

FULL APPLICATION SUMMARY

Proposed Charter School Name	School in the Square Public Charter School
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Public Contact Name	Evan Meyers
Public Contact Email Address	info@schoolinthesquare.org
Public Contact Telephone Number	914-471-2484
District of Location	CSD 9 or 10
Opening Date	August 2016
Proposed Charter Term	Five years: 2016-17 to 2021-22
Proposed Management Company/Partners	None
Projected Enrollment and Grade Span During Charter Term	Year 1: Grade 6, 108; Year 2: Grades 6-7, 216 Year 3: Grades 6-8, 324; Year 4: Grades 6-8, 324 Year 5: Grades 6-8, 324
Projected Maximum Enrollment & Grade Span	324 Students in Grades 6-8
<p>Mission Statement. School in the Square (S2) will engage, educate, and empower adolescents in the Bronx to respond mindfully and creatively to life’s opportunities and challenges. S2 draws its name from the concept of the public square, where communities come together to solve problems and celebrate successes. We envision S2 as a place where students, families, and educators are seen, heard, and inspired and where students build the academic foundations, emotional intelligence, and leadership skills necessary to excel in college and professional life. In line with our commitment to equity and diversity, S2 is dedicated to serving the highest needs students of the Bronx, regardless of their academic achievement, English language proficiency, or disability status.</p>	
<p>Guiding Principles. When students feel heard and known, they feel more valued, which leads them to invest and participate in their education. The “square” in School in the Square refers to our public square, an actual physical space in the school where our citizens-in-training will come to deliberate about school governance, discuss current events, and celebrate personal achievements. Our classroom approach will foster students’ "growth mindset" by apprenticing students into the strategies of experts and engaging them in solving real-world problems assessing it against the standards of authentic practice and the Common Core.</p> <p>S2’s key design elements fit within three pillars, which derive from our mission:</p> <p>Pillar 1: Rigorous Curriculum. S2 will offer a Common Core aligned program of study in ELA, mathematics, science, social studies, and the arts that encourages critical thinking and cogent communication.</p> <p><i>In-Depth, Immersive, and Extended Learning Experiences.</i> S2 provides time and opportunity for thoughtful work on specific problems and sets of learning tasks, gradually providing deeper immersion in particular disciplines. S2 will extend learning beyond the conventional classroom through strategic partnerships with outside organizations. A primary partnership will be with CityPathways (cPaths). This organization helps middle schoolers “see paths” to possible futures through hands-on, high-engagement learning cycles through which youth connect with NYC’s community, cultural, and environmental resources.</p> <p>Our school day runs from 9am to 5pm--1.5 hours longer than mandated--with an optional early bird homework/reading club with breakfast beginning at 8am. Our 187-day school calendar provides 10 additional days of learning for students and 18 additional days of assessment, teaching, and PD for educators.</p>	

Personalized Learning. PLT provides students with targeted instruction in math and literacy to address gaps and provide enrichment as needed. This instruction, often provided in small groups but also through tutoring, assistive technology, and independent projects, will ensure students can read with the insight required to analyze and effectively respond to texts across disciplines and develop understanding of key mathematical concepts and their applications to real-life problems.

Students in the Square Forum. Forums held every two weeks in the school's "square" will give students varied and authentic opportunities to contribute to the school environment and have a voice in decisions.

Pillar 2: Collaborative Professional Culture. S2 will develop robust teaming structures and a culture of collaboration for adults that will create a consistent and rigorous learning environment for youth. Teachers will meet in teams to support student growth, share strategies to improve instruction, collaborate on curriculum, and monitor assessments. All staff will participate in PD within a culture of respect and continuous improvement using the following strategies.

Teachers in the Square. S2 teachers will help students become better learners by modeling commitment to continual development as pedagogues. Teachers will self-reflect and receive ongoing, targeted feedback from their peers, supervisors, students, and their families through observations, inter-visitations, study groups, written correspondence, and surveys.

Common Planning. S2 teachers will develop a common professional language and use research-based frameworks for lesson design and data-driven instruction. Teachers will have seven hours per week of common planning time to collaborate on shared unit and lesson planning, meet with special education, ELL, and other service providers, as well as meet with their grade-level team to identify effective instructional practices.

Pillar 3: Compassionate Community. The S2 model provides a robust network of personnel and programmatic supports to ensure the physical, social, and emotional well being of each child.

Families in the Square. S2 will forge deep understanding and connection with each student and their family. Our East Side House Settlement (ESH) partner will support these efforts by closely monitoring attendance to identify chronically late or absent students, managing student discipline by using restorative justice practices, proactively identifying at-risk students, performing comprehensive family outreach, and connecting students and families to social services and community resources in the Bronx.

PrimeTime. At the start of each day, students will ready themselves for learning in an advisory-style 30 minute period called PrimeTime that incorporates mindfulness meditation.

Restorative Approaches. S2's founders are deeply committed to reducing interpersonal conflict and fostering a caring school environment. Restorative approaches to school discipline involve developing trusting, caring relationships, teaching self-regulation and social skills, and building community between teachers and students. ESH Advisors will use restorative approaches to conflict when they work with S2 students.

Target Community: School in the Square intends to serve students in the Bronx in the neighborhoods of Fordham, University Heights, Mount Hope, Morris Heights, and Highbridge, which cut across CSD 9 and 10.

Partnerships: School in the Square will partner with local CBO East Side House Settlement, which will place full-time Advisors at the school to support students and their families. In addition, City Pathways is partnering with the school to provide co-curriculars before, during and after school. Finally, Facing History And Ourselves will support our curriculum and weekly Forums in the Square community meetings.

SCHOOL IN THE SQUARE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

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I. MISSION, KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS, ENROLLMENT, & COMMUNITY

A. MISSION STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

Mission Statement. School in the Square (S2) will engage, educate, and empower adolescents in the Bronx to respond mindfully and creatively to life's opportunities and challenges. S2 draws its name from the concept of the public square, where communities come together to solve problems and celebrate successes. We envision S2 as a place where students, families, and educators are seen, heard, and inspired and where students build the academic foundations, emotional intelligence, and leadership skills necessary to excel in college and professional life. In line with our commitment to equity and diversity, S2 is dedicated to serving the highest needs students of the Bronx, regardless of their academic achievement, English language proficiency, or disability status.

School Objectives

- Foster the intellectual and personal growth of students through rigorous instruction and social-emotional development promoting post-secondary readiness and retention.
- Address the gaps between where students are and the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) through curriculum alignment and targeted academic interventions.
- Provide an inclusive educational program, develop quality IEPs, implement positive behavior supports, and shape an effective structured process for learning by SWDs and ELLs.
- Create a positive school culture that encourages student voice, ownership, and independence.
- Promote a collaborative professional environment that supports teacher growth and makes professional learning part of every teacher's experience.
- Build external partnerships to enhance student opportunity and promote family and community engagement.

Furthering the Purposes of the Law. S2's key design elements meet each objective of the NYS Charter School Education Law:

1. S2 will offer families and students expanded choices within the public school system. We will provide an extended day and year; a personalized approach to academic, social, and emotional learning in a safe environment with rich community partnerships; and design elements informed by feedback from local families and organizations we interviewed and surveyed.
2. S2's goal is to foster the intellectual and personal growth of each student in an effort to improve student learning and achievement. Our rigorous CCLS curriculum choices, assessment-based instructional practices, personalized learning approaches, and social-emotional support systems will enable our students to be successful in their post-secondary choices.
3. S2 is designed to increase learning opportunities for all students, with an emphasis on SWDs, ELLs, and at-risk students. By creating curricula that meet the needs of all learners, our teachers will remove potential barriers, as well as optimize levels of challenge and support. Our teachers will be equipped with the appropriate teaching certifications, engage in professional development (PD), and be skilled in both content and pedagogy to ensure all students are actively engaged in standards-based academic curriculum.
4. S2 integrates inquiry, metacognition, and non-cognitive strategies that complement and improve cognitive learning. Approaches such as the learner-centered framework Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR), the use of student-led conferences and portfolios, and rich partnerships to extend learning beyond the school are just a few of the innovative teaching methods and educational designs being offered.
5. S2 will nurture and create new professional growth opportunities for staff and emerging teacher leaders through peer-led professional development, problem-based inquiry groups, intervisitations, as well as on-going site-based support from educational consultants, new teacher

mentors, coaches, and workshops provided by affiliate partners.

6. S2's academic program focuses on a core set of performance-based accountability standards that align with the Common Core and meet the benchmarks found in the Educational Success strand of the NYSED Charter School Performance Framework. We will drive continuous instructional improvement and academic interventions through frequent diagnostic, formative, interim, and summative assessments of student progress.

B. KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

S2 will foster a democratic community that builds the intellectual and personal capacity of all members of our community and engages them in learning and work that matters. To accomplish this, S2 will recruit, train, and support highly effective teachers who can create and present rigorous and engaging lessons to a wide range of learners. Our instructional approaches will enhance students' ability to participate in the school and the world as valued citizens by presenting learning through the lens of problem solving issues important to students and society. S2 uses three core design elements ("pillars") to accomplish this.

Pillar 1: Rigorous Curriculum. S2 will offer a Common Core aligned program of study in ELA, mathematics, science, social studies, and the arts that encourages critical thinking and cogent communication. We will create a high-performing school by combining our emphasis on academic disciplines with a school culture that values every member of our community.

In-Depth, Immersive, and Extended Learning Experiences. S2 provides time and opportunity for thoughtful work on specific problems and sets of learning tasks, gradually providing deeper immersion in particular disciplines. Our schedule creates long blocks of learning time, ranging from 60-90 minutes, to enable students to use their knowledge and skills to engage with significant and meaningful problems and achieve mastery. Core class blocks will allow for highly effective instructional strategies such as workshop time, small-group discussions, personalized learning sessions, blended instruction, and project-based learning. Our school year calendar includes SummerFocus and SummerBridge programs for all students in July and August. These sessions will enable us to get to know our students, assess them, and support them in learning how to be successful at S2. Students will engage in activities and mini-projects that preview the upcoming year's themes and curriculum.

S2 will extend learning beyond the conventional classroom through strategic partnerships with outside organizations. A primary partnership will be with CityPathways (cPaths). This organization helps middle schoolers "see paths" to possible futures through hands-on, high-engagement learning cycles through which youth connect with NYC's community, cultural, and environmental resources. cPaths maps a broad array of youth-focused opportunities; matches youth with high quality cultural and community experiences that spark their passion for learning and build skills beyond the classroom; provides teaching artists, staff from community based organizations, and community college students to mentor and coach cohorts of youth through interest-aligned learning cycles. Through this expanded learning partnership, students will gain a clearer vision of future possibilities while forging a stronger commitment to their community and city.

Our school day runs from 9am to 5pm--1.5 hours longer than mandated--with an optional early bird homework/reading club with breakfast beginning at 8am. Our 187-day school calendar provides 10 additional days of learning for students and 18 additional days of assessment, teaching, and PD for educators.

Personalized Learning. Personalized learning will enhance success in our core curriculum courses. Based on district data and our experience, we expect many students will come to S2 with widely

varying levels of reading, writing, and math proficiency. No amount of in-class accommodation alone will sufficiently remediate seriously lagging skill. Key academic skills will be targeted in Personalized Learning Time (PLT), offered four times per week.

PLT provides students with targeted instruction in math and literacy to address gaps and provide enrichment as needed. This instruction, often provided in small groups but also through tutoring, assistive technology, and independent projects, will ensure students can read with the insight required to analyze and effectively respond to texts across disciplines and develop understanding of key mathematical concepts and their applications to real-life problems. Students will complete diagnostic and interim assessments that measure development of core literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers and the Academic Director (AD) will analyze and interpret this data during collaborative work periods and create timely programming for groups of students who present similar needs or strengths and will monitor progress of students to determine the efficacy of supplemental instruction and interventions. PLT will be customized to students' strengths, needs, and goals.

Personalized and inclusive learning experiences that integrate challenging content and well-developed learning strategies will prepare ELLs and SWDs to think critically, solve problems, and communicate in the language(s) of instruction. Our licensed special education teachers will support student inclusion and will work collaboratively with general education colleagues to increase engagement and expectations for learning, improve social interactions, and adapt curriculum and practice to different learning styles.

Students in the Square. Forums held every two weeks in the school's "square" will give students varied and authentic opportunities to contribute to the school environment and have a voice in decisions. S2 students will come together with staff to practice democracy through analyzing critical issues at school and in society at large, developing problem solving, leadership, and public speaking skills. Facing History and Ourselves will provide ongoing support in creating the curriculum, building in multicultural awareness practices and emphasizing perspective taking. Forum will alternate weekly with Debate Workshop, a course designed to provide students with regular opportunities to practice civic skills—public speaking, logical argument, close listening, collaboration—as well as provide a venue to learn presentation skills to express their thinking about current issues facing the school, their community, and society. Parents will be invited to join these discussions and, where appropriate, coordinate action items with the Parent and Family Association.

Throughout the year, Forum will include learning activities, projects, tests, and performance tasks aligned with Common Core standards. From these efforts students will develop collections of their work and share their progress in meeting standards during student-led conferences with parents at the end of each trimester. Students will also present their thinking about school and community issues during Forum, developing and demonstrating their public speaking and debate skills. Publishing parties scheduled at the end of learning units will celebrate student writing.

Pillar 2: Collaborative Professional Culture. S2 will develop robust teaming structures and a culture of collaboration for adults that will create a consistent and rigorous learning environment for youth. Teachers will meet in teams to support student growth, share strategies to improve instruction, collaborate on curriculum, and monitor assessments. All staff will participate in PD within a culture of respect and continuous improvement using the following strategies.

Teachers in the Square. S2 teachers will help students become better learners by modeling commitment to continual development as pedagogues. Teachers will self-reflect and receive ongoing, targeted feedback from their peers, supervisors, students, and their families through observations, inter-visitations, study groups, written correspondence, and surveys. Teachers will set and be assessed on their PD goals using clearly articulated indicators of success based on the Danielson Framework for

professional practice. Feedback will inform teacher discourse, goal setting, evaluations, and documentation of growth. S2's transparent professional culture will feature a clinical and case-based learning environment, with collegial inquiry, "game tape" analysis of teaching with colleagues, collaborative lesson planning, and exploration of professional resources, allowing teachers to grow their instructional practice and enrich one another.

