New York State Charter School Prospectus

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY for Excel Yonkers Charter School of Math, Medical Science and Technology

A. School's Mission:

The Excel Yonkers Charter School of Math, Medical Science and Technology (MMST) exists to prepare students for the highest level of educational achievement in a four-year college while preparing for employability in the medical, information technology, engineering and other professions.

B. School's Key Design Elements/Unique Characteristics include: Our focus on mathematics, medical science and information technology will help prepare our students for success in the diverse global economy so that they may become productive citizens of the world. We will use innovative instructional approaches to expose all our students to their careers of interest outside of the school's main focus of math, medical science and information technology. In addition, our students' personal and intellectual growth and fulfillment will be actively promoted along with the social and economic interests of the larger community.

1. ***Specific school focus****:*

While the main themes of the school are math, medical science and information technology, our students' personal and intellectual growth and fulfillment will be actively promoted along with the social and employment interests of the larger community. Students will graduate prepared for success in a four-year college or university, and prepared for work in their areas of interest including the mathematics, engineering, medical and information technology professions.

2. ***Unique calendar or schedules****:* We plan to satisfy all New York State's academic requirements. In addition, we will have an extended school day and year to provide students with more time on task. Our school day will run from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM, while our school year will be comprised of 210 days (including a 4-week summer session). During this mandatory four-week summer session for sixth graders, we will administer diagnostic assessments to provide students in need of academic intervention with intensive reading and mathematics instruction and to focus on inculcating the school culture of hard work and academic rigor. Students will also half a day per week in the field during the school year including working in hospitals learning how to register students, writing medical reports, working with medical technologies for billing, following protocols for preparation for medical procedures. These will include work-study for pay or related class credit.

3. ***Specific pedagogical approach****:* We will create an academic profile for each student and the school will deliver differentiated instruction in a technology-enabled environment that integrates virtual learning, classroom instruction and practical learning experiences to a diverse population of students in grades 6th through 12th. Teachers will work collaboratively engaging in inquiry about student work and sharing best practices. Instructional strategies will include direct instruction, collaborative team teaching, co-teaching, small-group instruction, project-based learning, learning in the field from professionals under teacher's supervision, and so one. All students will graduate with advanced placement and college credit-earning courses.

4. ***School culture:*** We will model in our own practices and operations, the values the school seeks to have graduates transfer to their future universities, work places, families, and communities. Our culture will embrace a love of learning, hard work, integrity, civic responsibility, caring and academic success. We will combine a rigorous and integrated academic curriculum with a performance-based culture emphasizing a passion for life-long learning, a desire for hard work and a commitment to community service.

5. ***Staffing:*** The school will recruit and retain highly skilled, NYS certified teachers for the core subjects. Professional instructors from industry and consulting professors will include physicians, nurses, other medical professionals, mathematicians and engineers, business leaders, technology experts, and more. Part-time or contract staff will include a grant writer, a school lawyer/legal advisor and a financial

auditor. The leadership team will include a school director, a coordinator of instruction and data analysis, coordinator of professional development/lead teacher mentor, and a school secretary/office manager.

6. ***Organization of the academic program:*** We plan to use the power of technology to deliver a widest array of differentiated learning to our students, based on their academic profile. In addition, we plan to schedule students for double periods for literacy and math during the first two years, and double periods of math, and science during 8th and 9th grade, and double periods of computer programming and medical sciences in the upper grades, interdisciplinary classes, small group instruction, and extended day homework and intensive college preparatory learning time. Cultural immersion activities will include field trips to area teaching hospitals, businesses, technology data warehouse centers, and international travel in upper grades to sister/brother schools in North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America. Details of total educational program will be provided in the full application packet (Phase III).

