

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I.A. Mission Statement. The mission of Rockland Renewal Charter School (RRCS) is to provide its students with a rigorous, personalized, inclusive, authentic, meaningful and integrated education that increases their academic achievement, facilitates their access to higher education, builds their passion for life-long learning, helps them develop stronger ties to their community, enhances their appreciation for the natural world and helps them develop a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens.

RRCS seeks to provide an integrated interdisciplinary, place-based education that holistically prepares students for higher education, ensures resilience to overcoming challenges, and builds passion, purpose and discipline for achievement. RRCS students learn to care for the community and the environment for a sustainable and equitable future.

I.B. Key Design Elements. To fulfill its mission and reach all its goals, the educational program is built on the proven and research based strategies defined by a framework for closing the achievement gap known as “Environment as an Integrating Context for learning” (EIC), developed by the State Education and Environment Roundtable in 1998. EIC defines a framework for interdisciplinary, collaborative, student-centered, experiential, and engaged learning. EIC based learning, also known as Place-based learning, is not primarily focused on learning about the environment, it is about using a school’s surroundings and community as a framework within which students can construct their own learning, guided by teachers and administrators using proven practices. The observed benefits of EIC include:

- Better performance on standardized measures of academic achievement in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies;
- Reduce discipline and classroom management problems;
- Increase engagement and enthusiasm for learning; and,
- Greater pride and ownership in accomplishments.

The following are key design elements of our educational program:

- **Place-Based Learning:** Our school encourages teachers and students to use school site, local community, and special places nearby as resources, turning communities into classrooms and context for learning. It immerses students in local heritage, culture, landscapes, and opportunities as a foundation for the study of language, arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and other subjects. It is hands-on, project, problem and service learning based.
- **Rigorous Curriculum:** Provide our students with genuine challenges to think about interpretations and possibilities and to see patterns and interpret them.
- **Integrated Thematic Learning:** Our core curriculum weaves social studies, science, and character education throughout the entire program. The integrated curriculum allows students to learn material in great depth as well as to see connections that naturally exist among subject areas, making learning more meaningful and lasting.
- **Active Engagement:** RRCS is founded on the principle that children learn best when they are active participants in their own learning. When active engagement is combined with powerful and productive collaboration classrooms, teachers facilitate the development of self-directed learners where there are scaffolds at various levels.
- **Culturally Relevant Rich Curriculum:** Students from diverse backgrounds all need to recognize that what they are learning in the classroom is relevant to their personal life. Place based Instruction draws from their world, as they know it and builds upon prior knowledge and culture. Our teachers will present content that young people need to meet high standards in a context that has meaning and relevance in their everyday lives. We promote cultural journalism (from the Foxfire model) as a means to encourage multi-culturalism.

- **Enriched Learning Environment:** RRCS presents content in various modalities of learning. Stories and example cases are used as pleasurable encounters with literature and to help students remember information. Students are encouraged to use graphics organizers as visual means to organize, outline, integrate, and synthesize information. The creative arts are infused into curriculum to add depth and breadth.
- **Personalized and Differentiated Instruction:** Every student will have an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) that will detail a student’s academic, social, emotional, and physical strengths and challenges and will detail strategies and goals to improve student’s ability to succeed.
- **Responsive and Collaborative Classrooms:** RRCS endeavors to develop the whole child in a safe, nurturing, developmentally appropriate environment that deliberately helps children build academic and social-emotional competencies. Teachers use collaborative learning to help students consolidate what they know, clarify what they don’t know, and extend their learning skills.

I.C. Unique Characteristics. A high quality education starts with relationships. Students learn optimally only once teachers have found structures and processes to convey that they know the student and value who and what they are. The following characteristics build meaningful & lasting relationships:

- **Key Stage Looping.** Distinctive to the school’s program is the idea that a small group (twenty to twenty five) of students moves through the grades and curriculum together with the same teacher. The teacher helps connect to the student’s home and to the community in which the child lives. The loops are structured around key stages of development and academic milestones. The first loop is grades K-2 (learning to read), second loop is grades 3-5 (reading to learn), and the third loop is grades 6-8 (exploring careers and passions).
- **Differentiated Professional Development.** We provide each our teachers a personalized professional development plan to close skill and knowledge gaps that will improve their performance. RRCS provides a professional learning community for its faculty and peers are encouraged to mentor, collaborate, and extend opportunities for teachers to learn from one another to improvement of their practices. Learning occurs best when adults who aim to help their students learn see themselves on a path of lifelong learning.

I.D. Founders’ Capacity. The Rockland Renewal Charter School founders provide a broad range of competencies and experience in starting up a public and charter schools. Dr. Troi Sanon is the Vice-Chair of the Kingsbridge Innovative Design Charter School and leads its Governance Committee. Mr. Cotto serves as the founder and Executive Director of the Kingsbridge Innovative Design Charter School but also has over ten years of executive experience working with two national educational nonprofit organizations – the National Hispanic Institute and Junior Achievement of New York. Mr. Juan Morales has designed and built at least 7 public schools in New York State. Mrs. Edna Rivera has collaborated with the National Development Corporation to fund public school facilities building in Orange, Rockland, and Westchester Counties. Founders have partnered with Sustainable Community Schools, who are the founders of Charter School for Educational Excellence in Yonkers, NY.

Founder	Capacity	Organization	Education	Community	Parent	Legal	Finance	Facilities	Fundraising
Dr. Troi Sanon	University Educator, Out-of School	ED, IFG After-School Program	X	X			X		X
Julio Cotto	Elementary Middle School Educator	ED, KIDCS Charter School	X	X					X
Maria vazquez-Dole	Lawyer/Judge, University Educator	Monroe Village/Monroe College	X	X		X			X
Rosa Ellis	Retired Educator, CBO	Martin Luther King Center	X	X					
Nicole Bryant	Parent, CBO Leader	Rockland Family Shelter/NAACP		X	X				X
Edna Rivera	Facilities Finance	HOGAR/DHCR/Treasury CDFI		X		X	X	X	X
Evenide Fanfan	Parent, Educator/Technologist	Roselle district Technology Supervisor	X	X	X				
Juan Morales	Architect/Developer	Blue Nail Construction & Development		X			X	X	X