Common Planning. S2 teachers will develop a common professional language and use research-based frameworks for lesson design and data-driven instruction. Teachers will have seven hours per week of common planning time to collaborate on shared unit and lesson planning, meet with special education, ELL, and other service providers, as well as meet with their grade-level team to identify effective instructional practices. Teachers have professional planning time daily between 2:30 and 4:50pm. On Mondays, the full staff meets for the entire PD block with the remaining days of the week designated for specific planning activities. Teachers will use digital courseware and real-time diagnostic assessments to continually improve instructional practice, adjust curriculum, and inform small group and tutoring sessions. S2 teachers will develop teaching resources that exemplify high-quality instruction for ELLs and SWDs across content areas. These approaches will integrate research and principles from *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe) and *Classroom Instruction That Works* (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock).

Expanded Adult Roles. Students and their families will be well known by S2 staff. All staff will demonstrate care and consistently communicate high expectation for learning and behavior. S2 teachers will engage in ongoing workshops on the roles of advisor and coach based on findings from *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners: The Role of Noncognitive Factors in Shaping School Performance* from the University of Chicago Consortium and will receive PD in the MindUP curriculum program.

All of our teachers will be equipped to address different learning styles and needs. S2 embraces Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a set of principles for curriculum development that give all students equal opportunities to learn. Our licensed teachers will be trained in UDL, providing a framework for understanding how to create curricula that removes potential barriers, thereby optimizing levels of challenge and support, to meet the needs of all learners from the start. Teachers will learn how to use manipulatives, visuals, narratives, and technology as well as multi-level, multi-theme, multi-cultural resources to match students' interests, learning styles, and preferred modes of expression.

During SummerBridge, our cPaths partners will conduct student interest surveys such as the Kaleidoscope Profile - Learning Preference Inventory, which will enable cPaths to incorporate student interests and learning styles in the creation of curriculum. During the school year, cPaths will use community resources and connections to create co-curricular programming for our students. Teaching artists and workshop facilitators will be matched with students to do in-depth projects that connect students to a range of adult mentors, project coaches, artists, and community members.

Pillar 3: Compassionate Community. The S2 model provides a robust network of personnel and programmatic supports to ensure the physical, social, and emotional well being of each child.

Families in the Square. S2 will forge deep understanding and connection with each student and their family. Our East Side House Settlement (ESH) partner will support these efforts by closely monitoring attendance to identify chronically late or absent students, managing student discipline by using restorative justice practices, proactively identifying at-risk students, performing comprehensive family outreach, and connecting students and families to social services and community resources in the Bronx. In addition, a full-time ESH advisor will implement an Adolescent Issues course for all students to understand and discuss adolescent transition issues such as peer pressure. Students will develop the communication skills to share their experiences of adolescence with their families. As

noted above, families will be welcome at the biweekly S2 Forums. Each Friday afternoon, teachers will have 50 minutes for parent outreach, enhancing communication between S2 and families.

PrimeTime. At the start of each day, students will ready themselves for learning in an advisory-style 30 minute period called PrimeTime. PrimeTime will provide a shared language about what it means to be a successful S2 student. Three mornings per week will draw from the MindUP curriculum to increase focus, concentration, and self-awareness, including stress-reducing meditation. It will help our students respond, rather than react, to personally challenging situations and manage the chronic stressors in their environments (Jensen 2009). Two mornings per week teachers will focus on Academic Mindsets that build students’ repertoire of learning strategies, including academic behaviors such as doing homework and organizing materials, developing academic perseverance and tenacity, and practicing goal-setting and study skills strategies. These skills will be used to support students in planning for student-led conferences. Grab and Go breakfast will be available to students during this time.

Restorative Approaches. S2’s founders are deeply committed to reducing interpersonal conflict and fostering a caring school environment. Restorative approaches to school discipline involve developing trusting, caring relationships, teaching self-regulation and social skills, and building community between teachers and students. ESH Advisors will use restorative approaches to conflict when they work with S2 students, focusing on finding out what happened to whom and figuring out a way for everyone involved to move forward and do things differently in the future.

C. ENROLLMENT, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

Grades	Ages	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
6th	11-12	108	108	108	108	108
7th	12-13		108	108	108	108
8th	13-14			108	108	108
Totals		108	216	324	324	324

Rationale. S2 proposes to open a middle school because research indicates that the adolescent years are critical to students’ future paths in life. From ages 11 to 14, children experience tremendous growth as they prepare for increasing independence and responsibility in the world. Habits and attitudes formed during this timeframe significantly shape their lives (Rockoff and Lockwood, 2010). S2 understands the deep level of guidance and support that youth require during these formative years. Our goal is to prepare students academically, socially, and emotionally for their futures, inclusive of admission into quality high schools, which has become increasingly competitive in NYC.

In its first year of operation, S2 plans to recruit 114 students for grade 6, adding one grade per year until 2018–19, serving 324 students in grades 6 through 8. This enrollment target ensures a school with an approximately 27:1 student-to-teacher ratio in core classes with reduced ratios in our advisory-style PrimeTime and Adolescent Issues (<15:1) as well as during our supplemental instruction and intervention period Personalized Learning Time (~5:1). We believe this ratio to be small enough to build strong relationships among students, teachers, families, and community while providing the critical mass to sustain financial viability, a robust teaching staff, and stable outside partnerships. S2 estimates annual student attrition at 5%, based on community research. The school will fill vacancies from the waitlist as they arise to maintain a consistent headcount of 108 students per grade.

Recruitment. Diversity and equity are instrumental to a thriving, vibrant democracy. We intend to work with children who possess a broad range of perspectives and needs. We will serve a representative cross-section of Bronx children and meet or exceed district averages in students who are ELLs, SWDs, or who qualify for FRPL by prioritizing recruitment of these sub-groups.

To bolster our recruitment efforts, our planning team has built relationships with local elementary schools as well as community and faith-based organizations and agencies that have sponsored us into their communities and aided recruitment efforts. Specifically, the Tenant Association of a 250-unit public housing project, New Tabernacle Baptist Church, Ogden Presbyterian Church, Highbridge Voices and New Heights (after-school programs), and the Supportive Children’s Advocacy Network (SCAN) will work on our behalf to further recruitment efforts. Our founding board includes four members who live or work in the Bronx, each of whom will work within their spheres of influence to aid recruitment of general and special populations.

Crucially, our memorandum of understanding with ESH outlines specific actions that both their two S2 based staffers and the larger 100-year-old Bronx organization will take on S2’s behalf, including tapping their comprehensive support network, canvassing neighborhoods alongside S2 staff, and launching a public awareness campaign for the school.

In addition to collaborating with the organizations named above, S2 will use the following strategies to recruit a general population of students: hosting public meetings at different times of day on different days of the week to ensure families can have a representative in attendance; connecting with CSD 9/10 elementary schools; and recruiting families on charter waitlists.

Recruitment of special populations. As we have done during our public meetings, media appearances, and parent focus groups, S2 will continue to send a clear message that our school design serves everyone in the community, with an explicit focus on serving SWDs, ELLs, and students who are at risk of academic failure. We will use a broad spectrum of strategies to ensure that we target recruitment of special populations:

Strategies for Recruiting Special Populations During Planning Year (November 2015 - June 2016)	Special pop. targeted		
	ELLs	SWD	At-risk*
Leveraging the networks of East Side Housing Settlement and SCAN, two best-in-class multi-service agencies working with underserved, at-risk, economically disadvantaged, homeless or sheltered, and English language learning families in the Bronx.	X	X	X
Working with local district elementary schools, bilingual school guidance counselors and administrators, and after-school programs to identify and connect with families in identified sub-populations.	X	X	X
Contacting parents and guardian emails received from website whose children qualify as ELL, SWD, or at-risk.	X	X	X
Establishing S2 in a predominantly economically disadvantaged neighborhood with high ELL and SWD populations.	X	X	X
Translating S2 materials (i.e., brochure, website, petitions, surveys, live events) into communities’ native languages (Spanish and Twi, the principal language of Ghana).	X		

Networking with district Committee on Special Education (CSE) as well as local elementary school guidance counselors, ELL and SpEd coordinators, and principals to connect with students and families who meet criteria as special populations		X	
Finding and enrolling students who reside in temporary housing facilities and NYC Housing Association Tenant Associations.			X
*At risk: Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) who have mental health issues, interrupted formal education (SIFE), are homeless or in temporary housing, and/or have experienced child abuse or trauma.			

To date, our recruitment efforts demonstrate significant interest in S2. We have already secured 113 forms indicating families’ intention to apply, which suggests ample demand for the school we plan.

Application and Enrollment. As with the recruitment materials, applications will be available in predominant community languages (Spanish; Twi, a Ghanaian dialect) and may be submitted in person or via email, mail, or fax. Each April, S2 will conduct a lottery overseen by an independent third party to select students. For each grade that has openings, students residing in CSD 9 or 10 will be drawn first, followed by applicants from outside the district. Once open seats are filled, remaining students will be placed on a waiting list in the order drawn. S2 will add all applications received after the annual deadline to the waiting list in the order received. As part of our commitment to the community, S2 intends to fill open seats in any grade at any time of year and program students into an accelerated orientation process including assigning them a “buddy” to ease their transition.

Enrollment and Retention Targets. S2 began student recruitment activities in Spring 2015 and will continue until 108 students are enrolled in our 6th grade for the 2016-2017 school year.

As our recruitment plan outlines, S2 anticipates meeting state targets for enrollment and retention of at-risk students in light of the 113 letters of intent to apply we received from local parents and the partnerships we have formed with service providers who will recruit special populations on our behalf. Given the demographics of CSD 9 and 10, the vast majority of our students will likely qualify as “at risk” by one or more criteria, and we anticipate serving a large population of students who are eligible for subsidized meals, ELL services, and/or special education services. Our school will match or exceed the district’s special population enrollment numbers which are: 91.4% for students who qualify for FRPL, 27.5% ELLs, and 18.4% SWDs and meet retention targets for these sub-groups, which are 87.0%, 86.5%, and 76.0% respectively.

S2’s key elements were designed with retention of at-risk sub-groups in mind. Academic and social-emotional strategies to serve and retain students, especially SWD and ELLS, are core features of our organizational mission and program. We intend to:

- Identify supports necessary for students early in the year during our SummerBridge and SummerFocus induction programs in July and August (See Section 2C).
- Provide on-site ESH staff for comprehensive mental, emotional, and physical support.
- Employ relevant, interactive, proven pedagogical methods throughout the curricular program and personalize offerings to foster student investment and ownership through cPaths.
- Commit to a consistent, shared lesson design format that ensures teachers use research-based, high-yield instructional strategies and provide targeted feedback during all learning activities.
- Facilitate daily mindfulness meditation to develop social and emotional competencies.

- Provide small-group, personalized intervention and enrichment time (See “Personalized Learning Time” in Section 2C) for students four days a week that includes instruction from ESL and special education teachers and learning specialists.
- Address challenging student behaviors using frameworks (such as Collaborative Problem Solving and Guided Discipline) that feature restorative justice techniques.
- Facilitate regular interdisciplinary data meetings between our Academic Director (AD) and our educators to monitor the progress of students, especially our at-risk, SWD, and ELLs, during daily professional development.

We will use the following strategies specifically for ELL retention and achievement:

- Provide an immersion approach for ELLs with targeted language goals for learning activities, in addition to other linguistic supports designed to help ELLs access academic content.
- Employ dual-certified (general education plus ESL) and bilingual teachers.
- Train in ELL models such as West Ed’s Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL).

We will use the following strategies specifically for SWD retention and achievement:

- Provide an integrated collaborative-teaching setting to support inclusion of SWDs in the universal academic program.
- Employ dual-certified (general education plus special education) teachers.
- Provide weekly progress monitoring and targeted, intensive literacy and math interventions in groups of no more than 3-5 in PLT.
- Monitor the effectiveness of interventions and SPED program as referenced above

Lastly, key to retention is our commitment that every student feels known, supported, and encouraged. Positive relationships with students and their families enable students to feel safe and secure in their learning environments and provide scaffolding for important social and academic skills. Allying with and engaging families helps expand learning opportunities for students.

D. COMMUNITY TO BE SERVED

Community Description. S2 commits to serving students with the highest needs from the ethnically diverse neighborhoods of Fordham, University Heights, Mount Hope, Morris Heights, Belmont, Highbridge, Mount Hope, and West Concourse within CSD 9-10. One of the poorest urban counties in the country, the Bronx has the highest rates of asthma, obesity, and mortality and morbidity in New York State. Its population lives with many of the acute and chronic stressors that research links to academic failure and school dropouts (Jensen, 2009), and educational attainment stands at low levels. As the table below demonstrates, our target community is predominantly Black and Latino, a disproportionate percentage live below the poverty line, and about half of residents have less than a high school education.

Neighborhood	Black	Latino	In Poverty	Speak Poor/No English	No High School Diploma
New York State	16%	18%	16%	7%	15%
Fordham	25%	66%	47%	25%	49%
Highbridge	32.9%	64%	37%	24%	44%
University Heights	24%	63%	38%	26%	49%
Mount Hope	47%	49%	38%	25%	46%

Morris Heights	33%	55%	43%	19%	47%
Belmont	20%	51%	50%	23%	55%
West Concourse	22%	71%	35.9%	27%	53%
Mount Hope	27%	67%	44%	26%	47%

Description of District Schools and Student Population. According to the Bronx Achievement Pact, only 59% of Bronx students graduate from high school, and roughly 11% complete a four-year college degree. Approximately 83% of Bronx students score below proficient on state measures of literacy and mathematical numeracy. CSD 9 and 10 have the two largest middle school populations in the Bronx and the highest number of students per middle school in New York City. In grades six through eight, Bronx students perform well below the levels of New York City and State. According to the 2011-12 New York State Report Card, 13.6% of District 9 and 14.2% of District 10 8th grade students demonstrate proficiency on the New York State Assessment in English language arts, and 12.5% of District 9 and 17.9% of District 10 8th graders demonstrate proficiency in Mathematics.

Bronx schools face many challenges: overcrowding, above-average proportions of at-risk students, including ELLs and SWDs, as compared with other boroughs in New York City and other counties in New York, as well as an over 50% five-year teacher attrition rate, meaning the average teacher in the Bronx has less years of experience as compared with their Manhattan counterparts.

Value of the School in the Identified Community. During our community outreach efforts, parents, students, and families affirmed the value of many S2 priorities and key design elements:

- Parents of current charter school students reported that they had trouble finding childcare options when their schools closed early for weekly staff PD, leading us to offer school services from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day.
- Parents told us “children need more than just English, math and science to be successful,” compelling us to build in a robust co-curricular program with CityPathways.
- A parent at a local elementary said she needed the teacher to “make time to focus on children’s needs.” This confirmed our decision to program a consistent Intervention/Enrichment block four days per week with reduced teacher-to-student ratios.
- Chancellor Farina and the current administration have bemoaned the high rate of suspensions among students of color, SWDs, and ELLs (4,513 suspensions in CSD 9 and 10 in 2012) and have called for restorative justice practices like the ones we describe.
- Over 95% of parents expressed enthusiasm for bringing in “more charter schools in the Bronx to help our kids.”