7. ***Assessment and its use:***

Multiple measures from both formative and summative assessments will be used to monitor student progress and inform instructional planning and design, instructional delivery, professional development and other decisions, including weekly reports to parents. These assessment results will include and not be limited to: NYS assessments, alternative diagnostic assessments for severely disabled (RCTs for some special ed. students, portfolios); standardized test; teacher-made classroom tests and assignments, homework assignments, in-class tests, classroom performances, grade-level exams, and more. The following decisions will be made with the assessment results data. 1) targeting instruction, with decisions about class priorities, lesson plans, and the academic year; (2) meeting the needs of diverse learners, using strategies such as grouping, creating academic improvement plans (AIPs), and giving individualized assignments and materials appropriate to the students' levels; (3) supporting conversations with parents, students, fellow teachers and administrators about students' learning; (4) shaping teachers' professional development by reflecting on their own practice; and (5) encouraging self-directed learning by giving the assessment data to students.

C. **A discussion of the proposed school founding group's capacity to effectively oversee and govern the school.** The governing board will be comprised of educators, lawyers, doctors, parents and community members, and accountants. The lead applicant has 20 years experience in education—6 yrs as math and computer science teacher and 14 years in central office administration in the roles of chief technology officer, facilities bond program director, and systems control analyst. As a teacher, she was a lead teacher and mentor for new teachers of math, business subjects and computer sciences. She has teaching certificates in math, computer science, business and vocational technology education. In these roles, she supervised teachers and staff, developed and managed budgets in the millions of dollars, and evaluated teachers. She has NYS administrator certificate (SDA) and is a doctoral candidate at Teachers College, Columbia University in Educational Leadership. She anticipates a December 2010, conferment.

The coordinator of instruction is a retired school administrator of a NYS high school that received awards as a high-achieving, gap-closing high school. She designed innovative programs including a 9th grade students' induction program which provides them with an 11th grade or senior mentor during their first two years of high school. This program improved attendance, reduced bullying of incoming freshmen, isolation and drop-outs. She is an outstanding school administrator.

The coordinator of data analysis and professional development is also a retired lead teacher with over 30 years experience in education. She is adept in data-informed instructional decision making, coaching and reading programs. She developed and operated reading centers in schools. As a lead teacher, she coached teachers on using student data for instructional decision-making, item analysis of test items, and differentiated instruction. In addition, she has NYS administrator certificate and experience evaluating teachers and designing appropriate professional developments. Most importantly, she is a literacy coach who has continued post-retirement work for districts in the tri-state area. Detailed qualification documents of staff will be provided in the full packet.

II. STUDENT POPULATION

A. Student Enrollment

The table below illustrates enrollment projections for the school, by year, for the first five years of operation.

Anticipated Enrollment Table

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Kindergarten	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
1st	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
2nd	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
3rd	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
4th	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
5th	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
6th	**120**	**105**	**105**	**105**	**105**
7th	**0**	**115**	**105**	**105**	**105**
8th	**0**	**0**	**110**	**105**	**100**
9th	**0**	**0**	**0**	**105**	**105**
10th	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**105**
11th	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
12th	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Ungraded	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Total	**120**	**220**	**320**	**420**	**520**

B. Target Populations

Applicant Instructions: ***Using statistics as well as descriptive language, describe the population of students with disabilities, students who are English language learners, and students from households who are eligible for the federal free- and reduced-priced lunch program in the school district where you intend to operate a charter school.***

The Students and Community: Excel Yonkers Charter School of Math, Medical Science and Technology will strive to be the 6th - 12th grade school of choice for all Yonkers parents and students. According to a 2008-2009 school year data obtained from the New York State Department of Education web site (https://www.nystart.gov/publicweb), Yonkers Public Schools' enrollment is as follows: out of the total public school student population of 22,894, 17 percent are White, 26% are Black, 51 percent are Hispanic/Latino and 6 percent are Others. Many students go to private schools, thus the disproportionate number of White students in the public school compared to the population of the City of Yonkers. Unfortunately for lower income families, private school is not an option. Out of the total student population, 15 percent (3,367) are Limited English Proficient (LEP); 74 percent (16,973) are eligible for free or reduced lunch program; and 13.05 percent are students with disabilities (3,658) based on a total population of 28,033.