Rockland Renewal Charter School’s Board of Trustees will initially be composed of those nine members. During the 2011-2012. The Board will maintain its membership between 5-15. Chair (1), Vice Chair (2), Treasurer (3), Secretary (4), Dr. Sanon, the Lead Applicant, is designated by the Board to serve as the Executive Director, Dr. Sanon has an extensive experience in nonprofit management, program development and grant writing. He worked for 20 years, basically developing proposal for nonprofit organizations including his experience at ECQ Group, a nonprofit NYC based firm that provides consulting to nonprofit agencies in NYC. He holds a bachelor in business administration from ISSEP, in Port-Au-Prince, a MBA from NYU and a Doctorate Degree from the University of Alberta. Dr. Sanon Currently serves as the Executive Director of IFG Productions, an art based after school, and cultural exchange community based organization, in Spring Valley. Ms. Nicole Bryant was born and raised in Spring Valley; she currently serves as the Director of the Rockland Family Shelter (RFS) programs in Spring Valley, a non-profit organization, dedicated to serving domestic violence and sexual assault victims and their families; through direct services, education, advocacy, agency consultation and leadership in coordinated community action. Ms. Bryant has served for seven years as the President of the regional NAACP; and is still a member of their executive committee. She was one of the youngest Presidents of the NAACP in the Nation during her time of service. Julio Cotto is as the school leader and founder of Kingsbridge Innovative Design Charter School (KIDS), a sister school of RRCS, located in Kingsbridge, Bronx. Before starting KIDS, Mr. Cotto served as Associate Vice President for Institutional Advancement for the National Hispanic Institute, a national leadership training nonprofit in the U.S. and Latin America and most recently served as the Director of Community Initiatives for Junior Achievement of New York. Rosa Ellis is currently a retired, after serving for 25 years as a teacher at the West Side High School, a progressive school based in Manhattan. Prior to her retirement, she served in the positions of family group advisor, and the PTA and School Leadership Team liaison. Ms. Ellis attended the New York City public school system. She later went to Interboro Institute where she received an AOS degree. She began attending Marymount Manhattan College in 1984 and graduated in 1988 with a BA degree. She continued her education at The City University of New York and graduated in 1999 with an MA degree, she currently serves as a volunteer coordinator of a community education program at the Martin Luther King Center, in Spring Valley, NY. Evenide Fanfan, is an experienced educator, a teacher of 1st. to 5th grade for more than ten years, in Roselle, NJ. She currently serves as Supervisor of the Roselle Public Schools Technology Department. She moved from Haiti to the US at age 9, went to the NJ public schools system; graduated with a bachelor and a masters degree in education from Rutgers University in New Jersey, she served as a teacher in a NJ charter school for 5 years. Ms. Edna Rivera is the Executive Director of Housing Opportunity, in Rockland County, she has 25 years of experience in housing and real estate.

II. STUDENT POPULATION

II.A. Student Enrollment

Anticipated Enrollment Table

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Kindergarten	75	75	75	75	75
1st	75	75	75	75	75
2nd		75	75	75	75
3rd			75	75	75
4th				75	75
5th					75
6th					
7th					
8th					

9 th
10 th
11 th
12 th
Ungraded

II.B.1. Target Populations. The school age demographics consists of 58% Black (40% are Haitian, 10% Jamaican), 25% Hispanic (12% Guatemalan, 11% Ecuadorian), 7% Filipino, 6% East Indian, 2% Polish. The community is made up of 31% immigrants, including groups from Haiti, Jamaica, Guatemala, Philippines, India, Ecuador, Poland, amongst others, who exclusively speak a foreign language at home. The median income for the area is \$51,881. Although 18.7% account for residents under the poverty level, school age children eligible for Free Lunch have grown from 49% to 65% over the past two years. The special education population in the East Ramapo district is 6.42%, including private school students. Although the English Language Learners (ELL) population in East Ramapo district is 14.48%, we believe that there are at least another 10% students whose parents have advocated them as general education to ensure a quality education. Due to recent school facility closings, including the only ELLs and SWDs middle school in 2008, the district schools are getting overcrowded, teacher student ratio increasing from 12 to 16, and the district is only providing limited English Language Learner services, while that constituency is growing due to Haiti earth quake and Hispanic immigrants due to economy. In 2008, only 33% of special education and 44% of English Language population graduated. East Ramapo School District has not met its AYP in the 2005-2006, 2006-2007, and the 2007-2008 school years. Of a total of 25, 526 school age children who reside in the school district, only 7901 are currently enrolled in the public school district, down from 8901 a year ago. In summary analysis, many middle class families have lost faith in the district and move their children to either NJ or other well-performing Rockland School districts.

II.B.2. Recruitment and Enrollment. In the spring of 2009, the lead applicant was able to gather over 2500 petitions from parents interested in an alternative to the current school district. Since 80% of the community is religious and most of the school age children from East Ramapo live in Spring Valley, we partnered with the largest two churches. The largest religious constituency is Catholic and worships at the St. Joseph Church, which comprises 44%, or 23,000 of Spring Valley residents. We were able to gather over 2000 petitions across multiple ethnicities, including Haitian, Hispanic, and European from St. Joseph. The third largest religious constituency is the French Language Baptist, which has over 1500 members, and provided over 500 petitions. Amongst these two churches we were able to reach 50% of families with school age children. Furthermore, we have partnered with majority of the day care, preschool, and out-of-school programs as feeder programs.

II.B.3. ELLs Identification and Education. Through our petition drives we have maintained a Home Language Survey to help gauge the quantity and need of Ell's children based on Social Economic Status, Parent's education, and Native Language dominance. Almost 65% of the families that inquired about Rockland Renewal Charter School could be classified as English Language Learners. Our enrollment preference is English Language Learners. We hope to serve at minimum 35% ELLs. Furthermore, we primarily target Haitian and Hispanic immigrants living in poverty who are at least 65% more likely to be at-risk during middle school years and drop out of school at 16 years of age.

