff recruitment efforts will help to ensure that resources are being allocated to outlets, which prove most effective.

The transformative power of education and the high quality instruction that students will receive at NCSE has the power to eliminate the economic isolation and disparities in student achievement among its economically disadvantaged, English learning, special needs, and minority student populations that many families of Norwalk have experienced. As described in Section III.1a, Norwalk posts higher percentages of minority, low-income (free or reduced lunch eligible), and non-English fluent populations, lower graduation rates and median household incomes than all four of its surrounding communities, lower percentages of individuals with a bachelors or higher degree, and higher poverty rates than all of its counterparts. This exemplifies the racial/ethnic and economic isolation that prevails in the city of Norwalk, which NCSE strives to mitigate for future generations.

Employment opportunities and income levels are often correlated with educational levels and skill sets. NCSE will alleviate racial, ethnic, and economic isolation by providing every student with the tools and support they need for success. In accordance with the school's mission, NCSE will provide students with a strong foundation of skills and knowledge, and the capacity to think critically, creatively, and globally to compete for admission into top schools. The school will engage students in a challenging and supportive environment where every student will attain success. Analysis of student achievement data disaggregated by subgroup will provide an indication of whether or not the school is succeeding to close achievement gaps in order to prevent racial, ethnic, and economic isolation. This can only be achieved through the high expectations, support, and collaboration of the key stakeholders all in service to the success of the every child. Ongoing and consistent systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's program with fidelity will help to ensure that the school effectively achieves its goals in service to every student's success.

4. Timetable

a. Provide a detailed timetable of projected activities and dates leading to the opening of the proposed school. The timetable should include, at least, activities related to community outreach, student enrollment, curriculum development, recruiting and hiring high-quality teachers and leaders, and building acquisition.

With anticipated initial certificate of approval issued by the conclusion of 2017, pending funding appropriations by the General Assembly, and a school opening date of September 2019, NCSE submits the following timeline illustrating approximate dates and timeframes for some of the key pre-opening activities.

Activity	Timeframe	Notes
General		
File for Federal 501(c)(3) Status for School and State Tax Exempt Status	Upon initial certificate	NCSE is aware that it may take several months for the IRS to review and approve.
Community Outreach in Norwalk Region	Ongoing to and through operation	Networking, community outreach, building relationships, and seeking endorsements
Initial Certificate of Approval	11/2017	Submitted 8/15/17, Decision expected within 90 days
Budget Approval for Funding	2019	
Website development	Upon approval of initial certificate, Full launch 1/2019	School website developed with comprehensive information and online enrollment forms available
School Facility		
Identification of intended site	Jan 2018-Jan 2019	Pre-planning for financing, acquisition, renovation,
Facility Acquisition	June 2019	Finalize financing and acquisition
Facility Renovations	Summer 2019	Design and development
Renovation Completion	By 08/2019	C of O and all other required documents attained, move-in ready for preliminary administrative staff
Board of Trustees		
Board Recruitment	Present, ongoing	Network through personal and professional affiliates
Initial founding Board appointed	7/2018	Initial founding Board members are appointed to represent minimum requirements for membership
Board Training/Strategic Planning/Development	7/2018	Board orientation, strategic planning, training, possible retreat
Staff recruitment and appointment		
Principal recruitment	9/2018-12/2018	Recruitment of Principal with hiring firm
Principal appointment	1/2019	Principal appointed after careful screening process
Finance & Operations Manager (FOM) recruitment	11/2018-3/2019	FOM recruited through widespread online and media postings
FOM appointment	Jan-Mar 2019	FOM appointed after careful screening process
Instructional Staff Recruitment	1/2019-7/2019	Staff recruited through widespread online and media posting, job fairs, postings, etc.
Instructional Staff hired	7/2019	Staff hired after careful screening process
Staff Professional Development	8/2019	Pre-service staff development for all members
Students Enrollment		
Recruitment	7/2017 - Opening	Three phases of recruitment begins
Enrollment Period	1/2019-6/2019	Families submit enrollment forms online and in hard copies
Lottery	6/2019	Lottery conducted by independent third-party
Transportation Meetings	5/2019-8/2019	Meetings with district central offices
Transportation Determined	8/2019	Based on enrollment, routes and pick up/drop off times determined

Activity	Timeframe	Notes
Curriculum		
Curriculum Development	1/2018-ongoing	Selection, development, and refinement of curriculum resources and guiding documents
Curriculum Units	1/2018 Ongoing	Based on selections and guiding documents, curriculum units developed initially by leadership, with revisions by full instructional staff in subsequent years

5. Transportation

Please note: This section is required, but not subject to scoring.

a. Describe the plan for transporting students from within the local school district to and from the proposed school. Please detail any arrangements that have been made with the local school board(s). If the school plans to implement an extended-day or extended-year program that requires transportation beyond what the district provides, please detail any arrangements that have been made to transport these students. If necessary, please indicate what transportation options, if any, are available for out-of- district students.

Upon charter approval, NCSE will appeal to the Norwalk School District and the district’s contracted school bus company to determine a feasible plan for providing transportation for students who reside in the district. The school will also reach out to neighboring districts for initial points of contact. At the conclusion of the school’s enrollment period, NCSE will determine from which districts students will be attending and identify the distribution of transportation needs of the scholars. NCSE will work with the transportation departments and their contracted bus companies to negotiate pick up and drop off times, and revised bus routes for NCSE scholars.

PREFERENCES

The SBE will give preference to certain factors when considering applications for charter schools. These factors are as follows: (1) establishing a school whose primary purpose is the establishment of programs designed to the student populations as set forth in C.G.S. § 10-66bb(c)(3)(A)(i) through (vi); (2) the primary purpose is to improve the academic performance of an existing school that has consistently demonstrated substandard academic performance, as determined by the Commissioner; (3) serving students who reside in a priority school district pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-266p; (4) serving students who reside in a district in which seventy-five percent or more of the enrolled students are members of racial or ethnic minorities; (5) demonstrating highly credible and specific strategies to attract, enroll and retain students from among the populations set forth in C.G.S. § 10-66bb(c)(3)(A)(i) through (vi); or (6) in the case of an applicant for a state charter school, such state charter school will be located at a work-site or the applicant is an institution of higher education. To be considered for one or more of the preferences, please complete the sections below as appropriate.

In determining whether to grant an initial certificate for approval, the SBE shall consider (i) the effect of the proposed charter school on (I) the reduction of racial, ethnic and economic isolation in the region in which it is to be located, (II) the regional distribution of charter schools in the state, (III) the potential of over concentration of charter schools within a school district or in contiguous school districts, and (IV) the state's efforts to close achievement gaps, as defined in C.G.S. § 10-1600, and (ii) the comments made at a public hearing conducted as part of the charter application process.

1. Serving High-Need Student Populations

- a. *Pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-66bb(c)(3)(A), an applicant may be considered for this preference if you intend to be a charter school whose primary purpose is the establishment of an education program designed to serve one or more of the following high-need student populations: (1) students with a history of low academic performance; (2) students who receive free or reduced-price lunch, pursuant to federal law and regulations; (3) students with a history of behavioral and social difficulties; (4) students identified as requiring special education; (5) students who are English language learners; or (6) students of a single gender. Please indicate the high-need student population(s) that the proposed school would serve, and describe in no more than 250 words how the services and educational programs of the school would lead to academic achievement for such students. The SBE will also consider all applicable sections of the application.*

The mission, vision, and programs at NCSE have specifically been designed to provide the necessary supports, challenges, resources, and learning environment to ensure that every child has equitable opportunities for success. Norwalk has demonstrated a persisting trend of achievement gaps for low-income, minority, and special needs students, which NCSE strives to mitigate. NCSE is designed to address the individualized needs of historically underserved students, including students: with a history of low performance; who receive free or reduced-price lunch; students identified as requiring special education; and English learners.

NCSE's educational program will allow multiple points of entry, providing accessible and supportive, yet challenging and rigorous instruction that targets every student's needs. The success of NCSE will rely heavily on the versatility of the curriculum and instructional strategies that support research-backed best practices. Key strategies include an inclusive, smaller learning environment with reduced student-to-teacher ratios; the use of real-time data to inform flexible, differentiated, instructional groupings uniquely tailored to each student; and personalized learning

plans that provide evidence of each student's achievements, strengths, areas in need of improvement, goals, and progress.

NCSE's programs are modeled after the Stamford Excellence and Bronx Charter School for Excellence, a 2012 National Blue Ribbon School that has proven effective for students who have been underserved by traditional district schools. NCSE will enrich this model to one that is more relevant to the students and families of Norwalk, while offering the community an enhanced educational option based on a nationally recognized, field-tested, and successful program.

- b. Pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-66bb(c)(3)(E), an applicant may be considered for this preference if you demonstrate highly credible and specific strategies to attract, enroll and retain students from among the populations described above. Please indicate the high-need student population(s) that the proposed school would serve, and describe in no more than 250 words how the school would attract, enroll and retain students from these populations.*

NCSE will maintain an open enrollment policy and will not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, religion, disability, national origin, native language, or sexual orientation. Although the school may appeal to populations in high-needs communities, the school does not intend to enact enrollment preferences beyond currently enrolled students and siblings of enrolled scholars after the first year of operation. NCSE will accept applications for all age and grade eligible students. Applications will be provided in English, Spanish, and prevailing languages. Enrollment and waitlists will be determined by a blind lottery. Applicants who have siblings already attending the school will be given preference for any vacancies that occur.

NCSE will utilize strategies, which include:

- Hosting, attending, and distribution of marketing materials at open houses, public meetings, and presentations at organizations such as head start programs, ESL programs for adults with school-aged children, public health centers, housing authorities, counseling centers and support groups, and places of worship
- Neighborhood canvassing, especially in areas with higher concentrations of public housing and multicultural communities
- Distribution of marketing materials in English, Spanish, and prevailing languages
- Local media stations that target both English and non-English speaking audiences
- Bilingual staff members to support recruitment efforts
- Families of children with disabilities or English learners will receive more specific information about the programs and services that NCSE will offer
- Comprehensive information will remain available on standing marketing materials

We will continually emphasize that the school's policies support open enrollment, non-discriminatory practices, and an inclusive educational model.

2. Improving the Academic Performance of an Existing School with Substandard Performance

Norwalk Excellence is proposing the opening of a new school and will not be turning around an existing school. Therefore, this section does not apply.

3. Opening in a Priority School District or District with at Least 75 Percent Racial or Ethnic Minority Enrollment

Norwalk Excellence intends to locate and operate in the Norwalk School District. Norwalk was named a priority district and is one of the 30 Alliance Districts in Connecticut.

4. Being a Higher Education Institution

This section does not apply.

5. Locating at a Work Site

This section does not apply.

Appendix A: Founding Members' Resumes and Curriculum Vitae

Founding Members:

Quentin Phipps
Charlene Reid
Tanya Pierre
Monica Rios
Aya Wakamatsu

Quentin Phipps
(860) 830-5407
E-Mail quewp1@gmail.com

Profile

Over a decade of professional and political experience working with constituents, clients, property and business owners, developers, entrepreneurs, economic development agents, elected officials, and community stakeholders. Professional accomplishments include adopting a plan of development, raising municipality's bond rating, creating new retail recruitment tools, planning and managing events, coordinating advocacy activities, designing marketing, securing diverse funding opportunities through sponsorships and grants, drafting policy, community organizing, development training, and managing a not-for-profit organization.

Professional Achievements:

- Fairfield County Business Journal 40 Under 40 2017
- American Council for Young Political Leaders Delegate 2016
- Hartford Business Journal 40 Under 40 2015
- Connecticut Magazine 40 Under 40 2013
- Partnered with City of Middletown to Secure the Main Street Center Come Home to Downtown Pilot Grant
- Launched Middletown Restaurant Week
- Board of Directors
 - Middlesex United Way January 2013 - Present
 - Middlesex Substance Abuse Action Council (Middlesex Chamber of Commerce Regional Action Council) November 2005 - Present
 - Oddfellows Playhouse Youth Theater March 2009 - Present
- Young Elected Official National Black Caucus Treasurer 2014 - 2017

Professional and Political Experience:

Excellence Community Schools, Director of Advocacy & Policy June 2014 - Present
Downtown Business District, Executive Director / Downtown Manager April 2012 - March 2014
City of Middletown, City Treasurer November 2011 - Present
Guilford Savings Bank, Officer; Branch Manager September 2009 - July 2011
City of Middletown, Chair; Planning & Zoning Commission June 2007 - November 2011
Bank of America, Vice President; Banking Center Manager July 2005 - April 2009
Divisional INROADS Support Specialist May 2003 - January 2005

Education:

Bryant University, R.I. May 2005 Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
Concentration: Marketing Minor: Political Science

Community Relations Management

- Manage lobbying and advocacy efforts at federal, state and local level
- Coordinate media engagement
- Develop strategic partnerships between education, youth, and family stakeholders
- Create and execute recruitment plan for inaugural educational laboratory

Non-For-Profit Management:

- Manage operations
- Execute marketing plan for traditional and new media
- Submit economic development policy
- Coordinate synergistic efforts between business and community agencies
- Research, write, and execute grant proposals
- Design and implement “friendrasiers” and fundraisers

Personnel Management:

- Manage, lead, and coach teams of five to thirty
- Promote a culture of customer needs base marketing
- Evaluate individual contributions and team performance
- Develop and implement training curriculum
- Create daily processes to ensure associate expertise in product knowledge
- Recruit and train new hires

Financial Product and Service Consulting

- Advise clients regarding current and future needs
- Produce relationship review initiative to promote proactive client contact

Information Technology Customer Relationship Management:

- Interpret and analyze complex and cumbersome data to create actionable processes
- Present professional development workshops on macro and micro trend analysis and social media
- Conceptualize and administer customer feedback surveys

Project Management

- Spearhead community events to maximize corporate sponsorship investment and increase event earnings
- Propose incentive plan modifications to encourage behaviors promoting activities to drive strategic plan initiatives
- Design and initiate business development group through local Chamber of Commerce

CHARLENE MARIE REID

718-644-5908

Email: charlenemreid@gmail.com

EDUCATION

University of Pennsylvania, 2016
Doctorate of Education, Educational Leadership

Columbia University, Teachers College, 2003
Master of Education, Educational Leadership

University of California, Los Angeles, 2001
Master of Education, Elementary Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 1998
Bachelors of Arts, Political Science

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Executive Non-profit, School, and District Management; School Improvement and Turnaround; Program Evaluation; Strategy and Growth Development; Adaptive Leadership Development; Explicit Reading Instruction; Cognitive and Conceptual Math Instruction; Cross-cultural, Language and Academic Development Strategies; Teacher Hiring and Retention; Conflict Resolution; Professional Learning Communities; Community and Parent Partnerships; Data Analysis.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Chief Executive Officer and Founder

Excellence Community Schools, New York, NY (7/14-present)

Founder, Stamford Charter School for Excellence, Stamford, CT (4/14-present)

Founder and chief executive of a charter management organization that manages three charter schools in the Bronx, one charter school in Stamford, CT, and several school improvement partnerships with local catholic and district schools in Harlem and the Bronx. By 2020, the charter management organization will have a portfolio of 9 schools.

Executive Director and Head of School

Bronx Charter School for Excellence, Bronx, NY

Kindergarten through Eighth Grade (7/09-6/14)

Supervised and managed the entire BCSE organization, located on two campuses (elementary school and middle school), which included the instructional, operational, facilities and financial staff. Managed the BCSE Board of Trustees including the executive, finance, development, real estate and education committees. Served as the liaison with the charter authorizer, SUNY Charter Schools Institute. Orchestrated the strategic planning for fundraising and future growth of BCSE. Oversaw \$8 million budget, surplus investments and assets. Lead the real estate acquisitions and transactions, including issuing a \$25 million dollar tax-exempt bond for a building purchase and new construction. Managed all external relations with funders, vendors, politicians, and community partners. Continued as the instructional leader with all the responsibilities of the principal.

Principal

Bronx Charter School for Excellence, Bronx, NY
Kindergarten through Fifth Grade (2/07-6/09)

Orchestrated the 54% increase on New York State English Language Arts test scores from 2006-2007 to 2007-2008 academic year. Fostered collegiality and team building among staff members and encouraged their active involvement in decision-making process. Provided two-way communication with executive director, staff, students, parents, and community. Communicated and promoted expectations for high-level performance to staff and students. Directed professional development activities and put programs in place with staff to ensure attainment of school's mission through data-driven analysis. Identified, analyzed, and applied research findings to promote school improvement. Developed and set annual performance objectives for each of the Charter School Renewal Benchmarks. Observed employee performance, recorded observations, and conducted evaluation conferences with staff. Worked with faculty and students to develop a student discipline management system that resulted in positive student behavior and enhanced the school climate. Articulated the school's mission to the community and solicited support in accomplishing the mission. Used appropriate techniques to encourage community and parent involvement.

Assistant Principal

Public School 194, Countee Cullen Literacy Academy, Harlem, NY
Kindergarten through Fifth Grade (7/04-2/07)

Spearheaded the transformation of a school identified for corrective action in mathematics. Assisted in managing \$3.5 million budget. Supervised teacher and paraprofessional development through workshops, observations, conferencing and modeling. Supervised the *Reading First* Program, including the management and analysis of instructional data utilizing the *mClass* database. Managed staff members that included secretaries, school aides, custodians, coaches and parent coordinator. Coordinated multiple corporate partnerships that enhanced literacy and technology programs. Established a discipline policy in alignment with Chancellor's regulations. Co-developed and supervised Saturday and afterschool literacy and mathematics academy. Coordinated data analysis through baseline assessments in literacy and mathematics.

Assistant Principal

PS/MS 306, Bronx, NY
Sixth Grade (8/03-6/04)

Responsible for the supervision of 10 sixth grade regular and special education classrooms. My duties included facilitating professional development sessions in areas of instruction, curriculum and data analysis. Observed and monitored daily instruction through informal and formal observation protocols, lesson plans and one on one conferences. Responsible for creating a guided reading and math intervention program for students who were at risk of failing.

Teacher

Public School 46, Harlem, NY
3rd Grade (9/01 – 6/03)

99th Street Elementary School, Los Angeles, CA
5th, 4th, and 1st Grade (9/98 – 6/01)

ACCREDITATIONS

- New York State School Administrator/Supervisor
- New York State School District Administrator
- New York State Pre-Kindergarten through 6th Grade Teacher
- California State Multiple Subjects Pre-Kindergarten through 12th Grade Teacher

SELECTED ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS AND PAPERS

- Parker, L., Reid, C., & Ghans, T. (2016). *Fostering the summer leap and holding steady - A case study of elementary parents as agents for summer reading gain*" has been received by journal The Elementary School Journal - currently under review.
- Parker, L., Reid, C., & Ghans, T. (2016). *Beyond Race, Class and School Type: Districts and Charters Collaborating for Change*. Paper accepted to the Fourth 21st Century Academic Forum Conference at Harvard. Boston, MA.
- Reid, D., Reid, C., & Parker, L. (2016). *Gauging College Readiness through College Exposure: Examining the Colgate University Summer Institute*. Paper accepted to the Fourth 21st Century Academic Forum Conference at Harvard. Boston, MA
- Parker, L., Reid, C. & Ghans, T. (2015). *What a difference a year makes: Building a social network across the charter/district divide*. Paper presented National Education Research Association Conference at Trumbull, CT.
- Parker, L. & C. Reid. (2015). *The new charter movement: Unifying educators around best practices by creating district-charter school partnerships*. Paper presented American Education Research Association Conference at Chicago, IL.
- Reid, C. (2014). *Autoethnography within the context of charter school expansion: A theoretical and methodological lens for urban leaders*. Paper accepted to the 36th Annual Ethnography in Education Forum. University of Pennsylvania
- Parker, L. & Reid, C. (2014). *Redefining intellectuals in the production of knowledge: An alternative research paradigm for community partnership and the university*. Paper presentation at American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference. Philadelphia, PA.
- Reid, C (2014). *Self-inquiry, journaling and autoethnography as methods of discovery underlying charter school expansion*. Paper accepted at the 27th Annual Ethnographic and Qualitative Research Conference. Las Vegas, NV.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS AND PANELS

- National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 3 Presentations/panels on hiring, starting charter schools, and the creativity gap, June 2015
- NYC Collaborates, *Bronx Study Tour*, June 2012
- KISS FM Open Line: Education Town Hall, NYC Public Charter Schools, March 2012
- NPR: On Point with Tom Ashbrook, *Grading Charter Schools*, February 2012
- NYC Charter Center, *Start Right with Recruiting and Hiring*, January 2012
- NYC School Leaders in Training, *A Culture of Data*, November 2011
- NYC Charter Center, *Establishing & Reinforcing a Culture of Data*, October 2011
- State University of New York, *Urban Education in 10 Years*, April 2011
- New Haven, Connecticut Public Schools, *School Leader Turnaround*, February 2011
- NYC Charter Center, *Start Right with Recruiting and Hiring*, January 2011
- NYC Charter Center, *A Culture of Data*, November 2010
- New York Charter Schools Association, *Blueprint for Hiring*, October 2010
- Credit Suisse, *State of Urban Education*, October 2010
- NYC Charter Center, *Start Right with Recruiting and Hiring*, January 2010

PUBLICATIONS AND RELATED ARTICLES

- New York Daily News, *School leaders hope tensions ease between district, charter schools with new collaboration launched in the Bronx*, May 17, 2012
- New York Press, *Struggling New Charter Was Saved by Determined Principal*, November 16, 2011
- New York Daily News, *Stakes High for Charter Hopefuls*, April 19, 2011
- New York Parenting Issues, *Why NYC Charter Schools?*, April 16, 2011
- Bronx Times, *Developing Smart Ways to Succeed*, April 11, 2011
- Wall Street Journal, *New Proficiency Standards Hit Charters*, August 2, 2010
- Published in New York Post, *Charters: No Arguing With the Results*, June 4, 2009
- New York Post, *Word Perfect*, May 9, 2009
- Published in Teaching to Change Los Angeles, *Teachers for Social Justice*, December 10, 2000

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Columbia University Teachers College, Cahn Fellowship for Distinguished New York City Principals, 2011-2012
- Cambridge Leadership Associates, Adaptive Leadership: From Harvard to the Business World, 2008-2009
- Lesley University, *What Every School Leader Needs to Know About Good Literacy Teaching and Effective Literacy Coaching*, Center for Reading Recovery, 2008
- Harvard Graduate School of Education, National Institute for Urban School Leaders, 2006
- The City College, The City University of New York, Child Care Provider Program, 2005
- New York State *Reading First* Program, Leadership Institute, 2004, 2005
- NYC Department of Education, *Everyday Mathematics* Training for School Leaders, 2004-2006
- Columbia University Teachers College, School Law Institute, 2003

CONSULTANCIES AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

- External Expert Evaluator, Fahari Charter School, Brooklyn, May 2012
- Advisory Board Member, Central Queens Academy Charter School, June 2011-Present
- High School Mentor, Student Sponsor Program, August 2010-Present
- Expert Reviewer, Walton Family Foundation Start-up Grant, November 2011
- State University of New York, Expert Leader, Charter Replication Conference, July 2011
- State University of New York, External Expert Reviewer, New Charter School Applications, May 2010

HONORS AND AWARDS

- 2013-2016, New York State Charter School Best Practice Dissemination Grant Recipient
- 2012 New York State National Blue Ribbon Schools Awardee, January 2012
- The Blackboard Awards, 2011 Honoree for Excellence in Education: Outstanding Principal of the Year Award, November 2011
- Awarded a Cahn Fellowship for Distinguished New York City Principals, July 2011-Present
- MSNBC's "Morning Joe" show, High Performing School segment, September 30, 2011
- Ranked #1 public charter school in New York State and #4 public school in New York State, 2011
- Ranked #3 public school in New York City based on 3rd-5th ELA and Math scores, 2010
- BCSE received highest renewal granted by Charter Schools Institute SUNY Board of Regents, full-term, five-year Initial Renewal, March 2009
- Ranked #7 public school in New York City based on 3rd-5th ELA scores at 91%, 2008-2009
- Ranked #1 public school in Bronx during 2007-2008 academic year

- Council of Supervisors and Administrators (CSA) Performance Differential Recipient, 2004, 2005
- U.S. Department of Education, Teacher Quality Enhancement Scholarship Recipient, 2001
- UCLA Graduate School of Education Dean's Scholarship Recipient, 1999-2001
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Alumnae Chapter Scholarship Recipient, 2000-2001
- UCLA Academic and Athletic Scholarship Recipient, 1994-1997
- UCLA Dean's Honor List 1994-2001

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
- American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
- Harvard Graduate School of Education, The Principals' Center
- The American Educational Research Association (AERA)
- National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS)
- New York Charter Schools Association (NYCSA)
- Northeast Charter Schools Network (NECSN)
- Jack and Jill of America Inc., Bergen-Passaic New Jersey Chapter, Member of Community Service, Audit and Education/Legislative Committees

Tanya Pierre



Phone: 347-446-5486 • Email: tpierre@excellenceschools.org

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- ***Founding Teacher and Administrator of a 2012 National Blue Ribbon School.***
- ***Teacher of the Highest Performing Fifth Grade English Language Arts class in New York State.***
- ***Coach for Teachers in the Writers Workshop Model.***
- ***Chosen to Represent New York City Public Schools for "TeachNY" ad campaign.***
- ***Selected for the Teach For America Program (remaining with placement site school one year beyond commitment).***

EDUCATION/CREDENTIALS

Master of Arts Degree in Politics and Urban Education (2004)
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, Teachers College, New York City, NY

Bachelor of Arts Degree (1997)
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY, Rutgers College, New Brunswick, NJ

TEACH FOR AMERICA (1997-1999)

Certification: Teaching Certification in Elementary Education (1999), Western Maryland College, Westminster, MD

PERMANENT NEW YORK STATE TEACHING LICENSURE: Pre Kindergarten–Grade 6

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

Excellence Community Schools, Bronx, New York/Stamford, Connecticut (2017-Present)

- Obtain and evaluate instructional programming for all schools in network
- Supervise instructional specialists, coaches, and other relevant support staff
- Support and evaluate principals regarding instructional practices and performance
- Develop major goals to support overall network objectives

DIRECTOR OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Excellence Community Schools, Bronx, New York/Stamford, Connecticut (2015-2017)

- Obtained, created and evaluated instructional programming for all schools in network
- Supported and evaluated organizational leaders regarding instructional practices and performance
- Developed teaching staff regarding best instructional practices
- Created and refined curriculum for Excellence Community Schools

LITERACY COORDINATOR

Bronx Charter School for Excellence, Bronx, New York (2013-2015)

- Shared best practices for literacy with district schools
- Supported instructional practices of a kindergarten team comprised of 15+ members
- Developed organizational leaders in district schools
- Created and refined curriculum for Bronx Charter School for Excellence's second charter school

ACADEMIC DEAN

Bronx Charter School for Excellence, Bronx, New York (2010-2013)

- Established curriculum for grades five through eight in all core content areas aligned to Common Core Standards
- Supported and evaluated teachers on best instructional practices using the Danielson model
- Communicated with parents to maintain and increase support for school's mission and vision
- Coordinated and supervised state assessments, including eighth grade advanced placement proficiency and regents exams
- Hired personnel using criteria to assess candidate's alignment to school's culture and mission.
- Helped to manage the daily needs of the organization including scheduling, behavior management and communications with various stakeholders

LITERACY COACH

Bronx Charter School for Excellence, Bronx, New York (2009-2010)

New York City Department of Education, New York, NY (2004-2006)

- Supported teachers with the implementation of the Writers Workshop. Duties included:
 - teaching classes on a half day schedule
 - modeling lessons for teachers of all grades
 - co-planning with teachers
 - identifying resources
 - providing feedback

TEACHER

Bronx Charter School for Excellence, Bronx, New York (2007-2009)

New York City Department of Education, New York, NY (2000-2004)

Baltimore City Public School System, Baltimore, MD (1997-2000)

Selected Contributions:

- Taught third through sixth grade
- Organized and facilitated literacy and math workshops
- Headed extra-curricular program to elevate reading and writing skills as grade leader
- Directed after-school drama productions; coordinated a total of seven plays
- Tutored students

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND SKILLS

ALL STARS PROJECT –Development Coach for the Developmental School for Youth, a leadership-training program for young people between the ages of 16 and 21.