The overall graduation rate is 65 percent—58 for Black students, 73 percent for White students, 63 percent for Hispanic/Latinos, 86 percent for Asians, 36 percent for students with disabilities and 39 percent for LEP students. Even though this graduation rate is 10 percent points above the state standard of 55 percent, it is below the Westchester County average gradation rate.

The Charter School of Educational Excellence, a K-5 public school in Yonkers, has a student

population of 358 students—3.35 percent (12) are LEP; 68.99 percent (247) are on free and reduced-priced lunch (FRPL); and 2.23 percent (8) students with disabilities. The Excel Yonkers Charter School of Math, Medical Science and Technology will draw students from both schools and will have an ELL, FRPL and SWD that is comparable to the Charter School of Educational Excellence. We estimate that 80 percent of our students will be eligible for the FRPL, 60 percent ELLs, and 5 percent will be students with disabilities.

The intent of the school is to enroll most of the students from the City of Yonkers while drawing from neighboring Westchester County towns and villages within 15-mile radius of the school's location, if there are open slots. We will obtain the students demographical information from students' previous schools and will build a database profile for each student with their individualized educational plans, and accelerated English language immersion programs.

We will refute the idea that low academic achievement and behavior are to be expected of students from low income families. These goals will help us achieve our mission: 1) Ensure optimal academic achievement levels for all students by eradicating any achievement gaps among No Child Left Behind subgroups (Asian, Black, Hispanic, low income students, students with disabilities, and English language learners) and ultimately increase the high school graduation rates of Yonkers students; 2)Prepare our students for success in the diverse, global economy through classroom instruction and other school experiences that are responsive to each child's ability, interests and challenges; and 3) Build and manage effective relationships with parents and the community so that they are informed and actively support the education of our students.

Explain how your school will attract, serve, and retain such students in numbers that are comparable to that or greater than the existing school district.

To attract students to enroll in our school, we plan to engage in community outreach through walking around and speaking with people about the school at public fairs and community events, give out brochures of the school, send out flyers and letters to parents in the neighborhood, advertise in the local newspapers, reach out to community organizations to disseminate information about the school, work with student recruiting consultants, and more. Most importantly, we plan to reach out to the K-5 charter school to recruit some of their fifth graduates who may want to continue with the rigorous charter school culture.

Describe specifically how these students will be identified, how the school will develop plans for their education, and how their progress will be monitored.

We will be an open enrollment school and will have open door policy for all students, within the limits of our facility, student population and student teacher ratio. Parents will enroll their children and if applications exceed our student population limits, we will use a lottery system to select students for the first cohort of sixth graders. The process will be repeated yearly. Students will be identified in the local community.

We will administer diagnostic assessments and will use the data to build an academic profile for each student. We will also obtain students' academic achievement profile from their previous schools to be used as baseline data and integrated into our longitudinal data system to monitor growth and value-added by our teachers, parents, community and staff. Their profile will contain all pertinent demographic data and performance data on various types of assessments for literacy, math, social studies, science, physical education, and IEPs for special education students. The school will operate under a data-informed system that will be the basis for a culture of inquiry around student achievement and continuous improvement of all instructional support systems. All achievement gaps will be monitored and closed through individualized and differentiated instruction. We will make aggressive use of information and communication technology tools for diagnosing students' academic standing, and delivery of relevant instruction that is differentiated based on students' academic and career interests and abilities.

In addition, *explain how the school's curriculum and approach to instruction will be designed or adapted to serve those students.*

We will use differentiated instructional strategies to engage all students so that each one can reach his or her highest potential. We plan to have gender-groupings for classes so that students can be engaged in learning. The fulcrum of our school's curriculum will be the New York State Curriculum and Learning Standards, including the student's choice of a second language from a list of languages; music, dance and physical education.