Admissions of Limited English Proficient Students. Rockland Renewal Charter School's admissions procedures are consistent for all students, including students identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). We will not know whether a particular student is LEP until after they have registered and enrolled in school. We are committed to recruiting and retaining LEP students. We have targeted recruitment

strategies and programmatic elements specific to serving English Language Learners. We fully intend on meeting or exceeding the percentage of LEP students in the neighboring host district schools. Our outreach and recruiting strategy will include, but not be limited to, the follow elements:

- Presenting all marketing and communications material (including recruitment and enrollment materials) in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and French.
- Working with local community-based organizations and faith-based organizations to target immigrant communities through informational sessions
- Visiting local pre-kindergarten programs that serve high immigrant populations

We anticipate that these targeted recruitment strategies, in conjunction with a dual language program that promotes bilingualism and bi-literacy as a vehicle to high academic achievement, will allow us to attract and retain greater enrollment as compared to the enrollment figures of neighboring public schools. All of the recruitment and enrollment materials, as well as flyers for informational sessions will be kept on file in the Principal's office.

Identification

Rockland Renewal Charter School will follow the New York State LEP Identification Process to identify students who would be eligible for additional services. We will send the Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ), issued by the State Education Department, to the family of every new student enrolled at the school. The HLQ will be translated into a format that the parent or guardian best understands. If, based on answers to the *Home Language Questionnaire*, it is determined that the student's home language is not English or the student's native language is not English we will conduct an informal interview in the native language and English. We will ensure that the interviewer has enough structured feedback to make a reasonable assessment of the students' oral proficiency in the English language. If a student speaks another language and speaks little or no English, we will administer the Language Assessment Battery-Revised (LAB-R). This assessment determines the initial English proficiency level (beginning, intermediate, advanced, or proficient) and consists of four subtests including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. If the student scores below the established cut-off point on the test, that pupil will be classified as LEP and will receive additional support services as outlined in this application.

English Language Development (ELD) Program. We are committed to recruiting and retaining ELL students. We will have targeted recruitment strategies and develop programmatic elements specific to serving a community of English Language Learners. Although we cannot guarantee who will be enrolled through our lottery process we fully intend on meeting or exceeding the percentage of ELL students in the neighboring host district schools. Specifically, we will ensure that all parent and community communication will occur in English, Haitian Creole, and Spanish (or other languages dictated by the specific student population we enroll through the lottery process). In addition, we have developed academic programming that is responsive to the needs of English language learners. The needs of ELL students at Rockland Renewal Charter School will be met through a Structured Immersion/English Language Learner Model. Structured Immersion is the use of English as the language of instruction for all content areas. Teachers will employ a variety of English language development strategies. ELL students attend classes where all lessons are conducted in English in order to develop their English verbal and literacy skills. Given our commitment to developing bi-literacy in English and Spanish, we will also create multiple opportunities for students to develop content-specific vocabulary in English and Spanish through direct instruction, word walls, word webs, etc. In addition, the ELD teacher will push into classes during specific periods to support ELL students' specific language needs. ELL students will receive special support in English during the daily skills block. ELL students will be integrated into all classes at Rockland Renewal Charter School. Our program for English Language Development (ELD) will be rooted in the New York State learning standards for English as a Second Language, which serves as the framework for the New York State ESL Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). We will use the NYS ESL

Learning Standards to assist our administrative team and ELD teachers in building a child specific curriculum map to develop proficiency in the English language. In addition, our Spanish Language Arts block will cultivate comprehension and critical thinking skills in a second language. These skills are directly transferable to English Language Development and will be particularly helpful to our native Spanish speakers. We will monitor the effectiveness of the ELD program in meeting the academic needs of our ELL students primarily through the Child Study Team's analysis of qualitative and quantitative individual student data. This team will be used to identify and develop a plan for students that need additional support structures (such as ELLs, special education students, or other targeted student groups) to acquire specific skills. This structure will provide our teachers with a consistent format to review student progress toward meeting the ESL learning standards and develop strategies to specifically meet their instructional needs. The results of these meetings will be documented and archived at the school site in a secure location. Parents and families of our ELL students will receive a regular progress report for their child documenting progress toward meeting the ESL standards. These reports will be translated as necessary to ensure accountability for all parties: students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

Non-exclusionary Provision. Rockland Renewal Charter School ensures that ELL students will be integrated into all classes, both instructional and non-instructional, as well as all extracurricular activities. In addition, we will provide structured support to our students that will make sure that our ELL/LEP students are active participants in this programming.

Appropriate Staff and Materials. The APSC will manage the English Language Development (ELD) teacher and receive regular updates on the ELD program through the Child Study Team meetings. Classroom teachers and ELD staff will have time set aside during the instructional day for collaboration. The ELD teacher will be responsible for ensuring that teachers have the appropriate curricular materials and training to meet the needs of their students. We will be using the Learning Standards for English as a Second Language as a framework for curricular development. This document will assist teachers with designing authentic assessments, link language to other content areas, assess student performance, correlate tasks at all levels of language proficiency, and prepare students for NYS assessments in core subject areas. Additionally, they will receive training on strategies to support ELL students.

Measuring Progress. All students identified as LEP will be given the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) to measure student progress in learning English as a Second Language. Our teachers will use the results to:

1. Indicate the proficiency level of each student
2. Determine whether or not the student the student's proficiency level is high enough to exit the ELD services
3. Determine appropriate placement and services depending on levels of proficiency on each of the subtests: listening, speaking, writing and reading.

Students will maintain the LEP identification until they have scored higher at the Proficient Level on the NYSESLAT. Rockland Renewal Charter School will administer the English Language Arts examination to all students who as of January 3, 2007 have been enrolled in schools in the United States (excluding Puerto Rico) for one year or more, for Federal NCLB Title I accountability purposes. Rockland Renewal Charter School will also use other assessment tools to determine student proficiency in Reading and Mathematics in their native language and to determine whether or not individual students need remedial or intervention services in those subject areas. We will use the Desarrollo de la Lectura (EDL2) as an ongoing diagnostic tool to measure Spanish language proficiency. In addition, we will use the Supera, a Spanish language norm-referenced assessment, to establish proficiency in reading and mathematics. For students with a native language other than English or Spanish, we will administer the language appropriate assessment in Reading and Mathematics.