Rationale for selecting and ability to serve this community. Our proposed Board of Trustees includes four Bronx residents who care deeply about building S2 in their community and helped us choose CSD 9-10 as our potential home. In their opinion and ours, the residents of CSD 9-10 have limited options for quality education, and S2 brings together a unique package of design elements that afford families an educational opportunity unlike any other in the community.

S2’s innovative strategies directly address the challenges of a so-called “culture of poverty” in many ways. For example, research literature on children from poverty (Jensen, 2009) indicates a series of significant risk factors attributable to the environment, including social and emotional challenges, acute and chronic stressors, cognitive lags, and health and safety issues. In response to these factors, we specifically designed a schedule to promote secure attachments with adults (for social and

emotional learning), facilitate mindfulness meditation on a daily basis (to reduce stress), and provide a robust fitness program (to mitigate health issues).

Family and Local Community Support. The applicant group has developed an extraordinary network of colleagues and advocates actively supporting the school. Key indicators of community support, and evidence of demand for seats in our school, include:

- 113 “letters of intent to apply” from CSD 10 families of current 4th graders (eligible for 6th grade in 2016), an early indicator that we will meet our enrollment goals.
- 386 petition signatures from community members in CSD 9-10 in general support of the school.
- Community leaders have joined the Board, among them two members of Community Board 6— Evonne Capers, the president of a Tenant Association, and Hiram Ratliff, a pastor and former Harlem Children’s Zone child services coordinator; Daniel Diaz, the Associate Director of East Side Housing Settlement; and Walter Rendon, a teacher-leader in CSD 10.
- Partnerships with significant community-based organizations with deep roots in the community that have elected to partner with S2, including East Side House Settlement and CityPathways.
- Expressions of strong need and support for the school in public meetings and surveys. 139 people completed our survey, indicating high interest in the educational options S2 proposes and aligning with feedback received at our town-hall-style meetings. (See Attachment 2.)

Taken together, these quantitative and qualitative indicators suggest strong demand for S2.

Wider Community Support. We have shared our vision throughout NYC’s communities to invite all stakeholders into our “square.” We have received significant support and commitments; to date, over 35 philanthropists and foundations in NYC have pledged \$600,000 upon receipt of the charter. In addition, the applicant group currently receives significant pro-bono support—legal from Weil, Gotshal, & Manges; accounting from Imowitz, Koenig, & Co.; office space from Meritage Properties; and architectural services from Gertler-Wente Architects LLP.

E. PUBLIC OUTREACH

Outreach Efforts. Above all, S2 believes in the democratic values of equity and diversity. In crafting our outreach efforts, we backwards-designed a three-phase approach to engage a broad demographic of Bronx residents, including special populations usually underserved by charters. Our outreach events and materials reflect a commitment to providing all students with an equal opportunity to attend S2, both explicitly through specific mentions of our desire to be an inclusive community and implicitly through translating our materials to native languages and hosting events in locations that serve families with a wide spectrum of needs.

Phase 1 began in September 2014 and entailed finding a best-fit community for School in the Square. (Find details and outreach artifacts in Attachment 2.) In August and September of 2014, we deconstructed the inquiry into the following sub-steps:

- 1. Interpreted community data** to get a macro perspective on the region.
- 2. Surveyed local community members and leaders** about their neighborhood’s history, strengths, and needs through interviews, canvassing in residential neighborhoods and outside of schools, and informal and formal meetings with church leaders, daycare centers, and everyday residents.
- 3. Spoke, listened, and networked at Community Board and Community Education Council (CEC) meetings.** We visited every Community Board and Education Council meeting operating in our proposed districts: Community Boards 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 and CECs 7 and 10.

After completing Phase 1 of our inquiry, we learned that:

- **The vast majority of the community leaders and members to whom we spoke,—over 95%—expressed interest in bringing a charter school to their neighborhood and communicated that there was a strong need for them.** During our neighborhood canvassing efforts, we spoke to church leaders, principals, elementary and middle school families, business owners, local artists, and teachers—indeed anyone who would speak to us—about their educational opportunities and challenges. In fact, the mission of starting a new school resonated so deeply with five community leaders we met during this phase—among them: two Community Board members, the associate director of a large Bronx-based multi-service organization, the reverend of two large Ghanaian churches, and a Bronx teacher-leader—co-hosted family outreach events with us in their respective organizations.
- **CSD 9 and 10 have similar educational needs from a macro perspective.** In partnership with 2014 Service to America medal (a national public service award) winner Sara Meyers, we conducted a “deep dive” into all available public data, from demographic, achievement and school data (e.g. overcrowding, rates of attendance, etc.) to health and socioeconomic data (e.g. numbers of single-parent households, high school and college graduates per household). This analysis revealed that neighborhood schools in both districts face significant challenges, including a growing population of ELLs, underperformance on state measures, high rates of teacher turnover, high proportions of students eligible for free and reduced price lunch, overcrowding and low level educational attainment of residents relative to their higher-income peers.
- **CSD 9 and 10 has less charter saturation than other Bronx districts.** In fact, we learned that CSD 10—the largest district of the Bronx—has the lowest charter saturation per capita.

From this inquiry and the resultant learning, we concluded that both CSD 9 and CSD 10 were viable locations for S2. In *Phase 2*, we concentrated our efforts on specific neighborhoods within these large districts to evaluate families’ interest in educational alternatives and secure partnerships with organizations that shared our beliefs and mission. This phase consisted of:

- 1. Facilitating four Town Hall-style public meetings**, including an event at the Twin Peaks Public Housing Complex hosted by its Tenant Association (Dec. 11, 2014); a daytime event (Jan. 17, 2015) and evening event (Jan. 22, 2015) at the Mill Brook Community Center; and a late-afternoon event at Highbridge Voices (Jan. 29, 2015).
- 2. Launching a public media campaign** consisting of a website schoolinthesquare.org (which continues to generate parent interest and features a panel of our former students), newspaper coverage in *The Bronx Free Press*, and an in-depth interview on BronxNet’s *Perspectives* (a half-hour television program) on March 24, 2015 during which we discussed the key design elements of the school and our outreach efforts.
- 3. Connecting with influential local organizations and leaders**, including:

Faith-based Organizations. Presentations were made to a diverse group of congregants at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Ogden Presbyterian Church, Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, and New Tabernacle Baptist Church.

Politicians. Local politicians we contacted and a number of officials offered support including Monica Major of the Bronx Borough President’s Office and Assemblyman Victor Pichardo.

Community-Based Organizations (“CBOs”). Numerous CBOs were contacted and subsequent meetings led to invitations from *New Heights* (combines basketball and academics to improve college and career readiness) and *Highbridge Voices* (a renowned choral/academic program) to speak to their parent communities. Our outreach also connected us with executives at East Side House Settlement and CityPathways, anchors in the community that have committed to a partnership with S2. We also met with leaders from The Point Community Development Corporation, Highbridge Development

Corporation, MBD Community Housing Corporation, and Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation to deepen our understanding of the community.

Public Schools. PS 114 and NYC Montessori Charter School each co-sponsored parent information sessions. Elementary school administrators in CSD 9-10 and the superintendent of CSD 9-10 were contacted. Leaders of local charter schools including KIPP, Harlem Villages Academy, Success Academy, Atmosphere Academy, Community Charter School, Brooklyn Lab, and The Equity Project were contacted to learn from their successes and struggles. They have afforded us access to key staffers to answer questions about all elements of our work including staffing, budgets, facilities, and community outreach.

Phase 2 of our inquiry yielded the following:

- **Formal partnerships with East Side House Settlement.** Our memorandum of understanding (Attachment 7) outlines specific recruitment responsibilities during pre-opening and attendance outreach and mental health support after opening.
- **Support from key community stakeholder organizations and their families.** After conducting outreach events, our website began receiving traffic, and we began to receive emailed letters of intent to apply from interested parents.
- **A better understanding of how to structure our organization.** Charter school leaders were generous in sharing their time and wisdom on avoiding common pitfalls of school startup work.

Feedback and its Impact on Our Proposal. Efforts have led to strong community ties and commitments from various stakeholders who want to participate in our initiative and take on advisory roles. Several have joined our Board. Our interactions have gone well beyond “meet and greets;” we engaged with the community and its organizations to learn about their work and continue to receive and listen to feedback to improve our plan. Extended detail about our outreach, the feedback we received, and how we incorporated the feedback can be found in Attachment 2.

Over the course of multiple visits and conversations we forged relationships with important thought partners such as Lew Zuchman, executive director of SCAN; Nicholas Woo, academic director of Highbridge Voices; New Heights executives; and the East Side House leadership team. This process has influenced various design elements of S2 including:

- *Transition Program for Incoming Students.* When surveyed, a required transition program for entering students was favored by 95% of prospective parents.
- *Extended Day.* Parents want their children in a safe environment that provides education and enrichment from 8am-5pm. Our partnership with cPaths will ensure that students remain productive at school even on days when teacher training is scheduled. From conversation and surveys, we learned many parents work multiple jobs and depend on robust after school programs and that weekly early-release days employed by many charter schools burdens families.
- *“It Takes a Village...”* Many stakeholders reiterated the point that schools need partnerships and cannot unilaterally address the needs of all students. In response, we met with many community organizations and identified those that best meet our community's needs and our school's goals.
- *School in the Square Concept.* Our vision resonated with many parents and community members who feel that traditional schools afford students little voice and few opportunities to productively resolve conflicts. This reinforced our commitment to restorative justice practices and town-hall-style meetings, as well as our emphasis on teaching life skills.

Ongoing Outreach and Publicizing the School for Prospective Families. *Phase 3* involves continuing our outreach efforts, consolidating community support and buy-in, and building out the foundation of the school with our community and organizational partners. This phase includes:

1. Deepening existing ties to community-based organizations like ESH and SCAN through continuing to co-host student recruitment events, such as a June 21, 2015 Parent Roundtable at a board member's Woodlawn church.
2. Speaking, listening, and networking at monthly Community Board meetings.
3. Collaborating with Planning Team/Board Members monthly to gain insight from those who live and work in the Bronx.
4. Connecting with charter leaders such as Alicia Johnson, the COO of KIPP-NYC, NYSED officials such as Betty Rosa, Board of Regents in the Bronx, and political leaders such as Michaela Daniel from the Deputy Mayor's Office for Strategic Policy Initiatives and David Frank, the Director of Charter Policy at the NYC Department of Education.
5. Collaborating with select Board Members to develop hiring policy and procedures, refine bylaws, and revise budget to reflect evolving organizational needs.
6. Appearing in Bronx media outlets including *The Bronx Free Press* and *BronxNet* local TV station.
7. Convening public meetings and info sessions at CSD elementary schools and after-school programs.

F. PROGRAMMATIC AND FISCAL IMPACT

Local Schools. The NYCDOE operates 113 elementary schools, 63 middle schools, and 52 high schools in the combined areas of CSD 9-10, totaling 90,000 students. In no K–8 school did more than half of the students attain proficiency on the New York State ELA Assessment. In 12 of the 26 CSD 10 schools serving middle school grades, less than 10% of students scored proficient on the 2013-14 New York State ELA Assessment. In CSD 9, on average 13.1% and 11.5% of middle school students attained proficiency on the math and ELA assessment, respectively.

Currently, only one charter middle school operates in CSD 10, while CSD 9 houses one charter middle school and five charters with middle as well as elementary or high school grades (plus an additional four charters). In addition, CSD 9 and 10 have 16 private elementary and/or middle schools, primarily parochial Catholic K–8 schools.

Programmatic Impact. S2 will recruit across a number of neighborhoods and will not draw a significant number of students from any one school, thus limiting our impact on individual programs. Our establishment will mitigate overcrowding, an ongoing serious problem, in CSD 9 and 10 district schools where grades 4-8 class sizes have increased by 8.2% since 2000. We regard S2 as a partner to other CSD 9 and 10 schools, offering relief from overcrowding while welcoming cross-pollination of ideas through shared programs, inter-visitations, and out-of-school activities (such as a middle school debate league).

Fiscal Impact. S2 will have a negligible fiscal impact on the NYCDOE, whose operating budget for 2014-15 is \$20.6 billion. At full capacity with 300 students, S2 anticipates per pupil revenue of \$4,208,100. Adding in \$2,775 per pupil for rental assistance and \$444,182 for special education revenue yields a total of \$5,484,782, which calculates to .021% of the NYCDOE's budget. Moreover, economic progress, as decades of community revitalization efforts have taught us, accompanies a community's rising hopes for a better future, generating fiscal health in indirect ways as more youth attain the education that will secure their futures. We believe our energy and optimism will be contagious as we join this community in recognizing and fulfilling the promise and potential of its youth and families.

II. EDUCATIONAL PLAN

A. ACHIEVEMENT GOALS

S2 is committed to accommodating and accelerating students of all levels, supporting those who lack foundational skills in literacy and numeracy, while enriching the learning of students who perform at or above grade level. We will measure proficiency with these metrics:

Meeting and Exceeding Achievement Standards

Metric 1: Each year, S2's aggregate Performance Index (PI) on the state ELA and math exams will meet or exceed that year's Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the NCLB accountability system and will attain status of "In Good Standing" under the state's NCLB accountability system.

Metric 2: Each year, the percentage of all tested students in at least their second year at S2 and performing at or above Level 3 on the state ELA and mathematics exams will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in Community School District (CSD) 10.

Metric 3: Each year, 90% of students who test two or more years behind grade level and who have attended S2 for at least one full year will demonstrate at least 1.5 years growth *per year* in ELA and Math based on pre and post assessments.

Metric 4: Each subgroup of S2 students will make Adequate Yearly Progress in mathematics and ELA as defined by NCLB and measured by NYSED.

Metric 5: At least 70% of S2 English Language Learners (ELLs) who have been continuously enrolled for two or more years will score proficient or better on the NYSESLAT exam and no longer be designated as ELLs by the time they are promoted to the 9th grade.

Knowing and Caring for Our Students

Metric 1: By the end of Year 1, a minimum of 85% of students and parents/guardians will indicate that they are satisfied with the level of support, care, and respect they receive from their educators and advisors as evidenced by Board-created surveys.

Metric 2: 85% of students completing 8th grade, who have attended S2 for three years, will have visited at least four college campuses.

Participation in the "Square"

Metric 1: At least 90% of students and parent/guardian respondents will express satisfaction with our overall program as evidenced by surveys.

Metric 2: Average daily attendance will be 95% or higher (excluding students with extenuating circumstances) as evidenced by NYC DOE's Automate the Schools (ATS).

Metric 3: Student year-to-year retention rate will be 90% or higher as evidenced by ATS (excluding students who leave S2 for a change in residence).