NYU STEINHARDT METROPOLITAN CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION- Facilitated workshops to heighten awareness of disproportionality in special education.

Monica Rios

(347) 290-8033

rios.monica81@gmail.com

EDUCATION: **Bachelor of Science, Business Administration** (May 2006) **Oswego, NY**
SKILLS: Proficient use of office machinery (fax, Xerox, multi-line phone). Knowledge of MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Data Entry. Bilingual, speak, read and write Spanish.

WORK EXPERIENCE:

7/16 – Present **Excellence Community Schools** **Bronx, NY**
Bronx and Stamford Charter Schools for Excellence **Stamford, CT**
Regional Director of School Operations
Maintaining and managing student enrollment, setup and implementation of school calendar, student transportation, school lunch program, annual lottery, network and staff email accounts. Responsible for school purchases such as student/teacher curriculum, computers/laptops, classroom/office supplies and furniture as well as keeping inventory. Manage and coordinate State and Charter compliance reporting for all schools.

9/06 – 6/16 **Bronx Charter School for Excellence** **Bronx, NY**
1/15 - 6/16 **Stamford Charter School for Excellence** **Stamford, CT**
Director of Operations
Responsibilities include managing enrollment and registration, setup and maintenance of student files, managing student transportation and the school lunch program, setup, implantation and management of the annual lottery, assist in preparation of various reports, payroll, employee enrollment in benefits and timekeeping of all employees.

5/05 – 5/06 **Oswego State University** **Oswego, NY**
Receptionist
Answer phones and direct calls; take down phone messages, use of fax machine and copy machine, distribution of mail.

5/05 – 5/06 **Oswego State University** **Oswego, NY**
Copy Center Attendant
Performed duties that included responsibility for the opening and closing of the copy center for faculty, residents and staff. Made multiple copies, laminations, posters and transparencies for departments and student organizations. Other duties included operating a cash register, customer service and maintaining the center.

12/04 – 1/05 **Department of Health** **New York, NY**
Clerical Associate (College aide)
Reviewed correction applications for birth certificates. Made sure all documentation presented was acceptable, accurate as well as needed to further complete the application process. Issued correspondence to applicants.

11/03 – 2/05 **Oswego State University** **Oswego, NY**
Head Computer Lab Tech
Performed duties that included responsibility for the opening and closing of computer lab for residents and staff, assisted with lab equipment and software problems that students incurred during their visit, and protected lab from theft and vandalism. Other duties included supervision of other student workers and taking care of timesheets for payroll.

References Available Upon Request

Aya Wakamatsu

EMAIL AWAKAMATSU@EXCELLENCESCHOOLS.ORG

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Director of Development

July 2016 - Present

Director of Special Projects

January 2016 – June 2016

Excellence Community Schools (Bronx and Stamford Charter Schools for Excellence) – Bronx, NY and Stamford, CT

- Developing and executing organization's fundraising strategy, enhancement of public profile, raising donor base and levels, cultivating new opportunities for contributions, and establishing stewardship programs
- Accessing, procuring, and maintaining state, federal, and private funding through grant writing and reporting
- Collaborating with network leadership to streamline, codify, and systematize the network's models to facilitate expansion, replication, improvement, and greater efficiency
- On-site classroom coaching, professional development, and leadership support
- Facilitating network strategies to build organizational capacity and develop a human capital pipeline
- Authoring new school applications

Program Coordinator

August 2015 – December 2015

Northeast Charter Schools Network – New Haven, CT Office

- Provided administrative and operational support that included budget development, grant writing, and event coordination

Educational Consultant

September 2007 – December 2015

Contractor to independent charter schools and organizations in New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, and North Carolina

- Authored successful, state authorizer approved initial and charter renewal applications that accurately reflect the schools' academic, organizational, and fiscal programs with strategic plans for the proposed charter term
- Conducted and coordinated school site visits, generated written reports based on quantitative and qualitative analysis, and presented findings to the school's Board, leadership team, and staff to promote sustainable school improvement
- Designed and delivered professional development workshops that promote best practices and quality advancement
- Project management of an advisory committee, recruiting and overseeing its delegates, functions, and progress
- Collaborated in the design of Elevate's comprehensive school monitoring framework created to assess school systems, programs, and practices
- Compiled, organized, and integrated data to identify performance trends and conduct a regression analysis to determine the predictive value of school assessments for NYS exam outcomes
- Constructed diagnostic assessment resources reflecting New York State Learning Standards for K/1 ELA and Math
- Co-presented at the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools' National Conference of 2012
- Participated in the evaluations and interviews of charter school applicant groups for the Walton Family Foundation's Public Charter Startup grants
- Disseminated information, attended teacher-recruitment fairs, and interviewed candidates to determine alignment of mission and educational philosophies between the schools and applicants

Teacher, Grade Level Leader, Mentor, Parent-Teacher Association Member

August 2005 – June 2007

Kuumba Academy Charter School – Wilmington, DE

Teacher, Grade Level Leader, Mentor, Parent-Teacher Organization Member

August 2000 – August 2005

Marion T. Academy Charter School – Wilmington, DE

Family Learning Coordinator

November 1999 – August 2000

Reflections Teen Family Literacy Program – Wilmington, DE

Teacher, Assistant Director, Center Trainer, Health and Safety Coordinator

February 1996 – October 1999

KinderCare Learning Center – Pike Creek, DE

PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE

Registered Professional Nursing License – States of New York and Connecticut

Continuing License (Highly Qualified) for Elementary K-6 and Middle Grades 6-8 – State of Delaware

Comprehensive K-12 Certificate: Teacher of Art - States of Delaware and Pennsylvania

EDUCATION

Associates in Applied Sciences (RN)

Hudson Valley Community College – Troy, NY

May 2011

Masters in Elementary Education – Graduate Coursework

Wilmington University – New Castle, DE

35 Credits - 2007

Bachelor of Fine Arts

Completion of Pre-Certification Program for Art Education Grades K-12

University of the Arts – Philadelphia, PA

1995

Organizational Chart Norwalk Charter School for Excellence

Board of Trustees
(Governing Council)

Executive
Committee

Education & Accountability
Committee

Development
Committee

Finance
Committee

Principal

Academic Dean &
Dean of Students/Social
Worker

Finance &
Operations
Manager

Learning
Specialist

Lead
Teachers

Special Education
Teachers

Education
Associates

Nurse

Office Assistants

Custodial Staff

**Norwalk Charter School for Excellence
DRAFT Bylaws**

August 15, 2017

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of the Corporation is the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence (hereinafter the "Corporation").

ARTICLE II

MEMBERSHIP

The Corporation has no members. The rights which would otherwise vest in the members vest in the Directors of the Corporation (hereinafter the "Trustees") of the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence. Actions which would otherwise require approval by a majority of all members or approval by the members require only approval of a majority of all Trustees then in office or approval by the Board of Trustees (hereinafter the "Board").

ARTICLE III

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

A. Powers . The Board shall conduct or direct the affairs of the Corporation and exercise its powers, subject to the limitations of the Education Law, Not-for-Profit Corporation Law, the Corporation's Charter and these Bylaws. The Board may delegate the management of the activities of the Corporation to others, so long as the affairs of the Corporation are managed, and its powers are exercised, under the Board's ultimate jurisdiction.

Without limiting the generality of the powers hereby granted to the Board, but subject to the same limitations, the Board shall have all the powers enumerated in these Bylaws, and the following specific powers:

1. To elect and remove Trustees;
2. To select and remove Officers, agents and employees of the Corporation; to prescribe powers and duties for them; and to fix their compensation;
3. To conduct, manage and control the affairs and activities of the Corporation, and to make rules and regulations;
4. To enter into contracts, leases and other agreements which are, in the Board's judgment, necessary or desirable in obtaining the purposes of promoting the interests of the Corporation;
5. To carry on the business of operating a charter school and apply any surplus that results from the business activity to any activity in which the Corporation may engage;
6. To act as trustee under any trust incidental to the Corporation's purposes, and to receive, hold, administer, exchange and expend funds and property subject to such a trust;
7. To acquire real or personal property, by purchase, exchange, lease, gift, devise, bequest, or otherwise, and to hold, improve, lease, sublease, mortgage, transfer in trust, encumber, convey or otherwise dispose of such property;
8. To borrow money, incur debt, and to execute and deliver promissory notes, bonds, debentures, deeds of trust, mortgages, pledges, hypothecations and other evidences of debt and securities;
9. To lend money received only from private sources and to accept conditional or unconditional promissory notes therefore, whether interest or non-interest bearing, or secured or unsecured; and
10. To indemnify and maintain insurance on behalf of any of its Trustees, Officers, employees or agents for liability asserted against or incurred by such person in such capacity or arising out of such person's status as such, subject to the provisions of the Connecticut Not-for-Profit Corporation Law and the limitations noted in these Bylaws.

B. Number of Trustees . The number of Trustees of the Corporation shall be not less than five (5) nor more than twenty (20). The Board shall fix the exact number of Trustees, within these limits, by Board resolution or amendment of the Bylaws.

C. Election of Trustees .

1. Election . The Board shall elect the Trustees by the vote of a majority of the Trustees then in office, whether or not the number of Trustees in office is sufficient to constitute a quorum, or by the sole remaining Trustee.

2. Eligibility . The Board may elect any person who in its discretion it believes will serve the interests of the Corporation faithfully and effectively, but must be at least 21 years of age.

3. Interested Persons . Not more than 49% of the persons serving on the Board may be interested persons. An "interested person" is: (1) any person currently being compensated by the Corporation for services rendered to it within the previous 12 months, whether as a full-time or part-time employee, independent contractor or otherwise; or (2) any sister, brother, ancestor, descendant, spouse, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, mother-in-law or father-in-law of any such person.

4. Term of Office .

- a. The Trustees elected or appointed shall be divided into three classes for the purpose of staggering their terms of office. All classes shall be as nearly equal in number as possible.
- b. The term of each Trustee shall be for three (3) years.
- c. The term of office of a Trustee elected to fill a vacancy in these Bylaws begins on the date of the Trustee's election, and continues: (1) for the balance of the unexpired term in the case of a vacancy created because of the resignation, removal, or death of a Trustee, or (2) for the term specified by the Board in the case of a vacancy resulting from the increase of the number of Trustees authorized.
- d. A Trustee's term of office shall not be shortened by any reduction in the number of Trustees resulting from amendment of the Corporation's Charter or the Bylaws or other Board action.
- e. A Trustee's term of office shall not be extended beyond that for which the Trustee was elected by amendment of the school's charter or the Bylaws or other Board action.

5. Time of Elections . The Board shall elect Trustees at the Annual Meeting and whose terms begin on July 1st of the next fiscal year, or at a Regular Meeting designated for that purpose, or at a Special Meeting called for that purpose.

D. Removal of Trustees . The Board may remove a Trustee in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Education Law and the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law.

E. Resignation by Trustee . A Trustee may resign by giving written notice to the Board Chair or Secretary. The resignation is effective upon receipt of such notice, or at any later date specified in the notice. The acceptance of a resignation by the Board Chair or Secretary shall not be necessary to make it effective, but no resignation shall discharge any accrued obligation or duty of a Trustee. Any Trustee that shall fail to attend three consecutive meetings either in person, by video-conferencing or by phone, without an excuse accepted as satisfactory by the Board shall be deemed to have resigned, and that vacancy shall be filled.

F. Vacancies . A vacancy is deemed to occur on the effective date of the resignation of a Trustee, upon the removal of a Trustee, upon declaration of vacancy pursuant to these Bylaws, or upon a Trustee's death. A vacancy is also deemed to exist upon the increase by the Board of the authorized number of Trustees.

G. Compensation of Trustees . Trustees shall serve without compensation. However, the Board may approve reimbursement of a Trustee's actual and necessary expenses while conducting Corporation business.

ARTICLE IV

PRINCIPAL OFFICE

The Corporation's principal office shall be at the following address: Norwalk Charter School for Excellence, c/o: Street Address, Norwalk, CT Zip###; or at such other place as the Board may select by resolution or amendment of the Bylaws. The Secretary shall note any change in office on the copy of the Bylaws maintained by the Secretary. There shall be kept at the office of the Corporation correct books of account of the activities and transactions of the Corporation, including a minute book, which shall contain a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation, Charter, a copy of these By-Laws, and all minutes of meetings of the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE V

MEETINGS OF THE BOARD

A. Place of Meetings . Board Meetings shall be held at the Corporation's principal office or at any other reasonably convenient place as the Board may designate.

B. Annual Meetings . An Annual Meeting shall be held in the month of June of each year for the purpose of electing Trustees, making and receiving reports on corporate affairs, and transacting such other business as comes before the meeting.

C. Regular Meetings . Regular Meetings shall be held 5 times throughout the year and other times as the Board determines.

D. Special Meetings . A Special Meeting shall be held at any time called by the Chair or in his or her absence, the Vice Chair or senior Trustee, upon written request of three (3) Trustees, or by any Trustee upon written demand of not less than one-half of the entire Board then seated.

E. Adjournment . A majority of the Trustees present at a meeting, whether or not a quorum, may adjourn the meeting to another time and place.

F. Notices . Notices of all Board Meetings to Trustees shall be given as follows:

1. Notice of the time and place of every meeting shall be mailed not less than five (5) nor more than ten (10) days before the meeting to the usual address of every Trustee.

If a Trustee waives notice as set forth below, notice may be provided as follows:

2. Annual Meetings and Regular Meetings may be held without notice to the Board if the Board fixes the time and place of such meetings.
3. Special Meetings shall be held upon four days' notice by first-class mail or 48 hours' notice delivered personally or by telephone, facsimile or e-mail. Notices will be deemed given when deposited in the United States mail, addressed to the recipient at the address shown for the recipient in the Corporation's records, first-class postage prepaid; when personally delivered in writing to the recipient; or when faxed, e-mailed, or communicated orally, in person or by telephone, to the Trustee or to a person whom it is reasonably believed will communicate it promptly to the Trustee.

G. Waiver of Notice . Notice of a meeting need not be given to a Trustee who signs a waiver of notice or written consent to holding the meeting or an approval of the minutes of the meeting, whether before or after the meeting, or attends the meeting without protest prior to the meeting or at its commencement, of the lack of notice. The Secretary shall incorporate all such waivers, consents and approvals into the minutes of the meeting.

ARTICLE VI

ACTION BY THE BOARD

A. Quorum . Unless a greater proportion is required by law, a majority of the whole number of the Board of Trustees as fixed by resolution or amendment of the these By-laws shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business or of any specified item of business.

B. Action by the Board .

1. Actions Taken at Board Meetings . Except as otherwise provided by statute or by these Bylaws, the vote of a majority of the Board present at the time of the vote, if a quorum is present at such time, shall be the act of the Board. If at any meeting of the Board there shall be less than a quorum present, the Trustees present may adjourn the meeting until a quorum is obtained.

2. Board Participation by Other Means . In all events, a quorum of Trustees must be present to lawfully conduct a Board Meeting of the charter school. To the extent permitted by Article 7 of the Public Officers Law, trustees participating by means of video-conferencing may be counted toward achieving a quorum. Once a quorum is present, additional Trustees may participate in a Board meeting through conference telephone or similar communication equipment, provided that all Trustees participating in such meeting can hear one another and there is no objection from any Trustee or any person in the public audience. Trustees other than in-person or by live video-conferencing shall not vote. Trustees participating by means of video-conferencing shall do so from a place at which the public may attend, listen and observe.

C. Committees .

1. Appointment of Committees . The Board may create committees for any purpose, and the Chair of the Board shall designate the chairs of such committees. Except as set forth below, members of a committee need not be exclusively Trustees. Each committee shall serve at the pleasure of the Board. At each meeting of a committee, a majority of the members of the committee will be present to constitute a quorum. The vote of a majority of the members of a committee present at any meeting at which there is a quorum will be the act of the committee.

2. Standing Committees . A standing committee of the Board will consist of not less than three (3) Trustees, and shall be created by approval of a resolution adopted by a majority of the entire Board. Each standing committee shall serve at the pleasure of the Board. The Principal, and such other individuals as the chair of each standing committee shall designate, shall be non-voting members ex officio of each respective standing committee of the Board. Each standing committee may meet in executive session with only voting members of such committee in attendance. The standing committees of the Board shall be as follows:

Executive Committee . An Executive Committee shall consist of not fewer than five (5) Trustees who shall consist of the Chair, Vice Chair, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and such one or more other members of the Board as may be elected by the Board of Trustees. The Chair shall chair the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall have full authority to act between meetings of the Board of Trustees, except to the extent as limited by law or specified by the Board of Trustees. A majority of the members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of its business.

The Executive Committee shall oversee operations of the Corporation, with the assistance of the Principal. The Executive Committee shall also make recommendations with respect to internal governance of the Corporation by providing a review of the adequacy of the Certificate of Incorporation and these By-Laws of the Corporation and recommending to the Board, as conditions dictate, amendments to the Certificate of Incorporation and By-Laws for consideration by the Board. The Executive Committee shall also be responsible for the periodic evaluation of the performance of the Principal and be responsible for recommending to the Board reasonable compensation and benefits for the Principal and NCSE's leadership team. In addition, the Executive Committee shall be responsible for the receipt, retention, investigation and action upon complaints and concerns of Trustees, officers and employees.

Education & Accountability Committee. The Education and Accountability Committee will have and exercise authority of the Board with respect to all academic aspects of the Corporation including, but not limited to, the Corporation's accountability plan and the Corporation's adherence to state academic standards.

Finance Committee . The Finance Committee shall exercise general supervision over the financial affairs of the Corporation including consideration of all proposals referred to the Finance Committee by the Board of Trustees regarding the revenue or the property of the Corporation. The Finance Committee shall exercise supervision over the state of the assets, the debt, the revenue and the receipts and expenditures of the Corporation; report the conditions thereof and render opinion and advice thereon; and also appoint subcommittee(s), if necessary, to carry out any of the Committee's responsibilities and duties. The Finance Committee shall also review the annual budget prepared by management and recommend such budget to the Board of Trustees for approval by the Board; authorize the giving of appropriate receipts for property delivered or debts or moneys paid to the Corporation; and authorize the sale, assignment, transfer or other distribution of any stocks, bonds, mortgages or other securities in the name of the Corporation upon such terms and in such a manner as may be deemed advisable.

The Finance Committee shall prescribe from time to time the place and manner of safekeeping of the investments of the Corporation, including the manner of access thereto and withdrawal thereof; authorize the deposit of moneys in banks or trust companies approved by the Committee and to prescribe the manner of withdrawals of such moneys; and to authorize the borrowing of money by the Corporation.

Development Committee

Development committee will guide the schools' fundraising goals based on an annual strategic plan. The strategic plan can include a capital plan to lease, purchase or renovate facilities, establish goals to supplement operating revenues to enhance programming, and prepare events to actively fundraise.

3. Special Committees . The Board may appoint special committees. Special committees will have only the powers specifically delegated to them by the Board. The members of special committees shall be appointed by the Chair of the Board with the consent of the Board. In the absence or disqualification of a member of a special committee, the member or members thereof present at any meeting and not disqualified from voting, whether or not such person or persons constitute a quorum, may unanimously appoint another director to act at the meeting in place of any such absent or disqualified member.

4. Committees of the Corporation . The Board may create one or more committees other than standing or special committees, which will be committees of the Corporation to carry out such functions as the Board may specify and as permitted by law. Such committees may be elected or appointed in the same manner as officers of the Corporation.

5. Authority of Committees . The Board may delegate to a Board committee any of the authority of the Board, except with respect to:

- a. The election of Trustees;
- b. Filling vacancies on the Board or any committee of the Board;
- c. The fixing of Trustee compensation for serving on the Board or on any committee;
- d. The amendment or repeal of Bylaws or the adoption of new Bylaws;
- e. The appointment of other Board committees, or the members of the committees, and
- f. The amendment or repeal of any resolution of the Board which by its terms shall not be so amendable or repealable.

6. Procedures of Committees . The Board may prescribe the manner in which the proceedings of any Board Committee are to be conducted. In the absence of such prescription, a Board Committee may prescribe the manner of conducting its proceedings, except that the regular and special meetings of the Committee are governed by the provisions of these Bylaws with respect to the calling of meetings, and in accordance with the State Open Meetings Law.

D. Standard of Care .

1. **Performance of Duties** . Each Trustee shall perform all duties of a Trustee, including duties on any Board committee, in good faith and with that degree of diligence, care and skill, including reasonable inquiry, as an ordinary prudent person in a like position would use under similar circumstances.

2. **Reliance on Others** . In performing the duties of a Trustee, a Trustee shall be entitled to rely on information, opinions, reports or statements, including financial statements and other financial data, presented or prepared by:

a. One or more Officers or employees of the Corporation whom the Trustee believes to be reliable and competent in the matters presented;

b. Legal counsel, public accountants or other persons as to matters that the Trustee believes are within that person's professional or expert competence; or

c. A Board Committee on which the Trustee does not serve, duly designated in accordance with a provision of the Corporation's Charter or Bylaws, as to matters within its designated authority, provided the Trustee believes the Committee merits confidence and the Trustee acts in good faith, and with that degree of care specified in Section D.1., and after reasonable inquiry when the need is indicated by the circumstances, and without knowledge that would cause such reliance to be unwarranted.

3. **Investments** . In investing and dealing with all assets held by the Corporation for investment, the Board shall exercise the standard of care described above in Section D.1. and shall consider among other relevant considerations the long and short term needs of the Corporation in carrying out its purposes, including its present and anticipated financial requirements. The Board may delegate its investment powers to others, provided that those powers are exercised within the ultimate direction of the Board.

E. Rights of Inspection . Every Trustee has the right to inspect and copy all books, records and documents of every kind and to inspect the physical properties of the Corporation, provided that such inspection is conducted at a reasonable time after reasonable notice, and provided that such right of inspection and copying is subject to the obligation to maintain the confidentiality of the reviewed information, in addition to any obligations imposed by any applicable federal, state or local law.

F. Participation in Discussions and Voting . Every Trustee has the right to participate in the discussion and vote on all issues before the Board or any Board Committee, except that any Trustee shall be excused from the discussion and vote on any matter involving such Trustee relating to: (a) a self-dealing transaction; (b) a conflict of interest, (c) indemnification of that Trustee uniquely; or (d) any other matter at the discretion of a majority of the Trustees then present.

G. Duty to Maintain Board Confidences. Every Trustee has a duty to maintain the confidentiality of all Board actions which are not required by law to be open to the public, including discussions and votes which take place at any Executive Sessions of the Board. Any Trustee violating this confidence may be removed from the Board.

ARTICLE VII

OFFICERS

A. Officers. The Officers of the Corporation consist of a President (hereinafter "Chair"), Vice President (hereinafter "Vice Chair"), a Secretary and a Chief Financial Officer (hereinafter "Treasurer"). The Corporation also may have such other officers as the Board deems advisable.

1. Chair . Subject to Board control, the Chair has general supervision, direction and control of the affairs of the Corporation, and such other powers and duties as the Board may prescribe. If present, the Chair shall preside at Board meetings.

2. Vice Chair . If the Chair is absent or disabled, the Vice Chair shall perform all the Chair's duties and, when so acting, shall have all the Chair's powers and be subject to the same restrictions. The Vice Chair shall have other such powers and perform such other duties as the Board may prescribe.

3. Secretary . The Secretary shall: (a) keep or cause to be kept, at the Corporation's principal office, or such other place as the Board may direct, a book of minutes of all meetings of the Board and Board Committees, noting the time and place of the meeting, whether it was regular or special (and if special, how authorized), the notice given, the names of those present, and the proceedings; (b) keep or cause to be kept a copy of the Corporation's Charter and Bylaws, with amendments; (c) give or cause to be given notice of the Board and Committee meetings as required by the Bylaws; and (d) have such other powers and perform such other duties as the Board may prescribe.