Program Evaluation and Modification. We will have internal and external structures to ensure that all students are successful at Rockland Renewal Charter School. The Teachers Council will engage the NYU Metro Center BETAC for continuous improvement assessments of LEP academic program and support services. Furthermore, RRCS has already established best practice sharing with Family Life Academy Charter School (FLACS) in New York City CSD 9 in the Bronx with Marilyn Caro. We are trying to establish an arrangement where RRCS teachers can attend FLACS internal professional development for ELL instruction. All recommendations will be integrated into the curriculum strategic plan which the Teachers Council will update with necessary modification, measurable targets, and leading and lagging indicators. In addition, we have developed systems for regular internal reflection on disaggregated student data to make ongoing modifications to our program to address the needs of our students who have been identified as LEP. All RRCS students will be benchmarked under Fountas & Pinnell Reading Records and fluency rates. The Trustee Executive Committee will track effective implementation of recommendations from advisory partners.

Assurance of Non-Assignment as Disabled. Rockland Renewal Charter School assures that national origin minority students are not assigned to classes for the disabled because of their lack of English skills.

Assurance of Notices in Native Language. Rockland Renewal Charter School assures that parents with limited English language acquisition receive notices and other information from the proposed charter school in their dominant language. RRCS intends to provide an extensive language program; we hope to be able to have our language teachers provide language support for our classroom teachers. All material will be providing in all native languages that make up the school community. Furthermore, we plan to leverage a Community Council of parents and community partners to facilitate in providing parents with Limited English proficiency with translation support.

II.B.4. SWDs Identification and Education.

Admissions of Students with Disabilities. Students with disabilities will be admitted using the same policies and procedures as all other students. Rockland Renewal Charter School will not be aware of students' special needs status until after admittance. Special needs status does not affect a student's lottery standing or weighting, as all students are admitted equally (with exceptions given as per Article 56 for students living within the school's CSD). The school will create new enrollment materials annually, all of which will clearly state that the school is open to ALL students, and that we make all efforts to provide the services that students may need. Additionally, the Principal, Assistant Principals and teachers will reach out to pre-kindergarten programs that serve special needs students, to host informational sessions, and distribute enrollment materials. Our goal is to provide an educational environment that serves students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, and provides all of the services required by law. All of the recruitment and enrollment materials, as well as flyers for informational sessions will be kept on file in the office.

Special and Related Services. Rockland Renewal Charter School will meet the IEP requirements of all admitted students by requesting the services from the local district or by contracting with an independent provider. Rockland Renewal Charter School may provide, request, or contract out for any or all part of any of the services required in any students IEP. Rockland Renewal Charter School will prepare to directly provide and privately contract some of the services through independent service providers, as needed, and as possible. Provision of these services will be dependent upon the individual goals and requirements of the IEP, availability of services through the CSE, and the particular qualifications and specialty of the special education teachers on staff at Rockland Renewal Charter School. During the first year of operation, Rockland Renewal Charter School will have a 1 FTE special education teacher on staff. We estimate that 10% of our students will have IEPs, greater than the special education population of the

local school district. This estimation is actually based of the rate of special education children in neighborhood schools in East Ramapo. We are using the East Ramapo School District numbers as a conservative estimate of our population, as it relates to funding. Over time, we will incrementally increase our special education staffing in order to adequately meet the needs of students and the requirements of their IEPs. Contracted service providers will be incorporated into the fabric of the school (including staff meetings, professional development, and parent/family meetings) to the greatest extent possible.

Coordination with CSE. The Principal of Rockland Renewal Charter School will coordinate the provision of special education with the assistance of the special education teacher, to ensure quality, consistency and academic excellence. The Principal will use various vehicles to communicate with the regional CSE to ensure that all special education services and programs are provided in accordance with IEPs. Such vehicles will include quarterly meetings at the CSE, letters and emails regarding newly admitted students (requesting IEPs or initial referrals in process), and phone calls (to follow up on all items in progress, coordinate logistics for CSE meetings, etc.). Additionally, when a student is receiving services from a district employee or contractor, the Principal will ensure that the employee or contractor enters the correct service start date in the district system. The Principal will include such interactions in her/his monthly report to the Board of Trustees. CSE meetings will be requested formally via a letter (and follow up phone calls) to the CSE Chairperson with a copy to any other CSE staff people who have developed a relationship with the school. Oftentimes, the staff person can be helpful in moving a charter school's request forward in a timely fashion. The student's general education teacher, and special education teacher, as well as the Principal and/or Special Education Coordinator will be required to be present at the CSE meeting. During the annual review of the IEP, the CSE will be made aware of the student's participation and progress toward meeting his/her IEP goals. Additionally, CSE members will be invited to participate in any Child Study Team or other school based meetings in which the student's academic progress is to be discussed.

The RRCS shall administer all required New York State assessments for the grades served by the school. At this time, the School does not plan to administer the Optional Intermediate Level Technology Education assessment. All students with disabilities shall take New York State assessments except in cases where the Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed by the Committee on special Education (SCSE) of the students' district of residence determines that such students cannot participate in regular state assessments. In these instances, the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) shall be administered as required by law.

Participation in CSE Meetings. CSE meetings are a critically important venue for teachers, students, parents and administrators to share perspectives about a student's strengths and areas for development. Rockland Renewal Charter School's administration is committed to ensuring that all of the necessary parties are present at CSE meetings. Rockland Renewal Charter School will demonstrate this commitment by providing substitute coverage to regular education and special education teachers whose presence is required at any given CSE meeting. Regular education and special education teachers are required to attend the CSE meetings for their students. Teachers will be required to substantively contribute to the dialogue and documentation for the CSE meeting. Additionally, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and/or special education coordinator will be present at all such meetings.

Child Find Requirements. Rockland Renewal Charter School takes seriously its responsibility to identify, locate and evaluate all students with a suspected disability. Through the school's Child Study Team (CST), which is composed of the ELD teacher, special education teacher, the general education teacher, Assistant Principal(s), and the Principal, Rockland Renewal Charter School will screen and evaluate students who are suspected of having disabilities and in need of special education. This includes students who are progressing from grade to grade, highly mobile children and migrant children. The Child Study Team will formally meet weekly for at least 45 minutes to discuss any children who are suspected to have

a disability. If there are no such students during any given week then during every fourth meeting, the CST will dedicate time to reviewing the programs of already identified students, the need for reviews and progress toward goals. The Child Study Team will review data presented by teachers regarding individual students. These data presented for each child in CST should always include the reasons why a disability is suspected, including behaviors observed, frequency of behavior, academic struggles, interventions attempted, and outcomes of all such interventions. Based on this documentation, the team will jointly develop and recommend appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation. The Child Study Team will recommend a referral for services to the CSE once determining that the student's needs are not being met within the actual educational program being provided, and after curricular modifications and strategies have been exhausted. The recommendation will then be forwarded to the CSE in order for the CSE evaluative process to begin. Parents and teachers also have the right to make a direct referral to the CSE of the student's district of residence. These rights are respected and will not be violated at Rockland Renewal Charter School.