Metric 4: At least 80% of students' parents/guardians will attend student-led conferences.

B. SCHOOL SCHEDULE AND CALENDAR

Overview. S2's schedule maximizes the time students spend learning and mastering rigorous standards-based curriculum, considers adolescents' social, emotional, and developmental needs, and creates opportunities for extended and deep professional learning for adults. By extending both the school day and year, S2 provides increased core instructional time for students and substantial PD for staff. Sample weekly and daily schedules for 6th grade appear in Attachment 3A. 7th and 8th grade schedules will look similarly.

The annual calendar is organized into trimesters and provides 187 instructional days, seven more than the district school schedule. S2's schedule provides eight hours of instruction each day (1.5 more hours per day of instruction than district schools), netting approximately eight additional weeks of instruction per year. The proposed first-year school calendar appears in Attachment 3B.

Summer Programming. Students will be required to attend two summer programs: SummerFocus, a two-day cycle in July, and SummerBridge, an eight-day cycle in August.

SummerFocus. In order to better know our students and proactively assess their needs, incoming students will participate in a two-day SummerFocus cycle. Cognizant of the anxiety that transitioning to a new school can produce in adolescents, we will invite segments of the class (up to 35 students per cycle broken into intimate groups of five to six) to interview with ESH advisors and S2 educators, take diagnostic assessments for literacy and numeracy, and receive introductory information about their new middle school program.

Summer Institute (for teachers). Summer Institute will serve as an induction program for all S2 educators and ESH advisors and will provide an opportunity to process data collected during the SummerFocus cycles. Time will be divided between team and culture building, collaborative planning for SummerBridge and the school year, and data analysis. Time will also be allocated to learning how to facilitate PrimeTime, including the MindUP program.

SummerBridge. In order to ease the transition from elementary to middle school, students will participate in SummerBridge which acquaints students and families with our school goals, values, and innovative learning structures, including PrimeTime, Forum, and PLT. In addition to culture and teambuilding, students will take part in an interest fair facilitated by our partner, cPaths, to inform electives offered during the school year, and will engage with ESH advisors to determine services and supports needed for a successful year.

Extended Learning Time for Students. Our formal Monday–Friday school day extends from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. School will open at 8 a.m. for our Early Bird Program, which will provide an enriched morning for students who can benefit from homework support, tutoring, and quiet reading time. It will also accommodate families' work schedules with an earlier start time in a safe and structured environment for their children. Beginning in Year 3, we anticipate providing a robust assortment of clubs and extended learning time programming up to two hours before and after the school day. In addition, our SummerFocus and SummerBridge programs will provide an additional ten days of instruction to the school year.

Student Groupings and Class Organization. S2 will organize each grade of 108 students into four cohorts of 27 students each, providing a 1:27 teacher to student ratio. Students will be heterogeneously grouped, with respect to abilities and special education or ELL status and will remain in these cohorts for approximately 70% of their coursework. Teachers and specialized instructional support personnel will be prepared and qualified to deliver high-quality, evidence-based, individualized instruction and support services. Special education and ESL teachers will follow a co-teaching and pull-out model to provide services aligned with students' IEP and ELL requirements. For the remaining 30% of courses, such as PLT, PrimeTime, and cPaths, students will be grouped flexibly based on learning style, interests, and skill-based assessments. PrimeTime, Adolescent Issues, and PLT groups will range in sizes between 10 to 27 students, based on assessments and the specific activity students are engaged in for a unit cycle.

Flexible Block Scheduling. We prioritize our students' need for increased opportunities to study ELA and mathematics in our schedule. We also recognize that meaningful engagement in learning is enhanced when class time extends between 60 and 90 minutes, providing students experiential

learning opportunities, hands-on labs, project-based activities, and sustained time to read and practice new skills. Our ELA and Math classes are offered daily in blocks of 60, 70 or 85 minutes. Both ELA and Math are designed in two formats, Core and PLT, to provide for rich core curriculum experiences and personalized skill development. ELA and Math meet five days per week for a total of seven hours each, two hours more per week of each than district schools.

Scheduling in blocks provides many benefits because “longer classes in block schedules allow for more complicated learning to be broken down into smaller steps and then built back up to the whole concept” (Retting and Canady, 1996). At S2, it will (1) allow a diversity of high-leverage teaching methods, including reading/writing workshops, learning stations, jigsaw, role-play, online curriculum integration, and projects; (2) reduce how many classes students/teachers attend and prepare for daily; (3) increase length and quality of student-teacher engagement; (4) enable extended labs and experiential learning times for foundational instruction; and (5) reduce total transition time between classes to maximize learning and enable two 15-minute recharging breaks.

Personalized Learning Time. Scheduled to meet four days per week—two in math and two in ELA—for a total of 2.5 hours each per week, this class gives educators an opportunity to provide targeted instruction based on real-time diagnostic assessments and teacher observations for individuals and small groups of students. In addition to providing for Tier II and Tier III instructional strategies, PLT will focus on foundational proficiencies through reading, writing, math interventions, word study, computer-based practice programs, and tutoring. During PLT time, the Academic Director, special education, ESL, and AIS teachers will join core teachers in an effort to reduce group sizes and provide specialized and targeted instruction. During ELA PLT, students will also use the myOn literacy program as the foundation for independent and guided reading time. During Math PLT, teachers will meet students where they are and support mastery of math fluency, procedural skills, and application by reinforcing, remediating, accelerating, and enriching math learning.

Science and Social Studies Inquiry Cycles. Science and Social Studies will be taught in alternating cycles. Each student will take one cycle of Social Studies and one cycle of Science within each trimester. By the end of the year, each student will have completed three six-week cycles of Social Studies and three six-week cycles of Science.

“Whole Child” Supports. This schedule enables our school vision to nurture the whole child each day by providing for daily thirty minute PrimeTime Advisory, a weekly Adolescent Issues class, three 70-minute blocks of Foreign Language provided through Powerspeak’s online curriculum, two 70-minute blocks of Health and Fitness as well as daily recess, a weekly opportunity to develop and practice debate skills and citizenship, and extended time to explore project-based arts and community curriculum through cPaths. Built into the end of each day is time to reconnect in PrimeTime Advisory Groups to share reflections and organize for the next day’s work. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, when morning PrimeTime focuses on Academic Mindsets, we offer a 15-minute midday PrimeTime break for students to practice mindfulness strategies.

Consistent and Comprehensive Professional Development Time S2 believes that an empowering, satisfying work environment for teachers translates into an enriching, successful learning environment for students. We will provide scheduled opportunities for teachers to continue developing their craft, contribute, and hear and respond to recommendations and critiques from colleagues. S2’s master schedule ensures collaborative planning time and student data analysis each week. In addition, every Monday the full staff convenes for 120 minutes for schoolwide PD, coordination of schoolwide grading systems, planning events, and sharing promising practices.

Professional Development Program	Minutes/Week
Collaborative grade-level planning	290
Full-staff time for organizational and professional development	120
Assessment and Data Analysis - individual and team	160
Personalized PD and check-ins with school leaders, coaches, or mentors.	60
Parent Outreach	50

C. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

S2’s curriculum and instructional practices will cultivate critical and creative thinking, collaborative skills and dispositions, and leadership. Our students will master Common Core skills and connect their learning to real-life situations, yielding powerful insights and prompting productive action.

Mission-Related Curricular Overview. Students’ development of critical understanding and skills will lead to competent learners in and out of school who are prepared to succeed in school, postsecondary learning, the workplace, and life. The Common Core and other 21st century standards anchor all S2 curriculum and help students see similarities and differences across disciplinary modes of thought. S2 will draw upon existing curricula aligned to the NYS and Common Core Learning Standards. Teachers will adapt curriculum in response to our ongoing assessments to ensure that it addresses the academic needs of our students. Ensuring the success of all students is an essential component of our curriculum choices and instructional practices.

Students’ development of “non-cognitive” competencies also directly supports S2’s central mission, since social and emotional learning (SEL) enables success in every area of life. Non-cognitive factors such as academic behaviors, perseverance, mindsets, and learning strategies, along with social skills, positively impact academic performance (Duckworth and Seligman 2005). Dweck and colleagues (2011) conclude in a review of academic mindsets that, “educational interventions and initiatives that target these psychological factors can have transformative effects on students’ experience and achievement in school, improving core academic outcomes such as GPA and test scores months and even years later.” Our curriculum integrates these skills into academics as well as extracurriculars, giving students steady practice in tenacity, self-discipline, cooperation, empathy, and responsibility.

Rationale and Overview for Proposed Curricula for Core Classes. S2 curriculum choices provide our staff with established curriculum models that are aligned to the CCLS and used successfully by many New York City Public Schools.

Subject Area	Proposed Curricula
English Language Arts	EngageNY and Expeditionary Learning
Mathematics	Eureka Math
Science	The Full Option Science System (FOSS)
Social Studies	NYC Department of Ed Social Studies Scope and Sequence

English Language Arts

Goals: The New York State Common Core ELA Learning Standards provide a pathway to nurturing students who are college and career ready in ELA and communication skills. Towards this end, students must demonstrate independence; build strong content knowledge; respond to varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline; comprehend as well as critique; value evidence; use technology and digital media strategically and capably; and come to understand other perspectives and cultures. To achieve this result for our students, S2 plans to adopt the Engage NY curriculum, a comprehensive grades 6-8 English Language Arts curriculum that provide lessons, assessments, and resource materials from Expeditionary Learning (EL). S2's Forum and Debate classes will provide complementary real-life applications of the standards.

The EL curriculum provides a clear progression of learning goals in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Students will build knowledge through reading and writing grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational. Daily sharing of explicit learning targets at the opening of each lesson and identifying the “gist” of shared texts prior to the main idea supports the daily practice of gathering evidence to answer text-based questions. The study of vocabulary is integrated throughout, and routines and practices promote stamina and build toward complexity.

Text complexity is a main focus of the Common Core and the EL curriculum builds a staircase of increasing complexity in the texts students read throughout the year. The curriculum maps guide teachers through lessons teaching close reading and writing, working with evidence, understanding perspectives, utilizing research and decision-making, and integrating informational texts aligned with themes in the literary readings. The selected texts model for students the type of thinking and writing they should aspire to do in their own work. The curriculum provides opportunities for focused vocabulary and language development through the teaching of direct and explicit learning targets. Effective literacy instruction will be integrated across content areas through the use of compelling topics that engage students in informational and literary texts and emphasize “author’s craft” in accordance with the Grade 6-8 standards.

Techniques: Our choice to use EngageNY is also grounded in a curricular emphasis on providing students with opportunities for multiple forms of writing across the content areas. Students will use evidence from text to present careful analyses, well-defended claims, and clear information as well as learn to write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences. Narrative writing enables students to develop a command of sequence and detail that is an essential component of the argumentative and informative writing that predominates in later grades. The curriculum will provide structures that support students in producing clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience and provide common rubrics for assessment. ELA classes will use a variety of formats, including the workshop model, guided groups, blended learning through technology, and project-based learning.

Although all students need support at the word, sentence, and text levels to meet the CCLS, ELLs benefit particularly from additional support because they are learning language and content in their new and native languages concurrently. Whether the challenge be at the word level (i.e. words having multiple meanings, unfamiliar vocabulary, and archaic language), the syntax level (i.e. compound and complex sentences), or at the text level (i.e. texts that play with chronology through the use of flashbacks or foreshadowing, use text features or graphics, have multiple levels of meaning, or addresses topics that require specialized content knowledge), all our students, especially our ELLs and SWDs, will benefit from additional targeted supports. These specific scaffolds will serve as the subject of ongoing professional development for all educators.

To enrich and expand opportunities for students to engage in reading a range of texts, all S2 students will use in the myOn Literacy Program, which offers thousands of digital titles, read aloud audio, STEM-related informational texts, and teacher assessment reports that track Lexile growth. Opportunities to work in myOn will be provided in our ELA Personal Learning Time (PLT) as well as other core classes, Early Bird, and extended day.

Mathematics

Goals: Middle grade math is where students come to connect arithmetic and algebra, and gain the universally relevant mathematical understanding necessary for success in college and beyond. It is the math our students need to navigate the world and make sound financial decisions.. S2 chose its mathematics program, Eureka Math, to create a solid foundation for algebra in grades 6 through 8. It focuses on basic skills to develop automaticity and strong conceptual understanding at every level through focus on visualization, explanations using precise vocabulary, and manipulative-based representation of math concepts. Eureka Math material derives from a partnership with the NYSED and served as the basis for the EngageNY Common Core curriculum, so it is likely that our incoming students will be familiar with similar programs.

Techniques: Eureka emphasizes a logical progression for identifying and developing students' mathematical understanding in grades 6 through 8. The initial 7–10 minutes of daily “Math Talk” develops conceptual understanding by allowing multiple responses and points of entry consistent with the overarching ethos of our school and Common Core. The math workshop method uses flexible grouping, math rotation stations, and manipulatives to help students at different levels construct their understanding through active learning. In 20 minute workshop segments, small groups rotate between stations where they experience differentiated teacher instruction and modeling, hands-on collaborative problem solving and discussion, and independent practice.

S2 is deeply committed to tackling math fluency issues for students who arrive underprepared in “the basics.” Mathematics research shows that basic fact fluency grows from uncovering the numerous patterns and relationships that interconnect basic mathematical combinations. Many students need additional assistance in forming these connections through instruction that promotes relational thinking (e.g., our daily Math Talks and ongoing formative assessments). We will provide additional practice with “basics” through select online programs and games drawn from resources that provide problems and give instant feedback to students (including 10Marks, Deltamath.com, Desmos, National Library of Virtual Manipulatives, Math Playground, and Brainpop). These will be available for student use in Math PLT, and can reinforce core learning before and after formal instructional time, at home, or in the local public library. Teachers will monitor students' online accomplishments to determine next steps to move students forward.

To help ELLs and SWDs master these standards, our staff will use scaffolded lessons, resources, and methods from EngageNY that more fully support our students in acquiring grade-level knowledge and skills. Effective methods build on approaches that are effective for all students while providing additional support for ELLs who are learning content in an additional language and SWDs who benefit from certain modifications and scaffolds.

Science

Goals: The science curriculum at S2 will coordinate content and processes with (1) Intermediate Level Science Core Curriculum (2) New York State Learning Standards for Mathematics, Science, and Technology and (3) Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) based on the Framework for K–12 Science Education developed by the National Research Council. S2 will use FOSS as our science curriculum. Students will engage in structured activities to achieve science literacy and

deepen their understanding of science concepts and the interconnectedness of mathematics, science, and technology. Scientific inquiry and hands-on laboratory work (in 70 minute blocks) will help students develop the skills of analysis, inquiry, and design. Through informational texts, content-rich science videos, and online resources, students will build background knowledge and learn to pose and evaluate arguments based on evidence.