The middle school will maintain extremely high academic standards focusing on a rigorous college preparatory curriculum beginning and continuing with increased intensity through high school. Teachers providing special education services will have a special education certificate and be able to work in an integrated environment. The middle school curriculum will fuse E.D. Hirsch's Core Knowledge Sequence with New York State Standards, the principles of service learning, medical science and technology. Detailed curriculum will be provided in the full packet. The Core Knowledge and Sequence is a carefully planned body of classical knowledge of proved and lasting significance assumed in public discourse and known by a broad majority of literate Americans. The Core Knowledge Curriculum will be fully implemented in the middle grades 6^{th} – 8^{th}. Eight graders will successfully complete Algebra 1 for high school credit prior to entering grade nine. In addition to completing community service projects, core curriculum and Algebra 1, eight graders will be required to complete a cross-curriculum research paper and defend to a panel composed of community members, school personnel and peers. The culminating assignment will be modeled after college level thesis. Students will be required to successfully complete the assignment to gain entrance into the ninth grade. This will ensure that every student receives an academically superior education balancing a content-rich curriculum with an emphasis on civic involvement.

The high school component of Excel Yonkers Charter School of MMST which will begin in the schools fourth year, and will entail rigorous college preparatory course work. Students will be expected to successfully complete advanced placement work in all core academic areas and pass all Advanced Placement exams. Students will also master an employability skill in the medical, business technology and other fields through clinical training. The following is a set of criteria for students to meet prior to graduation: 1) complete advanced placement high school courses in all subjects; 2) demonstrate competency in the medical science and technology fields; 3) demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language; 4) be able to play a musical instrument or perform a dance; 5) gain acceptance to a four year college or university or gainfully employed in the medical or technology fields with plan of attending college. The full high school four-year course sequence will be provided in the full packet.

Traditional classroom experiences, by their nature, are to some degree contrived. Teachers "create situations in the classroom in which students are asked to solve problems, analyze issues and role-play situations. The more effectively a teacher can reduce these contrived situations, and increase the number of meaningful experiences, the more successful a teacher will be in motivating students to learn. Making this conscious effort to breathe relevance into the curriculum will encourage students to build connections between the classroom and the "real world."

Our school will integrate community service projects into the sixth through eighth grades Core Knowledge Curriculum and promote collaboration between the school and its surrounding community. Students will apply classroom learning to authentic and meaningful situations that positively impact the community—health, technology, sanitation, education, global economy, and more. Our service learning projects will be structured as six-week thematic units that revolve around a specific issue affecting the community. Each subject will tie into the theme where natural relationships exist. In this model, students will work in each classroom towards completing a culminating activity that will positively impact the community. Examples include:

- Forming a Reading Friends program where a second year student can mentor an incoming sixth grader as they read books together, read with senior citizens in convalescent homes, read to

children in hospitals, etc.

- Writing, designing, and distributing a health booklet prepared with medical students from area medical centers and schools to educate neighborhood residents on various health issues that affect the community and residents.

Students interested in entering the field of information technology may complete or take all electives in advanced technologies. Advanced technologies is a concept in technical training that will be offered to prepare our students for careers in the information technology field including medical technologies, programming, and business information systems. Interested students will receive training in a cluster of four digital technology areas that are in high demand in today's business world. The details will be included in the full packet.

Also, describe the plan for recruitment and enrollment of students. Explain how the school will be publicized and marketed throughout the community to a broad cross-section of families and prospective students.

To attract students to enroll in our school, we plan to engage in community outreach through walking around and speaking with people about the school at public fairs and community events, give out brochures of the school, send out flyers and letters to parents in the neighborhood, advertise in the local newspapers, reach out to community organizations to disseminate information about the school, work with local clergymen and their members, work with student recruiting consultants, and more. We also plan to set up booths in front public buildings such as libraries to inform residents of our school and the programs we offer. Most importantly, we plan to reach out to the K-5 charter school in Yonkers to recruit some of their fifth grade graduates who may want to continue with the rigorous charter school culture.

What strategies will you use to reach families that are traditionally less informed about educational choice options?

We will reach families that are traditionally less informed about educational choice options by attending events in their neighborhoods, speaking with them in their language if required, working with their community organizations, and through word of mouth. The same strategies used in recruiting all students will be used. We will invite interested families to an open house in a community center within their neighborhoods. We will also create a video to share the components of our school programs with the community agencies and the parents in those hard-to-reach communities. Disseminate information at bulletin boards in the public libraries, Laundromats, grocery stores, and parks within these areas.