Data Reporting. The Principal, acting as special education coordinator will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the data reporting requirements of IDEA. The Principal will not provide direct services to students with disabilities in this capacity. As such, the Principal will accurately and in a timely fashion provide the requisite reports to the SED. These reports include the PD 1C/4C, PD6, PD 5C and the PD 8. The school's student information system is designed to track the data that is to be reported. The Principal and/or Special Education Coordinator will work with the special education teacher(s) to ensure that the information being reported through the SED's web based system is accurate, and complete.

FERPA. In order to ensure that students with special needs are receiving those services and accommodations consistently, all staff will receive training regarding confidentiality requirements and procedures to ensure that all confidential records are kept in a locked file. Staff will understand that IEPs are highly confidential documents that are not available for all to read, but rather, are meant to be used as instructional and assessment guidance for teachers of those individual students. As such, teachers and other staff with a legitimate "need to know" have access to the IEP records which are maintained in a locked file. An access log will be maintained and will include the name of the person who has retrieved a file, the student's name, and the date of access. Additionally, all staff will be trained in issues of confidentiality, FERPA and how to access records. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction and/or the Special Education Coordinator and the special education teacher will be responsible for maintaining the records in proper order. The School will meet all FERPA regulations.

Informing Parents/Families. Parents will be regularly informed of their child's progress, at least as often as parents are informed of non-disabled students' progress toward the annual goals, that is, three times per school year through the standards-based report cards, through bi-annual Family/Teacher Conferences, and through the summary reports of the school and formative assessments (see Section II.2a.6 for more information about Assessment). Parent/family reports include information regarding the extent to which the student's progress is sufficient to enable the student to achieve the goals by the end of the school year.

IEP Access. Teachers and other staff with a legitimate "need to know" have access to the IEP records which are maintained in a locked file. An access log will be maintained and will include the name of the person who has retrieved a file, the student's name, the date of access. Additionally, all staff will be trained on issues of confidentiality, FERPA, how to access records, accommodations, and individual teachers' responsibilities for implementation of the IEP.

Services. Rockland Renewal Charter School will enroll all students regardless of identification as having special needs. Students who have an IEP will be served at Rockland Renewal Charter School. We will have special education teachers on staff to provide resource room, push in, pull out, and special classes as necessary. During the first year of operation, we will have to request that the CSE provide many of the

services, including related services for our students. This is legally the CSE's responsibility as the LEA, but in subsequent years, and to a limited extent during year one, we will provide most, if not all the services directly to students. We will make every and all efforts to retain students with disabilities by contracting independently with service providers to provide services to students during school, by facilitating the process of obtaining RSAs for parents, and by vigorously working with the CSE to deliver the services that are necessary. Using all of the resources available to us, we will ensure that students are receiving the needed services, and maintain enrollment at Rockland Renewal Charter School. Additionally, we will have small group instruction daily during reading, writing, math, Spanish and skills-block. During these times, students with identified special needs, or students who are being studied by the CST will have additional time with teachers to either work toward IEP goals, or receive other individualized instruction and attention without a disruption to the class, nor to the usual learning of the student.

Referral. Rockland Renewal Charter School takes seriously its responsibility to identify, locate and evaluate all students with a suspected disability. Through the school's Child Study Team (CST), which is composed of the ELD teacher, special education teacher, the general education teacher, Assistant Principal(s), and the Principal, Rockland Renewal Charter School will screen and evaluate students who are suspected of having disabilities and in need of special education. This includes students who are progressing from grade to grade, highly mobile children and migrant children. The Child Study Team will formally meet weekly for at least 45 minutes to discuss any children who are suspected to have a disability. If there are no such students during any given week and during every fourth meeting, the CST will dedicate time to reviewing the programs of already identified students, the need for reviews, progress toward goals, etc. The Child Study Team will review data presented by teachers regarding individual students. These data presented for each child in CST should always include the reasons why a disability is suspected, including behaviors observed, frequency of behavior, academic struggles, interventions attempted, and outcomes of all such interventions. Based on this documentation, the team will jointly develop and recommend appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation. The Child Study Team will recommend a referral for services to the CSE once determining that the student's needs are not being met within the actual educational program being provided, and after curricular modifications and strategies have been exhausted. The recommendation will then be forwarded to the CSE in order for the CSE evaluative process to begin. Parents and teachers also have the right to make a direct referral to the CSE of the student's district of residence. These rights are respected and will not be violated at Rockland Renewal Charter School.

HQ Teachers. Rockland Renewal Charter School affirms that all special education teachers will be highly qualified per 34 CFR 33.18. All special education teachers will be New York State certified in special education and will meet the NCLB and IDEA criteria to be highly qualified in accordance with guidance provided in updated NCLB and IDEA Fact Sheets for all public school teachers.

II.B.5. Outreach and Recruitment Plan. Beyond the local churches where most families with children congregate, we plan to outreach families less informed about educational options in the local parks and restaurant owners. We have already met a couple of ethnic restaurants that would sponsor informational sessions and allow posters in their storefronts. RRSC will develop an outreach strategy that will help the school to obtain a minimum of 10% of students with disabilities, 35% students who are English language learners, and 75% of students from households who are eligible for the federal free- and reduced-priced lunch program in its annual total enrollment. We have discussed with the East Ramapo School District in providing mailings for ELLs and SWDs in the district.