4. Treasurer . The Treasurer shall: (a) keep or cause to be kept adequate and correct accounts of the Corporation's properties, receipts and disbursements; (b) make the books of account available at all times for inspection by any Trustee; (c) deposit or cause to be deposited the Corporation's monies and other valuables in the Corporation's name and to its credit, with the depositories the Board designates; (d) disburse or cause to be disbursed the Corporation's funds as the Board directs; (e) render or cause to be rendered to the Chair and the Board, as requested but no less frequently than once every fiscal year, an account of the Corporation's financial transactions and financial condition; (f) prepare or cause to be prepared any reports on financial issues required by an agreement on loans; and (g) have such other powers and perform such other duties as the Board may prescribe.

B. Election, Eligibility and Term of Office .

1. Election . The Chair shall nominate and the Board shall elect the Officers annually at the Annual Meeting or a Regular Meeting designated for that purpose or at a Special Meeting called for that purpose, except that Officers appointed to fill vacancies shall be elected as vacancies occur.

2. Eligibility . A Trustee may hold any number of offices, except that neither the Secretary nor Treasurer may serve concurrently as the Chair.

3. Term of Office . Each Officer serves at the pleasure of the Board, holding office until resignation, removal or disqualification from service, or until his or her successor is elected.

C. Removal and Resignation . The Board may remove any Officer, at any time in accordance with the Education Law. Such removal shall not prejudice the Officer's rights, if any, under an employment contract. Any Officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Chair, the resignation taking effect upon receipt of the notice or at a later date specified in the notice.

STAFF

A. Principal. The Board may employ a Principal who will be charged with the administrative and executive management of the affairs of the Corporation and such other powers and the performance of such other duties as the Board may delegate, subject to oversight by the Board.

B. Additional Personnel . From time to time, the Principal may employ such other staff personnel, including the Principal of the Corporation, with such titles as the Principal will determine according to available administrative funds and needs of the Corporation. The Principal of the Corporation may only be hired or terminated with consent of the majority of the Board of Trustees then seated.

C. Compensation . The Board of Trustees shall, upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, establish reasonable compensation and benefits for the Principal and NCSE's leadership team. The Principal shall not participate in the discussions and deliberations of, and the voting on, his or her compensation. The Principal may from time to time establish the rate of compensation and benefits for the staff personnel of the Corporation and recommend to the Board of Trustees the compensation and benefits of the leadership team.

ARTICLE VIII

NON-LIABILITY OF TRUSTEES

The Trustees shall not be personally liable for the Corporation's debts, liabilities or other obligations.

ARTICLE IX

INDEMNIFICATION OF CORPORATE AGENTS

To the fullest extent permitted by law and in accordance with standards and procedures provided by Sections 721 through 726 of the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law and any amendments thereto: the Corporation will indemnify any person (and that person's heirs, executors, guardians, administrators, assigns and any other legal representative of that person) who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to or is involved in (including as a witness) any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit, proceeding or inquiry (brought in the right of the Corporation or otherwise), whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, and whether formal or informal, including appeals, by reason of the fact that the person is or was a director or officer of the Corporation, or, while a director or officer of the Corporation, is or was serving at the request of the Corporation as a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, for and against all expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by that person or that person's heirs, executors, guardians, administrators, assigns or legal representatives in connection with that action, suit, proceeding or inquiry, including appeals. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Corporation will indemnify any person seeking indemnification in connection with an action, suit, proceeding or inquiry (or part thereof) initiated by that person only if that action, suit, proceeding or inquiry (or part thereof) was authorized by the Board.

The Corporation will pay expenses as incurred by any person described in paragraph 1 of this Article in connection with any action, suit, proceeding or inquiry described in paragraph 1 of this Article; provided, that, if these expenses are to be paid in advance of the final disposition (including appeals) of an action, suit, proceeding or inquiry, then the payment of expenses will be made only upon delivery to the Corporation of an undertaking, by or on behalf of the person, to repay all amounts so advanced if it is ultimately determined that the person is not entitled to be indemnified under this Article or otherwise.

The Corporation may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person described in paragraph 1 of this Article against any liability asserted against that person, whether or not the Corporation would have the power to indemnify the person against that liability under the provisions of this Article or otherwise.

The provisions of this Article will be applicable to all actions, suits, proceedings or inquiries made or commenced after the adoption of this Article, whether arising from acts or omissions occurring before or after its adoption. The provisions of this Article will be deemed to be a contract between the Corporation and each director or officer who serves in such capacity at any time while this Article and the relevant provisions of the laws of the State of Connecticut and other applicable law, if any, are in effect, and any repeal or modification of this Article will not adversely affect any right or protection of any person described in paragraph 1 in respect of any act or omission occurring prior to the time of the repeal or modification.

If any provision of this Article will be found to be invalid or limited in application by reason of any law or regulation, that finding will not affect the validity of the remaining provisions of this Article. The rights of indemnification provided in this Article will neither be exclusive of, nor be deemed in limitation of, any rights to which any person described in paragraph 1 of this Article may otherwise be entitled or permitted by contract, the Certificate of Incorporation, vote of the Board, or otherwise, or as a matter of law, both as to actions in the person's official capacity and actions in any other capacity while holding such office, it being the policy of the Corporation that indemnification of any person described in paragraph 1 of this Article will be made to the fullest extent permitted by law.

For purposes of this Article, reference to "other enterprises" will include employee benefit plans; reference to "fines" will include any excise taxes assessed on a person with respect to an employee benefit plan; and reference to "serving at the request of the corporation" will include any service as a director or officer of the

Corporation which imposes duties on, or involves services by, that director or officer with respect to an employee benefit plan, its participants, or beneficiaries.

The Corporation may, by vote of the Board, provide indemnification and advancement of expenses to employees and agents of the Corporation with the same scope and effect as the foregoing indemnification of and advancement of expenses to directors and officers.

ARTICLE X

SELF-DEALING TRANSACTIONS

The Corporation shall not engage in any self-dealing transactions, except as approved by the Board. "Self-dealing transaction" means a transaction to which the Corporation is a party and in which one or more of the Trustees has a material financial interest ("interested Trustee(s)"). Notwithstanding this definition, the following transaction is not a self-dealing transaction, and is subject to the Board's general standard of care:

A transaction which is part of a public or charitable program of the Corporation, if the transaction (a) is approved or authorized by the Board in good faith and without unjustified favoritism, and (b) results in a benefit to one or more Trustees or their families because they are in a class of persons intended to be benefitted by the program.

ARTICLE XI

OTHER PROVISIONS

A. Fiscal Year . The fiscal year of the Corporation begins on July 1 of each year and ends June 30.

B. Execution of Instruments . Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, the Board may adopt a resolution authorizing any Officer or agent of the Corporation to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of or on behalf of the Corporation within limits, if any, prescribed by the Board. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized, no Officer, agent or employee shall have any power to bind the Corporation by any contract or engagement, to pledge the Corporation's credit, or to render it liable monetarily for any purpose or any amount. This shall not be at odds, however, with Section C which follows.

C. Checks and Notes . Except as otherwise specifically provided by Board resolution, checks, drafts, promissory notes, orders for the payment of money, and other evidence of indebtedness of the Corporation may be signed by the Principal or Treasurer. Checks in excess of \$5,000 must be signed by two authorized signatories or as otherwise approved in the Corporations Fiscal Procedure Manual.

D. Construction and Definitions . Unless the context otherwise requires, the general provisions, rules of construction, and definitions contained in the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law and the Education Law shall govern the construction of these Bylaws. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, words in these Bylaws shall be read as the masculine or feminine gender, and as the singular or plural, as the context requires, and the word "person" includes both a corporation and a natural person. The captions and headings in these Bylaws are for reference and convenience only are not intended to limit or define the scope or effect of any provisions.

E. Conflict of Interest . Any Trustee, Officer, key employee (defined as a Corporation employee in a decision-making capacity, including but not limited to the Principal), or Committee member having an interest in a contract, other transaction or program presented to or discussed by the Board or Board Committee for authorization, approval, or ratification shall make a prompt, full and frank disclosure of his or her interest to the Board or Committee prior to its acting on such contract or transaction. Such disclosure shall include all relevant and material facts known to such person about the contract or transaction which might reasonably be construed to be adverse to the Corporation's interest. The body to which such disclosure is made shall thereupon determine, by majority vote, whether the disclosure shows that a conflict of interest exists or can reasonably be construed to exist. If a conflict is deemed to exist, such person shall not vote on, nor use his or her personal influence on, nor be present during the discussion or deliberations with respect to, such contract or transaction (other than to present

factual information or to respond to questions prior to the discussion). The minutes of the meeting shall reflect the disclosure made, the vote thereon and, where applicable, the abstention from voting and participation. The Board may adopt formal policies requiring:

1. Regular annual statements from Trustees, Officers and key employees to disclose existing and potential conflicts of interest; and
2. Corrective and disciplinary actions with respect to transgressions of such policies. For the purpose of this section, a person shall be deemed to have an "interest" in a contract or other transaction if he or she is the party (or one of the parties) contracting or dealing with the Corporation, or is a Director, Trustee or Officer of, or has a significant financial or influential interest in the entity contracting or dealing with the Corporation.

F. Non-discrimination. The Corporation shall not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, gender or age in either the hiring and other employment practices of the school or in its admission policies for students. Further, the Corporation shall be open to all students in its authorized geographic area on a space available basis and shall not discriminate in its admission policies or practices. The Corporation shall conduct all of its activities in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal anti-discrimination laws, as well as in accordance with all other laws and regulations applicable to the operation of charter public schools in the State of Connecticut.

G. Interpretation of Charter . Whenever any provision of the Bylaws is in conflict with the provisions of the Charter, the provisions of the Charter shall control.

ARTICLE XII

AMENDMENT

Provided a quorum is present, a majority of the Trustees then seated may adopt, amend or repeal these Bylaws, such material amendments being subject to approval by the Connecticut State Department of Education or its designee. No provision of these By-laws by which more than a majority vote shall be required for any specified action by the Trustees, may be amended, suspended or repealed by an smaller vote than that required for action thereunder.

CERTIFICATE OF SECRETARY

The undersigned does hereby certify that the undersigned is the Secretary of the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence, an education Corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the State of Connecticut; that the foregoing Bylaws of said Corporation were duly and regularly adopted as such by the Board of Trustees of said Corporation; and that the above and foregoing Bylaws are now in full force and effect.

_____, Secretary

Dated: _____

Appendix D: DRAFT Conflict of Interest Policies

The Norwalk Charter School for Excellence Conflict of Interest Policy

Purpose of a Conflict of Interest Policy

The purpose of a conflict of interest policy is to protect the interest of The Norwalk Charter School For Excellence (“NCSE”) when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of a disqualified person, defined as members of key administrative or managerial staff or the Board of Trustees of NSCE (collectively, the “Board” or individually, “Trustees”) or their family members. Key administrative or managerial staff includes the Principal, Operations Manager, and Deans. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable Federal, state, or local laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to non-profit organizations.

Explaining Conflicts of Interest

For key administrative or managerial staff or the board members of nonprofit organizations, conflicts of interest occur whenever a disqualified person acts in a position of authority on an issue in which they have financial or other interests. In other words, when there is a dual interest or the appearance of a dual interest for any disqualified person, the potential for a conflict of interest exists. For example, a disqualified person would be in conflict of interest if he/she offers services to the organization on whose board they serve even if the charge for these services is at or below the market value. Similarly, if a disqualified person contemplates selling or leasing property that the organization may wish to purchase, the disqualified person will be placed in a conflict of interest situation.

In cases of potential conflict of interest, key administrators, managers and Trustees must act to preserve and enhance public trust in NCSE by putting the interests of the organization ahead of all other business and personal interests. In addition to the public’s sensitivity to excessive benefits, activities that appear to have a conflict of interest can be the basis for lawsuits against the disqualified person. Also, all disqualified persons must comply with the Internal Revenue Service rules on excess benefit transactions applicable to 501(c) (3) organizations.

When disqualified persons are confronted with an actual or apparent conflict of interest, there are reasonable steps that the organization can take to preserve its integrity. Disqualified persons need not be disqualified from boards simply due to conflicts of interest. Perhaps the most important step is for board members to disclose information related to the possibility of dual interests to others on the board. *Minimally, the disqualified person needs to inform the board of the important facts and details and must abstain from voting on the transaction.* These actions should be recorded in the minutes to document the disclosure.

What is a Conflict of Interest?

A conflict of interest occurs whenever an individual or a member of his or her immediate family has a direct or indirect interest or relationship, financial or otherwise, that may conflict or be inconsistent with the individual's duties, responsibilities, or exercise of independent judgment in any transaction or matter involving NCSE.

A conflict of interest does not necessarily imply that an individual is ineligible for employment or to serve on the Board or a committee or cannot represent the NCSE in a specific situation, but it may indicate that participation in some matters should be avoided or limited. If a key administrator, manager or Trustee has an actual or potential conflict of interest relating to business or transactions before the Board he or she should immediately notify the Chair of the Board or of his or her committee. The Principal should disclose her or his own potential or actual conflicts of interest to the Secretary and the Chair of the Board. In making the disclosure, the individual should reveal all material facts about the conflict of interest and explain his or her relationship to the transaction or matter at issue. In some circumstances, full disclosure of the conflict may in itself be sufficient to ensure the integrity of operations.

Code of Conduct

The Board expects of itself, its members and key staff of NCSE ethical and businesslike conduct. This commitment includes proper use of authority when acting as Trustees and key staff members.

1. Trustees and key staff members must demonstrate unconflicted loyalty to the interests of NCSE.
 - This accountability supersedes any conflicting loyalty such as that to advocacy or interest groups and membership on other boards or staffs.
2. Trustees and key staff members must avoid any conflict of interest with respect to their fiduciary responsibility.
 - There must not be any conducting of private business or personal services between any Trustee and NCSE except as procedurally controlled to assure openness, competitive opportunity and equal access to otherwise "inside" information.
 - There must not be any excess benefit transaction between the NCSE on the one hand and a Trustee on the other hand.
 - Trustees or key staff must not use their positions to obtain for them or for their family members employment within the NCSE.
 - If a Trustee or a family member is considered for employment, the Trustee or key staff member must temporarily withdraw from Board deliberation, voting and access to applicable information.

3. Trustees and key staff members will deal with outside entities or individuals, with clients and staff and with each other in a manner reflecting fair play, ethics and straightforward communication.

Rules Concerning Excess Benefit Transactions

The Board, any Trustee, and key employees shall refrain from entering into any transactions that are excess benefit transactions as defined in IRC Sec. 4958 with the NCSE. The Board shall also refrain from causing NCSE to enter into any excess benefit transaction with any family member of a Trustee.

An excess benefit transaction means any transaction in which an economic benefit is provided by an applicable tax-exempt organization (such as NCSE) directly or indirectly to or for the use of any disqualified person if the value of the economic benefit provided exceeds the value of the consideration (including the performance of services) received for providing such benefit. For purposes of the preceding sentence, an economic benefit shall not be treated as consideration for the performance of services unless such organization clearly indicated its intent to so treat such benefit. "Excess benefit" means the excess referred to in the first sentence of this paragraph.

Conflict of Interest Policy

In addition to the above the Board and key employees shall not enter into any contract or transaction with (a) one or more of its Trustees, NCSE or (b) an organization in or of which a Trustee of NCSE is a Trustee, officer, or legal representative, or in some other way has a material financial interest unless:

1. That interest is disclosed or known to the Board,
2. The Board approves, authorizes or ratifies the actions in good faith,
3. The approval is by a majority of Trustees (not counting the interested Trustee), and
4. At a meeting where a quorum is present (not counting the interested Trustee).

The interested Trustee or key employee may be present for discussion to answer questions, but may not advocate for the actions to be taken and must leave the room while a vote is taken. The minutes of all actions taken on such matters shall clearly reflect that these requirements have been met.

Trustees and key employees should sign a statement regarding conflicts annually. These statements must be submitted to the Chair of the Board who will review of this information with the Executive Committee.

Annual Conflict of Interest Certification

The undersigned person acknowledges receipt of a copy of the Conflict of Interest Policy modified by the Board of Trustees of NCSE on June 23rd, 2008. By my signature affixed below I acknowledge my understanding of and agreement with the spirit and intent of this policy and, I agree to report to the Secretary or the Chair of the Board of Trustees any possible conflicts (other than those stated below) that may develop before completion of the next annual statement and to abstain from any participation in such matters relating to that conflict. In addition, I acknowledge by indication of my signature below that I have not entered into any prohibited excess benefit transactions for this annual period.

_____ I am not aware of any conflict of interest.

_____ I have a conflict of interest in the area(s) indicated below.

_____ I have not entered into any prohibited excess benefit transactions.

Conflicts:

Signature

Date

Print name

Appendix E – DRAFT Key Personnel Job Descriptions

Positions

Principal

Finance & Operations Manager

Academic Dean

Dean of Students/Social Worker

Learning Specialist

Teacher

Education Associate

Grade Level Chair

Norwalk Charter School for Excellence

Principal

Under the general direction of the Board of Trustees, the Principal shall be responsible for the operation and the general management of the activities and services of the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence. Specific duties and responsibilities shall include the following:

1. Give direction and leadership to the achievement of the organization's mission and the formulation of its annual goals and objectives.
2. Work with the Board of Trustees and staff to develop and implement policies, procedures, and long-range strategic plans.
3. Oversee and manage the Academic Dean who will, in part, provide instructional leadership under the supervision of the Principal
4. Oversee administrative and financial operations, and all personnel matters (design of staff and organizational structure, hiring and firing responsibilities, etc.)
5. Prepare and, following Board approval, administer the annual budget.
6. Ensure compliance with NCSE charter.
7. Oversee the management of the overall operation of school facilities.
8. Pursue and incorporate private revenue sources through a variety of fundraising mechanisms to ensure a balanced budget.
9. Develop and maintain a working partnership with representatives of the surrounding business community.
10. Keep informed of trends, issues, events, and developments within the local city, state, and national charter school field through professional peer contacts, conference attendance, etc.
11. Participate in an annual performance evaluation process established by the Board of Trustees.
12. Ensure the safety and well being of the children and staff of the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence.

Special Knowledge/Skills:

- Working knowledge of curriculum and instruction
- Ability to evaluate instructional program and teaching effectiveness
- Ability to manage budget and personnel
- Ability to coordinate campus functions
- Ability to interpret policy, procedures, and data
- Strong organizational, communication, public relations, and interpersonal skills

Major Responsibilities and Duties:

School or Organization Morale

- Provide instructional resources and materials to support teaching staff in accomplishing instructional goals.
- Foster collegiality and team building among staff members. Encourage their active involvement in decision-making process.
- Provide two-way communication with other members of the leadership team, staff, students, parents, and the community
- Communicate and promote expectations for high-level performance to staff and students. Recognize excellence and achievement.
- Ensure the effective and quick resolution of conflicts

School or Organization Improvement

- Build common vision for school improvement with staff. Direct planning activities and put programs in place with staff to ensure attainment of the school's mission.
- Identify, analyze, and apply research findings to promote school improvement
- Develop and set annual performance objectives for each of the Academic Excellence Indicators using the campus planning process and site-based decision making committee

Personnel Management

- Interview, select, and orient new staff. Approve all personnel assigned to NCSE.
- Define expectations for staff performance with regard to instructional strategies, classroom management, and communication with the public.
- Observe employee performance, record observations, and conduct evaluation conferences with staff
- Assign and promote NCSE personnel
- Make recommendations to Board on termination, suspension, or non-renewal of employees assigned to NCSE
- Work with NCSE committees to plan professional development activities
- Confer with subordinates regarding their professional development growth. Work with them to develop and accomplish improvement goals.

Student Management

- Work with faculty and students to develop a student discipline management system that results in positive student behavior and enhances the school climate
- Ensure that school rules are uniformly observed and that student discipline is appropriate and equitable in accordance with Student Code of Conduct and campus handbook
- Conduct conferences about student and school issues with parents, students, and teachers

School or Community Relations

- Articulate the school's mission to the community and solicit support in accomplishing the mission
- Use appropriate techniques to encourage community and parent involvement

Professional Growth and Development

- Develop professional skills appropriate to job assignment
- Demonstrate professional, ethical, and responsible behavior. Serve as a role model for all NCSE staff.

Finance & Operations Manager

List of responsibilities

- Acting as an integral member of a small senior management team, with the purpose of sustaining and determining the organization's goals and growth
- All internal and external financial reporting; budget development, implementation and oversight; management of government contracts
- Overseeing the payments of bills, accounting for expenditures, purchasing and receipt of goods
- Coordinating all audit and 990 procedures
- Overseeing risk management, legal, and compliance activities related to NCSE's charter
- Working with the Principal to provide staff support to Board of Trustees and acting as liaison to Board finance committee
- Overseeing and implementing human resource policies, payroll and benefits
- Managing technology staff and spearheading systems strategy and growth
- Supervising administrative staff ensuring smooth daily procedures and meticulous record keeping
- Managing the facility, and ensuring that the building and equipment is well maintained, repaired and adequately staffed to provide for a safe and clean environment for the students and staff; supervising custodial staff
- Spearheading the analysis for additional facilities to accommodate the growth of NCSE
- Securing and supervising all related contracted services for space and equipment

Academic Dean

The Administrative Dean will lead a team of teachers in designing a curriculum that is, both, aligned to the to the Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and Connecticut State Framework, and utilizes project based learning.

List of Responsibilities

- Development and implementation of a year-long professional development program/plan which emphasizes and supports project based learning.
- Facilitates grade level and interdisciplinary team meetings in the development and assessment of these projects.
- Collaborates with the performance based assessment specialist to ensure that all formative assessments are truly measuring what is learned through the projects and that the two are true predictors of a student's success on standardized, summative assessments. Identifies, and works with teachers to identify, explicit linkages between standardized tests and the skills taught within the projects.
- Provides systematic support for lead teachers of grade level/ department teams.
- Conducts daily in-class observations to provide input to teachers and facilitates conversations allowing them time to reflect on their own practice.
- Fosters the teachers' development in the use of differentiated instruction strategies to ensure student mastery of the skills taught within the interdisciplinary projects.
- Provides explicit, on-going professional training in the use of project-based learning.
- Assists Principal to ensure availability of supplies and curricular materials that support teacher learning in the above areas.
- Develops project reports twice annually to the Principal and Board that highlight improvements in the implementation of project-based learning and how it is moving the students forward.
- Carries out specialized projects as requested by principal.
- The Dean will take responsibility for the development of the faculty as individuals and as a group.
- S/he will take charge of the professional development program, including the summer institute and retreat, as well as leading teachers through the school's career path evaluation system.
- S/he will take the lead in recruiting new teachers, in concert with other administrators and faculty, and subject to the final decision of the Principal of the school.
- S/he will advocate faculty compensation and benefits as part of the budget process.
- In due time, the school intends to establish an internship program for beginning teachers, for which the Dean would also be responsible.
- The Dean reports to the Principal and is a member of the senior administrative staff group.
- The school is seeking a person of maturity and wisdom, with strong interactive interpersonal leadership skills and an appetite for detail.

- S/he should have an informed enthusiasm for working in a new school, a thorough background in contemporary best teaching practices, and a comfort level as a teacher of teachers.
- Qualifications include successful teaching experience in independent schools, similar experience in leading adults, and graduate study in teaching.
- Compensation is competitive, and based on experience; there is a complete benefit package.

Specific Responsibilities (including, but not limited to):

- Teach four core subject blocks, and one club every day with two preparation periods each day.
- Oversee a shared Advisory Class of 12-15 students daily.
- Design and implement a research-based curriculum.
- Design and use evaluation methods to measure progress towards mastery of school and CT State Standards.
- Assist in the development of interim assessments and use data to refine curricula and instructional practice.
- Assume responsibility for the academic progress of all students.
- Teach students with disabilities in an inclusion setting and implement IEPs as necessary.
- Document all syllabi, lesson plans, assignments, rubrics, and other instructional materials.
- Create a structured classroom environment by reinforcing school-wide rules and establishing a culture of high academic and behavioral standards as part of a mission driven team.

Qualifications (including, but not limited to):

- A Master's degree is required.
- A minimum of two years of urban teaching experience.
- Track-record of achieving quantifiable student performance gains that surpass local school district averages.
- Considerable experience implementing standards-based curricula and using data to drive instructional decisions.
- Strong knowledge of specific subject matter taught (Math, English, Science and/or Social Studies).
- Extensive experience designing standards-based curriculum.
- Exceptional classroom management skills.
- Ability to work with students from a variety of academic backgrounds, including those with special needs and low skill levels in a heterogeneously grouped classroom setting.

Part 2:

- The academic dean is responsible for leading a faculty and developing an academic program that is rich, innovative, and integrated.
- As enrollment continues to grow, the academic dean will oversee expansion of the program with an emphasis on elements critical to the mission—engagement with the neighborhood surrounding our new campus (including development of an environmental stewardship program), ethical decision-making and communication across cultures.
- As a member of the senior administrative team, he/she is involved in planning and decision-making around issues central to the school.
- The academic dean chairs the academic committee, which consists of department heads and other educational program directors. In consultation with that committee and the head of school, he/she sets and maintains the school's academic policies.

Qualities:

- The ideal candidate will be a visionary, dynamic leader who can both inspire and manage faculty and curricular development in a growing independent high school.
- Qualities that are key to working at Norwalk Charter School For Excellence are commitment to team, sense of humor, emotional intelligence, and demonstrated respect for all members of our community—students, faculty, staff, parents, trustees, and friends.
- As we continue to grow our new school, we seek faculty and administrators who are life-long learners and effective collaborators, flexible, open-minded, and committed to reinvention.