Techniques: The science curriculum centers on three categories of tasks—experimentation; data representation, analysis, and interpretation; and explanation—that allow students to engage in all eight NGSS science practices. The FOSS units of study integrate these tasks in a spiral curriculum for grades 6–8 that cycles through units on physics, earth and environmental sciences, biological sciences, and chemistry. In both real-world and lab-based investigations, students will apply scientific concepts, formulate hypotheses, make predictions, analyze data, and develop explanations of natural phenomena.

S2 students' literacy skills will develop as they read science texts in real-world contexts, explaining, exploring, and elaborating on a question connected with their own lives. Students will gain proficiency in core ELA standards through non-fiction reading about science as they learn to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information, data, and multiple points of view. Research shows that students need to be grounded in information about the world around them to develop strong general knowledge and vocabulary that is necessary for becoming a successful reader. The myOn Literacy Program used in ELA will also provide supplementary nonfiction digital texts in science.

Social Studies

Goals: S2's social studies program will help students think like historians. We will draw on the NYC DOE's 6-8 Social Studies Scope and Sequence (S & S), a comprehensive resource that integrates the CCLS, the NYS Social Studies Core Curriculum (content, concepts, key ideas, understandings, and performance indicators), and the NYS Social Studies Framework. Its outcomes align closely with S2's commitment to developing the social studies competencies vital to a democracy: gathering, using and interpreting evidence; chronological reasoning and causation; comparison and contextualization; applying geographic reasoning; understanding economics and economic systems; and engaging in civic participation. To embed moral values in such outcomes, S2 will partner with Facing History and Ourselves on anchor units and assessments for our three-year curriculum. FHAO's acclaimed strategies integrate history, literature, and ethics to advance the knowledge, values, and skills that strengthen democracy.

Students will master five key content standards: U.S. and New York history; world history; geography; economics; and (with special emphasis) civics, citizenship, and government. Also receiving our special attention among the ten S & S unifying themes are these five: individual development and cultural identity; development and transformation of social structures; power, authority, and governance; civic ideals and practices; and science, technology, and innovation.

Techniques: Supported by S2 teachers, students will develop the skills to investigate and understand important issues in the world around them inclusive of inquiry, research and writing, interpersonal and group, sequencing and chronology, mapping and navigation, graphing and image analysis.

Offsite expeditions with cPaths will reinforce classroom learning and tie to essential questions, key ideas, and performance indicators. For example, in our first unit, 6th graders will engage with the S & S Essential Question "Does geography determine development?" They will use topographical maps and nautical charts to study the shoreline of the city and the features of the harbor and rivers that made possible the creation of a port. Students will visit South Street Seaport and Hudson River

Park to gain a physical sense of how the port functioned. Written histories will help students understand how the port changed through time and implications on lives historically and today.

Co-curricular courses. Co-curriculars include physical education, foreign language (through online programming with online instructor), Adolescent Issues (planned by ESH), and electives developed by cPaths (see below).

Innovative Curriculum Elements. Three innovative curricular elements of S2 are Forum (which alternates with Debate Workshop); Personalized Learning Time intervention/enrichment block used to address students' unique needs on an individual and small-group basis; and CityPathways.

Forum and Debate Workshop. Students will meet alternating Mondays for Forum or Debate Workshop. This time will provide opportunities for students to address important school, community, and social issues through research and writing tackling a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences as recommended in the ELA standards. FHAO will collaborate with S2 staff in identifying topics and providing engaging resources around selected themes. S2 will also use curriculum resources from New York City Urban Debate League, a program that empowers underserved students while immersing them in public speaking, research techniques, civics, and law. The program has data showing that their alums have higher grade point averages, high school graduation rates, college acceptances, and number of scholarships than their peers. Debate classes provide time for argument development while Forum allows students to present their arguments and ideas; both require students to make decisions and solve real-world problems. Cases will require students to collaborate in small groups, conduct evidence-based discussions, communicate their ideas orally and in writing, and address complex issues of social importance. As students wrestle with issues, educators will collect anecdotal evidence, videotape and audio record dialogues for later transcription, and use school-wide debate rubrics to monitor student performance.

At other times, Forum will utilize a "charrette" format in which students work in PrimeTime groups to generate solutions to a given problem in an allotted time and present to the full community for approval or a vote. For example, if students voice complaints about school breakfast, we will grapple with "How can a community come together to improve their breakfast offerings, addressing all concerns as well as regulations and costs?" This process of finding acceptable resolutions is a form of democracy in action. To enhance the public and democratic dimensions of Forum, parents will have an open invitation to attend, and we will occasionally host guest facilitators. All students, including at-risk learners, benefit as they integrate oral and written language while providing structured opportunities to research and write about topics important to adolescents.

Personalized Learning Time. Meeting four days per week, PLT gives educators an opportunity to respond to student needs for Tier II and Tier III instruction in small groups determined by diagnostic assessments (NWEA MAP) and teacher observations in the classroom. For most students, PLT will focus on foundational proficiencies. In ELA, listening and reading comprehension and vocabulary development will be addressed in small group instruction. Guided reading groups for struggling readers, literature circles, and independent reading for proficient and advanced students will also be a part of PLT. In addition, all students will use myOn Digital Literacy Program, which offers thousands of digital titles based on student interest and levels, read aloud audios, informational text aligned with STEM, and teacher assessment reports that track Lexile growth. In math, small group instruction will be explicit and systematic. This includes providing models of proficient problem solving, verbalization of thought processes, guided practice, corrective feedback, and frequent cumulative review. When appropriate, students will use computer-based math fluency practice such as Concord Consortium and IXL Math. Educators will also provide

dedicated ELL and SWD services during this block. The various personalized offerings will meet on a pre-established schedule and be coordinated by teachers.

cPaths. CityPathways exposes students to a broad range of enrichment through high-quality community based organizations and teaching artists—personnel referred to as Coaches. A sample cPaths learning cycle is “I am an Alphabet,” exploring how the natural world is impacted by the environment and how we as individuals are shaped by forces in our environment. This is linked to the previously-referenced Social Studies Essential Question, “Does geography determine development?” bridging towards the Essential Question “To what degree does geography determine culture?” Teaching artists from the Bronx Museum of the Arts will come to the school once a week and students will go to the museum once a week, making several visits to the “Trees are Alphabets” exhibit by E.J. McAdams, which considers how sun, rain, wind, and soil constantly transform the shapes of trees. Students will engage in action research examining their everyday environment—and their own lives—through the lens of change. They will use the museum’s MediaLab to create a multi-media timeline of an object in their environment, depicting influences upon it, as a mid-point project and a digital chronology of important events in their own lives as a culminating project.

Instructional Practices. S2 will ground our instruction in research-based practices that align with our curriculum choices and provide teachers with the skills and strategies that encourage a variety of learning modalities and appropriate supports and extensions for all learners. This approach offers students ample opportunity to build and demonstrate mastery of standards.

Unit and Lesson Design. S2 educators will use Understanding By Design (UbD) as a model for planning new lessons and enhancing/extending lessons from our identified curriculum resources. The UbD framework enhances student learning as it supports teachers to think purposefully and focus curriculum and teaching on the development and deepening of student understanding and transfer of learning (i.e., the ability to effectively apply content knowledge and skill). When students make sense of and transfer their learning through authentic performance, understanding is revealed. To support all learners, S2 teachers will also use Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a set of principles for curriculum development that provides all students with equal opportunities to learn. Individuals bring a huge variety of skills, needs, and interests to learning. S2 teachers will use UDL for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone, with flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs, thereby enhancing student understanding and mastery of skills, content, and process.

Methods. No single instructional method is most effective for all students. S2 teachers will use a full range of instructional methods to maximize student learning, including direct instruction, student-facilitated learning, and independent study. Quality teaching will serve as the unifying principle of our instructional program, and we will consistently use research-proven strategies to build students’ skills and knowledge. Our instructional approaches will draw from the following key methods.

1) Related to UbD, but making transfer and independence more explicit is *Gradual Release of Responsibility* (GRR), which draws from an extensive research base, including Piaget’s work on cognitive structures and schema (1952); Vygotsky’s work on zones of proximal development (1962, 1978); Bandura’s work on attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (1965); Bruner’s work on scaffolded instruction (1976); and Duke and Pearson’s work on reading instruction (2002). S2 teachers will draw upon GRR to support their instructional decisions as they guide students to understand important skills and concepts through iterative cycles of focus lessons; guided, collaborative, and independent practice; and regular opportunities for application and transfer. GRR starts with instructional scaffolds—purposeful, educator-designed supports for learning, such as providing guided notes, previewing vocabulary, and progressing from simple to complex

applications of the same concept. But our main objective is to release cognitive responsibility to learners over time and to ensure that each student is pushed at an appropriately challenging level each day. The GRR is a learning-centered framework that ensures educators establish goals, check for understanding, provide feedback, align future instruction and tasks with student performance, and gradually remove instructional scaffolds to promote independent performance and transfer.

2) S2 teachers will implement a highly interactive and widely researched instructional model that engages students in strategic, authentic disciplinary reading called *Questioning the Author* (QtA). Similar to the types of questioning used in the Expeditionary Learning ELA Curriculum, QtA is a comprehensive, cross-disciplinary approach to reading comprehension that “focuses on the importance of students’ active efforts to build meaning from what they have read and the need for students to grapple with ideas in a text” (Beck & McKeown, 2006). In addition to engaging with before and after-reading strategies, educators using QtA apprentice students into using *during reading* strategies through asking open-ended queries that require students to make literal sense of a segment of the text and then reflect on its meaning. Examples of queries are “So, what is the author trying to tell us? How do you know? What makes you say that?” or “Why is the author telling us that now?” or “How do you think the author wants us to feel about the character?” Using this process iteratively, students develop the habit of continually monitoring their understanding of a text and pausing when gaps arise. S2 teachers will facilitate QtA student discussions in whole groups, small groups, or individually, and can eventually release responsibility to independent study groups, as S2 founders have done in their classrooms with great result.

3) S2 teachers will use an *Inquiry Process* in curricula designed around open-ended essential questions that challenge students to engage with real world issues and seek solutions using the methods of academic disciplines. We will teach our students the structured problem-solving processes and questioning techniques used by social scientists, mathematicians, and scientists. Our students will be encouraged to rethink assumptions and engage their world as a place to improve rather than to accept. Above all, inquiry will develop our students’ conscious control of the concepts and procedures they are using, building transferable strategies they can apply to new situations. Students will use inquiry learning during content area workshop sessions, in full class and small group discussions, and while working on science projects.

4) *Acceleration*. As teachers collaborate and share assessment results, they will generate next steps for students based on evidence of student understanding/misunderstanding. All students will receive timely and appropriate supports and extensions to enhance their skills. Rather than concentrating on a litany of items that students have failed to master, acceleration readies students for new learning. Past concepts and skills are addressed, but always in the purposeful context of future learning. Students learn faster and comprehend at a higher level when they have prior knowledge of a given concept. A crucial aspect of the acceleration model is putting key prior knowledge into place so that students have something to which they can connect new information. S2 teachers will thoughtfully activate prior knowledge that will best help students grasp the upcoming standard. This strategic approach of preparing for the future while plugging critical holes from the past yields strong results.

5) *Scaffolds and Differentiation*. The Center for English Language Learners at the American Institutes for Research presents prototypes that demonstrate how scaffolds have been effectively applied to lessons developed by Expeditionary Learning and CCLS math for New York State. These scaffolds may be used with ELLs at any level of English language proficiency, with variations in the levels of support predicated on students’ prior math knowledge and English proficiency. Scaffolds will be used as temporary instructional supports to help make rigorous grade-level curriculum accessible to all students, including ELLs and SWDs.

Partnerships Supporting Curriculum and Instruction

CityPathways (cPaths). To extend S2's core concept of the public square, cPaths will design and facilitate learning experiences that extend beyond the walls of the school, equipping students to become citizens and stewards of their city. By providing diverse programming for all students from 2:30-4:50 two days per week, cPaths will expose S2 students to a broad array of school-based and off-site experiences through 6-10 week rotating enrichment clubs. After students explore a range of activities, such as performing arts, robotics, and capoeira, they will choose areas in which to further concentrate and deepen learning. cPaths staff will meet monthly with AD and grade teams to coordinate project themes and trips to complement S2 curriculum.

Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO). To engage students in issues of social inequality, racism, and the deterioration of resource-deprived urban areas across the world, FHAO will work with S2 staff to develop a robust whole-school model for Forum and Debate that will impact the culture of our entire school. FHAO will also provide PD and resources for our social studies curriculum. Research shows that FHAO schools see increased academic engagement and decreased fighting and bullying, along with improved classroom learning environments and richer discussions of complex issues.

Equinox Sports Club. To enhance our health and fitness program and provide students with highly trained specialists, S2 has created a partnership with Equinox Sports Clubs of New York. They have committed to providing S2 with two instructors for four hours per week to work with our students to provide a rigorous physical education experience. Trainers will plan with our part-time health and fitness teacher to develop physical education curriculum and lesson plans.

Student Transition and Orientation Program. Students will be required to attend two summer programs, SummerFocus and SummerBridge.

SummerFocus: S2's Interview, Assessment, and Summer Assignment Cycle. As students prepare to enter our school, we want to help them feel known and supported. Our two-day SummerFocus session (See Attachment 3a) will offer students an opportunity to meet staff and peers in small group and individual sessions. During this two-day cycle, students will:

- Meet the Executive and Academic Directors and get to know their teachers.
- Learn about their summer assignments and how to organize and manage their summer schedules.
- Take interest surveys and meet for one-on-one interviews with S2 and ESH staff to learn more about them and undergo social, emotional, and mental health screening with an ESH advisor.
- Take diagnostic exams to establish pre-instructional baselines for literacy and numeracy and provide educators with usable data for coordinating support services and making adjustments to the Academic Program.
- Obtain resources to enrich their summer experiences such as passes to museums, information about local libraries' events, etc.
- Meet peers in small group settings to alleviate concerns about transitioning to the next grade.

Returning 7th and 8th grade students will also participate in Focus. They will complete assessments and surveys, participate in interviews with staff, and receive summer assignments. They will also engage in small group discussions introducing incoming 6th grade students to S2. Midyear transfer students will participate in assessments, surveys, and interviews whenever they arrive.

SummerBridge: S2's Introductory Course for New Students. During this eight-day unit, students will:

- Build relationships with educators and peers in community building activities.
- Engage in mindful awareness practices such as meditation and learn about academic mindsets.
- Establish adolescent-friendly norms, criteria, rubrics and checklists for being community-minded.
- Participate in scaffolded versions of Debate and Forum.