As a public charter school, RRCS will be open to all children of appropriate grade levels from the East Ramapo School District, on a space available basis with priority given to siblings of current and new students from East Ramapo. No tuition or application fee will be required; we will not discriminate on the

basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language, or academic achievement. Our enrollment projection for the 2012-2013 is 150 students, kindergarten through first grade. RRCS will aggressively outreach to parents of children with Special Needs including but not limited to children with moderate to profound intellectual disabilities, Behavior Disorders, and Learning Disabilities, those who have physical, emotional, intellectual, socioeconomic, and/or cultural risk factors that research indicates may negatively influence educational success in standard programs. We will provide the same state and federally mandated programs and services for students with disabilities as do other public schools in East Ramapo to include necessary special education related services, and program accommodations to which they are entitled. Teachers and administrators will attend RRCS' Schools' special education training. In January of each year the school will hold a public open house and then conduct an annual admissions lottery between March and April to assign students to a waiting list for the following September. In collaboration with the State Education Department, RRCS will organize a multifaceted lottery to ensure the enrollment of our target percentage 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. We anticipate that approximately twice the number of our target enrollment (250-300 children) will be chasing the 150 seats in 2012-213 and about the same amount in 2013-2014. In mid March, we will conduct the first facet of our lottery with all candidates. We plan select (50) or 1/3 of the candidates at the first facet. The board will make an assessment of the number of students with disabilities, students who are English Language Learners, and of students from households who are eligible for the federal free- and reduced-priced lunch program in that group of children in that group. We anticipate that 5 or 10% of the winners will be Children With Disability, 35% of students who are English language learners, and 75% of students from households who are eligible for the federal free- and reduced-priced lunch program in that group of children. The board will call these winners for an interview; make an assessment of the number, again. By end of March, the board will run the second facet of lottery to select (100) two tier of the enrollment, from a group of 250 children, we anticipate that 10 or 10% will be either of the children will be Children With Disability (CWD), 35% of students who are English language learners, and 75% of students from households who are eligible for the federal free- and reduced-priced lunch program in that group of children.

We believe that that enrollment strategy and the fact that RRCS will be located in a high-poverty neighborhood will easily allow us to enroll and retain 75% or 113 of 150 students will be eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch, during our first year of operation. Once all students are enrolled RRCS will conduct meetings to orient families to the structure of the school and welcome them into the school community.

Our school will be located in Chestnut Ridge, formerly called South Spring Valley, therefore a great number of our student will come from the Village of Chestnut Ridge, and its surrounding areas: Spring Valley and Hillcrest. According to the Census 2000, the Village of Spring Valley has an income per capita of 14,861 and 18.7% of the population is living under the poverty level, comparing to the rest of the county (9.5%) and New York State (14.5%). Spring Valley remains one of the poorest, villages in New York State. While we understand that the figures fluctuate, the 2007 per capita figure in this current analysis (\$927) serves as a good estimate of the per capita for 2012-2013.

III. SCHOOL DESIGN

III.a. Student Achievement.

There is a need for improved educational opportunities throughout New York, especially in isolated areas such as East Ramapo where English Language Learners are equally or at greater risk than economically disadvantaged students. The educational divide continues to plague our country and towns, such as Spring Valley. It is through lessons learned from our collaboration with successful area charter schools like the

Charter School for Educational Excellence (CSEE) that will lead us to implement key educational principles for diverse learning communities in East Ramapo that will increase and improve neighborhood choices for quality education. CSEE, which resides in a school district with similar conditions, has testing grades considerably above neighboring schools.

Although, the East Ramapo School district improved achievement between 2006 and 2009, within the new cut score it performed similar to the Yonkers School district. We expect to replicate the following CSEE best practices in East Ramapo with Rockland Renewal to demonstrate that East Ramapo students can perform with innovative techniques:

- Performance based culture: align student performance with teacher performance.
- Provide Differentiated Professional Development on a weekly basis for both English Language Arts and Math.
- Provide teachers with growth-based assessments such as Fountas & Pinnell and Math Interim assessments by Princeton.
- Empower teachers to go beyond standards and provide personalized assignments to students based on need.
- Promote compacting as a strategy for all students to provide a rigorous academic environment and make all students feel like they are gifted and talented.
- Promote team teaching and teacher collaboration.
- Provide Learning Center resources for children on a daily basis who require Level 2 or 3 Response to Intervention.

III.b. Reducing At-risk High School Population. RRCS plans to provide the East Ramapo community with a K-8 school that will not only prepare its graduates for competitive high school programs, but the necessary attitudes that they need to graduate high school, excel on regent exams, and pursue competitive colleges because they would feel that they have received a worthy and motivating education. We project that regardless of Social Economic Status; RRCS alumni will graduate 100% of its students and continue to perform at grade level.

III.c. Assessments. RRCS is grounded in the belief that data-driven instruction makes it possible to meet students' individual needs. Teachers at RRCS will be researchers who constantly assess children's progress, through both formal and informal methods, and modify their instruction to respond to student needs. RRCS will create and maintain Individual Learning Profiles (ILP) of each student throughout their time at the school. The ILP will include standardized test results, samples of student work, formative assessment data, student reflections, and teacher prepared narrative and rubric based checklist progress reports. Where relevant, these data will be quantified and stored electronically so that it can be used flexibly to examine students' strengths, needs, and growth as individuals and as a cohort. The school is also committed to using qualitative data to help us to deepen our understanding of test scores and what they communicate about individual student's needs. During the planning year, the applicants will research different student information software packages to track student achievement data in terms of the NYS Standards, such as Chancery, Class Builder and Power School.

RRCS will administer New York State tests as well as a nationally norm-referenced test such as the Terra Nova. In addition, RRCS will use several forms of formative assessments, allowing teachers to consistently and frequently monitor students' progress in content and skill areas in order to inform instruction. Currently, RRCS plans to use the following formative assessments, explained in more detail below:

With time and resources devoted to individualized attention, RRCS is uniquely poised to use formative assessments to inform teachers' understanding. Additionally, teachers will regularly provide students with pre and post-unit assessments and reflections to determine both the direction of a particular unit and what has been learned. Pre-tests will be used to identify target goals for individuals and curriculum activities, while post-tests that show student growth will be used to help teachers reflect on the effectiveness of unit activities. A large portion of professional development resources and time will be devoted to examining student work and conference notes, interpreting assessment data, and designing instruction that addresses students' needs and capitalizes on their strengths. Assessment data and teacher observations will be regularly communicated to the administration and families. Each teacher will meet his/her supervising instructional leader on a bi-weekly basis to discuss individual students and overall class progress. Teachers will be in frequent contact with families through weekly newsletters, notes and phone calls home, and appointments. Three times a year, teachers will prepare reports that include a narrative summary of a child's growth and standards-based skills checklists to share student progress with families. Twice a year, these reports will be accompanied by formal individual family conferences.