III. SCHOOL DESIGN

Applicant Instructions: ***Describe why the proposed school design and the founding group are likely to accomplish the following eligibility criteria (a-i) listed below. You must address each criteria specifically and separately. If your school design or plan draws on existing school models, you may choose to present historical evidence that your design, or at least components thereof, have led to similar outcomes in existing schools. If your school design or plan does not have a precedent, you may choose to present a clear rationale for the design and any research or other supporting information that leads you to believe the plan or model will fulfill the following eligibility criteria and outcomes:***

a. Increase student achievement and decrease student achievement gaps in reading/language arts and mathematics;

We will conduct a gap analysis to determine learning gaps, students' strengths, areas in need of improvement, and areas of personal interest. This will be used to design academic enrichment or intervention programs as well as academic educational plans (AEPs) for each student.

b. Increase high school graduation rates and focus on serving at-risk high school student populations (including re-enrolled drop-outs and those below grade level);

Evaluate the academic profile of incoming students to determine academic strategies to employ to prevent drop-out and enhance graduation rate. We will investigate drop-out prevention strategies that are research-based and proven to work. Details will be in full packet.

c. Focus on academic achievement of middle school student populations and preparation for transition to high school (if applicable);

Focus on building full and functional literacy skills, methodical reasoning and reading writing scientific.

d. Utilize a variety of high-quality assessments to measure understanding and critical application of concepts;

Students will be engaged in reading assessments, and they will design projects that integrate learning standards. We will also use the interdisciplinary, cross-standards project assessment that the New York State designed.

e. Increase implementation of local instructional improvement systems to assess and inform instructional practice, decision-making, and effectiveness;

Through improvement cycle that will involve assessments—practical and written, quantitative and qualitative, and both formative and summative—we will continuously collect these student data as inputs into the feedback for continuous improvement of instructional practice, decision-making and results-driven instruction.

f. Partner with low-performing, local public schools to share best practices;

We will extend our open door policy to the other schools in the area to share any practices that have worked to improve achievement of all students. Conversely, we will adopt best practices that have worked in other schools.

g. Demonstrate the ability to overcome start-up challenges to open a successful school through management and leadership techniques;

The biggest foreseeable startup challenge is one of acquiring an educationally sound facility and the recruitment of the most highly qualified teachers. To overcome both challenges and achieve our goals, we plan to partner with local businesses, Yonkers Public Schools, The City of Yonkers, local universities, and more, to share their facilities. In addition, we will work with other community organizations such as churches as partners in helping resolve the facilities issues.

h. Demonstrate the support of the school district and the intent to establish an ongoing relationship with such district; and

We plan to reach out to the local Yonkers Public Schools superintendent and the leaders of the Charter School of Educational Excellence to garner their support in working as partners. We will share any best practice ideas with them, write grants together to maximize provision of educational opportunities, and share in professional profession dev activities. Many federal and state government competitive grants require or encourage collaboration and partnerships among schools in the local area in which resources and professional development activities are shared.

i. Provide access to viable education alternatives to students in regions where there are a lack of alternatives.

The school will provide access to a viable and sustainable educational alternative to students in the Lower Hudson and Yonkers community through the delivery of the programs that have been described in this prospectus. When we increase graduation rates, improve students' academic standing and employability skills so that they can be productive citizens and positive contributors to our society, the whole community will benefit. And then, we will become the grades 6th through 12th school of choice for students and parents in Yonkers and surrounding areas within 15-mile radius.

Currently, there is only one charter school in Yonkers that provides K-5 education. When these students graduate from the 5th grade, the parents' only choice is to re-enroll them to the public schools or spend money in a private school. Many of these parents cannot afford to send their children to private schools and will take the risk of their children being left behind in the traditional public schools. Our school will provide another viable alternative for those students who want to continue their education in a charter school of rigorous learning, like Excel Yonkers Charter School of Math, Medical Science and Technology.