- Learn about school rules, values, and expectations through role play and creative activities.
- Learn about CityPathways programs and participate in mini-units that preview upcoming courses.
- Practice routines for trips and travel to a cultural institution in preparation for the various educational trips during the school year.
- Become acquainted with S2's grading system and student-led conference structure, which will be incorporated into PrimeTime Advisory during the year.

As our school grows into Y2 and Y3, our 7th and 8th grade students will attend this program with content focusing on high school preparation, college exploration, and career readiness.

D. ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Our comprehensive assessment systems will help our administration and teachers adjust teaching and learning practices to improve student performance. By regularly assessing student understanding, S2 will identify strategies to increase student learning, enable teachers to make strategic changes to the curriculum, and enhance communication with students and families about academic progress. Our ED and AD will coordinate the implementation of state, city, and internal assessments including those mandated by the NYS testing program. S2 will conduct the following assessments and analyze corresponding student achievement data.

Formative and Curriculum-based Assessments. Feedback to students that is frequent, specific, and accurate provides students with information about their strengths and areas for growth. The curriculum based measurements (CBM) incorporated in the curriculum programs we selected (e.g. Expeditionary Learning, Eureka Math) will support our use of prevention and intervention models. S2 will use formative assessments as (a) screening/benchmark instruments to identify at-risk students requiring additional instructional support, (b) progress monitoring tools to determine a student's response to supplemental instruction/intervention, and (c) outcome assessments to understand program efficacy and student performance in relation to same-age peers. Formative assessments will inform how students are grouped within classrooms and programmed and supported during PLT. Formative assessment results will also provide students with clear and explicit information on their academic progress and support them in goal setting.

In addition to the assessments and analytic rubrics for each curriculum, we will use (a) pre and post tests aligned to concepts or skills in the standards from each curriculum (b) exit tickets at the end of class to measure whether each student mastered the objective or needs additional support (c) constructed response questions (d) chapter and unit tests (e) homework, quizzes, and tests from curriculum units used to evaluate mastery of skills and content and (g) think-pair-shares and quick writes that facilitate simultaneous full-class participation and engagement.

Diagnostic and Interim Assessments. S2 will use Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP), Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), and NYS LEP Identification Process and Writing Tasks aligned with rubrics approved by the National Writing Project. These results will support teachers diagnostically as well as in modifying and enriching curriculum, selecting and matching students to texts, and providing them with indicators of student learning progressions in relation to mastering the concepts and skills in the standards.

To track interim growth, S2 students will return to these Lexile and standards-based assessments every six to eight weeks to measure instructional efficacy and student growth as modeled by North Star Academy, Amistad Academy, and Democracy Prep. These assessments will provide real-time data, with results shared with teachers in a timely way. The assessment results will be used to inform curriculum adjustments and assess the individual needs of each student.

Summative Assessments. S2 students will take all required city, state, and federal assessments such as New York State Tests in ELA, math, and science, and the New York State English as a Second Language Test for our ELL students to measure progress toward English proficiency. S2 will fully comply with all administration requirements for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) designating that they participate in the New York State Alternative Assessment. S2 will use these assessments to revise curriculum and instruction and identify needs of subgroups as well as individual students. Students will also show summative growth at the conclusion of every unit through performance-based assessments aligned to our curricula.

Using Assessment Data to Improve Academic Outcomes. S2 will use real-time assessment data to identify and provide support to students at risk of academic failure. Students whose coursework, grades, and other assessments indicate they are not on track to meet learning objectives will be recommended for additional support via our AIS teacher and be programmed for tutoring and small group instruction during PLT.

Our teachers will use data to benchmark progress towards meeting achievement goals, evaluate the effectiveness of our ELL and SWD services, identify trends and gaps in student understanding, conduct error analyses to determine the need for targeted intervention or enrichment in particular sub-skills, and differentiate instruction, including implementation of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.

Our Board of Trustees will use the data to hold the instructional leaders of the school accountable and evaluate their performance, allocate budgetary resources flexibly and responsively, communicate the school's outcomes and progress with the authorizer, and monitor and report progress towards Achievement Goals.

Our parents and students will use the data to monitor progress towards long-term academic goals, evaluate their satisfaction with the school, its educators, and its leadership, and identify potential high schools suited to students' interests, strengths, or needs. Parents and students will be made aware of student achievement data through a variety of mechanisms. S2 will provide parents with regular online access to their child's performance through Cortex, described below.

S2 will incorporate top-notch assessment-based practices and tools:

- We intend to use an online learning management system developed by InnovateEDU called Cortex. Cortex, an integrated student information and learning management system that integrates data from a variety of sources (including the NYC DOE's ATS system), creates a comprehensive profile for every child, providing a fully digital portfolio of academic evidence that can follow students at every stage of their academic career at S2 and beyond. Cortex can import, store, and aggregate achievement data, as well as provide visual assessment results, attendance, and proficiency across Common Core. The Brooklyn Lab Charter Middle School and several district and charter schools have chosen to pilot Cortex beginning in 2014.
- Assessment results will be analyzed and interpreted during PD blocks. We provide teachers with 150 minutes for data analysis per week and—with the support of the AD—will use assessment data to plan instruction. Assessment results will be presented to the Board in an accessible and transparent manner, and used by educators and learning support staff to design individual student action plans and other interventions.
- S2 will issue standards-based report cards each trimester that inform parents of their child's level of proficiency across a number of learning domains, including coursework, academic standards, and SEL standards like those defined in CASEL's five-point framework.
- At the end of each trimester, S2 will hold student-led conferences in which students present their portfolios to their families and reflect on their learning process.
- We will orient families to our grading approach and obtain assessment and personal information

during SummerFocus and SummerBridge in order to make strategic adjustments to our program. SummerFocus and SummerBridge will devote significant time to the diagnostics we describe in [Figure 2.1 Table of Diagnostic and Interim Assessments](#)

- The AD will lead teachers in exploring instructional strategies appropriate for students who score below, on, or above grade level. Students will meet regularly with their PLT instructors to self-assess and review progress towards their learning goals (drawing from the assessments described above as well as in-class work). As part of PrimeTime Academic Mindsets, students will learn how to set short and long-term goals (e.g. around increasing their reading proficiency).
- Our special education and ESL teachers, along with the ESH advisors, will communicate with the parents/guardians of SWDs and ELLs, communicating in their home languages, when necessary, about their child's progress in meeting both their academic and IEP goals. Teachers will communicate weekly during their dedicated Friday afternoon parent outreach time. IEP progress reports will be embedded within students' report cards.
- Evaluation of Forum and Debate will include the use of "The Classroom Debate Rubric," a five point scale rubric developed by Northern Illinois University, which incorporates criteria appropriate for adolescent learners. Evaluations will occur at the end of each trimester.
- Students and teachers will participate in summer, winter and spring surveys to assess effectiveness of PrimeTime Advisory, with questions related to academic mindsets, peer relationships, behavior, and executive functioning. We will share and unpack this data with the community in newsletters, on our website, and during Forum to continually improve these programs.

Reporting Structures. S2 will issue quarterly reports to its Board of Trustees detailing aggregate student performance, measuring progress against our Achievement Goals, and presenting next steps for the instructional leadership team. At the conclusion of the year, an annual report will include aggregated student test data, enrollment and retention statistics, and promotion statistics. See [Figure 2.2 for Table of Summative Assessments](#).

Figure 2.1 - Table of Diagnostic (D) and Interim (I) Assessments

Assessment(s)	D	I	Description and Research	Frequency/ Time Frame	Rationale	Use and Personnel Involved
Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP)	X	X	Computer-based adaptive assessment providing detailed student-, class-, and building-level literacy and math levels.	Diag.: Aug. Interims: Oct., Dec., Feb., May (Every 6-8 weeks)	To continually benchmark student reading performance on a longitudinal rubric, make responsive programmatic adjustments, and monitor growth in math and literacy over time.	Academic Director and educators will analyze student subskills to inform targeted literacy and math instruction and interventions in PLT and Core classes.
Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI)	X	X	Same as above (no math). Uses Lexile Framework to measure growth over time.	Diag.: Sept. Interim: Jan.	Same as above (no math). To provide supplementary data to NWEA MAP.	Same as above (no math).
NYS LEP Identification Process	X		Results of home language survey and NYS Identification Test of ELLs determine LEP status.	Diag.: Aug.	To identify and coordinate services for our ELL population.	ESL educators will administer, process, and program supports for all identified ELLs.
Writing Portfolio and other performance assessments measured along standards-aligned to rubrics	X	X	Performance-based writing tasks assessed to longitudinal writing rubrics. (e.g. 6+1 Trait rubric validated by the National Writing Project)	Diag.: Aug. Interim: every 6-8 weeks	To benchmark student writing performance on a longitudinal rubric, make responsive programmatic adjustments, and monitor writing growth over time.	AD and educators will analyze student writing using analytic, “trait-based” rubrics to inform writing instruction and interventions in PLT and Core classes.
Pre and post curriculum-based measures (See “Formative Assessments” in Section 2D)	X	X	Content and skill-based assessments that accompany each purchased curriculum	Ongoing	To benchmark student performance prior to and after instructional units.	AD and all educators will assess students daily for understanding and weekly (at minimum) for performance growth.

Figure 2.2 - Table of Summative Assessments

Assessments(s)	Description and Research	Time Frame	Rationale	Use and Personnel Involved
NWEA MAP, SRI, and Writing Portfolio	See Figure 2.1 - Table of Formative Assessments.	May/June	To assess students progress in reading, writing, and math over the academic year.	Academic Director and educators will compare progress against baseline data for all student groups to assess effectiveness of curriculum, instruction, and assessment program; make programmatic adjustments; inform future professional development; communicate student progress to families.
Curriculum-based measures	Aligned to each inquiry-based unit's curriculum	Ongoing	To assess end of unit growth.	All subject area educators will feature culminating assessments at the conclusion of their unit. These measures will vary subject-to-subject and curriculum-to-curriculum and will inform future units.
NYS English as a Second Language Achievement Test	State measure of English language proficiency.	Spring	To determine continuation or non- continuation of LEP services	ESL team will lead general educators in analyzing overall progress of ELLs and reflecting on the effectiveness of ESL programming. ESL team will adjust ELL programming and supports; communicate student status to families.
NYS Tests (ELA and Math)	State measure of grade-level proficiency	April	To assess students' achievement and progress towards mastery of grade-level standards.	AD and all educators will disaggregate results to compare progress and achievement across student groups; assess the effectiveness of curriculum, instruction, and assessment program; make programmatic adjustments; inform future professional development; reflect on the accessibility of our curricula to ELLs and SWDs; calibrate local assessments to the level of rigor in state measures
NYS Alternate Assessment	Portfolio Assessment for students deemed eligible by the CSE.	End of Sept. to end of Feb.	To assess students' mastery of alternative grade- level measures	Special educators will use these results to evaluate the efficacy of services provided to students with severe cognitive disabilities and inform future programming decisions.

E. PERFORMANCE, PROMOTION, AND GRADUATION STANDARDS

S2 is committed to preparing all students for college success and has set high promotional standards for all grade levels. Promotional standards include demonstrated proficiency on state assessments and successful completion of ELA, math, science, and social studies courses. ELLs will have multiple learning supports and students with IEPs will have all accommodations and modifications of curriculum as indicated in their plans.

Sample Exit Standards for 8th Grade based on the NYS P-12 CCLS

<u>ELA Promotional Standards</u>	<u>Math Promotional Standards</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.2. Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.3. By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.4. Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.5. Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.7. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.8. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.9. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Use linear equations and systems of linear equations to represent, analyze, and solve a variety of problems.2. Grasp the concept of a function as a rule that assigns to each input exactly one output.3. Use ideas about distance and angles to solve problems.4. Know that there are numbers that are not rational and approximate them by rational numbers.5. Work with radicals and integer exponents.6. Understand the connections between proportional relationships, lines, and linear equations.7. Define, evaluate and compare functions.8. Use functions to model relationships between quantities.9. Understand congruence and similarity using physical models, transparencies or geometry software.10. Understand and apply the Pythagorean theorem.11. Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving volume of cylinders, cones and spheres.12. Investigate patterns of association in bivariate data.13. Demonstrate grade level mastery of Mathematical Practices, including: make sense of problems and persevere in solving them; reason abstractly and quantitatively; construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others; model with mathematics; use appropriate tools strategically; look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.
	<u>Science Promotional Standards</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Formulate questions about natural phenomena2. Identify appropriate references to investigate a

<p>10. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.</p> <p>11. Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources.</p> <p>12. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts and information through the selection, organization and analysis of relevant content.</p> <p>13. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences using effective technique, relevant details, and well-structured sequences.</p> <p>14. Produce clear and coherent writing</p>	<p>question</p> <p>3. Refine and clarify questions so that they are subject to scientific investigation</p> <p>4. Independently formulate a hypothesis</p> <p>5. Differentiate among observations, inferences, predictions and explanations</p> <p>6. Design and conduct an experiment to test a hypothesis</p> <p>7. Organize results, using appropriate graphs, diagrams, data tables, and other models to show relationships</p> <p>8. Accurately describe the procedures used and the data gathered</p> <p>9. Evaluate the original hypothesis in light of the data</p>
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Promotion Policy. The NYS P-12 Common Core Learning Standards provide a framework for determining what a student should learn in each grade. Student proficiency in these standards will inform promotion and retention decisions.

Promotion decisions will be made by the ED in consultation with the AD and an individual student’s teachers. Decisions will be based on multiple measures of student readiness for the next grade level in ELA, math, science, and social studies, including NYS annual tests. Teachers will review student work from throughout the school year to determine whether the student is ready for the subject matter of the next grade. If the work shows readiness for the next grade level, the student is promoted. If not, the student must complete a promotion portfolio for the subject in which promotion is in doubt. The portfolio will be modeled on that used by the NYCDOE and will include standards-based assessments and classwork. Assessments align to the Common Core Learning Standards and focus on determining whether students are ready for the work of the next grade. The ELA portfolio includes writing samples and assessments of reading accuracy and comprehension. The math portfolio includes one-on-one assessments and classwork focused on the major work of the grade. Science and social studies portfolios include a project showing proficiency in the methods of those disciplines according to rubrics established by the teaching staff. Student participation in Debate and Forum will also be considered. Student-led Conferences, in which students show their parents or guardians the range of work they have completed in each trimester, will be assessed according to teacher-made rubrics, and contribute to the body of work considered for promotion. The rubric will be based on students’ ability to organize and explain their work for presentation and their capacity for self-assessment.