Specific Responsibilities:

Programmatic

- Assess and expand the academic offerings in line with the school's mission and with the needs of a growing student body
- Work with program directors to develop curriculum for exploratory courses
- Oversee the registrar's operation of class scheduling, grading, transcripts, and student records
- Work with educational organizations to assure that we meet their curricular requirements

Faculty Leadership

- Mentor new faculty
- Oversee and facilitate a dynamic professional development program, including weekly meetings focusing on teaching and learning
- Respond to students and parents who have concerns about classes or teachers
- Teach and advise as needed

School Leadership

- Collaboratively set and maintain academic policies

- Work collaboratively with the dean of students and principle to be sure the academic and student life programs are in sync
- Help to evaluate and set general school policy and troubleshoot conflicts as they arise
- Serve as the school's coordinator for services and accommodation plans for students with disabilities

Required Skills and Experiences:

- Master's degree
- Five years' teaching experience
- Experience in instructional design/curriculum development
- Desire to work in a dynamic, start-up environment
- Teaching, advising, and administrative professional development experience

Dean of Students/Social Worker

Supervisor: Principal

Classification: Leadership Team

Under the direction of the Principal, the Dean of Students is responsible for creating and maintaining a safe, healthy, and supportive environment and culture that synthesizes the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and spiritual development of our students in a holistic way.

Characteristic Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Cultivates and maintain a school culture that is aligned with the school's mission statement.
2. Assess and develop groups school environment to shift or align thinking and behaviors of persons of school environment forward to a unified thinking.
3. Ignite morale and school spirit through: environment, by grade level, grade span and school-wide opportunities and activities in order to build culture capacity.
4. Model and adhere to school cultural standards.
5. Manages school culture and activities that provide student learning and development opportunities: community service and outreach, student Activities, Specials, athletics, extra-curricula and recreation, and student leadership.
6. Responsible for academic observation, evaluation & supervision of Specials and/or assigned grades.
7. Manages student support services related to: Nurse and related issues, Administration for Child Services (ACS), school-wide Student behavioral management and discipline affairs.
8. Responsible for learning and development of students outside the classroom.
9. Coordinates with teacher-leaders and parent/community leaders in developing and managing co-curricular learning and service opportunities.

10. Works with student groups and other members of the school community in developing extracurricular programming assuring integration with the academic life to encourage student personal growth and development as well as to foster school pride and ownership.
11. Helps establish a student culture where diversity is encouraged and where students learn to respect differences, take responsibility for their actions, and exercise leadership.
12. Provides leadership in and is responsible for the development, implementation and evaluation of policies and regulations pertaining to student life, especially those related to the stabilization of teacher classroom management, student conduct and student affairs.
13. Develops and coordinates policies and procedures relative to all student activities; oversees annual production of Student & Family Handbook and other documents.
14. Administers the policies and regulations of school as they pertain to students, including internal disciplinary procedures.

Qualifications:

1. Master's degree in educational leadership, social work or related discipline (minimum) with at least 6 years of increasingly responsible experience in student affairs at a elementary and/or middle school.
2. Excellent leadership and managerial skills and the capacity to supervise and lead in student developmental affairs, staff professional development and parent workshops.

Learning Specialist

Qualifications

- CT Teacher Certification in Special Education or reciprocity from another state in the equivalent area
- At least 4 years of teaching experience in special education

Responsibilities

- Provides mandated Special Education Teacher Support Services (S.E.T.S.S.) as mandated by student Individualized Education Plans.
- Collaborates with necessary personnel to identify and support students who are considered “at-risk.”
- Collaborates with classroom teachers to design and execute individualized education plans for students with special needs in order to ensure they achieve.
- Plans purposefully in order to provide students with opportunities for constructing meaning and developing understanding of new concepts.
- Utilizes developmentally appropriate and rigorous curricula and instructional materials that are tightly aligned to benchmarks and the Connecticut standards.

- Presents students with new ideas and concepts through a variety of strategies, and inspires and guides them to explore, express and uncover new ideas of their own.
- Modifies existing instructional plans as necessary to accommodate individual student's special needs.
- Administers, collects, and analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data gathered from a variety of assessments on each student.
- Builds relationships with his or her students' families through regular communication about students' progress and provides ways in which families can support their children's learning.
- Participates in school-wide student assessments in order to diagnose students' needs. These include assessments administered to students to screen for special needs and assessments administered to targeted students to monitor progress.
- Provides resources and supports for classroom teachers to implement early intervention strategies when identifying academic concerns.
- Refers students when necessary for special services through either the existing school resources, or the more formal Planning and Placement Team
- Participates in meetings with the Planning and Placement Team to review Individual Education Plans and suggest appropriate supports.
- Writes Individualized Education Plans and monitors progress toward student goals.
- Keeps organized records of student progress and provides up-to-date reports.

Classroom Teacher Job Description

Responsibilities

- Develops weekly written lesson plans that correlate with NCSE's curriculum and goals and objectives.
- Collaborates with colleagues to develop and plan units and lessons and develop expertise in implementing instruction.
- Knows the school charter and its accountability plan, including the performance goals for students set forth therein.
- Uses tests, assessments, classroom performance and other designated evaluation and diagnostic tools to assess the progress of students in order to create individual learning plans and to identify curricular and professional development needs.
- Creates and maintains an orderly and well-managed classroom environment.
- Communicates with families of students. Attends parent/child-sponsored events.
- Familiar with the Connecticut assessment expectations and test preparation.
- Is reflective of his/her own practice and participates in on-going professional development.
- Embody, advocate and operationalize the mission, vision, and strategic direction of NCSE
- Assume responsibility for the academic progress of students with a high sense of urgency and ownership towards quantifiable results

- Use assessments and data to inform instructional practices
- Actively works to ensure all students meet or exceed expectations on the state ELA and Math exam
- Utilize IEPs to adapt instruction to reach the needs of students with disabilities in an inclusion setting
- Communicate effectively and regularly with students and parents about student progress

Qualifications and Experience

- A strong commitment to NCSE's mission and vision
- An uncompromising belief that all students can learn
- A relentless work ethic and a high degree of patience to push through difficult challenges
- A willingness to be held accountable for quantifiable student achievement and academic gains
- Demonstrated ability to have a high number of students meet or exceed state standards in ELA and Math
- The ability and commitment to use data and regular assessment to inform instructional decisions
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with a team of teachers
- Outstanding public speaking and writing skills
- Technological proficiency and adaptability
- Excellent organizational skills
- The desire and humility to grow as an educator
- At least two years of experience with a proven track-record of high achievement in the classroom
- Bachelor's Degrees (required), Master's Degree (preferred)
- Connecticut State Teaching Certificate or Equivalent

Educational Associate

The Norwalk Charter School for Excellence is seeking motivated educators who are dedicated, ambitious, and committed to student success and education reform. Qualified candidates must demonstrate records of achievement, high degrees of personal responsibility, and the drive to do whatever it takes to ensure that every child achieves academic success. This individual must be committed to excellence, lead by example, and see collaboration as a key component of success. This position is ideal for candidates that wish to fully pursue a credentialed lead teaching position. Becoming an educational associate serves as an internship for candidates who wish to develop their expertise through observation and experience in preparation for a meaningful and successful teaching career.

Qualifications

- Bachelor's Degree
- Certified teachers who have a desire to develop their expertise in the classroom in preparation for a lead teacher position *or* current enrollment in a master's education program
- Desire to become a lead classroom teacher
- Completion of CT Child Abuse Prevention Workshop
- Completion of CT School Violence Prevention Workshop

Candidates who do not meet the above requirements will not be considered.

Responsibilities

- Plans and teaches with grade level team to implement best practices for the success of all learners within the classroom
- Plans purposefully in order to provide students with opportunities for constructing meaning and developing understanding of new concepts
- Utilizes developmentally appropriate and rigorous curricula and instructional materials that are tightly aligned to benchmarks and the state standards.
- Presents students with new ideas and concepts through a variety of strategies, and inspires and guides them to explore, express and uncover new ideas of their own
- Administers, collects, and analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data gathered from a variety of assessments on each student
- Builds relationships with his or her students' families through regular communication about students' progress and provides ways in which families can support their children's learning
- Participates in school-wide student assessments in order to diagnose students' needs
- Supervises lunch and/ or recess
- Provides coverage for classroom teachers
- Provides other support as needed by the school community

Special Education Teacher

The Norwalk Charter School for Excellence is seeking an educator who is dedicated, ambitious, and committed to student success and education reform. Qualified candidates must demonstrate records of achievement, high degrees of personal responsibility, and the drive to do whatever it takes to ensure that every child achieves academic success. This individual must be committed to excellence, lead by example, and see collaboration as a key component of success.

Qualifications

- CT Teacher Certification in Special Education or reciprocity from another state in the equivalent area
- At least 2-3 years of classroom teaching experience in special education

Responsibilities

- Plans and teaches with general education teacher to implement best practices for the success of all learners within the classroom.
- Collaborates with grade-level team to plan and execute individualized education plans for students with special needs in order to ensure they achieve.
- Plans purposefully in order to provide students with opportunities for constructing meaning and developing understanding of new concepts.
- Utilizes developmentally appropriate and rigorous curricula and instructional materials that are tightly aligned to benchmarks and the Common Core State Standards, NGSS and Connecticut Frameworks.
- Presents students with new ideas and concepts through a variety of strategies, and inspires and guides them to explore, express and uncover new ideas of their own.
- Modifies existing instructional plans as necessary to accommodate individual student's special needs.
- Administers, collects, and analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data gathered from a variety of assessments on each student.
- Builds relationships with his or her students' families through regular communication about students' progress and provides ways in which families can support their children's learning.
- Participates in school-wide student assessments in order to diagnose students' needs.
- Supports PPT in writing Individualized Education Plans and monitors progress toward student goals.
- Participates in annual IEP meetings for students with disabilities.

Grade Level Chair (GLC)

As the grade level chair at the NCSE, the role is to oversee and manage the designated grade level team. The purpose of this role is for classroom teachers and the leadership team to work together to meet the needs of students and teachers school wide. As a grade level chair, one will delegate, organize and manage the needs of the team. GLCs will have a total of two prep periods per day.

Responsibilities of a GLC

- Oversee curriculum map for each subject
- Oversee planning
- Ensure Common Core- aligned lesson planning and instruction

- Ensure the Habits of Mind deliverables are being met and the Habits are encouraged by the team
- Delegate jobs/planning responsibilities
- Lead Reading Block planning meetings (including Specials Team members)
- Facilitate Data Analysis
- Evaluate materials
- Oversee scheduling/ coverages
- Ensure all technology subscriptions are being utilized
- Manage deadlines
- Point person/liaison between team and leadership
- Team communicator
- Mentor new teachers and educational associates
- Model good teaching habits
- Schedule Peer Observations
- Organize monthly PLC meetings (protocols)
- Keep agendas and notes
- Field Trip Coordinator
- Family Mediator
- Facilitate consistency with behavior systems
- Peer Observations/Feedback (documents provided to supervisor)
- Danielson Framework for Teaching Certification
- Facilitate hot seat using protocol-warm and cool comments (twice a year)
- Summer Planning (3-5 days)
- Flexible Schedule
- Event calendar List (Parent Workshops, PD, Summer Project, Field Trips, Grade Level Events)
- 1 scheduled late day per week to support dismissal and late pick-ups
- 1 scheduled early day per week to support arrival and preparation for school opening

Appendix F – Letters of Endorsement, Evidence of Support

Harry W. Rilling – Mayor of Norwalk

Michael Lyons – Chair, Norwalk Board of Education

Brenda Penn-Williams – President, Norwalk Branch NAACP

Rev. Lindsay Curtis – Chair, Norwalk ACTS

Deidra Davis – Norwalk Housing Authority Representative, Community Advocate

Amanda Brown – Norwalk Resident, Former Councilwoman

Matthew Nittoly – Executive Director, Side By Side Charter School

Christopher Harrington – Connecticut Policy Manager, Northeast Charter Schools Network

Signed Petition Samples



CITY OF NORWALK
Harry W. Rilling
Mayor
hrilling@norwalkct.org
norwalkct.org
P: 203-854-7701 / F: 203-854-7939
Norwalk City Hall
125 East Avenue, PO Box 5125
Norwalk, CT 06856-5125

August 9, 2017

Dr. Dianna Wentzell
Commission of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, Connecticut 07

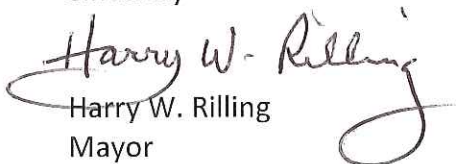
Dear Commissioner Wentzell,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the establishment of Norwalk Charter School for Excellence ("Norwalk Excellence"). As Mayor of Norwalk, I believe public education to be an engine for economic, social, and cultural empowerment for families and neighborhoods. Our local school district is making tremendous progress, however, we always need additional high-quality early public education options in Norwalk, where Norwalk Excellence intends to open to meet the challenging needs of our children. I have confidence that Norwalk Excellence educational leaders have demonstrated a commitment to working with the community to ensure that the school reflects the diversity and unique assets in the area. They are working closely with our Board of Education to best determine how a new school could complement our existing schools. Most importantly, we are certain Norwalk Excellence will help underserved Norwalk children attend the best high schools and colleges in the country.

Connecticut faces various economic and educational challenges. School choice and high-quality charter schools are important tools in creating solutions for Connecticut's complex and interrelated financial and public education issues. I support additional schools in Norwalk as long as we appropriately fund existing schools in our community.

If you have any questions or concerns, I welcome further conversation.

Sincerely


Harry W. Rilling
Mayor



NORWALK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
125 EAST AVENUE
NORWALK,
CONNECTICUT

July 24, 2017

Dr. Dianna Wentzell
Commissioner of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, Connecticut 07

Dear Commissioner Wentzell:

The members of the Norwalk Board of Education would like to express our enthusiastic support for the establishment of the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence ("Norwalk Excellence"). As leaders in the Norwalk community, we believe public education to be an engine for economic, social, and cultural empowerment for families and neighborhoods. There is a need for additional high-quality early public education options in Norwalk, where Norwalk Excellence intends to open to meet the challenging needs of our children. We are confident Norwalk Excellence's educational leaders have demonstrated a commitment to working with the community to ensure that the school reflects the diversity and unique assets in the area. Most importantly, we are certain Norwalk Excellence will help underserved Norwalk children attend the best high schools and colleges in the country.

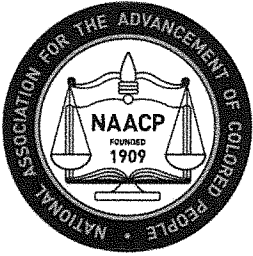
Connecticut faces various economic and educational challenges. School choice and high-quality charter schools are important tools in creating solutions for Connecticut's complex and interrelated financial and public education issues. We support additional schools in Norwalk and appropriately funding existing schools in our community.

If you have any questions or concerns, we welcome further conversation. Thank you for this opportunity to share our sincere and enthusiastic support for the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence.

Sincerely,



Michael W. Lyons, Chair
Norwalk Board of Education



NORWALK BRANCH NAACP

OFFICERS:

Brenda Penn-Williams
President

Andre Williams
1st Vice President

Shirley Mosby
2nd Vice President

Darnell D. Crosland, Esq.
3rd Vice President

Margaret K. Suib, Esq.
Secretary

Beverly McFadden
Assistant Secretary

Joseph E. Mann
Treasurer

Eric Montgomery
Assistant Treasurer

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Christine Bisceglie
Eric Fischman
Carolyn C. Fuller
Deborah Hanton

Rev. Dr. Jeffrey A. Ingraham
Rosa M. Murray
Jacqueline Steiner
Carolyn Walker
Louise Williams

Mailing Address:

Norwalk Branch NAACP
P.O. Box 1647
Belden Station
Norwalk, CT 06852

Email:

NAACPNorwalk@gmail.com

Website:

NorwalkBranchNAACP.org

Phone:

203-857-9940

August 9, 2017

Dr. Dianna Wentzell
Commission of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, Connecticut 07

Dear Commissioner Wentzell,

We are writing to express our enthusiastic support for the establishment of Norwalk Charter School for Excellence ("Norwalk Excellence"). As leaders in the Norwalk community, we believe public education to be an engine for economic, social, and cultural empowerment for families and neighborhoods. There is a need for additional high-quality early public education options in Norwalk, where Norwalk Excellence intends to open to meet the challenging needs of our children. We are confident Norwalk Excellence educational leaders have demonstrated a commitment to working with the community to ensure that the school reflects the diversity and unique assets in the area. Most importantly, we are certain Norwalk Excellence will help underserved Norwalk children attend the best high schools and colleges in the country.

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If you have any questions or concerns, we welcome further conversation. Thank you for this opportunity to share our sincere and ecstatic support for Norwalk Charter School for Excellence.

Sincerely

Brenda Penn-Williams, President

June 21, 2017

Dr. Dianna Wentzell
Commission of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, Connecticut 07

Dear Commissioner Wentzell,

We are writing to express our enthusiastic support for the establishment of Norwalk Charter School for Excellence ("Norwalk Excellence"). As leaders in the Norwalk community, we believe public education to be an engine for economic, social, and cultural empowerment for families and neighborhoods. There is a need for additional high-quality early public education options in Norwalk, where Norwalk Excellence intends to open to meet the challenging needs of our children. We are confident Norwalk Excellence educational leaders have demonstrated a commitment to working with the community to ensure that the school reflects the diversity and unique assets in the area. Most importantly, we are certain Norwalk Excellence will help underserved Norwalk children attend the best high schools and colleges in the country.

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If you have any questions or concerns, we welcome further conversation. Thank you for this opportunity to share our sincere and ecstatic support for Norwalk Charter School for Excellence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lindsay E. Curtis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and "C".

Rev. Dr. Lindsay E. Curtis, Chair
Norwalk ACTS

June 21, 2017

Dr. Dianna Wentzell
Commission of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, Connecticut 07

Dear Commissioner Wentzell,

We are writing to express our enthusiastic support for the establishment of Norwalk Charter School for Excellence ("Norwalk Excellence"). As leaders in the Norwalk community, we believe public education to be an engine for economic, social, and cultural empowerment for families and neighborhoods. There is a need for additional high-quality early public education options in Norwalk, where Norwalk Excellence intends to open to meet the challenging needs of our children. We are confident Norwalk Excellence educational leaders have demonstrated a commitment to working with the community to ensure that the school reflects the diversity and unique assets in the area. Most importantly, we are certain Norwalk Excellence will help underserved Norwalk children attend the best high schools and colleges in the country.

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Sincerely



July 6, 2017

Dr. Dianna Wentzell
Commission of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

Re: School of Excellence for Norwalk, CT

Dear Commissioner Wentzell:

We are writing to express our enthusiastic support for the establishment of Norwalk Charter School for Excellence (“Norwalk Excellence”). As leaders in the Norwalk community, we believe public education to be an engine for economic, social, and cultural empowerment for families and neighborhoods. There is a need for additional high-quality early public education options in Norwalk, where Norwalk Excellence intends to open to meet the challenging needs of our children. We are confident Norwalk Excellence educational leaders have demonstrated a commitment to working with the community to ensure that the school reflects the diversity and unique assets in the area. Most importantly, we are certain Norwalk Excellence will help underserved Norwalk children attend the best high schools and colleges in the country.

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If you have any questions or concerns, we welcome further conversation. Thank you for this opportunity to share our sincere and ecstatic support for Norwalk Charter School for Excellence.

Sincerely



Amanda M. Brown



July 31, 2017

Dr. Dianna Wentzell
Commission of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

Dear Commissioner Wentzell,

We are writing to express our enthusiastic support for the establishment of Norwalk Charter School for Excellence ("Norwalk Excellence"). As leaders in the Norwalk community, we believe public education to be an engine for economic, social, and cultural empowerment for families and neighborhoods. There is a need for additional high-quality early public education options in Norwalk, where Norwalk Excellence intends to open to meet the challenging needs of our children. We are confident Norwalk Excellence educational leaders have demonstrated a commitment to working with the community to ensure that the school reflects the diversity and unique assets in the area. Most importantly, we are certain Norwalk Excellence will help underserved Norwalk children attend the best high schools and colleges in the country.

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If you have any questions or concerns, we welcome further conversation. Thank you for this opportunity to share our sincere and ecstatic support for Norwalk Charter School for Excellence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matthew Nittoly", is written over a horizontal line.

Matthew Nittoly
Executive Director, Side by Side Charter School



NORTHEAST
CHARTER SCHOOLS NETWORK

June 21, 2017

Dr. Dianna Wentzell
Commission of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, Connecticut 07

Dear Commissioner Wentzell,

We are writing to express our enthusiastic support for the establishment of Norwalk Charter School for Excellence (“Norwalk Excellence”). As leaders in the Norwalk community, we believe public education to be an engine for economic, social, and cultural empowerment for families and neighborhoods. There is a need for additional high-quality early public education options in Norwalk, where Norwalk Excellence intends to open to meet the challenging needs of our children. We are confident Norwalk Excellence educational leaders have demonstrated a commitment to working with the community to ensure that the school reflects the diversity and unique assets in the area. Most importantly, we are certain Norwalk Excellence will help underserved Norwalk children attend the best high schools and colleges in the country.

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If you have any questions or concerns, we welcome further conversation. Thank you for this opportunity to share our sincere and ecstatic support for Norwalk Charter School for Excellence.

Sincerely,

Christopher Harrington
Connecticut Policy Manger
Northeast Charter Schools Network

DATE: August 1st 2017

<p>Petition Summary</p>	<p>Our proposal is to establish a new, state, public charter school in the Norwalk Public Schools District. Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will provide a high-quality, PK-5 educational option that boosts student achievement and prepares more scholars for competitive high schools, colleges, and chosen careers. Our school will be based on the National Blue Ribbon Award-winning model of the Bronx Charter School for Excellence.</p>
<p>Petition Statement</p>	<p>We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens and community members who urge our leaders to approve the opening of the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence.</p>

Printed Name	Signature	City of Residence	Age(s) of Children	Interest in Enrollment? (Y/N)
Ana Cazada	Ana Cazada	Norwalk	8, 10	yes
Carmen catalan	Carmen catalan	Norwalk	9, 10	yes
Loretha Regina Pauda	Loretha Regina Pauda	Norwalk	4	
Carmina Ramirez	Carmina Ramirez	Norwalk	1, 7	yes.
Rosa Garcia	Rosa Garcia	Norwalk	9, 11	yes
Yessica Alvarenga	Yessica Alvarenga	Norwalk	7, 6	yes
Sintiamarodicago	Sintiamarodicago	Norwalk	4, 4	yes
MARISOL SILVA	MARISOL SILVA	Norwalk	8, 5	yes.
Natacha J. P. Costa	Natacha J. P. Costa	Norwalk	15, 3	yes

We appreciate your support of and/or interest in enrolling your child(ren) at our school. Please note that a signature on this page does not supplant the application and lottery process required for enrollment, and does not guarantee a seat for your child(ren).

DATE: 8/11/17

Petition Summary
Our proposal is to establish a new, state, public charter school in the Norwalk Public Schools District. Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will provide a high-quality, PK-5 educational option that boosts student achievement and prepares more scholars for competitive high schools, colleges, and chosen careers. Our school will be based on the National Blue Ribbon Award-winning model of the Bronx Charter School for Excellence.

Petition Statement
We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens and community members who urge our leaders to approve the opening of the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence.

Printed Name	Signature	City of Residence	Age(s) of Children	Interest in Enrollment? (Y/N)
Valerie Keen	<i>Val Keen</i>	NORWALK	6	Y
RUDY PIERRE	<i>Rudy Pierre</i>	NORWALK	6, 4	Y
Cindy Casagnot	<i>Cindy Casagnot</i>	NORWALK	8	Y
Brenda Dar-sal	<i>Brenda Dar-sal</i>	NORWALK		
Mercedes Dorleans	<i>Mercedes Dorleans</i>	NORWALK	9, 8, 1	Y
Brenda Cardenas	<i>Brenda Cardenas</i>	NORWALK	1, 6, 9	Y
Nicole Carrick	<i>Nicole Carrick</i>	NORWALK	1 1/2, 5	Y
Natakie Broussseau	<i>Natakie Broussseau</i>	Norwalk	1 1/2.	Y
Ralph Jr-Baptiste	<i>Ralph Jr-Baptiste</i>	Norwalk	3.	Y
Jamie Delivo	<i>Jamie Delivo</i>	Norwalk	9, 5	N

We appreciate your support of and/or interest in enrolling your child(ren) at our school. Please note that a signature on this page does not supplant the application and lottery process required for enrollment, and does not guarantee a seat for your child(ren).

DATE: 8/1/17

Petition Summary

Our proposal is to establish a new, state, public charter school in the Norwalk Public Schools District. Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will provide a high-quality, PK-5 educational option that boosts student achievement and prepares more scholars for competitive high schools, colleges, and chosen careers. Our school will be based on the National Blue Ribbon Award-winning model of the Bronx Charter School for Excellence.

Petition Statement








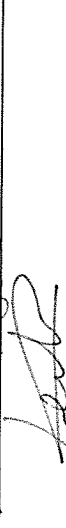


We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens and community members who urge our leaders to approve the opening of the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence.

Printed Name	Signature	City of Residence	Age(s) of Children	Interest in Enrollment? (Y/N)
Soann Lafonte		Norwalk	12, 14, 7, 5	Y
Carmen		Norwalk	8, 10	Yes
Maggie Mannix		Norwalk	9, 5	Yes
Veronica Aloisena		Norwalk	5, 7	Yes
Abra Alba Rodriguez		Norwalk	6	Yes
Yennifer, N.		Norwalk	4	Yes
Melanie Hendrickson		Norwalk	3 1/2	Yes
Abigail Rodriguez		Norwalk	5 and 3	Yes
Carlton Rosales		Norwalk	7	Yes
Ruby Lindsey		Norwalk	3 and 3	Yes

We appreciate your support of and/or interest in enrolling your child(ren) at our school. Please note that a signature on this page does not supplant the application and lottery process required for enrollment, and does not guarantee a seat for your child(ren).