External Assessments

New York State Standardized Tests

- 3rd, 4th, 5th grade ELA
- 3rd, 4th, 5th grade Math
- 4th grade science
- 5th grade social studies

Internal Assessments

Assessment	Description and Use	Timeframe	Grades
TerraNova or similar norm reference test	Norm reference for grades 2-5. Assessing all components of reading and math,	Spring	2-5
DRA	Individualized administered diagnostic assessment of decoding and reading comprehension. Results will be used to determine small groups for guided reading instruction as well as teaching points for individualized reading conferences.	Twice a year	K-5
DIBELS	Individualized administered assessment that evaluates students progress with phonemic awareness, decoding, reading, and oral comprehension, listening, and writing. DIBELS results will be used to determine how to group students for word study, small group writing instructions, and intervention from the instructional specialists.	Fall and Spring	K-2
Math Interviews	Based on work piloted successfully in NYC CSD 3 schools in collaboration with Bank Street College, teachers will administer individualized performance assessments to determine each student's progress towards meeting NYS math standards. The data from the interview will be used to determined appropriate intervention services, homework.	Fall and Spring	K-5
Running Records	A running record is a method of recording a student's progress in oral reading, particularly	Monthly	K-5

	<p>highlighting his advances in fluency, comprehension, decoding words, and understanding a body of text, Typically the text that is used is a short reading passage that the child has not seen before. The child reads it aloud while the teacher takes careful, coded notes about the child’s reading. Teachers will be trained in the use of miscue analysis to analyze running records. Once the child is finished reading, the teacher will ask him or her questions about the text. Based on the outcome of running records teachers will have a clearer understanding of students reading levels and will be able to discern which strategies and knowledge of phonics need to be strengthened for each child.</p>		
<p>Teacher Designed Assessments</p>	<p>Teachers will design formative and summative tasks tailored to the NYS Standards, including but not limited to phonemic awareness and knowledge of decoding, vocabulary, reading skills, and math skills. The results of these assessments will help teachers to group students for focused small group instruction during workshop periods and help them identify students who would benefit from working with the instructional specialists. Teacher created assessments will align specifically to the instructional goals and standards planned in the unit of study. The assessment will be designed in collaboration with grade colleagues, instructional specialists, and master teachers for the key stage loop and discipline.</p>	<p>Formative assessments will be ongoing; Summative assessments will be given at minimum every six weeks in each curricular area.</p>	<p>K-5</p>
<p>Everyday Math Assessments</p>	<p>The Everyday curriculum includes end of unit assessments that challenge students to use and extend what they have learned. Each assessment packet is comprised of four to six tasks that incorporate the math skills learned in that unit as well as a checklist for teachers to evaluate students understanding of each skill or concept. Teachers will use the results of these assessments to make decisions about interventions and extensions for individuals and group of students.</p>	<p>Formative checklists will be used throughout each unit, while summative tasks will be given at the completion of each unit.</p>	<p>K-5</p>
<p>FOSS Science Assessments</p>	<p>The FOSS curriculum includes formative and summative assessment tasks that are specifically aligned with NYS Science Standards. Teachers will use the data from the formative assessment tasks to modify and customized science instruction. Summative assessment tasks will be used to document and report student progress and create appropriate groupings for future units of study.</p>	<p>Formative assessments will be used throughout each unit, while summative tasks will be given at</p>	<p>K-5</p>

		the completion of each unit.	
Standards-Based Observation Checklists	When planning units, teachers will create observation checklists to assess student performance. These checklists will reflect each standard addressed in a particular activity. Checklists will document whether students are approaching, meeting, or exceeding the standards. Checklists will be used to refine instruction, inform individual conferences, and determine small group intervention.	Ongoing	K-5
Standards-Based Rubrics	Teachers will work with their grade team colleagues to develop and use rubrics to assess student work. These rubrics will reflect each standard addressed in a particular task. Rubrics will document whether students are far below, approaching, meeting, or exceeding the standards. Graded student work will be used as evidence of student progress for narrative reports and family conferences. Teachers will also use graded work to determine individual needs and plan whole class and small group instruction.	Once a month in grade teams	K-5
Anecdotal Records	Teachers will keep organized, careful records for each student, writing informal notes about him. The notes could be about subjects ranging from behavioral concerns to the student asking a thought-provoking question about math problem that shows a shift in understanding. With these reflections teachers can glean patterns concerning academic progress, weaknesses or struggles in certain skills or content area, and progress in meeting expectations. During the planning year, RRCS will begin developing a systematic set of checklists for teachers to use to organize documented student progress.	Ongoing	K-5
Student Portfolios	Portfolios will be structured, maintained, and reviewed in a consistent manner across all grades. Students will play an active role in the maintenance and understanding of their portfolios. Portfolios will be presented to families by both teachers and students at semi-annual family conferences. Portfolios will be used as an articulation tool to inform the child's teacher of each child's strength, needs, and interests	Portfolio reviews will be conducted with the staff and students in winter, spring, and fall	K-5
Checklist Progress Reports	Checklist progress reports, which will be issued three times a year, will inform families of student's progress toward the NYS Standards in each instructional area. Students' progress on the academic checklist will be recorded as far below, approaching, meeting, or exceeding the standards.	Late Fall, Winter, and Spring	K-5

	Additionally, the checklists will record students' progress towards behavioral expectations such as timely completion of homework and participation in small group work. These behaviors will be recorded as rarely, inconsistently, consistently, always. The checklist report will also feature records of students attendance and lateness		
Narrative Progress Reports	Teachers will prepare narrative progress reports three times a year. These reports will be used to inform families of specific accomplishments, strengths, areas of growth, and goals for each child. The staff will collaboratively determine the structure of the narrative reports and will elicit feedback from families about the helpfulness of these reports. Reports will be translated into the home language whenever possible.	Late fall, winter, and spring	K-5

III.e. Local Instructional Improvement Systems.