For all grades, promotional requirements will be clearly delineated and made known to educators, students, families, Board, and other relevant stakeholders through the report cards, student handbook, learning portfolio materials, SummerBridge, our website, and conferences with students and parents/guardians. Students’ PrimeTime and ESH advisors will monitor student progress towards promotional goals via Cortex online standards-based LMS. We will alert the student’s parent/ guardian about the Promotion in Doubt evaluation process as early as November and no later than January 1 for a school year. Once a child is identified, teachers will create a targeted academic plan that will involve a schedule of intensive interventions.

We will provide progress reports to parents/guardians of students who underperform academically on a monthly basis and our staff will collaborate with families to establish and

clarify potential retention and intervention plans. Furthermore, our ESH Advisors will work with students and families to address any obstacles to learning and provide referrals for additional services.

F. SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

School Culture. Building school culture is every member of our community’s responsibility; dynamic and purposeful, it defines our interactions. Together, the administration, teachers, students, parents/guardians, support staff, and community partners will collaborate to create a respectful, caring, responsive school through everyday routines, awareness, and relationships. Accordingly, S2 will place high priority on the academic and socio-emotional needs of our students, with opportunities for students to exhibit S2’s values throughout the day. This proactive approach, combined with strong, distributed leadership, sets norms of trust, respect, high expectations, support, optimism and accountability that guide everyday actions.

Every time we greet a student warmly by name, seek input on a new school policy, listen carefully to all parties in a conflict, or help others produce their best work, we reinforce these norms. By continually sending young people the message “We know you, we have time for you, and you matter,” S2 provides the compass and protocols necessary to support students in understanding their important role within the community.

Strategies for Developing a Safe and Orderly Environment. We believe staff culture sets the tone for school culture. We will build a collaborative staff culture through shared belief in discipline and restorative justice. We will model frequent and transparent communication among teachers and administrators, facilitating clarity of expectations and consistency in policy implementation. The leadership team will cultivate an environment that provides teachers with the differentiated support they need to enact and sustain these norms.

At S2, students come first. Staff members understand their primary responsibility: to know their students well, in both academic and social-emotional areas. Our system of assessments will enable collaborative analysis of needs to streamline our support services and outreach.

Shared Decision-Making and Teacher Leadership. S2 will encourage teacher participation in all aspects of our learning community, fostering and developing teacher leadership. We will actively inspire, support, empower, and celebrate the contributions of others and create conditions necessary to achieve S2’s goals, including our focus on continual improvement. School structures, norms, routines, protocols, traditions, and language will support mutual accountability and collaboration.

Shared Language and Management Practices. S2 will establish shared language among staff, students, and families to effectively communicate goals and values. Shared language practices will influence how we speak with and about each other, how we give feedback, how we share information, and how we resolve conflicts. This will provide young adolescents with the consistency and clarity of expectations necessary for them to engage in a demanding learning environment.

Developing a Student Culture of Learning and Reflection. As a place where they forge important relationships with peers and adults, middle school is a significant factor in teenagers’ identity formation. Will they become achievers, outcasts, provocateurs, peacemakers, social activists, problem solvers? Every day holds new opportunities to discover, create, and learn in a collaborative community where relationships with teachers and peers are an integral part of the process.

SummerFocus/ SummerBridge/ PrimeTime. These structures create foundational experiences to prepare for thoughtful engagement and hone academic skills and dispositions. School expectations and policies will be addressed in SummerBridge and reviewed during PrimeTime throughout the year.

Primary Person Model. Each student will have a PrimeTime teacher-advisor and an ESH advisor who will work directly with them and their families to address social and emotional needs through attendance support and referrals for other support services. Together they will take responsibility for connecting with advisees to know each student as a scholar and as a person while connecting with each advisee's family (See Attachment 7) and will have dedicated time in our schedule to collaborate.

Student-led Conferences. Our practice of Student-led Conferences each trimester empowers students to play an essential role in their personal and academic lives. Such conferences spur students to redefine their conversations with teachers and parents/guardians to include what and how they learn, as well as the progress they are making. As they set long- and short-term goals, they develop ownership of their learning and broaden their perspective. They assess both opportunities and obstacles, impelling greater effort to actually meet their goals.

Restorative Justice, Responsible Behavior. When members of our community have a sense of responsibility to themselves and others, the choices they make will strengthen the community. Building a sense of belonging, ownership, and mutual respect is key to the foundation upon which our school is built. Our entire community will work together to articulate practices that reflect these values. For example, when a child makes a choice that negatively impacts others, they need to understand the implications of their choice, whom it affects, and what other choices could have been made. Through this process with the support of advisors and teachers, students will develop the self-awareness and skills to act responsibly in future situations.

Student Behavior Management and Discipline. S2 intends to take a proactive role in nurturing students' prosocial behavior by providing them with a range of positive behavioral supports as well as meaningful opportunities for social emotional learning. We will establish a school-wide tiered framework of behavioral supports and interventions that guides the entire community toward following the school's rules and expectations, as well as the delivery of consistent and appropriate consequences when inappropriate student behavior disrupts learning. S2 models its approach based on the updated NYCDOE discipline code that we view as progressive and mission-aligned with S2. S2 will use a series of escalating consequences to redirect negative behaviors and protect the school community from harm. The NYCDOE code groups infraction into five levels based on the severity. Whenever possible and appropriate, the response to misconduct should begin with the lowest level of disciplinary response and should include appropriate guidance intervention(s).

Level 1: Uncooperative/Noncompliant Behavior

Level 2: Disorderly Behavior

Level 3: Disruptive Behavior

Level 4: Aggressive or Injurious/Harmful Behavior

Level 5: Seriously Dangerous or Violent Behavior

Borrowing heavily from the NYCDOE Discipline Code, S2's Discipline Code (See Attachment 4, "Consequences") categorizes standard infractions into one of the five levels listed above. A range of responses for each level of infraction appears below.

Uncooperative and Disorderly Student Behavior (Levels 1 and 2). Teachers will begin with verbal reminders of the expected student behaviors and strategies explicitly taught at S2. Reminders include de-escalation and calming techniques to enable students to reflect on behavior and adjust it themselves. Consequences for minor offenses include warnings from teacher or administrator, student/teacher conference, parent/guardian conference, phone calls home, and/or exclusion from extracurriculars.

Disruptive Behavior (Level 3). In addition to consequences noted above, if students are unable to adjust minor behaviors that prevent them or others from learning or disrupt the peace of the school community, they will be removed from the classroom. They will be referred to an ESH Advisor,

who will work with them to identify pertinent issues, develop an individualized behavior plan in conjunction, and return to class as appropriate.

Aggressive and Harmful Behavior (Levels 4 and 5). S2 will limit exclusion from learning to the extent possible and intends to use suspension and expulsion only as a last resort to maintain safety of the school community. Behavior issues that require these types of interventions will require involvement from the ED, including all reviews and approvals of recommendations for suspension.

Intervention Strategies. S2 Discipline Policy provides appropriate consequences and interventions for behavior violations.

Intervention and Prevention. Approaches include but are not limited to ESH support and services to address personal and family circumstances; social/emotional learning, such as conflict resolution/peer mediation/negotiation, restorative justice, anger management, stress management, and/or communication skills acquisition; use of alternate instructional materials and/or methods; enrichment services; alternate class placement; and/or development or review of functional behavioral assessments and behavioral intervention plans in alignment with citywide standards.

Conflict Resolution and Mediation. S2 will provide students with time and space to resolve conflicts in structured and productive manners. This may involve individuals or groups. No student shall be forced to participate in conflict resolution activities, but it is highly encouraged as an effective means to repair strains on relationships.

Restorative Justice. As part of our restorative justice approach, students will be given the opportunity to address the harm they have caused, even if it appears only to affect themselves. The nature of reparations will be determined in conference with school staff, parents, and when appropriate and to the extent possible, will involve the victim in discussion of chosen remedy. Examples of reparations include replacing, fixing, or cleaning damaged property; service or assistance to make up for lost time; and/or written or verbal apologies.

Consequences for Students with Disabilities. We intend to honor the individualized education plans of students with disabilities, 504 plans, or the behavior intervention plans of students who are “presumed to have a disability” and intend to respect the protections they receive under IDEA Manifestation Determination Review if they are subject to a disciplinary change in placement. A team that includes our ESH Lead Advisor and special educators will help determine appropriate behavioral and disciplinary interventions for all SWDs. For extended narrative, see Attachment 4.

Developing Parent and Community Culture of Engagement. S2 will establish an environment that encourages involvement and contributions of parents and guardians, partners, and community members. We will devote time, resources, and capital to cultivating and building these relationships.

Student and Family Support Services. We will use a range of formats for effective and timely communication with families including weekly newsletters, with classroom highlights, events, deadlines, and other information, to keep all community members up to date. S2 will work hard to make parents/guardians feel welcome at school. The Parent and Family Association will provide a forum for discussion of school issues and help parents become aware of opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. Students’ families will be involved in day-to-day life of the school—as guest speakers in classes, volunteers, and participants in academic presentations and Forums—empowering them as essential collaborators in issues facing the school or their child.

Student-led Conferences, guided by students with support from PrimeTime advisors, will occur at the end of each trimester, fostering family participation. We will provide translation/ interpretation services at all school events.

All staff will play a role in connecting families to S2. Our ESH staff will provide information and programs to assist families with critical issues that often impede academic development, and make home visits and other face-to-face contact with culturally respectful protocols. Our specialist teachers will work closely with staff and families to ensure SWDs and ELLs receive appropriate services and parents/guardians know their rights. Workshops will inform families about current regulations, ways to support children at home, and resources. Teacher schedules include time for outreach so parents/guardians hear regularly about their children's progress and positive accomplishments. Our cPaths partnership will invite families to participate in various excursions, share their expertise, and attend Community Celebrations.

Satisfaction with School Culture. In the same way we ask students to give and receive feedback, S2 will build opportunities for reflection and improvement into our program through data analysis and surveys. Our Parent and Family Association will offer an organizational structure for parents and guardians to advance their ideas to S2 leadership. As part of our Student-led Conferences, parents and guardians will participate in brief surveys to provide feedback about communication, engagement, school culture (including safety and environment), and instructional programs. In addition to this and student feedback received in Forums, S2 will also use data gathered from annual NYCDOE School Surveys, which garner opinions on communication, family engagement efforts, school safety, and quality of instruction, to assess and improve family and student satisfaction.

School Self-Evaluation. Each year, S2 will analyze data about school safety and the learning environment. This will include consistency of behavior and academic expectations across teachers and grades. We will identify topics for school improvement based on these results which will include, but not be limited to: student attrition rate, suspension rate, incident reports, injury reports, attendance and lateness reports, family participation at Student-led Conferences and other school events, student achievement outcomes, teacher satisfaction surveys, and any formal complaints.

G. SPECIAL STUDENT POPULATIONS AND RELATED SERVICES

We have designed S2 to support all levels of learners within a structured environment designed to maximize student time on task with academically rigorous content. Staff will be hired and professionally developed with this lens, inclusive of PD in Universal Design for Learning (UDL). S2 structures like Personal Learning Time (PLT) are designed to ensure customization to student needs at all levels. As a school committed to democracy and social justice, S2 curriculum is designed to challenge all students to do their best academically, particularly our most vulnerable students: SWDs, ELLs, and students at risk of academic failure.

Supports for Students At Risk of Academic Failure

Identification. Based on average CSD 9 and 10 performance, we anticipate that a significant proportion of our students will enter one or more years behind grade level. To identify incoming students at risk of academic failure, we will administer computer-based reading and math diagnostic assessments during our SummerFocus and SummerBridge sessions. Students who are academically low achieving will be identified through triangulated assessments (See Section 2D and Figure 2.1) as well as through observations and early classroom performance.

Services and Staffing for Students At Risk Academically. We firmly believe that when students feel heard and known, they feel more valued, which leads them to invest and participate in their education. Accomplishing this involves instructional design that is inviting, relevant, inclusive, and challenging for all learners. S2's design incorporates instructional practices that meet the needs of all learners, cultivating an environment where students take academic risks, have the supports and interventions necessary to meet standards, and a learning community that values safety and closeness. This is the

essence of an effective Response to Intervention (RtI) system: setting up tiers of instruction and a network to support students wherever they are in the learning process. In addition to our four Core teachers, ESL and special education teachers, our school will hire an Academic Intervention teacher part-time in Year 1, with the expectation of being full time beginning Year 2.

Tier I. Our commitment to a UDL approach ensures students will have access to learning environments that are accessible and effective for all. Classroom teachers provide Tier I interventions and supports. The use of organizational tools and strategies, student goal-setting, metacognitive routines to prompt student self-assessment, conferring, and differentiated instruction will be in effect in all classes. S2 teachers will use technology to provide adaptive texts, supplemental instructional materials, and adaptive software to augment the curriculum. Educators will conduct universal screening using interim diagnostics, perform ongoing assessment to determine instructional strengths and needs, and implement interventions within the general classroom.

Tier II. Students who are not meeting grade-level benchmarks and for whom Tier I interventions are not supportive enough will receive Tier II interventions. These students will receive the same instruction as students in Tier 1 as well as targeted interventions. Tier II interventions will be provided by the classroom teacher as well as support staff when necessary. General educators will monitor student progress on a biweekly basis and interventions will be provided no less than three times per week for a minimum of 20-30 minutes per session.

Tier III. Students who do not respond to Tier II interventions will receive sustained, intensive interventions for 30+ minutes 3-4 times per week in small groups of no more than three students. Progress will be monitored no less than once a week.

The Academic Director, special educators, and ESL educators will regularly collaborate with general educators during PD to ensure lessons provide universal access. The specialist teachers will closely monitor students' response to interventions and keep classroom educators apprised of at-risk (but unclassified) students' progress and the effectiveness of implemented interventions.

Parents/guardians will be informed of these interventions and receive detailed plans for helping children succeed at home. Students without IEPs who exhibit signs of disabilities that impede their ability to participate successfully in our general education classrooms beyond the tiered interventions below may be referred to the CSE. All referrals will state reasons for referral (inclusive of test results), describe attempts to remediate student's performance, and describe nature and extent of guardian involvement. A copy of this referral, along with the procedural safeguard notices described in 34 CFR §300.504, will be sent to student's guardians.

Administration and Program Evaluation: S2 will gauge our effectiveness in supporting academically at risk students through:

- Gathering and analyzing interim assessments (e.g. NWEA MAP, SRI), classroom work, and other formative data from at-risk students, and analyzing trends of academic growth and progress.
- Evaluating how long it takes at risk students to move out of Tier II or III status, how fast they progress through interventions, and how well they do academically while in such programming.
- Disaggregating performance of at-risk students from the general education population to ensure they are making growth on par with general education peers.
- Interviewing educators about their needs in serving this population and customizing professional development in response to needs.
- Administering surveys and holding focus groups of parents and students about their satisfaction with the level of support S2 provides as well as its communication around student progress.