DATE: _____

<p>Petition Summary</p>	<p>Our proposal is to establish a new, state, public charter school in the Norwalk Public Schools District. Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will provide a high-quality, PK-5 educational option that boosts student achievement and prepares more scholars for competitive high schools, colleges, and chosen careers. Our school will be based on the National Blue Ribbon Award-winning model of the Bronx Charter School for Excellence.</p>
<p>Petition Statement</p>	<p>We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens and community members who urge our leaders to approve the opening of the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence.</p>

Printed Name	Signature	City of Residence	Age(s) of Children	Interest in Enrollment? (Y/N)
Erica Sastry		Norwalk	2	Y
J. Queins		Fairfield	4, 2, 1	N
L. Pombano		Norwalk	4, 2	Y
Nicole White		Norwalk	5	Y
Teresa Berera		Norwalk	4, 1	Y
Truong Pham		Danbury	3	Y
Victoria Santos		Norwalk	1, 10, 15	Y
Leticia Aguirre		Norwalk	6-8	Y
Cristina Hernandez		Norwalk	8-8	.
Cheryl Ann		Norwalk	6-8	.

We appreciate your support of and/or interest in enrolling your child(ren) at our school. Please note that a signature on this page does not supplant the application and lottery process required for enrollment, and does not guarantee a seat for your child(ren).

DATE: 2/11/17

Petition Summary
Our proposal is to establish a new, state, public charter school in the Norwalk Public Schools District. Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will provide a high-quality, PK-5 educational option that boosts student achievement and prepares more scholars for competitive high schools, colleges, and chosen careers. Our school will be based on the National Blue Ribbon Award-winning model of the Bronx Charter School for Excellence.

Petition Statement
We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens and community members who urge our leaders to approve the opening of the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence.

Printed Name	Signature	City of Residence	Age(s) of Children	Interest in Enrollment? (Y/N)
Ashley Ribalino		Norwalk	10	Y
Ericelda Martinez	Ericelda Martinez	Norwalk	4	Y
Andrea Rivasenera		Norwalk	1	Y
Warkya Caro		Norwalk	1	Y
Nayusha Pugh		Norwalk	1	Y
Sandra Miranda		Norwalk	1	Y
Wayne Winston		Bridgewater	-	N
Charital Reed		Bpt/Norwalk	7	Y
Marie Mello	Ch. Mello	Norwalk	10/10/14	Yea
Hector Capob		Norwalk	3, 5, 8	Yes

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DATE: 8/1/17

Petition Summary
 Our proposal is to establish a new, state, public charter school in the Norwalk Public Schools District. Norwalk Charter School for Excellence will provide a high-quality, PK-5 educational option that boosts student achievement and prepares more scholars for competitive high schools, colleges, and chosen careers. Our school will be based on the National Blue Ribbon Award-winning model of the Bronx Charter School for Excellence.

Petition Statement
 We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens and community members who urge our leaders to approve the opening of the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence.

Printed Name	Signature	City of Residence	Age(s) of Children	Interest in Enrollment? (Y/N)
John C Bryan	<i>[Signature]</i>	Norwalk	10 years	Y
Brittany Bines	<i>[Signature]</i>	Norwalk	6, 2	Y
Kerica Preece	<i>[Signature]</i>	Ridgefield	3, 2	Y
Natalio Roque	<i>[Signature]</i>	Norwalk	1	Y
Debra Gunn	<i>[Signature]</i>	Norwalk	3	
Rocelia Reyes	<i>[Signature]</i>	Norwalk	7, 9, 11	
Sandra White	<i>[Signature]</i>	Norwalk	5	Y
Sheron Rose	<i>[Signature]</i>	Norwalk	0	
Yennifer Betancourt	<i>[Signature]</i>	Norwalk	8, 3	
Leanne Tg	<i>[Signature]</i>	Norwalk	7, 5, 1	Y

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DATE: _____

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<p>Petition Statement</p>	<p>We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens and community members who urge our leaders to approve the opening of the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence.</p>	

Printed Name	Signature	City of Residence	Age(s) of Children	Interest in Enrollment? (Y/N)
Carolyn Fuller	Carolyn Fuller	Norwalk	0	TEACHER
Johanie Weldon	Johanie Weldon	Norwalk	0	N/A
Samuel Priole	Samuel Priole	Norwalk	0	N/A
Evelyn Rogers	Evelyn A. Rogers	Norwalk	0	N/A
Antia B. Schmidt	Antia B. Schmidt	Norwalk	0	N/A
Sean C. Carter	Sean C. Carter	Norwalk	3 Grandchildren	N/A
Julia Sead	Julia Sead	Norwalk	0 Grandchildren	N/A
Brenda Penn-Williams	Brenda Penn-Williams	Norwalk	2 Grandchildren	N/A
Shirley Moshy	Shirley Moshy	Norwalk	0	N/A
Bev McFadden	Bev McFadden	Norwalk	9 Grandchildren 2-17	TEACHER

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DATE: _____

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Petition Statement
We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens and community members who urge our leaders to approve the opening of the Norwalk Charter School for Excellence.

Printed Name	Signature	City of Residence	Age(s) of Children	Interest in Enrollment? (Y/N)
Margaret K. Sub	Margaret K. Sub	Norwalk	grown up	NO
Darius L. Williams	Darius L. Williams	Norwalk	Still swimming	NO

We appreciate your support of and/or interest in enrolling your child(ren) at our school. Please note that a signature on this page does not supplant the application and lottery process required for enrollment, and does not guarantee a seat for your child(ren).

**NORWALK CHARTER SCHOOL FOR EXCELLENCE
PERSONAL INTERVENTION PLAN (PIP)
SCHOOL YEAR: _____ - _____**

STUDENT INFORMATION

DATE: _____

STUDENT NAME: _____ GRADE: _____

CLASS: _____ TEACHER: _____

GENDER: M F DATE OF BIRTH: ____/____/____

Student ID NUMBER: _____

HOLDOVER: Y N HOLDOVER GRADE(S): _____

SECTION 504 PLAN: Y N TEST MODIFICATIONS:

ELL: Y N HOME LANGUAGE: _____

STUDENT PERFORMANCE - Attach Evidence/ Documentation (i.e. Teacher Spreadsheet, DRA Portfolio, Student Work, etc.)

PROFICIENCY LEVELS (Fill in the name of assessment, date, score and any other relevant information or data.)

Date	Name of Assessment	Score	Notes

READING:

Strategy/Program: (Indicate what intervention strategies and/or program(s) were selected for the student based on his/her evidenced area(s) of need.)

Skill(s) to be addressed:

Specific intervention(s):

Frequency and duration of intervention(s): {How often the service(s) will be provided (e.g., 3 x per week. What the length of each targeted intervention session will be (e.g., 1 hour per day)?}.

Response to intervention measured by: (Observation and classroom assessments)

Intervention to be provided

by: _____

Continue to implement interventions, accommodations or supports for _____ weeks.
Follow up meeting will be scheduled if the student does not respond to interventions.
Next Steps: Tier III formal meeting and/or referral for evaluation to Section 504 or Special Education.

Participants and titles: _____

Signature of Participants: _____

Date Completed: _____

Pre-Opening Budget Statement Format

Start-Up Explanation of Revenues and Expenditures

Revenue			Budget Narrative / Description of Assumptions
In-kind services		\$ -	
Private contributions (for example: Foundation X grant for \$\$)		300,000	
Total Revenue		\$ 300,000	
Expenditures			
Salaries and Benefits			
Salary--Administrators (for example: 10 weeks for 2 administrators)	111A	\$ 65,000	Principal - SIX months.
Salary--Teachers (for example: 6 weeks for 5 teachers)	111B	-	
Salary--Education Aides	112A	-	
Salary--Support staff	112B	42,750	Finance and Operations Manager - SIX months / Office Assistant - THREE months.
Salary--Other	119	8,750	Custodian - ONE month.
Benefits	200	28,135	
Subtotal		\$ 144,635	
Services and Activities			
In-service staff development	322	\$ -	
Pupil services	323	-	
Field trips	324	-	
Parent activities	325	-	
Professional tech services	330	5,000	Set-up for staff.
Accounting	330	10,000	2 months Financial Consultant
Audit	331	30,000	Legal expense for entity formation and lease & contracts reviews
Student transportation	510	-	
Communication	530	500	Internet, etc. for staff.
Telephone	530	1,000	Phones (cell and land lines) for staff.
Postage and shipping	530	2,000	
Travel	580	1,000	
Subtotal		\$ 49,500	
Physical Plant			
Rent	400	\$ 6,000	Six months space rental for family meetings
Utilities	400	-	
Custodial services	400	-	
Maintenance and repairs	400	15,000	Estimate
Renovations/expansion	400	50,000	Estimate
Subtotal		\$ 71,000	
Marketing and Development			
Charter Management Org.	590	\$ -	
Advertising	590	2,500	
Printing	590	1,000	
Insurance	590	3,000	D&O, Liability, etc.
Subtotal		\$ 6,500	
Supplies and Equipment			
Supplies--Instructional	611	\$ -	
Supplies--Administrative	612	500	Supplies for staff.
Supplies--General	690	-	
Text books	641	-	
Library books	642	-	
Computers	700	1,200	Computer for staff.
Furniture	700	1,000	Furniture for staff.
Vehicles	700	-	
Other equipment	700	-	
Subtotal		\$ 2,700	
Other Objects			
Other objects (e.g., in-kind)	800	\$ -	
Subtotal		\$ -	
Loan Repayments			
Interest	900	\$ -	
Principal	900	-	
Subtotal		\$ -	
Total Expenditures		\$ 274,335	
INCOME LESS EXPENDITURES		\$ 25,665	

Projected Five Year Budget Statement Format

	FY 1	FY 2	FY 3	FY 4	FY 5	Budget Narrative / Description of Assumptions
Revenue						
Number of students	168	224	280	336	392	
Per-pupil revenue	\$ 1,848,000	\$ 2,464,000	\$ 3,080,000	\$ 3,696,000	\$ 4,312,000	\$11,000 per Student. Rate remains flat for initial charter term.
Student entitlements	60,480	80,640	100,800	120,960	141,120	\$600 per Student. Rate remains flat for initial charter term.
SPED	150,000	200,000	250,000	300,000	350,000	
Grants	7,560	10,080	12,600	15,120	17,640	Based on \$45/student collection
In-kind services	-	-	-	-	-	
Private contributions	200,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	
Total Revenue	\$ 2,266,040	\$ 2,904,720	\$ 3,593,400	\$ 4,282,080	\$ 4,970,760	
Expenditures						
Salaries and Benefits						
111A Salary-Administrators	\$ 130,000	\$ 228,900	\$ 235,767	\$ 323,840	\$ 333,555	See 'Staffing & Comp.' tab of the school's Financial Plan template for position details.
111B Salary-Teachers	573,000	791,190	1,000,926	1,293,953	1,533,772	
112A Salary-Education Aides	80,000	162,400	247,272	334,690	424,731	
112B Salary-Support staff	147,000	151,410	155,952	160,631	165,450	
119 Salary-Other	90,000	92,700	130,481	134,395	138,427	
200 Benefits	246,330	312,448	387,746	492,241	568,551	Payroll taxes equate to 10.95% of total compensation. Fringe benefits equate to 13.20% in YR 1 and 10.95% in YR 5. Included is a 0.00% retirement contribution for FT employees (See 'Staffing & Comp.' tab for further detail).
Subtotal	\$ 1,266,330	\$ 1,739,048	\$ 2,158,144	\$ 2,739,751	\$ 3,164,486	
Services and Activities						
In-service development staff	\$ 8,500	\$ 11,500	\$ 14,500	\$ 18,000	\$ 20,500	Based on FT staff - \$500 per staff member (includes conferences, workshops, professional texts, etc.).
Pupil services	183,600	244,800	306,000	367,200	428,400	Based on Student - \$200 per student. Student testing & assessment, enrichment, etc. PLUS SPED at \$150K starting first year.
Field trips	16,800	22,400	28,000	33,600	39,200	Based on Student - \$100 per student.
325 Parent activities	3,360	4,480	5,600	6,720	7,840	Based on Student - \$20 per student for meetings, meals, etc.
330 Professional tech services	29,000	12,000	15,000	18,000	21,000	\$750 per month. YR 1 includes \$20k start/set-up expense. YRS 2-5 monthly charge increases \$250 per month.
Accounting	25,000	25,750	26,523	27,318	28,138	Financial Consultant
331 Audit	18,000	20,000	22,000	24,000	26,000	Estimated YR 1 - \$18,000 with \$2k increase year to year.
510 Student transportation	-	-	-	-	-	Provided by the district
530 Communication	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400	\$200 per month for internet services.
530 Telephone	7,800	9,000	10,200	11,400	12,600	\$650 per month for general school/office phones and phones for staff.
Postage and shipping	5,040	6,720	8,400	10,080	11,760	Increases \$100 per month per year.
580 Travel	4,250	5,750	7,250	9,000	10,250	Based on Student - \$30 per student. Based on FT staff - \$250 per staff member.
Subtotal	\$ 303,750	\$ 364,800	\$ 445,873	\$ 527,718	\$ 608,088	
Physical Plant						
400 Rent	\$ 332,640	\$ 443,520	\$ 551,400	\$ 628,320	\$ 776,160	Assumes 18.00% of total yearly state per pupil revenue.
400 Utilities	49,896	54,886	60,374	66,412	73,053	Cost is an estimate as a facility has not been secured. Estimation is 15.00% of yearly rent total in YR 1 with a 10.00% increase in YRS 2-5.
400 Custodial services	-	-	-	-	-	Custodian on staff.
400 Maintenance and repairs	30,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	Estimated \$30,000 - YR 1. \$15,000 per year thereafter.
400 Renovations/expansion	-	-	-	-	-	
Subtotal	\$ 412,536	\$ 513,406	\$ 626,774	\$ 709,732	\$ 864,213	
Marketing and Development						
590 Charter Management Org.	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
590 Advertising	8,400	2,800	2,800	2,800	2,800	Based on Student - \$50 per NEW student (Includes ads, community outreach, newspapers, mailings, meetings).
590 Printing	5,040	6,720	8,400	10,080	11,760	Based on Student - \$30 per student.
590 Insurance	15,000	16,000	17,000	18,000	19,000	Estimated YR 1 - \$15,000 with \$1k increase year to year.
Subtotal	\$ 28,440	\$ 25,520	\$ 28,200	\$ 30,880	\$ 33,560	
Supplies and Equipment						
611 Supplies-Instructional	\$ 16,800	\$ 22,400	\$ 28,000	\$ 33,600	\$ 39,200	Based on Student - \$100 per student.
612 Supplies-Administrative	15,000	20,000	25,000	30,000	35,000	Includes: copier and printing costs leases, office supplies, etc. \$15,000 in year one and additional \$5,000 each year thereafter.
641 Text books	25,200	14,000	19,000	19,000	19,000	Based on Student - \$150 per student YR 1; Includes bulk purchases of workbooks and instructional material / Year 2-5 - \$250 per NEW Student / Year 3-5 - Replacement cost of additional \$5,000 annually.
642 Library books	3,000	4,000	5,000	6,000	7,000	Based on classroom - \$500 per classroom.
690 Supplies-General	5,880	7,840	9,800	11,760	13,720	Based on Student - \$35 per student.
690 Supplies-Food Services	30,240	40,320	50,400	60,480	70,560	Based on \$180/student
700 Computers	64,750	21,700	26,700	27,050	26,350	Computers (laptops/chromebooks) for staff and students. Average cost of \$350 per student and full-time FTE in YR 1. YRS 2-5; average \$350 per NEW student and full-time FTE. YRS 3-5; \$5k additional for upgrades and replacement.
700 Furniture	35,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	Based on classroom - \$5,000 per classroom / \$5,000 Admin. In YR 1. \$5,000 Per New Class Room in Yrs 2-5.
700 Vehicles	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
700 Other Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	
Subtotal	\$ 195,870	\$ 140,260	\$ 173,900	\$ 197,890	\$ 220,830	
Other Objects						
800 Other objects (e.g., in-kind)	-	-	-	-	-	
Subtotal	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Loan Repayments						
900 Interest	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
900 Principal	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
Subtotal	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Total Expenditures	\$ 2,206,926	\$ 2,783,034	\$ 3,432,891	\$ 4,205,970	\$ 4,891,177	
INCOME LESS EXPENDITURE	\$ 59,114	\$ 121,686	\$ 160,509	\$ 76,110	\$ 79,583	

Charter School Cash Flow Schedule For Year One of Operation

Charter School Name	First Per-Pupil - 7/1		Second Per-Pupil - 9/1				Third Per-Pupil - 1/1				Fourth Per-Pupil - 4/15				Totals
Budget	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June			
Beginning Balance	\$ 25,665		\$ 486,538	\$ 254,570	\$ 538,636	\$ 361,993	\$ 214,047	\$ 42,053	\$ 316,850	\$ 149,896	\$ 125,103	\$ 417,349	\$ 242,556		
Revenue															
Number of students	168														
Per-pupil revenue	\$ 1,848,000	\$ 462,000	\$ 462,000				\$ 462,000			\$ 462,000			\$ 462,000	\$ 1,848,000	
Student entitlements	60,480					24,192	5,184	5,184	5,184	5,184	5,184	5,184	5,184	60,480	
SFD	150,000								150,000					150,000	
Grants	7,560					756	756	756	756	756	756	756	2,268	7,560	
<i>(Food \$\$ will be a receivable after June. For this exercise it is added to June)</i>															
In-kind services	-													-	
Private contributions	200,000	200,000												200,000	
Total Revenue	\$ 2,266,040	\$ 662,000	\$ -	\$ 462,000	\$ -	\$ 24,948	\$ 5,940	\$ 467,940	\$ 5,940	\$ 155,940	\$ 467,940	\$ 5,940	\$ 7,452	\$ 2,266,040	
Expenditures															
Salaries and Benefits															
Salary-Administrators	111A	\$ 130,000	\$ 10,833	\$ 10,833	\$ 10,833	\$ 10,833	\$ 10,833	\$ 10,833	\$ 10,833	\$ 10,833	\$ 10,833	\$ 10,833	\$ 10,833	\$ 130,000	
Salary-Teachers	111B	573,000		52,091	52,091	52,091	52,091	52,091	52,091	52,091	52,091	52,091	52,091	573,000	
Salary-Education Aides	112A	80,000		7,273	7,273	7,273	7,273	7,273	7,273	7,273	7,273	7,273	7,273	80,000	
Salary-Support staff	112B	147,000	\$ 12,250	\$ 12,250	\$ 12,250	\$ 12,250	\$ 12,250	\$ 12,250	\$ 12,250	\$ 12,250	\$ 12,250	\$ 12,250	\$ 12,250	147,000	
Salary-Other	119	90,000		8,182	8,182	8,182	8,182	8,182	8,182	8,182	8,182	8,182	8,182	90,000	
Benefits	200	246,330	5,575	21,887	21,887	21,887	21,887	21,887	21,887	21,887	21,887	21,887	21,887	246,330	
Subtotal		\$ 1,266,330	\$ 28,658	\$ 112,516	\$ 112,516	\$ 112,516	\$ 112,516	\$ 112,516	\$ 112,516	\$ 112,516	\$ 112,516	\$ 112,516	\$ 112,516	\$ 1,266,330	
Services and Activities															
In-service development staff	322	\$ 8,500			850	850	850	850	850	850	850	850	850	8,500	
Pupil services	323	183,600			18,360	18,360	18,360	18,360	18,360	18,360	18,360	18,360	18,360	183,600	
Field trips	324	16,800			4,200	4,200	4,200	4,200	4,200	4,200	4,200	4,200	4,200	16,800	
Parent activities	325	3,360			840	840	840	840	840	840	840	840	840	3,360	
Professional tech services	330	29,000	\$ 2,417	\$ 2,417	\$ 2,417	\$ 2,417	\$ 2,417	\$ 2,417	\$ 2,417	\$ 2,417	\$ 2,417	\$ 2,417	\$ 2,417	29,000	
Accounting	330	25,000	25,000											25,000	
Audit	331	18,000												18,000	
Student transportation	510	-												-	
Communication	530	2,400	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	2,400	
Telephone	530	7,800	\$ 650	\$ 650	\$ 650	\$ 650	\$ 650	\$ 650	\$ 650	\$ 650	\$ 650	\$ 650	\$ 650	7,800	
Postage and shipping	530	5,040	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 420	5,040	
Travel	580	4,250	\$ 354	\$ 354	\$ 354	\$ 354	\$ 354	\$ 354	\$ 354	\$ 354	\$ 354	\$ 354	\$ 354	4,250	
Subtotal		\$ 303,750	\$ 29,041	\$ 4,041	\$ 28,291	\$ 28,291	\$ 28,291	\$ 28,291	\$ 28,291	\$ 28,291	\$ 28,291	\$ 28,291	\$ 28,291	\$ 303,750	
Physical Plant															
Rent	400	\$ 332,640	\$ 27,720	\$ 27,720	\$ 27,720	\$ 27,720	\$ 27,720	\$ 27,720	\$ 27,720	\$ 27,720	\$ 27,720	\$ 27,720	\$ 27,720	\$ 332,640	
Utilities	400	49,896	\$ 4,158	\$ 4,158	\$ 4,158	\$ 4,158	\$ 4,158	\$ 4,158	\$ 4,158	\$ 4,158	\$ 4,158	\$ 4,158	\$ 4,158	49,896	
Custodial services	400	-												-	
Maintenance and repairs	400	30,000	15,000						15,000					30,000	
Renovations/expansion	400	-												-	
Subtotal		\$ 412,536	\$ 46,878	\$ 31,878	\$ 31,878	\$ 31,878	\$ 31,878	\$ 31,878	\$ 46,878	\$ 31,878	\$ 31,878	\$ 31,878	\$ 31,878	\$ 412,536	
Marketing and Development															
Charter Management Org.	590	\$ -												\$ -	
Advertising	590	8,400							2,800	2,800	2,800			8,400	
Printing	590	5,040	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 420	5,040	
Insurance	590	15,000	7,500			3,750			3,750					15,000	
Subtotal		\$ 28,440	\$ 7,920	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 4,170	\$ 420	\$ 420	\$ 4,170	\$ 420	\$ 3,220	\$ 3,220	\$ 3,220	\$ 28,440	
Supplies and Equipment															
Supplies-Instructional	611	\$ 16,800		\$ 8,400	\$ 840	\$ 840	\$ 840	\$ 840	\$ 840	\$ 840	\$ 840	\$ 840	\$ 840	\$ 16,800	
Supplies-Administrative	612	15,000		7,500	750	750	750	750	750	750	750	750	750	15,000	
Text books	641	25,200	12,600											25,200	
Library books	642	3,000		1,500				1,500						3,000	
Supplies-General	690	5,880	490		490	490	490	490	490	490	490	490	490	5,880	
Supplies-Food Services	690	30,240		2,749	2,749	2,749	2,749	2,749	2,749	2,749	2,749	2,749	2,749	30,240	
Computers	700	64,750	32,375											64,750	
Furniture	700	35,000	17,500											35,000	
Vehicles	700	-												-	
Other Equipment	700	-												-	
Subtotal		\$ 195,870	\$ 62,965	\$ 83,114	\$ 4,829	\$ 4,829	\$ 4,829	\$ 4,829	\$ 6,329	\$ 4,829	\$ 4,829	\$ 4,829	\$ 4,829	\$ 195,870	
Other Objects															
Other objects (e.g., in-kind)	800	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Subtotal		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Loan Repayments															
Interest	900	\$ -												\$ -	
Principal	900	-												-	
Subtotal		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Total Expenditures		\$ 2,206,926	\$ 175,462	\$ 231,969	\$ 177,934	\$ 176,644	\$ 172,894	\$ 177,934	\$ 193,144	\$ 172,894	\$ 180,734	\$ 175,694	\$ 180,734	\$ 2,206,926	
ENDING CASH BALANCE		\$ 84,779	\$ 486,538	\$ 254,570	\$ 538,636	\$ 361,993	\$ 214,047	\$ 42,053	\$ 316,850	\$ 149,896	\$ 125,103	\$ 417,349	\$ 242,556	\$ 59,114	

Stanford Charter School for Excellence

ENROLLMENT and STUDENT POPULATION

Instructions: Complete the fields in GRAY.

** Choose Operational YEAR ONE Here*

2019-2020	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
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SCHOOL DAYS

185

ENROLLMENT

Pre-Kindergarten	56.00	56.00	56.00	56.00	56.00
Kindergarten	56.00	56.00	56.00	56.00	56.00
1st Grade	56.00	56.00	56.00	56.00	56.00
2nd Grade	-	56.00	56.00	56.00	56.00
3rd Grade	-	-	56.00	56.00	56.00
4th Grade	-	-	-	56.00	56.00
5th Grade	-	-	-	-	56.00
6th Grade	-	-	-	-	-
7th Grade	-	-	-	-	-
8th Grade	-	-	-	-	-
9th Grade	-	-	-	-	-
10th Grade	-	-	-	-	-
11th Grade	-	-	-	-	-
12th Grade	-	-	-	-	-

Total Elementary Enrollment	168.00	224.00	280.00	336.00	392.00
Total Middle School Enrollment	-	-	-	-	-
Total High School Enrollment	-	-	-	-	-
Total Enrollment	168.00	224.00	280.00	336.00	392.00
New Enrollment	168.00	56.00	56.00	56.00	56.00

Number of Classrooms	6.00	8.00	10.00	12.00	14.00
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STUDENT POPULATION

Average Daily Membership %	98.00%	98.00%	98.00%	98.00%	98.00%
Average Daily Membership (ADM)	164.64	219.52	274.40	329.28	384.16
Average Daily Attendance %	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%
Average Daily Attendance (ADA)	159.60	212.80	266.00	319.20	372.40
Special Education Students %	9.15%	9.15%	9.15%	9.15%	9.15%
Special Education Student Count (SPED)	15.37	20.50	25.62	30.74	35.87
English Language Learner %	12.76%	12.76%	12.76%	12.76%	12.76%
English Language Learner Count (ELL)	21.44	28.58	35.73	42.87	50.02
% Student Qualifying for Free Lunch	40.00%	40.00%	40.00%	40.00%	40.00%
Student Count Qualifying for Free Lunch	67.20	89.60	112.00	134.40	156.80
% Student Qualifying for Reduced Lunch	20.00%	20.00%	20.00%	20.00%	20.00%
Student Count Qualifying for Reduced Lunch	33.60	44.80	56.00	67.20	78.40
Free and Reduced Lunch Student % (Title I)	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%
Student Count Qualifying for Free or Reduced Lunch	100.80	134.40	168.00	201.60	235.20

Norwalk Charter School for Excellence

Staffing and Compensation

Instructions: Complete the fields in GRAY.