Data Stream – Classroom-based Assessments. Teachers will use a variety of assessment tools and techniques to assure that children with different learning styles are given the opportunity to work to their strengths. Rockland Renewal Charter School teachers will be expected to give regularly scheduled formal assessments that show how well students have mastered material taught by that teacher in the classroom. This will provide teachers, parents, and students with crucial feedback on progress toward skill and content mastery and help prepare students for the end-of-year high-stakes exams. These assessments may include, but are not limited to, writing assignments, work portfolios, tests and quizzes (both teacher developed and those provided from the textbook curriculum publishers), research projects, artistic projects, teachers' written evaluations on oral reports and presentations, evaluation of student participation in class discussions, science projects and lab reports.

Performance-Based Accountability System. RRCS' initial Board of Trustees and Founder believe strongly in the theory of change that has driven the development of charter schools as a vehicle for education reform as a means to social and political change. As such, the Board and leadership team are committed to using several tools to consistently and frequently manage the school's performance along several important metrics, including financial stability, viability and position, student performance (disaggregated by sub-groups), staff and student absenteeism/attendance, parent/family satisfaction, and student retention. The Principal will use this tool to gather data for the monthly report on performance to the Board.

III.f. Best Practice Sharing. RRCS plans to share its best practices with all the local public schools in Rockland who may need support in improving its student achievement. The East Ramapo School District will be kept well-informed about student achievement at RRCS. School District officials will be invited to participate in our Fall and Spring conferences, and be informed on school performance. The school district will be invited to send their teachers to participate in our professional development workshops and seminars, and our teachers will be encouraged to participate in theirs. RRCS will send monthly "class" newsletters indicating the objectives that they will be focusing on for the coming month as well as projects students are working on. School-wide results will be published both at the central district level and locally to our parents through the school's Newsletter. In addition, our Director of Curriculum and Instruction will hold regular presentations at various locations in the community to communicate the school's mission, instructional programs, and our student achievement data. An annual quarterly address

will be held at the school district board meetings to inform community residents on the progress of the school and communicate our student achievement data. Special education services, whether provided by District or Charter School personnel, shall be determined in accordance with the policies, procedures, and requirements of the Local Plan for Special Education. Our vision is based on the belief that every student can learn and that every teacher can become an excellent teacher. The current system, however, does not encourage dedicated staff members to work together to help their students soar. Instead, we find a system that very successfully sorts both teachers and students into those who can and those who can't. We plan to collaborate with the School District to promote restructuring the current unperformed school district to increase student performance, both academically and socially for *all* our students, and change to a performance based system.

III.g. Start-up Competencies. Ramping up a charter school within 9 months can be challenging if its planning teams does not frontload 3 critical milestones: first is to secure a facility and work diligently to get it built out for a school and get a Certificate of Occupancy and Fire Inspection certificate in time to open. Second, it must immediately identify an experienced Director of Curriculum and Instruction who can ramp up fast to begin teacher recruitment. Third, although there may be adequate resources for financing charter schools, few fund startups and the process requires lead time on their side to consider due diligence. If a team has all these 3 key milestones ready when charter is awarded, it will overcome much stress. All other operation processes such as Insurance, Benefits, Banking, Accounting, Payroll, amongst others can be implemented fairly quickly with the right vendors who have a history with charter schools.

The Board has been meeting on a monthly basis for the last six months. As we get closer to opening the Board will be meeting on a weekly basis to plan and execute fiscal assignments. The Board will be reviewing different vendors' portfolio, selecting vendors for contracting for goods and services. The Board will coordinate, opening activities, monitor planning budgets; interviewing leaders, supervising, evaluating, and making determination of compensation for personnel; promotion and of personnel; leasing and buying facilities for school purposes.

A lawyer, accountant, and architect are the critical three roles within the first 9 months that will review contracts; ensure proper fiscal management of budget adjustments, and facilities design, build out, and certification. Sufficient educators to coach the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and provide assistance in the faculty hiring process will help the process substantially. We recommend that the school utilize early parents who enroll to support the interview process as well. If a charter school has effectively marketed itself during the petitioning process and leveraged local media to notify the community of applications, lottery deadlines and enrollment deadlines, it can have its enrollment completed by the end of May. The Executive Director should have strong project management experience to be able to delegate and manage all the different milestones and resources required to meet tight deadlines.

III.h. District Partnership. In January of 2009, the founders of RRCS met with the district's liaison for private schools. We discussed the high potential of partnering with the East Ramapo School District to support its limited English Language Learner and Student with Disability services. In February 2010, our lead applicant has participated in a public hearing on at the School District, where he discussed our program the entire school board. At the hearing, School Board members expressed interest in the existence of charter school in East Ramapo. The Superintendent of Schools spoke favorably about our plan and strategies, his only concern was based on the fact he thought that the charter school might affect the school budget as it was in 2009-2010.

RRCS will provide an unprecedented opportunity for the School District Board to take the initiative in school reform. This collaboration will help the school District to recognize that it is part of the problem

and also part of the solution. The existence of RRSC will encourage school board members and school leaders to think outside the "box" to find solutions. The existence of RRSC will create an environment in the School District, where most players will learn that all students can be academically successful, especially those who traditionally have not been successful. RRCS will allow regular site visits from the School District to facilitate exchange between our school leadership and their faculty.

III.i. Value Proposition. The East Ramapo School District, as with many school districts, only provides one teacher in the classroom to manage 25+ students; thereafter, specials and educational support staff either pullout or take over the class for their period. At RRCS, we designed our team to provide full-certified teachers in every classroom; furthermore, we request that our specialists participate during all types of instructions to provide either interdisciplinary or multisensory support for instruction. Another value that RRCS hopes to provide its students is substantial out of classroom time, whereas most public school districts cannot offer fieldtrips due to its scheduling practices. Most public schools provide assembly line instructions and teach to pacing charts, teacher at the surface for the most part. RRCS endeavors to provide large blocks of uninterrupted time in workshop model that allow students to deeply explore their content and activities in order to yield understanding. Many projects and activities may span days, weeks and months allowing time for students to solve problems, produce exhibits, and manage their own individualized learning plans at their own pace, while staying engaged in whole class thematic units.