STAFF HEADCOUNT

POSITIONS	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
	FTEs	Full/Part	FTEs	Full/Part	FTEs	Full/Part	FTEs	Full/Part	FTEs	Full/Part

SALARIES, TAXES AND BENEFITS

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Annual Salary Growth %				
3.00%				

Description of Assumptions

Salary-Administrators - 111A

Principal	130,000	1.0	F	1.0	F	1.0	F	1.0	F	1.0	F
Dean of Students/ Social worker	95,000	-		1.0	F	1.0	F	1.0	F	1.0	F
Academic Dean	81,000	-		-		-		1.0	F	1.0	F
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
TOTAL											

\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
130,000	133,900	137,917	142,055	146,316
-	95,000	97,850	100,786	103,809
-	-	-	81,000	83,430
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
\$ 130,000	\$ 228,900	\$ 235,767	\$ 323,840	\$ 333,555

Salary-Teachers - 111B

Lead Teacher	\$ 62,000	8.0	F	10.0	F	13.0	F	16.0	F	18.0	F
SpEd Teacher/Learning Specialist	77,000	1.0	F	2.0	F	2.0	F	3.0	F	4.0	F
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
TOTAL											

\$ 496,000	\$ 634,880	\$ 839,926	\$ 1,051,124	\$ 1,206,658
77,000	156,310	160,999	242,829	327,114
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
\$ 573,000	\$ 791,190	\$ 1,000,926	\$ 1,293,953	\$ 1,533,772

Salary-Education Aides - 112A

Educational Associate	\$ 40,000	2.0	F	4.0	F	6.0	F	8.0	F	10.0	F
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
TOTAL											

\$ 80,000	\$ 162,400	\$ 247,272	\$ 334,690	\$ 424,731
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
\$ 80,000	\$ 162,400	\$ 247,272	\$ 334,690	\$ 424,731

Salary-Support staff - 112B

Finance and Operations Manager	\$ 65,000	1.0	F	1.0	F	1.0	F	1.0	F	1.0	F
Office Assistant	41,000	2.0	F	2.0	F	2.0	F	2.0	F	2.0	F
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
TOTAL											

\$ 65,000	\$ 66,950	\$ 68,959	\$ 71,027	\$ 73,158
82,000	84,460	86,994	89,604	92,292
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
\$ 147,000	\$ 151,410	\$ 155,952	\$ 160,631	\$ 165,450

Salary-Other - 119

Custodian	\$ 35,000	1.0	F	1.0	F	2.0	F	2.0	F	2.0	F
Nurse	55,000	1.0	F	1.0	F	1.0	F	1.0	F	1.0	F
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
	-	-		-		-		-		-	
TOTAL											

\$ 35,000	\$ 36,050	\$ 72,132	\$ 74,295	\$ 76,524
55,000	56,650	58,350	60,100	61,903
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
\$ 90,000	\$ 92,700	\$ 130,481	\$ 134,395	\$ 138,427

Total Salaries	\$ 1,020,000	\$ 1,426,600	\$ 1,770,398	\$ 2,247,510	\$ 2,595,935
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Number of employees

Total number of employees	17	23	29	36	41
Total number of full-time employees	17	23	29	36	41

Payroll Taxes

Norwalk Charter School for Excellence

Staffing and Compensation

Instructions: Complete the fields in GRAY.

POSITIONS

STAFF HEADCOUNT

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
FTEs	Full/Part	FTEs	Full/Part	FTEs	Full/Part	FTEs	Full/Part	FTEs	Full/Part

FICA	6.20%
Medicare - employer	1.45%
State unemployment	1.50%
FUTA (Federal unemployment)	0.00%
State disability	0.80%
Worker's compensation insurance	1.00%

SALARIES, TAXES AND BENEFITS

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Annual Salary Growth %				
3.00%				

\$ 63,240	\$ 88,449	\$ 109,765	\$ 139,346	\$ 160,948
14,790	20,686	25,671	32,589	37,641
15,300	21,399	26,556	33,713	38,939
-	-	-	-	-
8,160	11,413	14,163	17,980	20,767
10,200	14,266	17,704	22,475	25,959

Total Payroll Taxes	\$ 111,690	\$ 156,213	\$ 193,859	\$ 246,102	\$ 284,255
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Taxes as % of Salaries	10.95%	10.95%	10.95%	10.95%	10.95%
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Fringe Benefits

Health	11.00%
Dental	1.00%
Vision	0.50%
Life	0.10%
Long-term Disability	0.10%
Short-term Disability	0.50%
Retirement Contribution	0.00%

\$ 112,200	\$ 156,926	\$ 194,744	\$ 247,226	\$ 285,553
10,200	14,266	17,704	22,475	25,959
5,100	7,133	8,852	11,238	12,980
1,020	1,427	1,770	2,248	2,596
1,020	1,427	1,770	2,248	2,596
5,100	7,133	8,852	11,238	12,980
-	-	-	-	-

Total Payroll Taxes	\$ 134,640	\$ 156,236	\$ 193,888	\$ 246,138	\$ 284,296
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Taxes as % of Salaries	13.20%	10.95%	10.95%	10.95%	10.95%
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Description of Assumptions

Not required - Teachers and other certified staff have to participate in the CT State pension plan; school doesn't have to contribute. Certified staff include teachers, deans, guidance counselors, and the principal.



BRONX CHARTER SCHOOL FOR EXCELLENCE

Financial Policies and Procedures Manual

February 2015

Facilitated by:

CSBM
CHARTER SCHOOL
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

— experience. expertise. execution. —

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Manual

Bronx Charter School for Excellence (the “School”) is committed to developing and maintaining financial policies and procedures that ensure sound internal controls, fiscal responsibility, transparency and accountability in accordance with the generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) practiced in the United States of America and the rules and regulations established by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB). The School will follow all the relevant laws and regulations that govern charter schools within the City and State of New York. As a nonprofit organization, the School is entrusted with funds granted by Federal, State, and City government agencies as well as Corporations, Philanthropic Foundations and Individual contributors. The policies and procedures outlined below will be part of the School’s system of internal controls designed to safeguard assets, promote operational efficiency, minimize waste, fraud and theft, and ensure accurate accounting data.

Financial Leadership and Management

The financial management team of the School consists of:

- Board of Trustees,
- Board Chairperson,
- Board Treasurer,
- Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees,
- Head of School,
- Business Manager,
- Director of Operations,
- Financial Consultant

The financial management team outlined above is accountable for fiscal oversight of the School. The financial management team will collectively work to make certain that all financial matters of the School are properly addressed with care, integrity, and accuracy in the best interest of the School.

Changes to the Financial Policies and Procedures Manual

The financial policies and procedures manual (the “Manual”) establishes the policies and procedures for the fiscal and administrative functions conducted by the School. The School’s financial management team is responsible for periodically reviewing and revising the Manual as needed. The Board of Trustees must approve all amendments to the Manual. Any violation of these policies and procedures is considered to be cause for termination or removal and, depending upon the nature of the infraction, civil and/or criminal prosecution.

Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the School is from July 1st to June 30th.

Annual Audit

The School will undergo an annual independent audit conducted by an audit firm engaged by the Board of Trustees. The audit will be performed shortly following the close of the School's fiscal year-end.

If total federal expenditures for the fiscal year should exceed \$750,000 (or current federal guidelines), an additional audit under the guidance of OMB Circular A-133¹ will be also conducted by the independent audit firm.

INTERNAL CONTROL STRUCTURE

Background

Internal controls have been established to provide reasonable assurance to achieve the following:

- Effectiveness and efficiency of operations;
- Reliability of financial reporting; and
- Compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

The internal control structure is composed of the following basic elements: (1) the control environment; (2) the accounting system; (3) control procedures; and (4) the accounting cycle.

1. Internal Control Environment

By implementing internal controls, the School establishes the importance of enforcing and maintaining accountability, transparency, and accuracy in its day-to-day financial transactions. Factors that impact the internal control environment can include school management and Board philosophy; organizational structure; ways of assigning authority and responsibility; methods of management and control; personnel policies and practices; and external influences such as significant donor expectations.

2. Accounting System

The School has implemented an accounting system consisting of processes and documentation used to identify, compile, classify, record and report accounting transactions. These processes were established to: (1) identify and record all of the School's fiscal transactions; (2) describe the transactions adequately, to allow proper classification for financial reporting, and (3) specify the time period in which transactions occurred, to record them in the proper accounting

¹ OMB Circular A-133 Revised 2007; http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/a133/a133_revised_2007.pdf; accessed on 07/2010

period.

3. Internal Control Procedures

The School has adopted a number of internal financial controls. These procedures are set up to strengthen the School's internal control structure in order to safeguard the School's assets. The internal financial controls consist of the following:

Segregation of Duties: A hierarchical structure of authority and responsibility has been developed at the School. Tasks are divided and allocated to guard against one individual having the ability to make an accounting error (either knowingly or unknowingly). This protects the School from any potential fraud or misappropriation of funds. In situations where there are an insufficient number of employees to achieve this because of budget constraints, a compensating control has been created at the School.

Restricted Access: Physical access to valuable and moveable assets is restricted to authorized personnel.

Document Control: To ensure that all documents are captured by the accounting system, all documents must be initialed and dated when recorded and then filed appropriately.

Records Retention: Records will be maintained for the periods sufficient to satisfy IRS regulations, federal grant requirements, OMB A133 audit requirements (if applicable) and other legal needs as may be determined. Record retention requirements are reviewed as needed with legal counsel and independent auditors to determine any necessary changes.

Processing Controls: These are designed to identify any errors *before* they are posted to the general ledger. Common processing controls include: (1) Source document matching; (2) Clerical accuracy of documents; and (3) General ledger account code checking.

Reconciliation Controls: These are designed to identify any errors *after* transactions have been posted and the general ledger has been run. The process involves reconciling selected general ledger control accounts to subsidiary ledgers.

Annual Independent Audit: The School's financial statements are audited annually by an independent audit firm selected by the Board of Trustees.

Security of Financial Data: The School's accounting software is accessible only to the Director of Operations, Business Manager and Financial Consultant. Individual user names and passwords will be issued for each user and their access will be limited according to their functionality and role within the School. All hard copies of financial data, when not in use, will be secured in a designated area at the School.

Risk Assessment: This is designed to identify, analyze, and manage risk relevant to the preparation of accurate financial statements. It includes mitigating risks involving internal and/or external factors that might adversely affect the School's ability to properly record, process, summarize and report financial data.

4. Accounting Cycle

The accounting cycle is designed to accurately process, record, summarize, and report transactions of the School. The School will maintain their accounting records and related financial reports on the accrual basis of accounting. Under the accrual basis of accounting, revenues are recognized when earned, and expenses are recognized when obligations are incurred (goods transferred or services rendered).

The components of the accounting cycle fall into five primary functions:

A. Revenue, Accounts Receivable, and Cash Receipts

Key tasks in this area include:

- Processing and recording cash receipts and making deposits;
- Performing month-end reconciliation procedures; and
- Tracking grant compliance and private revenue restrictions.

B. Purchases, Accounts Payable, and Cash Disbursements

Key tasks in this area include:

- Authorizing the procurement of goods and/or services;
- Processing purchases and recording invoices and issuing checks; and
- Performing month-end reconciliation procedures.

C. Payroll

Key tasks in this area include:

- Maintaining and processing payroll information;
- Performing quarterly and year end reconciliations; and
- Preparing required federal, state and local tax filings.

D. General Ledger and Financial Statements

Key tasks in this area include:

- Reviewing and reconciling general ledger activity;
- Reconciling bank accounts; and
- Producing financial statements.

E. Budgets and Financial Reporting

Key tasks in this area include:

- Preparation of annual budget; and
- Preparing monthly budget vs. actual reports.

ANNUAL BUDGETING AND REPORTING

Annual Budgeting

The School is responsible for creating annual operating and capital budgets as well as updating the 5-year budget projections (as needed), with input from the Financial Consultant and the Head of School. The annual operating and capital budget and the 5-year budget projections (if amended) must be approved and passed by the Board of Trustees by June 30th before the start of the new fiscal year. Following this approval, any formal amendments to the budget must also be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Financial Reporting

The Financial Consultant and Board Treasurer will complete and present financial reports as required by the Board of Trustees, including but not limited to the following:

- (1) Budget vs. Actual report with projections for the operating and capital budgets;
- (2) Balance Sheet;
- (3) Statement of Cash Flows;
- (4) Cash Flow projections as needed; and
- (5) Federal grant reports as needed.

CASH RECEIPTS AND REVENUE

Background

The School receives revenues from the following primary sources:

- Federal, state, and local government; and
- Corporations, foundations, and individuals
- Fundraising/Gala

Distribution of Mail

The Administrative Assistant sorts and distributes all mail on a daily basis.

- Bank statements are distributed to Head of School unopened for review.
- Vendor bills/statements, checks for deposit and city/state/federal agency correspondence are distributed to the Director of Operations unopened for review.

Receiving, Processing and Recording Cash Receipts

- All checks must be endorsed immediately in the designated endorsement area with “For Deposit Only” by the Director of Operations, with the appropriate bank account number and the name of the School.
- The Director of Operations will make a copy of the check, which is maintained with the Director of Operations and/or the Development Coordinator in the Cash Receipts Binder.
- The Head of School and Director of Operations are responsible for making all deposits. Checks should be secured in a locked location until deposited, and deposits must be made as needed.
- Payments received from students/families (for example, school lunch fees, uniforms, field trips) will be collected by designated staff and submitted to and counted for accuracy by the Director of Operations.
- The Financial Consultant records the receipt of funds in the accounting system.
- The Director of Operations is responsible for ensuring the completion of the Cash Receipts Packet and passes it to the Financial Consultant for filing. The packet includes:
 - Bank-endorsed proof of deposit;
 - Copy of all checks and cash receipt logs for currency; and
 - Additional documentation received with the check
- The Director of Operations and Financial Consultant will periodically audit and review all transactions for accuracy and proper supporting documentation.

Revenue Compliance

The School’s accounting and documentation system must be capable of meeting the specific requirements imposed by grant agreements and donor designations and restrictions. Restriction parameters (such as job codes, donors or classes) will be set up in the accounting system to allow for accurate tracking of the applicable revenue, expenses, and assets based on the funding requirements. **Expenses cannot be charged over 100% against multiple grants.** The Financial Consultant must ensure that all reporting requirements and deadlines are met.

Federal Awards

For all federal grants the Head of School will be required to certify all reports and payment requests by signing and agreeing to the following:

“By signing this report, I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that the report is true, complete and accurate and the expenditures, disbursements and cash receipts are for the purposes and objectives set forth in the terms and conditions of the federal award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent information or the omission of any material fact, may subject me to criminal civil or administrative penalties for fraud, false statements, false claims, or otherwise.”

Drawdowns/advances must be disbursed within specified time and maintained in insured

account. The funds must also be in interest bearing account, if:

- Aggregate federal awards are over \$120,000; and
- Account expected to earn in excess of \$500 in interest per year; and
- Bank required minimum balance is feasible for the School to maintain.

All Costs Must Be:

- Necessary, reasonable and allocable
- Conform with federal law and grant terms
- Consistent with state and local policies
- Consistently treated
- In accordance with GAAP
- Not included as a match (There are some federal grants that require the recipient to match using their own funds. Recipients are not allowed to use funds from one federal grant to match another grant.)
- Net of applicable credits
- Adequately documented

Revenue Recognition for Grants

Revenue is recognized when earned and when contributions are received or awarded in accordance with GAAP.

In-kind Contributions

Donated Goods and Services

Donated goods and services can include office space, professional services such as outside counsel's legal advice, food, clothing, furniture and equipment, or bargain purchases of materials at prices less than market value. In addition, volunteers can provide free services, including administrative services, participation in fundraising events, and program services. The Financial Consultant records donated items or services in the accounting system at fair value or avoided cost, as determined by the donor and documented in writing.

Donated Securities

Publicly traded securities may be accepted. The School should sell all gifts of public securities as soon as reasonably possible with the cash from the sale transferred to the School's bank account. The securities will be valued at the closing price on the day they were sold.

Contributions Acknowledgment Letter

When the School receives a donation or an unconditional pledge in excess of \$250, a contribution acknowledgement letter stating the value of the donation is drafted by the Development Coordinator, signed by the Head of School, and sent to the donor. The acknowledgment should include:

- The amount of cash received and a description of any other property contributed (for in-kind goods contributed in which donor determines fair value for their individual tax purposes, the donor provided fair value is included as contribution);
- A statement about whether any goods or services in return for the contribution were provided; and
- A description and an estimated value of what was provided if the School provided something in return for the contribution.

These rules do not apply on a cumulative basis. One contributor who makes separate donations, each of which is less than \$250 but in the aggregate is greater than \$250, is not required to receive an acknowledgment.

Accounts Receivable Aging

All outstanding accounts receivable are aged on a thirty, sixty, ninety, and over-ninety day basis. The Director of Operations should review the accounts receivable aging monthly, determine which invoices are collectible, and follow the necessary requirements based on the type of funding, in order to collect. Accounts receivable that are deemed uncollectible will be written off once approved by the Head of School.

PURCHASES AND CASH DISBURSEMENTS

Background

The School procures only those items and services required to fulfill the mission and/or fill a bona fide need. Procurements are made using best value contracting, which entails assessing the best value considering quality, performance, and price.

The School adheres to the following objectives:

- Procurements will be completely impartial based strictly on the merits of supplier and contractor proposals and applicable considerations such as delivery, quantity, quality.
- The School will make all purchases in the best interests of the School and its funding sources and in accordance with any grant restrictions as applicable.
- The School will buy from reliable vendors.
- The School will not contract with vendor who has been suspended or debarred. www.sam.gov
- The School will obtain maximum value for all expenditures.
- The School will be above suspicion of unethical behavior at all times and avoid any conflict of interest, transactions with related parties, or even the appearance of a conflict of interest in the School supplier relationships. The School's conflict of interest policies are described in its by-laws.

Exemption from Sales Tax

The School is exempt from federal and state tax. As such, the School is exempt from sales taxes

on goods purchased for their own internal use. The School's Director of Operations is responsible for ensuring that all vendors have a copy of the sales tax exemption letter.

Bidding Process

The School utilizes the following procurement guidelines:

Vendor Type	Definition	Bidding requirement
Preferred vendors	The vendor has a contract with New York City and/or New York State.	No bidding is required.
Sole vendors	The vendor is providing a unique service or product that is not offered by other vendors.	No bidding is required (Director of Operations must prepare a justification statement.)
All other vendor purchases:		
- Below \$19,999		No bidding is required.
- \$20,000 and above		Bidding is required (see below.)

Purchases Funded with Federal Awards

Competitive quotes are required for goods and services over \$3,000 (followed by bidding requirements stated above.)

Competitive Bidding Procedure

- The School will seek price quotes from at least three vendors and award the contract to the qualified vendor offering the supply or service needed for the lowest price.
- The Director of Operations is responsible for soliciting and documenting these quotes.
- The Head of School must provide final approval after multiple bids are presented with recommendations.
- Award may be made to a vendor other than the low bidder in circumstances which the higher bid demonstrates best value to the School. In such situations, the Director of Operations shall prepare a justification statement for such awards, furnishing a brief explanation of the factors leading to such a decision.
- If required by the School's Authorizer, the School will notify the School's Authorizer of any material or significant purchases, contracts and agreements in addition to obtaining Board of Trustee approvals.

Processing Purchases

Approval

No staff member may approve his/her own purchase requests. Each purchase must be approved as follows:

\$ Value/Range	Required Signatures for Approval
Below \$29,999	Head of School
\$30,000 and above	Head of School and Board Chairperson (or Designated Board Officer in his/her absence)*

* For recurring charges (such as rent, utilities, monthly insurance) over \$20,000, annual approval is acceptable.

Issuance and Monitoring of Purchase Orders

- ***Prior to Purchase Orders being created, Head of School approves the creation of the Purchase Order.***
- Request for purchases are submitted to the Director of Operations.
- The Principal or Director of Operations creates a Purchase Order (PO) per vendor and based on the total value of the Purchase Order, seeks approval based on the table above. All purchasing thresholds apply to the entire order, not single items.
- Purchase of services is approved through signed contracts, no PO necessary.
- The Director of Operations then sends the order to the vendor, accompanied by any required documentation.

Receipt of Goods

- The Receptionist will sign for delivery.
- The addressee is responsible for opening the box(es) and obtaining and signing the packing slip(s). In instances where there is no packing slip, a substitute packing slip will be filled out and signed by the Administrative Assistant.
- The Director of Operations will check the packing slip against the original PO.
- If there are discrepancies with the order, the Director of Operations or Administrative Assistant will contact the vendor to resolve any issues.

Processing Disbursements

- The vendor invoice is entered into the accounting system by the Financial Consultant
- The Financial Consultant will assemble and file (once complete) the following Cash Disbursement Packet:
 - Check Stub
 - Vendor Invoice;
 - Packing Slip; and
 - Other documentation

- The Director of Operations will maintain all blank check stock in a locked location at the school.
- The Financial Consultant cuts the check. The checks are run weekly or as needed.
- The Cash Disbursement Packet and check is reviewed, approved and signed (as required below).
- The Administrative Assistant or the Director of Operations mails the checks.
- Any and all voided checks should be stamped “Void” and filed appropriately.

Check signing authority is as follows:

\$ Value/Range	Required Signatures for Checks
Below \$10,000	Head of School
\$10,001 and above	Head of School and Board Treasurer (or Designated Board Officer in his/her absence)*

***Checks for expenses above \$10,000, except for **rent and health insurance**, require a second signature.*

In no event shall an authorized signatory approve an invoice, execute a check, or authorize a disbursement of any kind, payable to her/him.

Online/Phone/Fax/EFT Payments

Payments made online or by phone, fax, or electronic funds transfer (EFT) may be processed by the Head of School or the Director of Operations. The Head of School is authorized to make purchases of up to \$10,000 online or with debit card. For larger purchases, a discussion is had with the Board Finance Committee.

Accounts Payable

Accounts payables outstanding are aged on a thirty, sixty, ninety, and over-ninety day basis. The Financial Consultant and Director of Operations will review the accounts payable aging monthly, determine the available cash balances while taking into consideration other cash requirements in the near future and select which items to pay.

Outstanding Checks

Checks outstanding for 90 days or more should be investigated by the Director of Operations. Based on the outcome of the investigation, the check should be voided in the accounting system, a stop payment issued with the bank, and a new check issued to the vendor.

Reimbursable Expenses

- With prior approval, as described below, staff may make the purchase with their own funds and apply for reimbursement.
- Reimbursable expenses will require pre-approval by the Head of School or Director of

Operations who determines if the expense is allowable. The Head of School reviews the Expense Reimbursement forms after they are submitted.

- The Board Chair/Treasurer will approve the Head of School's expense reimbursements. All reimbursement checks issued to the Head of School will be signed by the Board Chair.
- Receipts are required for all expenditures requiring reimbursement.
- Employees should note that the School is tax exempt and therefore does not reimburse employees for sales tax. A copy of the Sales Tax Exempt Certificate may be obtained from the Director of Operations or Financial Consultant for use when making reimbursable purchases.

Travel Expenses

- All travel arrangements and expenses, must be pre-approved by the Head of School (The Board Chair/Treasurer will approve the Head of School's travel arrangements.)
- All pre-approved travel arrangements will be purchased or reimbursed by the School.
- Expectations for daily expenses or per diem allowances will be determined prior to the employee's trip.
- Receipts are required for all expenditures requiring reimbursement, and requests for reimbursement must be made within 90 days of expense, unless otherwise authorized by the Head of School.

Mileage Reimbursement

- All employees are reimbursed at the standard mileage rate per mile as determined by the Internal Revenue Service for use of their own vehicle for business-related travel as approved by the Head of School.
- Parking fees and toll fees are reimbursable if supported by receipts.

Political Contributions

No funds or assets of the School may be contributed to any political party or individual who either holds public office or is a candidate for public office. The School also cannot provide financial or in-kind support to any organization that raises funds for political purposes. Examples of prohibited activities are:

- Political contributions by an employee that are reimbursed by the School;
- Purchase by the School of tickets for political fundraising events; and
- Contributions in-kind, such as lending employees to political parties or using School assets in political campaigns.

Debit Card Purchases

- The School maintains a debit card in the name of the School; the card is issued to the Head of School.
- The cardholder must sign and adhere to the School's Debit Card Usage Agreement.

- All debit card purchases/payments must be approved based on the purchasing guidelines and policies outlined previously.
- Debit card purchases may not exceed \$5,000 per purchase.

Responsibilities of Cardholder

The cardholder is responsible for the safekeeping of the card, and will be held accountable to:

1. Ensure that the card is used only for legitimate school purposes;
2. Adhere to the Debit Card Agreement;
3. Maintain original receipts, invoices, purchase documents and correspondence including all detail related to the purchases on file for audit purposes, and to provide the School with copies of such documents upon request; and
4. Advise the School of any incorrect charges/transactions in order to follow-up and obtain credit from the issuing institution if warranted.

Cancellation and Renewal of Cards

All relevant cards will be cancelled should an individual cardholder leave his or her position or role with the School and if any of the above policies, procedures, and guidelines is not followed.

Rewards Program

If applicable, any rewards/points earned on the debit card will be redeemed monthly and credited towards amount due.

MANAGEMENT OF CASH

Bank Accounts

The School has the following accounts:

- Checking Account (Operating Account)
- Checking Account (Secondary)
- Savings Account

*The Escrow Account for Dissolution is required by the School's Authorizer to be a Board of Trustees-controlled dissolution account, whose sole purpose is to pay for legal and audit expenses associated with the dissolution of the School should it occur. The School's Authorizer requires the School to set aside \$75,000 over the first three years in this Escrow Account earmarked for the above named purpose.

In all instances, the School is utilizing its accounts in a way that safely maximizes its overall interest income. The School has the following authorized signatories on the accounts;

- Head of School
- Board Chairperson and a 2nd Designated Board Member.

Board approval is required to open or close a bank account and must be recorded in the board meeting minutes.

The School recognizes that federal insurance on deposits with a participating bank institution is limited to a total of \$250,000.00, regardless of the number of accounts held. If deemed necessary, the School may negotiate with the financial institution in order to secure such deposits in excess of federal coverage.

Bank Reconciliation

- Monthly bank account reconciliations are processed by the Financial Consultant using the accounting system.
- Any irregularities shall immediately be reported to the Head of School and the Board.
- A reconciled Bank Reconciliation report is attached to the bank statement and reviewed and signed by Head of School.
- Bank reconciliations are also provided to the Board upon request. Board Chair and Board treasurer have online access to the bank accounts.

Petty Cash Account

The School does not maintain petty cash.

Cash Transfers

- Cash balances in all the School bank accounts will be monitored by the Head of School to ensure that an adequate amount of funds are on hand to meet the School's financial obligations. Board Treasurer also has view access to accounts.
- Transfers **among** the School accounts (only) may be made by the Head of School as needed, per approval from the Board Chair or designated board member.

Investment of Funds

The Board Chair has been granted authority, in conjunction with the Board Finance Committee, to:

- Purchase and sell investments;
- Have access to investment certificates ;
- Keep records of investments and investment earnings; and
- Review and approve investment accounting, bank and broker statement reconciliations, adjustments to the carrying value of investments, and other decisions regarding investments.

Authorization of Investment Vehicles

The School's Board of Trustees authorizes use of specific depository and investment banks and brokerage firms. This authorization is documented in the minutes of the applicable board meeting. The Board Chair communicates the authorization and a list of those personnel designated as authorized agents for the agency to the appropriate banks and firms.

Reconciliation of Investment Accounts

Investment account balances are reconciled with the general ledger balance by the Financial Consultant on a quarterly basis and reviewed with the Board.

PAYROLL

Hiring

The School's philosophy is that success depends on hiring highly qualified professionals who are dedicated to ensuring that the services rendered to the students are of high standards, under the direction of the Principal, the Head of School and the Board.

- Recruitment will consist of a comprehensive process that includes advertisements in newspapers and educational journals, extensive networking and/or use of regional and national educational search firms and online publications.
- All new employees must receive a signed and approved employment letter from the Principal, Head of School or Director of Operations.
- Any new employees will be subject to fingerprinting and any additional background checks and references as deemed necessary.
- Once the new employee is hired, the Director of Operations will collect all necessary payroll data (see *Personnel File* table) and communicate it to the outside payroll service provider.
- If an employee must begin service before fingerprint clearance, the employee must receive an Emergency Conditional Appointment that the School's Board of Trustees approved.

Salary Determination

- The School will review comparable data which can include published compensation surveys and executive compensation reported in the IRS Form 990 of other NYC charter Schools and make salary decisions after discussions with the Board.
- The Board of Trustees determines the salaries for key employees (Principals and Head of School). Any such decisions will be captured in the Board meeting minutes.
- Any changes to a staff member's salary will be approved by the Head of School in writing or electronically and maintained in the employee file.
- When applicable, bonus calculations, requirements, and eligibility are determined by the Head of School.

The School complies with the laws and general principles of employee confidentiality as set forth in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)² with regard to the dissemination of private health information (PHI) of School employees. To comply with all rules and regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)³, the School will keep all medical records and all other related documents separate from the personnel file. Employees should consult with the Director of Operations or Head of School for further information concerning the School's privacy practices.

Analyzing Job Information

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)⁴ sets employee minimum wage and overtime requirements. Job positions are classified as either exempt or non-exempt from the requirements. These requirements are summarized below and are adhered to by the School.

NON-EXEMPT employees are entitled to overtime pay for all hours worked over 40 hours in a workweek under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Non-exempt employees do not receive compensation for their lunchtime and they may not work during lunchtime.

EXEMPT employees are not entitled to overtime pay under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

In addition to the above categories, each employee will belong to one other employment category:

- **REGULAR FULL-TIME employees** are those who are not in a temporary status and who are regularly scheduled to work the School's full-time schedule. A regular full-time employee is one who works thirty-five (35) or more hours per week.
- **PART-TIME employees** are those who are not in a temporary status and who work continuously for a specified number of hours per week, which is at least twenty (20) hours per week and less than a regular schedule of thirty-five (35) or more hours per week. Part-time employees receive all legally mandated benefits (such as Social Security and workers' compensation insurance).
- **TEMPORARY employees** are those that are hired for short-term periods, usually no longer than 6 months. They will receive all legally mandated benefits but are not eligible for the School's discretionary benefits.

² Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA); <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/administrative/index.html>; access on 07/2010

³ Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, as Amended; <http://www.ada.gov/pubs/adastatute08.pdf> ; access on 07/2010

⁴ Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA); <http://www.dol.gov/whd/flsa/index.htm> ; access on 07/2010

Compensation Accrual

Unpaid compensation (including unused vacation, sick and personal) as of June 30th of each fiscal year will be accrued per GAAP.

Obtaining Payroll Information

The Director of Operations is responsible for obtaining the following:

Personnel File	
Employment acceptance letter (signed by both parties)	Form I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification, with proper identification (to be kept in a separate file)
Job description	Federal Withholding Form W-4
Resume	NYS Wage Theft Prevention Form
Certifications (if applicable)	NYS IT-2104
Fingerprint Clearance	Direct Deposit
Retirement Account Application	Benefit Enrollment Form
Life Insurance Form	Emergency Contact Information
Resignation/Termination Letter	Payroll change documentation (i.e. enrollment/discontinuance of a benefit, change salary or title)

- All personnel files must be kept in a locked file cabinet and kept based on record retention requirement, Annex 2.
- Access to such personnel files is limited to the Head of School, and Director of Operations.
- No employee can review or access his or her own personnel file without written permission of the Head of School or Director of Operations.
- No personnel file is to be copied or removed from the office where it is kept unless expressly permitted in writing by the Head of School.

Time Reporting Procedures

- All employees are responsible for tracking the actual time they have worked and paid time off, in accordance with the Employee Handbook.
- The Director of Operations will keep track of all days the employees are not at work based on information provided by their direct supervisor.
- All overtime work must be pre-approved by his/her supervisor.

- Time off for no-fault days, leaves of absence, and unpaid lunch hours will not be considered hours worked for purposes of calculating overtime pay.
- If federal funds are used for salaries, then time distribution records are required and must accurately reflect the work performed for each award.
 - Employees working under one federal grant are required to prepare and sign semi-annual time certification.
 - Employees working under multiple federal grants are required to prepare and sign monthly Personnel Activity Report.

Processing Payroll

- Any changes to an individual's compensation must be approved in writing by the Head of School and submitted to the Director of Operations.
- The Director of Operations is responsible for removing terminated employees from the payroll system immediately after the terminated employee has received her/his last payment from the School.
- The Director of Operations and Financial Consultant will maintain an Excel spreadsheet to calculate the School's entire payroll based on attendance records approved by the Head of School for each payroll.
- The Director of Operations and Financial Consultant will then input the approved payroll data into the payroll provider system, creating an official Payroll Register Preview.
- The Payroll Register Preview is reconciled to the Excel spreadsheet by the Financial Consultant and forwarded to the Head of School for approval.
- Once approved, the Financial Consultant will submit the payroll for final processing.
- Payroll is recorded in the accounting software by the Financial Consultant.
- The Director of Operations will distribute payroll checks and direct deposit stubs to employees.
- The Director of Operations controls and monitors all payroll checks that are not deliverable and not cashed.
- Employees must submit written requests for replacement checks for lost checks to the Director of Operations.
- All payroll documents must be maintained in a secured and locked location.
- Documentation for each payroll consists of the following:
 - Approved Excel Spreadsheet;
 - Payroll Register Preview ;
 - Approved (by Head of School) documentation for payroll changes to individual employees (i.e. new hires, terminations, pay rate changes, or payroll deductions);
 - Attendance records;
 - Overtime timesheets; and
 - Final Payroll Register and Reports are approved via email by the Head of School

The School is on a semi-monthly payroll cycle which is made up of twenty-four (24) pay periods per year. 10-month salaried employees' (i.e. Instructional Staff) pay is spread out over these 24

pay periods to cover the summer months. Part-time hourly employees are only paid for time worked. Changes will be made and announced in advance whenever the School holidays or closings interfere with the normal pay schedule.

Payroll Reconciliations

The payroll vendor is responsible for the preparation of quarterly and annual payroll tax filings. The Director of Operations and Financial Consultant are responsible for reviewing all payroll tax documents and supporting schedules for accuracy and completeness.

Quarterly Reconciliation of Payroll to Accounting Records

On a quarterly basis, the Financial Consultant performs a reconciliation of all salary accounts, benefit deductions and payroll taxes in the general ledger, as compared with the salary reported by the payroll processing company on the Form 941 and/or other Quarterly Payroll Return. Any variances are researched and cleared within the month following quarter end.

Annual Reconciliation of Payroll to Accounting Records

On an annual calendar basis, the Director of Operations with assistance from the Financial Consultant performs a reconciliation of the annual Form 941, W-3 to General Ledger. Variances are researched and cleared by January 31 of the following year.

PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

Background

All property and equipment subject to the School's Capitalization Policy must be tagged in the manner described below and depreciated according to the School's Depreciation Policy.

Capitalization Policy

The School must capitalize items with an acquisition cost of \$3,000 or more **and** useful life greater than one year. For purchases with federal award the capitalization cost is \$5,000 per unit or more and useful life greater than one year. These items are also subject to the School's depreciation policy, outlined below.

In instances where a large quantity of one single item is purchased, if the total value exceeds the \$3,000 threshold, the items may be capitalized. For example, if a School buys 100 desks at \$250 per desk, each single item would not meet the threshold. Together, however, these 100 desks have a combined value of \$25,000, which should be capitalized.

Asset Tracking Process for Property Purchased with Federal Funds

Upon receiving any property that qualifies as a fixed asset, the Facilities Manager and the Director of Operations are responsible for recording the following into the Fixed Asset Tracking List:

- Asset tracking number as designated by the School;
- Asset name, use, condition and description;
- Classification (i.e. land, building, equipment, betterment, leasehold improvements, furniture, computer hardware and software);
- Serial number, model number, or other identification;
- Indicate if the title vests with the governmental agency, if required;
- Vendor name and acquisition date or date placed in service;
- Location of the equipment;
- Purchase Value;
- Disposal Date and Reason; and
- Specify dollar amount of any asset purchased with grant fund

Each item is also physically tagged in a visible area on the item and with an indication of whether the item belongs to the School or a governmental agency (i.e. purchased with grants such as Department of Youth and Community Development).

No employee may use or remove any of the School property, equipment, material or supplies for personal use without the prior approval of the Head of School, or Director of Operations.

The Director of Operations performs inventory audits every 2 years (in addition, documented inventory audit is required if assets are purchased with federal funds), verifying, and updating the data contained in the Fixed Asset Tracking List. The Fixed Asset Tracking list is reconciled to the General Ledger by the Financial Consultant. Assets are described and itemized in the financial software.

Depreciation Policy

Depreciation associated with fixed assets is calculated based on the asset's useful life using the straight-line depreciation method. Depreciation is based on the month the item was put into service. For instance, if the School purchased and started using a computer in July, it would be depreciated for a full fiscal year (12 months out of 12), and recorded as such. But if the School purchased the computer in April, then it would be depreciated for just one-fourth of the fiscal year (3 months out of 12) because it would only be in service for April, May and June.

Any item that is damaged, sold, lost or stolen will be taken out of service and written off. For assets purchased with federal funds for over \$5,000 the School must request disposition instructions from the federal awarding agency.

Depreciation Policy	
Computers	3 years
Furniture and Fixtures	7 years
Office and Classroom Equipment	5 years
Leasehold improvements	Shorter of: 1) the useful life of the leasehold improvements, or 2) the remaining years of the lease
Musical Instruments	3 years

DEBT

Board approval (as documented in the board meeting minutes) is required for incurring any loans, notes or lines of credit for the School. The Board Chairperson and Head of School will be authorized to negotiate the debt on behalf of the board. Two signatures (Board Member and Head of School) are required for all approved debt agreements.

Any loan covenants and restrictions will be reported to the full Board when the debt is authorized. The Head of School, Financial Consultant, and Auditors will periodically review these covenants and report to the Board of Trustees if there are any violations or potential violations of the covenants.

The Financial Consultant will reconcile the general ledger debt balances to statements or amortization schedules each month.

CONTRACTS AND LEASES

The Board Chair and Head of School will be authorized to negotiate and sign for any contracts and lease agreements as approved by the Board of Trustees and documented in board minutes.

Financial Consultant and Auditors will periodically review contract covenant/details and report to the Board of Trustees if there are any violations or potential violations of the covenants. The Financial Consultant will ensure that the appropriate accounting entries are made to properly reflect the obligations of the contract in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Utilization of Independent Contractors/Consultants

- When the School makes the choice to utilize an independent contractor, it first ensures that the individual does qualify as an independent contractor and should not be categorized as a regular employee.
- The School will maintain a written contract with the contractor/consultant.
- The School must obtain Form W-9 from the contractor/consultant prior to issuance of the first payment for services provided.
- In all cases where total payment exceeds \$600.00 in a calendar year, the School will issue IRS form 1099-Misc, as required by law.

IRS FORM 990 PREPARATION AND FILING

The preparation of the School's IRS Form 990 and CHAR500 (if required) will be contracted out to the independent accountants. The Director of Operations and Financial Consultant will be responsible for providing the information needed to prepare the report.

The Director of Operations and Financial Consultant will review the 990 draft. Any changes are communicated to the independent accountants and a revised draft is then forwarded to Board designee. The Board of Trustees or Head of School must approve the IRS Form 990 prior to filing. The 990 must be signed by the Board Chairperson or Board Treasurer or Head of School.

INSURANCE COVERAGE

The School maintains insurance policies such as: General Liability, Directors' & Officers', Umbrella Liability, Student Accident, Excess Liability and Worker's Comp.

The Director of Operations will conduct an annual review of scope and amount of coverage. The purpose of this review will be to ensure there are adequate means to preserve the School's assets and lower the risk of being underinsured. New policies will be executed by the Director of Operations. The Director of Operations is responsible for procuring annual renewals with the School's insurance broker at least one month in advance of a policy's expiration. The Director of Operations maintains original copies of all insurance policies at the School.

Any vendor (including Independent Consultants) doing business on School grounds (e.g. food service, construction, maintenance, etc.) or with School's students (e.g. bus company) must carry adequate insurance that satisfies the School's requirements and must issue a certificate of insurance that names the School as Additional Insureds. The Director of Operations is responsible for obtaining this before the vendor's service can commence.

RECORDS RETENTION

Records Retention Policy

All confidential paper records shall be maintained in locked facilities on School premises. The School has an established Disaster Recovery Policy. Annex 2 contains a table which provides the minimum requirements for records retention, as recommended by the Non-Profit Coordinating Committee of New York, www.npccny.org:

The following corporate documents are maintained on-site or stored electronically:

- a. Charter and all related amendments;
- b. Minutes of the Board of Trustees and subcommittees meetings;
- c. Banking documents;
- d. Leases;
- e. Insurance policies;
- f. Vendor invoices;
- g. Grant and contract agreements;
- h. Fixed asset inventory list; and
- i. Tax returns and correspondence

Records Access Policy

The Director of Operations will provide access to the School's records, as requested by auditors to facilitate the completion of such audits or reviews, in a timely manner.

Records Destruction Policy

Once School records have reached the conclusion of their retention period according to the Records Retention Policy, the office of origin will request authorization from the Head of School or Director of Operations for their destruction. If any litigation, claim, or audit is started before the expiration of the designated retention period, the records shall be retained until all litigation, claims, or audit findings involving the records have been resolved and final action taken. The School will arrange for the safe and secure destruction of confidential records. Destruction methods will not permit recovery, reconstruction and/or future use of confidential information. An overview of these methods follows:

- Paper records containing sensitive confidential information **must** be shredded and not disposed of with other waste.
- Electronic or digital data containing sensitive confidential information must be purged from the computer systems in the following manner; 1) Deletion of the contents of digital files and emptying of the desktop "trash" or "waste basket." 2) Use of purchased software applications to remove all data from the storage device.
- It is recommended that sensitive confidential data stored on removable storage devices should be physically destroyed.

FRAUD AND MISAPPROPRIATION

The School will not tolerate any fraud or suspected fraud involving employees, officers or trustees, as well as members, vendors, consultants, contractors, funding sources and/or any other parties with a business relationship with the School.

The Head of School, Director of Operations and Board of Trustees are responsible for the detection and prevention of fraud, misappropriations, and other irregularities. Fraud is defined as the intentional, false representation or concealment of a material fact for the purpose of inducing another to act upon it to his or her injury.

Actions Constituting Fraud

The term fraud, defalcation, misappropriation, and other fiscal irregularities refer to, but are not limited to:

- Any dishonest or fraudulent act
- Forgery or alteration of any document or account belonging to the School
- Misappropriation of funds, supplies, equipment, or other assets of the School
- Impropriety in the handling or reporting of money or financial transactions
- Disclosing confidential and proprietary information to outside parties
- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or persons providing goods or services to the School
- Destruction, removal, or inappropriate use of records, furniture, fixtures, and equipment

Reporting and Confidentiality

The Board of Trustees will treat all information received confidentially. Any fraud that is detected or suspected must be reported immediately to the Board of Trustees for further action. The employee or other complainant may remain anonymous. The outcome of an investigation will not be disclosed or discussed with anyone other than those who have a legitimate need to know.

Investigation Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees has the primary responsibility for the investigation of all suspected fraudulent acts as defined in the policy. The Board of Trustees may utilize whatever internal and/or external resources it considers necessary in conducting an investigation. If an investigation substantiates that fraudulent activities have occurred, the Board of Trustees will take and document proper action up to and including criminal prosecution.

WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

General

The Bronx Charter School for Excellence (“BCSE”) Code of Ethics and Conduct (The “Code”) requires trustees, officers, and employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As employees and representatives of the organization, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns within the organization prior to seeking resolution outside the organization.

It is the responsibility of all trustees, officers, and employees to comply with the Code and to report violations or suspected violations in accordance with this Whistleblower Policy.

No Retaliation

No trustee, officer, or employee who in good faith reports a violation of the Code shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequence. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

Reporting Violations

The Code is in line with the BCSE’s open-door policy and suggests that employees share their questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints with someone who can address them properly. In most cases, an employee’s supervisor is in the best position to address an area of concern. However, if you are not comfortable speaking with your supervisor or you are not satisfied with your supervisor’s response, you are encouraged to speak with the Head of School or the Principal or anyone in management who you are comfortable approaching. Supervisors and managers are required to report suspected violations of the Code to the Head of School/Principal, Charlene Reid; Tel 1-718-828-7301; Email creid@bronxexcellence.org, who has specific and exclusive responsibility to investigate all reported violations. For suspected fraud, or when you are not satisfied or uncomfortable with following the organization’s open-door policy, individuals should contact the Chair of the Board of Trustees Stacey Lauren; Email staceylauren3g@yahoo.com directly.

Whether or not you feel comfortable identifying yourself, please provide as much information as you can in order for us to conduct a proper investigation, including where and when the incident occurred, names and titles of the individuals involved, and as much other detail as you can provide.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for investigating and resolving all reported complaints and allegations concerning violations of the Code brought to the attention of the Board, and, at her or his reasonable discretion, shall advise the executive committee

and/or the Finance Committee.

Confidentiality

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant or may be submitted anonymously. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

Illustrative Types of Concerns

The following is non exhaustive list of the kinds of improprieties that should be reported:

- Supplying false or misleading information on BCSE's financial or other public documents, including its Form 990
- Authorizing or receiving compensation for hours not worked
- Providing false information to or withholding material information from BCSE's board or authorizing bodies
- Destroying, altering, mutilating, concealing, covering up, falsifying, or making a false entry in any records that may be connected to an official review or proceeding
- Altering, destroying, or concealing a document, or attempting to do so, with the intent to impair the document's availability for use in an official proceeding or otherwise obstructing, influencing, or impeding any official review or proceeding
- Embezzling, self-dealing, private enrichment (i.e., BCSE earnings benefiting a trustee, officer, or employee) and private benefit (i.e., BCSE assets being used by anyone in the organization for personal gain or benefit)
- Paying for services or goods that are not rendered or delivered
- Using remarks or actions of a sexual nature that are not welcome and are likely to be viewed as personally offensive, including sexual flirtations; unwelcome physical or verbal advances; sexual propositions; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; the display of sexually suggestive objects, cartoons, or pictures; and physical contact of a sexual or particularly personal nature.
- Using epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, and threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts that relate to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, or disability
- Circulating or posting written or graphic material in the workplace that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, age, or disability
- Discriminating against an employee or potential employee due to a person's race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, physical or mental impairment, or veteran status
- Violating BCSE's Code of Ethics, Conflict-of-Interest Policy, Harassment Policy, or Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
- Knowingly or purposefully acting in a manner contradictory to BCSE's charter
- Altering or tampering with the outcome of BCSE's lottery process
- Facilitating or concealing any of the above or similar actions

Accounting and Auditing Matters

The finance committee of the board shall address all reported concerns or complaints regarding corporate accounting practices, internal controls, or auditing. The Head of School and/or the Chair of the Board of Trustees shall immediately notify the finance committee of any such complaint and work with the committee until the matter is resolved.

Acting in Good Faith

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation of the Code must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of the Code. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

Handling of Reported Violations

The Head of School and/or the Chair of the Board of Trustees will contact the sender in writing and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within 7 business days. All reports will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.

CODE OF ETHICS

The Board of Trustees recognizes that sound, ethical standards of conduct increase the effectiveness of the School's governing body and staff as educational leaders in the community. Actions based on an ethical code of conduct promote public confidence in the School and the attainment of its goals. The Board also recognizes its obligation under the General Municipal Law to adopt a code of ethics consistent with the provisions of this law, setting forth the standards of conduct required of all Trustees, Officers and employees. Unless otherwise defined herein, terms have the meanings given in the by-laws of the School (the "by-laws").

Therefore, every Trustee, Officer, and employee of the School, whether paid or unpaid, shall adhere to the following code of conduct:

1. Management of the School: The Board of Trustees shall conduct or direct the affairs of the School and exercise its powers subject to the provisions of applicable law, as well as the requirements set forth in the School's charter and by-laws. The Board may delegate aspects of the management of school activities to others, so long as the affairs of the school are managed, and its powers are exercised, under the Board's ultimate jurisdiction.
2. Gifts: A Trustee, Officer, or employee shall not directly or indirectly solicit any gifts from the School; nor shall a Trustee, Officer or employee accept or receive any single gift having a value of \$100 or more, whether in the form of money, services, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, or any other form. Gifts from children that are Head of School sentimental in nature and of insignificant financial value may be accepted in the spirit in which they are

given.

3. **Gratuities and Kickbacks:** No employee (or anyone under their direct supervision) may solicit, demand, accept, or agree to a gratuity, kickback, or an offer of employment in connection with a business transaction. Such transactions include, but are not limited to, approvals on purchase requests, influencing the content of any procurement standard, auditing, or rendering of advice.
4. **Confidential Information:** A Trustee, Officer, or employee shall not disclose confidential information acquired by him or her in the course of his or her official duties or use such information to further his or her own personal interest. In addition, he/she shall not disclose information regarding any matters discussed in an executive session of the Board, whether such information is deemed confidential or not.
5. **Representation before the Board:** A Trustee, Officer, or employee shall not receive or enter into any agreement, express or implied, for compensation for services to be rendered in relation to any matter before the Board of Trustees, whereby the compensation is to be dependent or contingent upon any action by the School with respect to such matter, provided that this paragraph shall not prohibit the fixing at any time of fees based upon the reasonable value of the services rendered.
6. **Participation in Board Discussions and Votes:** Every Trustee has the right to participate in the discussion and vote on all issues before the Board or any Board Committee, except that any Trustee shall recuse him or herself from the discussion and/or vote on any matter involving such Trustee relating to: (a) a “self-dealing transaction” (see below) or (b) a potential Conflict of Interest (as defined in the Conflict of Interest Policy).
7. **Self-dealing Transactions:** Neither members of the Board nor the employees of the School shall engage in any “self-dealing transactions,” except as approved by the Board and in compliance with the Conflict of Interest Policy. “Self-dealing transaction” means a transaction to which the School is a party and in which one or more of the individual Trustees, officers, or employees has a financial interest.
8. **Disclosure of interest in matters before the Board:** Under no circumstance will an employee of the School initiate, participate, or benefit in any way from negotiating a contract or purchase of goods or services in which he/she, a relative, or an associate has financial interest. If an actual or potential conflict of interest is discovered, the employee must immediately withdraw from further participation in the involved transaction and report the transaction to the Board or Board Chairperson.
9. **Investments in Conflict with Official Duties:** A Trustee, officer, or employee shall not invest or hold any investment directly in any financial, business, commercial or other private transaction that creates a conflict with his or her official duties, except as approved by the Board and in compliance with the Conflict of Interest Policy.

10. Private employment: A Trustee, Officer, or employee shall not engage in, solicit, negotiate for, or promise to accept private employment when that employment or service creates a conflict with or impairs the proper discharge of his or her official duties.

Distribution of Code of Ethics

A copy of this Code of Ethics is to be distributed annually to every Trustee, Officer, and employee of the School. Each Trustee, Officer, and employee elected or appointed thereafter shall be furnished a copy before entering upon the duties of his or her office or employment.

Reprimands and Penalties

In addition to any penalty contained in any other provision of law, any person who knowingly and intentionally violates any of the provisions of the Board's Code of Ethics may be fined, suspended, or removed from office or employment, as the case may be, in the manner provided by law.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Purpose of a Conflict of Interest Policy

The purpose of a conflict of interest policy is to protect the interest of The Bronx Charter School For Excellence ("BSCE") when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of a disqualified person, defined as members of key administrative or managerial staff or the Board of Trustees of BSCE (collectively, the "Board" or individually, "Trustees") or their family members. Key administrative or managerial staff includes the Head of School, Principal, Director of Finance and Operations, and Deans. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable Federal, state, or local laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to non-profit organizations.

Explaining Conflicts of Interest

For key administrative or managerial staff or the board members of nonprofit organizations, conflicts of interest occur whenever a disqualified person acts in a position of authority on an issue in which they have financial or other interests. In other words, when there is a dual interest or the appearance of a dual interest for any disqualified person, the potential for a conflict of interest exists. For example, a disqualified person would be in conflict of interest if he/she offers services to the organization on whose board they serve even if the charge for these services is at or below the market value. Similarly, if a disqualified person contemplates selling or leasing property that the organization may wish to purchase, the disqualified person will be placed in a conflict of interest situation.

In cases of potential conflict of interest, key administrators, managers and Trustees must act to preserve and enhance public trust in BCSE by putting the interests of the organization ahead of all other business and personal interests. In addition to the public's sensitivity to excessive

benefits, activities that appear to have a conflict of interest can be the basis for lawsuits against the disqualified person. Also, all disqualified persons must comply with the Internal Revenue Service rules on excess benefit transactions applicable to 501(c) (3) organizations.

When disqualified persons are confronted with an actual or apparent conflict of interest, there are reasonable steps that the organization can take to preserve its integrity. Disqualified persons need not be disqualified from boards simply due to conflicts of interest. Perhaps the most important step is for board members to disclose information related to the possibility of dual interests to others on the board. *Minimally, the disqualified person needs to inform the board of the important facts and details and must abstain from voting on the transaction.* These actions should be recorded in the minutes to document the disclosure.

What is a Conflict of Interest?

A conflict of interest occurs whenever an individual or a member of his or her immediate family has a direct or indirect interest or relationship, financial or otherwise, that may conflict or be inconsistent with the individual's duties, responsibilities, or exercise of independent judgment in any transaction or matter involving BCSE.

A conflict of interest does not necessarily imply that an individual is ineligible for employment or to serve on the Board or a committee or cannot represent the BCSE in a specific situation, but it may indicate that participation in some matters should be avoided or limited. If a key administrator, manager or Trustee has an actual or potential conflict of interest relating to business or transactions before the Board he or she should immediately notify the Chair of the Board or of his or her committee. The Head of School and the Principal should disclose her or his own potential or actual conflicts of interest to the Secretary and the Chair of the Board. In making the disclosure, the individual should reveal all material facts about the conflict of interest and explain his or her relationship to the transaction or matter at issue. In some circumstances, full disclosure of the conflict may in itself be sufficient to ensure the integrity of operations.

Code of Conduct

The Board expects of itself, its members and key staff of BCSE ethical and businesslike conduct. This commitment includes proper use of authority when acting as Trustees and key staff members.

1. Trustees and key staff members must demonstrate unconflicted loyalty to the interests of BCSE.
 - This accountability supersedes any conflicting loyalty such as that to advocacy or interest groups and membership on other boards or staffs.
2. Trustees and key staff members must avoid any conflict of interest with respect to their fiduciary responsibility.

- There must not be any conducting of private business or personal services between any Trustee and BCSE except as procedurally controlled to assure openness, competitive opportunity and equal access to otherwise “inside” information.
 - There must not be any excess benefit transaction between the BCSE on the one hand and a Trustee on the other hand.
 - Trustees or key staff must not use their positions to obtain for them or for their family members employment within the BCSE.
 - If a Trustee or a family member is considered for employment, the Trustee or key staff member must temporarily withdraw from Board deliberation, voting and access to applicable information.
3. Trustees and key staff members will deal with outside entities or individuals, with clients and staff and with each other in a manner reflecting fair play, ethics and straightforward communication.

Rules Concerning Excess Benefit Transactions

The Board, any Trustee, and key employees shall refrain from entering into any transactions that are excess benefit transactions as defined in IRC Sec. 4958 with the BCSE. The Board shall also refrain from causing BCSE to enter into any excess benefit transaction with any family member of a Trustee.

An excess benefit transaction means any transaction in which an economic benefit is provided by an applicable tax-exempt organization (such as BCSE) directly or indirectly to or for the use of any disqualified person if the value of the economic benefit provided exceeds the value of the consideration (including the performance of services) received for providing such benefit. For purposes of the preceding sentence, an economic benefit shall not be treated as consideration for the performance of services unless such organization clearly indicated its intent to so treat such benefit. “Excess benefit” means the excess referred to in the first sentence of this paragraph.

Conflict of Interest Policy

In addition to the above the Board and key employees shall not enter into any contract or transaction with (a) one or more of its Trustees, BCSE or (b) an organization in or of which a Trustee of BCSE is a Trustee, officer, or legal representative, or in some other way has a material financial interest unless:

1. That interest is disclosed or known to the Board,
2. The Board approves, authorizes or ratifies the actions in good faith,
3. The approval is by a majority of Trustees (not counting the interested Trustee), and
4. At a meeting where a quorum is present (not counting the interested Trustee).

The interested Trustee or key employee may be present for discussion to answer questions, but may not advocate for the actions to be taken and must leave the room while a vote is taken.

The minutes of all actions taken on such matters shall clearly reflect that these requirements have been met.

Trustees and key employees should sign a statement regarding conflicts annually. These statements must be submitted to the Chair of the Board who will review of this information with the Executive Committee.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Interested Person

The General Municipal Law defines prohibited conflicts of interest for school trustees, officers and employees.

Under the General Municipal Law, no school officer or employee may have an interest, direct or indirect, in any contract with the School, when such officer, trustee, or employee, individually or as a member of the Board, has the power or duty to (a) negotiate, prepare, authorize or approve the contract, or authorize or approve payment under the contract; (b) audit bills or claims under the contract; or (c) appoint an officer or employee who has any of the powers or duties set forth above.

Financial Interest

A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

- An ownership or investment interest, other than de Minimis, in any entity with which the School has a transaction or arrangement,
- A compensation arrangement with the School or with any entity or individual with which the School has a transaction or arrangement, or
- A potential ownership or investment interest, other than de Minimis, in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the School is negotiating a transaction or arrangement. Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors having a value of \$100.00 or more whether in the form of money, service, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, thing or promise or in any other form, under circumstances in which it could reasonably be inferred that the gift was intended to or could reasonably be expected to influence the performance of a trustee, official or employee in his/her official duties, or was intended as a reward for any official action.

Duty to Disclose

Any trustee, officer or employee who has, will have, or later acquires an interest in any actual or proposed contract with the Board must publicly disclose the nature and extent of such

interest in writing to the directors and members of committees with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists

A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. A person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists. After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the governing board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

Notwithstanding anything herein, the following contracts are exempt from this policy, including but not limited to, employment contracts between the school and a board member or employee's spouse, minor children or dependents; a contract between the school and a corporation of which the board member or employee is neither a director nor owns more than five percent of outstanding stock; a contract between the school and a board member or employee entered into preceding the election of the board member but not the renewal/renegotiation of that contract; a contract between the school and a board member or employee in which the total paid does not exceed \$750.00 during the fiscal year when added to the aggregate amount of consideration payable under all contracts pertaining to that individual; a contract between the school and a company that employs a board member or employee where the individual's compensation is not directly affected as a result of the contract and the duties of the individual's employment do not directly involve the procurement, preparation or performance of such a contract; and purchases, in the aggregate amount of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) or less in any single calendar year. No review or action by any governing board or committee shall be necessary if an exception applies.

Procedures for Addressing a Conflict of Interest

An interested person may make a presentation at the governing board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.

The chairperson of the governing board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.

After exercising due diligence, the governing board or committee shall determine whether the School can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.

If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the governing board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the School's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and

reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy

If the governing board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a trustee, officer or employee has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the trustee, officer or employee of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

If, after hearing the trustee, officer or employee's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing board or committee determines the trustee, officer or employee has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

Any contract entered into with a prohibited interest is null, void and unenforceable. Further any trustee, officer, or employee who willfully and knowingly violates this policy shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

Records of Proceedings

The minutes of the governing board and all committees with board delegated powers shall contain:

- The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the governing Board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

Compensation

A voting member of the governing board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the School for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the School for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

A voting member of the governing board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the School, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee

regarding compensation.

Annual Statements

Each trustee, officer, and employee shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person:

- Has received a copy of the Code of Ethics and Policy on Conflicts of Interest,
- Has read and understands the Code of Ethics and Policy,
- Has agreed to comply with the Code of Ethics and Policy, and
- Understands the School is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

Periodic Reviews

To ensure the School operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information and the result of arm's length bargaining.
- Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the School's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

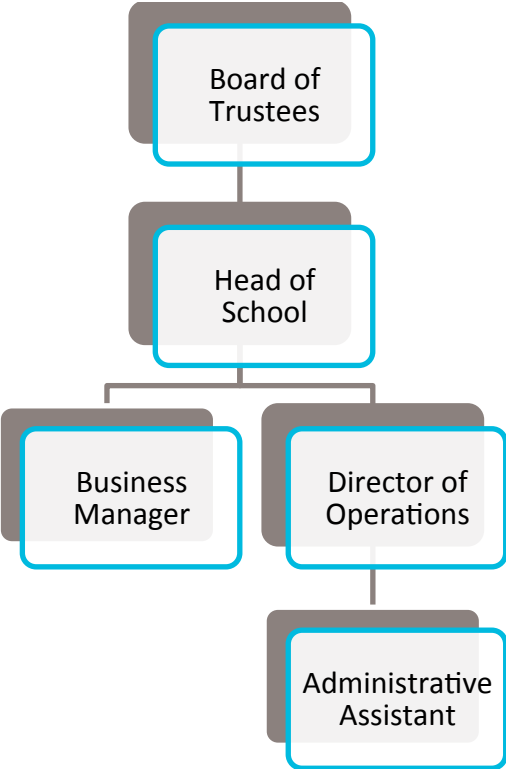
CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidential information includes all information gained during employment or service with the School that is not common knowledge including, but not limited to, student records, personnel records, financial or donation information (including donation lists, donor information, potential donors or business contacts.) All Trustees, Officers, and employees must keep such information confidential.

Information about children, families, and employees should be used in a professional manner, only with those who have a business-related need-to-know, and should never be used as a topic of casual conversation or gossip.

Before the end of a term of service or employment with the School, Trustees, Officers and employees must return to the School all Confidential Information without retaining it in any form. All other documents, data, manuals, security keys, and other items which are the School's property and which may be in the individual's possession or control should also be returned at this time. Any Confidential Information that cannot be returned must be destroyed.

Annex 1: Finance Team



Annex 2: Requirements for Record Retention

Item	Retention Period
Bank Statements & Reconciliations	7 Years
Cancelled Checks - (Important Payments - purchases of property, tax payments, large or significant contracts)	Permanent
Cancelled Checks - (Ordinary)	7 Years
Cash Books	Permanent
Cash Receipts and Disbursements	7 Years
Construction Documents	Permanent
Contracts and Leases (Current)	Permanent
Contracts and Leases (Expired)	7 Years
Corporate - Articles of Incorporation & By Laws	Permanent
Corporate - Certificate of Incorporation and Related Legal or Government Documents	Permanent
Corporate - Minutes of Board & Committee Meetings, etc.	Permanent
Correspondence (General)	3 Years
Correspondence (Legal / Important)	Permanent
Duplicate Bank Deposit Slips	3 Years
Email	5 Years
Employee Assignments and Garnishments	7 Years
Employee Benefit Plan Documents	7 Years
Employee Payroll Records	7 Years
Employee Payroll Reports (Federal, State or City Gov't)	7 Years
Employee Personnel Records (After Termination)	7 Years
Employee Personnel Records (Current)	Permanent
Employee Retirement & Pension Records	Permanent
Employee Timesheets	7 Years
Employee Workman's Compensation Documents	11 years
Employment Applications (Current Employees)	Permanent
Employment Applications (Other)	1 Year
Finance - Accounts Payable Ledgers and Schedules	7 Years

Finance - Accounts Receivable Ledgers and Schedules	7 Years
Finance - Audit Reports of Independent Accountants	Permanent
Finance - Chart of Accounts	Permanent
Finance - Depreciation Schedules	Permanent
Finance - Expense Analyses & Distribution Schedules	7 Years
Finance - Financial Statements (incl. Trial Balances)	Permanent
Finance - Fixed Asset Records & Appraisals	Permanent
Finance - General Ledgers	Permanent
Finance - Subsidiary Ledgers	Permanent
Finance - Tax Return Worksheets	7 Years
Finance - Tax Returns	Permanent
Finance - Uncollectible Accounts & Write-offs	7 Years
Finance - W-2 / W-4 / 1099 Forms, etc.	7 Years
Grant Inquiries	7 Years
Insurance - Accident Reports and Claims (Current Cases)	Permanent
Insurance - Accident Reports and Claims (Settled Cases)	Permanent
Insurance - Policies (Current)	Permanent
Insurance - Policies (Expired)	Permanent
Inventories	7 Years
Invoices from Vendors	7 Years
Invoices to Customers	7 Years
Notes Receivable Ledgers	7 Years
Paid Bills & Vouchers	7 Years
Patents & Related Papers	Permanent
Physical Inventory Tags	7 Years
Property Appraisals	Permanent
Property Documents - Deeds, Mortgages, etc.	Permanent
Stock and Bond Certificates (Cancelled)	7 Years
Stock and Bond Records	Permanent
Vendor Payment Request Forms & Supporting Documents	7 Years
Voucher Registers & Schedules	7 Years

Appendix J: CHARTER SCHOOL WAIVER REQUEST

CHARTER SCHOOL WAIVER REQUEST

Description of Waivers Permitted or Not Permitted:

Charter school applicants may request waivers of certain provisions of the general statutes and regulations over which the SBE has jurisdiction. Waivers may be granted for any such provisions with the exception of those relating to collective bargaining (§§ 10-153a–10-153g, 10-153i, 10-153j, 10-153m); teacher certification*; Chapter 163c of the Connecticut General Statutes (§§ 10-14n – 10-14x); school health and sanitation (§§ 10-203 through 10-217g, inclusive); discrimination in public schools (§ 10-15c); and children with disabilities. To request a waiver, you must specify the particular section of the law you seek to have waived. (*Teacher certification may be waived on an individual basis under certain conditions.

Please contact the Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification for further information).

Name of Applicant: Norwalk Charter School for Excellence

Address: TBD

City and Zip Code: Norwalk, CT

Phone and Fax: Contact: Quentin Phipps (203) 989-0000

1. Section of the general statutes or regulations you seek to have waived:
Norwalk Charter School for Excellence is seeking a waiver from the enrollment restriction described in CGS § 10-66bb(c)(1)(A)(i), stating that no state charter school shall enroll more than 250 students.
2. Describe why you feel that this waiver is necessary to achieve your mission:
The mission of Norwalk Charter School for Excellence (Norwalk Excellence) is to prepare scholars to compete for admission to and succeed in top public, private, and parochial high schools by cultivating their intellectual, artistic, social, emotional, and ethical development. The program is designed to serve 56 scholars at each grade level for a growing grade capacity of PK-5 in the initial charter term. The enrollment plan will allow the school to provide high-quality, data-driven, individualized instruction to the scholars enrolled at the school, while allowing Norwalk Excellence to efficiently optimize resources in support of its programs. Norwalk Excellence is proposing to open in the fall of 2019 to scholars in grades PK-1, and is adding one grade level each year. By its third year, the enrollment plan will exceed 250 students, which necessitates a request for a waiver from the enrollment restrictions to fulfill our approved mission and growth plan.
3. Describe the desired outcome/rationale (how you expect this waiver to assist in achieving educational learning objectives described in your plan):
Norwalk Excellence is proposing the enrollment configuration that follows:

Grade	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
PK	56	56	56	56	56
K	56	56	56	56	56
1	56	56	56	56	56
2		56	56	56	56
3			56	56	56
4				56	56
5					56
TOTAL	168	224	280	336	392

The waiver would allow Norwalk Charter School for Excellence to grow to capacity in accordance with our enrollment plan. As noted previously, the prescribed enrollment configuration will allow Norwalk Excellence to maximize resources to provide a comprehensive PK-5 educational program that is rigorous, supportive, and designed to support scholarly achievement as they advance in grade level.

4. Date of Application: August 15, 2017

APPENDIX K: STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STANDARD STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES
GRANT PROGRAMS

Application Package for the Development of State and Local Charter Schools

THE APPLICANT: **Quentin Phipps** HEREBY ASSURES THAT:

Norwalk Charter School for Excellence

(insert Agency/School/CBO Name)

- A. The applicant has the necessary legal authority to apply for and receive the proposed grant;
- B. The filing of this application has been authorized by the applicant's governing body, and the undersigned official has been duly authorized to file this application for and on behalf of said applicant, and otherwise to act as the authorized representative of the applicant in connection with this application;
- C. The activities and services for which assistance is sought under this grant will be administered by or under the supervision and control of the applicant;
- D. The project will be operated in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and in compliance with regulations and other policies and administrative directives of the State Board of Education and the Connecticut State Department of Education;
- E. Grant funds shall not be used to supplant funds normally budgeted by the agency;
- F. Fiscal control and accounting procedures will be used to ensure proper disbursement of all funds awarded;
- G. The applicant will submit a final project report (within 60 days of the project completion) and such other reports, as specified, to the Connecticut State Department of Education, including information relating to the project records and access thereto as the Connecticut State Department of Education may find necessary;
- H. The Connecticut State Department of Education reserves the exclusive right to use and grant the right to use and/or publish any part or parts of any summary, abstract, reports, publications, records and materials resulting from this project and this grant;
- I. If the project achieves the specified objectives, every reasonable effort will be made to continue the project and/or implement the results after the termination of state/federal funding;

- J.** The applicant will protect and save harmless the State Board of Education from financial loss and expense, including legal fees and costs, if any, arising out of any breach of the duties, in whole or part, described in the application for the grant;
- K.** At the conclusion of each grant period, the applicant will provide for an independent audit report acceptable to the grantor in accordance with Sections 7-394a and 7-396a of the Connecticut General Statutes, and the applicant shall return to the Connecticut State Department of Education any moneys not expended in accordance with the approved program/operation budget as determined by the audit;
- L. REQUIRED LANGUAGE (NON-DISCRIMINATION)**
References in this section to “contract” shall mean this grant agreement and to “contractor” shall mean the Grantee.
- (a) For purposes of this Section, the following terms are defined as follows:
- (1) "Commission" means the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities;
 - (2) "Contract" and “contract” include any extension or modification of the Contract or contract;
 - (3) "Contractor" and “contractor” include any successors or assigns of the Contractor or contractor;
 - (4) "Gender identity or expression" means a person's gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person's physiology or assigned sex at birth, which gender-related identity can be shown by providing evidence including, but not limited to, medical history, care or treatment of the gender-related identity, consistent and uniform assertion of the gender-related identity or any other evidence that the gender-related identity is sincerely held, part of a person's core identity or not being asserted for an improper purpose.
 - (5) “good faith" means that degree of diligence which a reasonable person would exercise in the performance of legal duties and obligations;
 - (6) "good faith efforts" shall include, but not be limited to, those reasonable initial efforts necessary to comply with statutory or regulatory requirements and additional or substituted efforts when it is determined that such initial efforts will not be sufficient to comply with such requirements;
 - (7) "marital status" means being single, married as recognized by the state of Connecticut, widowed, separated or divorced;
 - (8) "mental disability" means one or more mental disorders, as defined in the most recent edition of the American Psychiatric Association's "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders", or a record of or regarding a person as having one or more such disorders;
 - (9) "minority business enterprise" means any small contractor or supplier of materials fifty-one percent or more of the capital stock, if any, or assets of which is owned by a person or persons:
 - (1) who are active in the daily affairs of the enterprise,
 - (2) who have the power to direct the

management and policies of the enterprise, and (3) who are members of a minority, as such term is defined in subsection (a) of Connecticut General Statutes § 32-9n; and

(10) "public works contract" means any agreement between any individual, firm or corporation and the State or any political subdivision of the State other than a municipality for construction, rehabilitation, conversion, extension, demolition or repair of a public building, highway or other changes or improvements in real property, or which is financed in whole or in part by the State, including, but not limited to, matching expenditures, grants, loans, insurance or guarantees.

For purposes of this Section, the terms "Contract" and "contract" do not include a contract where each contractor is (1) a political subdivision of the state, including, but not limited to, a municipality, (2) a quasi-public agency, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 1-120, (3) any other state, including but not limited to any federally recognized Indian tribal governments, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 1-267, (4) the federal government, (5) a foreign government, or (6) an agency of a subdivision, agency, state or government described in the immediately preceding enumerated items (1), (2), (3), (4) or (5).

(b)

(1) The Contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the Contract such Contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, intellectual disability, mental disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by such Contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or of the State of Connecticut; and the Contractor further agrees to take affirmative action to insure that applicants with job-related qualifications are employed and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, intellectual disability, mental disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by the Contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved; (2) the Contractor agrees, in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the Contractor, to state that it is an "affirmative action-equal opportunity employer" in accordance with regulations adopted by the Commission; (3) the Contractor agrees to provide each labor union or representative of workers with which the Contractor has a collective bargaining agreement or other contract or understanding and each vendor with which the Contractor has a contract or understanding, a notice to be provided by the Commission, advising the labor union or workers' representative of the Contractor's commitments under this section and to post copies of the notice in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment; (4) the Contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this Section and Connecticut General Statutes §§ 46a-68e and 46a-68f and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §§ 46a-56, 46a-68e and 46a-68f; and (5) the Contractor agrees to provide the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities with such information requested by the Commission, and permit access to pertinent books, records and accounts, concerning the employment practices and procedures of the Contractor as relate to the provisions of this Section and Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-56. If the contract is a public works contract, the Contractor agrees and warrants that he will make good faith efforts to employ minority business enterprises as subcontractors and suppliers of materials on such public works projects.

(c) Determination of the Contractor's good faith efforts shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following factors: The Contractor's employment and subcontracting policies, patterns and practices; affirmative advertising, recruitment and training; technical assistance activities and such

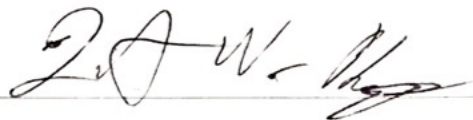
other reasonable activities or efforts as the Commission may prescribe that are designed to ensure the participation of minority business enterprises in public works projects.

- (d) The Contractor shall develop and maintain adequate documentation, in a manner prescribed by the Commission, of its good faith efforts.
- (e) The Contractor shall include the provisions of subsection (b) of this Section in every subcontract or purchase order entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a contract with the State and such provisions shall be binding on a subcontractor, vendor or manufacturer unless exempted by regulations or orders of the Commission. The Contractor shall take such action with respect to any such subcontract or purchase order as the Commission may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §46a-56; provided if such Contractor becomes involved in, or is threatened with, litigation with a subcontractor or vendor as a result of such direction by the Commission, the Contractor may request the State of Connecticut to enter into any such litigation or negotiation prior thereto to protect the interests of the State and the State may so enter.
- (f) The Contractor agrees to comply with the regulations referred to in this Section as they exist on the date of this Contract and as they may be adopted or amended from time to time during the term of this Contract and any amendments thereto.
- (g) (1) The Contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the Contract such Contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of sexual orientation, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or the State of Connecticut, and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their sexual orientation; (2) the Contractor agrees to provide each labor union or representative of workers with which such Contractor has a collective bargaining agreement or other contract or understanding and each vendor with which such Contractor has a contract or understanding, a notice to be provided by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities advising the labor union or workers' representative of the Contractor's commitments under this section, and to post copies of the notice in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment; (3) the Contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this section and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-56; and (4) the Contractor agrees to provide the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities with such information requested by the Commission, and permit access to pertinent books, records and accounts, concerning the employment practices and procedures of the Contractor which relate to the provisions of this Section and Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-56.
- (h) The Contractor shall include the provisions of the foregoing paragraph in every subcontract or purchase order entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a contract with the State and such provisions shall be binding on a subcontractor, vendor or manufacturer unless exempted by regulations or orders of the Commission. The Contractor shall take such action with respect to any such subcontract or purchase order as the Commission may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-56; provided, if such Contractor becomes involved in, or is threatened with, litigation with a subcontractor or vendor as a result of such direction by the Commission, the Contractor may request the State of Connecticut to enter into any such litigation or negotiation prior thereto to protect the interests of the State and the State may so enter.

M. The grant award is subject to approval of the Connecticut State Department of Education and availability of state or federal funds.

N. The applicant agrees and warrants that Sections 4-190 to 4-197, inclusive, of the Connecticut General Statutes concerning the Personal Data Act and Sections 10-4-8 to 10-4-10, inclusive, of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies promulgated there under are hereby incorporated by reference.

I, the undersigned authorized official; hereby certify that these assurances shall be fully implemented.

Authorized Signature:  _____

Name: *(typed)* Quentin Phipps

Title: *(typed)* Director of Policy and Advocacy, Founding Member, Primary Contact

Date: August 15, 2017