Supports for Students with Disabilities

Identification. S2 will identify students with pre-existing IEPs by reviewing each student's academic records alongside information from ATS and the Special Education Student Information System (SESIS). Our special educators will evaluate IEPs to determine how S2 can most effectively provide the settings and services defined in the IEP, working closely with the CSE. This process will include meeting with the CSE and students' guardian(s) to discuss how services will be delivered consistent with the IEP. Our goal will always be to ensure we provide all services recommended by the IEP, and that students can access and achieve through the curriculum, make progress towards annual goals, and participate fully in the life of the school, inclusive of PrimeTime, Forums, and cPaths.

The regional CSE will be responsible for initial evaluations, re-evaluations, and exit determination. Starting in year two, the S2 School Support Team will work with CSE and families to design, review, and revise all IEPs. S2 will collaborate closely with the CSE to ensure that all students' IEP needs are met within our program.

As referenced above, students for whom interventions prove ineffective will be referred to our Student Support Team (SST), comprised of our special and ESL educators. We will make staffing and programming decisions in response to diagnostic assessments and initial reviews of enrollees who have IEPs, scheduling students who require services first.

To determine whether a non-classified prospective student requires an IEP or special services, we will adhere to the following process:

1. After implementing all tiers of interventions, we will convene the SST to work with the student under discussion and a family member or caregiver. Open communication with families is paramount to avoid stigmatization and inaccurate assessment of student needs.
2. The SST will review diagnostic and interim data, interventions employed within the RtI framework, work samples, contextual information about the students' performance, and anecdotal observations. Participants will suggest modification or accommodation options that have not yet been exhausted.
3. After this review, the SST will make a cogent recommendation to the CSE for evaluation.
4. Anecdotal evidence and formal documentation from educators will be provided to the CSE to assist in the formal evaluation process prior to CSE determination.

Services and Staffing for SWDs. To ensure success for students with disabilities, S2 will work with the CSE and CSD 9 and 10 to provide all services in full accordance with state and federal laws. To the maximum extent each student's circumstances allow and in accordance with IEP and all applicable federal laws—including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973—S2 will educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE) alongside non-disabled peers. Our students with disabilities and their families will be offered appropriate evaluations and assessments and will be involved in the development of and decisions regarding their IEPs. S2 will provide full access to appropriate procedures and mechanisms for students and their parents or guardians to resolve any disputes or disagreements related to their services.

S2's staffing model is flexible and fully compliant with applicable laws, enabling us to provide all IEP and Section 504 services. In Year 1, we will hire one or two full time special educators (depending on enrollment) for students with mild or moderate special needs. These individuals will be responsible for implementing classroom-based IEP services, ensuring that all students with IEPs can access the general curriculum, and providing accommodations and modifications accordingly.

Certified special education teachers will focus on providing classroom-based inclusion services and other services when required by an IEP. Our special educators will work directly with the CSE and also serve as Section 504 Officers. If through the lottery process, students are admitted who have profound or severe disabilities, S2 will ensure that such students have appropriately certified aides and teachers working with them to provide necessary services.

At full capacity, S2 will offer a 3:2 staff-to-class model (six general educators for four classes of 27 students) in addition to licensed special educators providing services appropriate to students' IEPs. Special educators will collaborate closely with general educators to integrate differentiated instruction to meet the needs of students with disabilities. ICT teams will use Marilyn Friend's six co-teaching models to leverage the presence of two educators: Team Teaching; One Teach, One Observe; Station Teaching; Parallel Teaching; Alternative Teaching; One Teach, One Assist.

When a student arrives at S2 with either an IEP or 504 plan, our special educators and Academic Director will be immediately responsible for ensuring that all services indicated in the plan are available. All of the student's teachers will be provided with relevant sections of the IEP and will work with our special education teachers to ensure appropriate compliance with the plan.

Upon reviewing pre-existing IEPs, our special educators will provide summaries to general educators detailing students' IEP goals, required modifications to the instructional program; and strategies that have proven effective for the student in past educational settings. With the assistance of our AD, educators will align instructional units with strategies to ensure SWDs needs are met. Our AD will continually support general and special educators with opportunities to co-plan, troubleshoot co-teaching relationships, and differentiate so every student with disabilities can meet and exceed IEP goals. Ongoing training and PD will regularly be provided, inclusive of engaging outside consultants as necessary to support implementation of IEP or 504 plans.

All special education services will be provided by appropriately trained, certified, and licensed providers. Our special educators will manage and safeguard IEPs and other confidential documentation in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Family Educational Records Privacy Act. An access log will be maintained to track the movement and use of confidential records. Staff will be trained in policies and procedures in special ed service provision as well as records maintenance, family rights, and disciplinary expectations for students with disabilities. S2 will provide an annual report to SED as required by 34 CFR 300.750, delineating the number of students with IEPs and 504 plans, the specific nature of students' disabilities, and each student's placement and educational setting. S2 will comply with NYCRR 119.3 requirements for the Charter School Report Card, including those pertaining to students with disabilities.

Administration and Program Evaluation. Our model avoids pullout from core courses to the extent possible, providing customized, adaptive support through PLT, push-in models, and extended learning time. Each student with an IEP or 504 will be monitored weekly by a special education teacher to ensure compliance with his/her IEP and to assess whether students are making effective progress in all subjects or in accordance with IEP goals and if not, to take action accordingly. Students' IEPs will be reviewed annually and when necessary, our special educators will contact the CSE to re-evaluate students and revise IEPs as needed or requested by a parent. S2 will work closely with the CSE to ensure that S2 staff members participate in all Annual Review meetings and that all three-year re-evaluations are completed in a timely manner.

All S2 students with IEPs or 504s will take the same city, state, and classroom assessments as their non-disabled peers, receiving appropriate accommodations as identified in their IEPs. Parents/guardians will receive IEP progress reports along with each report card, and students will reference their IEP progress within Collaborative Conferences.

Our general and special educators with the AD will gauge effectiveness through:

- Gathering and analyzing regular interim assessments, classroom work, and other formative data from students with IEPs, examining trends of academic growth and progress.
- Reviewing summative data from service providers and educators to evaluate progress towards academic and non-academic goals.
- Disaggregating performance of SWDs from the general education population to ensure SWDs are making growth on par with general education peers.
- Interviewing educators about their needs serving this population and providing responsive PD.
- Surveying and conducting focus groups with parents/guardians of SWDs and the students themselves about their satisfaction with the level of support S2 provides as well as our communication about student progress.

Supports for English Language Learners

Identification. To identify ELLs, we will administer Home Language Surveys to all students and then the NYSISTEL if the student indicates that English is not the home language. Students who score beginner, intermediate, or advanced on the NYSISTEL will qualify for services.

English learners face daunting learning challenges understanding components of the language, including phonology, vocabulary, syntax, discourse styles, and cultural contexts, all while making sense of grade-level content. In order to increase their knowledge of the English language and apply that knowledge to content standards, ELLs need highly qualified teachers, challenging and engaging curriculum, and carefully scaffolded instruction. S2 will support identified ELL students in an inclusive Structured English Immersion (SEI) program that provides extra supports needed to rapidly achieve proficiency in English without segregating ELLs from their English-speaking peers.

ELL students will receive push-in language support services in general education classrooms from certified ESL educators as well as additional tiered ELL services through PLT, during which our ESL and special educators will be available to provide instruction targeted to each student's proficiency. We will use SEI language instruction and sheltered content instruction, which includes a variety of strategies for making the content of lessons more comprehensible to ELLs. These approaches will help students at beginning and early intermediate levels of English proficiency catch up to peers while benefiting students at all proficiency levels. ELL students will have equal if not greater access to all programs and services, including instructional services, support services, and enrichment and expanded programs.

Services and Staffing for ELLs. Our SEI program will comply with all applicable laws and legal precedents specifically related to ELLs, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, and *Castaneda v. Pickard* (1981). To ensure that our ELL students master English as quickly as possible, we will provide licensed and trained staff, specialized curricular materials, extra time, and in-class services for students in need of supplementary support. Our ESL teacher will communicate with students and their families as needed.

During weekly PD, our educators will provide content-based ELL instruction consistent with WestEd's framework for Quality Teaching of English Learners (QTEL), an approach predicated on the same principles as the Gradual Release of Responsibility. This structured approach to English immersion provides scaffolds and adapts instructional strategies for students in the Pre-Production, Early Production, Speech Emergence, and Intermediate or Advanced Fluency stages. By using a variety of stage-appropriate adaptations, our educators will optimize content and language learning with students. These interventions will be delivered in general education settings and in PLT, with targeted Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions delivered by a qualified ESL educator.

Students learn English best by speaking it, and our language-rich model, which includes familiarizing all students with academic vocabulary, will provide ample opportunities for our ELLs to “practice” English. By incorporating language goals alongside content goals in our Tier 1 program, we honor the widely established research finding that language learning and content-area learning are distinct educational goals (Gerstner and Baker, 2000; Himmele & Himmele, 2009; Fisher & Frey, 2011).

Administration and Program Evaluation. S2 will use multiple sources of data to evaluate the effectiveness of our ELL programming including:

- Gathering and analyzing regular interim assessments, classroom work, and other sources of formative data from ELL students, examining trends of academic growth and progress towards grade-level content and stage appropriate language goals.
- Disaggregating the performance of ELLs from the general education population to ensure ELLs are making growth on par with general education peers.
- Interviewing educators about their needs and providing PD in response to needs.
- Administering native language-aligned surveys and holding focus groups with families of ELLs and students themselves about their satisfaction with the level of support S2 provides as well as our communication around student progress.
- Analyzing annual performance on the NYSESLAT to evaluate how long it takes the average student to transfer out of ELL status, how fast they progress through evaluations, and how well they are doing academically. Using these indicators, we will evaluate our SEI program annually and modify accordingly.

Supports for Academically Advanced

Identification. We will identify academically advanced students through a series of evaluative tools including diagnostic assessments, review of student records, student interviews, observations, samples of student work across domains, and state test scores.

Services and Staffing. All classes will provide differentiation according to the needs, interests, and talents of each student. Academically advanced students will have additional autonomy in PLT to:

- Explore above grade-level texts with peers in book groups.
- Solve high-level math problems with real-world applications.
- Propose and develop an independent research project for a relevant audience.

Administration Review and Program Evaluation. S2 will use multiple sources of data to evaluate the effectiveness of its academically advanced programming including:

- Administering regular interim testing and disaggregating performance of academically advanced students from the general and special ed population to compare growth trends between groups.

Holding focus groups with academically advanced learners to ascertain the level of challenge they experience in the curriculum.

III. ORGANIZATIONAL AND FISCAL PLAN

A. APPLICANTS/FOUNDING GROUP CAPACITY

S2 founders Evan Meyers (proposed Executive Director) and Adam Fachler met in July 2013 in the Leaders in Education Apprenticeship Program (LEAP) where they discovered shared beliefs about education and began to plan a school together. After each spent a year as an intern principal, the pair worked full-time designing the educational plan for S2, meeting hundreds of families in Bronx churches, after school programs, elementary schools, and apartment buildings, and connecting and collaborating with a growing network of Bronx leaders.

Collectively, our planning team, which consists of our proposed Board of Trustees and an advisory board, has an interest in empowering young people in the Bronx and comprises both longtime colleagues of the founders as well as people met while soliciting feedback and support for S2. In selecting the board, we considered a host of factors including expertise, experience, and socio-economic, gender, and ethnic backgrounds. The founders and proposed board members have convened monthly since October 2014 to craft a shared vision for success.

Mr. Meyers and Mr. Fachler are the primary application authors; they meet regularly to collaboratively develop the school model, review drafts, and plan monthly applicant team meetings. They have expanded the team to provide expertise in several areas of the work:

- We enlisted former NYCDOE school leaders Mike Weinberg and Jeanne Rotunda to help think through our overall schedule, budget, and educational plan.
- For our first submission, we hired Simeon Stolzberg, an education consultant and former charter school authorizer, to provide support into the charter application process and preparation.
- We engaged Charter School Business Management (CSBM) to learn best practices around charter school finances and budgets and to review our final submission. Mr. Meyers has spent hours learning and reviewing S2 budget plans with their experts.

Additionally, we have received input on the application from Ron Berger, founder of Expeditionary Learning; David Levin, founder of KIPP Academy; Joel Greenblatt, founding member of Success Academy; Emary Aronson, Managing Director of Education at the Robin Hood Foundation; Eliot Washor, founder of Big Picture School Network; Steve Klinsky, the founder of Victory Education Partners; and education authors Jeff Wilhelm and Kathleen Cushman.

B. BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND GOVERNANCE

Overview. In Attachment 5A submitted with our Letter of Intent, we presented a proposed board of eleven trustees; with this submission, we add Aaron Listhaus. Our members have charter management and board experience, expertise in education (elementary, secondary, and higher education in both instruction and administration), non-profit management, youth development, at-risk youth services, social work, business, finance, law, entrepreneurship, corporate real estate, and management consulting. A number of our board members also have not-for-profit experience.

Narrative. Mr. Meyers recruited Mr. Pollack and other initial board members who began meeting in October of 2014 and took ownership of the project. Together they developed a vision for the skills and expertise that the leader of S2 would need. During the ensuing months more proposed members, were vetted and invited to attend meetings. In some cases, these individuals were ultimately invited to join the board.

After deliberation and months of dialogue about the professional and personal skills required to effectively run S2, the board collectively found that co-founder Mr. Meyers was unequivocally qualified to serve as its Executive Director. As a diverse, professional, and ultimately mission-aligned group, the board believes in its capacity to oversee implementation of the school program, support its leaders, and hold them accountable to results. Furthermore, the ED and the board have already sustained a healthy, professional, working relationship through the board work done to date.

Mitigating conflicts of interest. As Assistant Executive Director of ESH, an organizational partner, proposed board member Daniel Diaz will recuse himself from any board discussion or vote concerning ESH and will follow all the protocols in Article XII of our bylaws (Attachment 5B).

Administrative Relationship. The proposed Board of Trustees understands that if granted a charter with the Board of Regents, they are responsible for the academic, organizational, and financial performance of the school. They understand the Board of Regents has the authority to

approve our charter and in five years reauthorize it through a renewal process. Once chartered, S2 will work with the State Education Department on Prior Actions to secure consent to open as well as monitoring visits and reporting requirements once the school is operational.

Roles and Responsibilities. The key roles and responsibilities of our Board include:

- Defining and refining the school’s mission
- Setting and amending policy as necessary
- Establishing measurable goals with clear deliverables
- Hiring school leadership to manage day-to-day operations
- Ensuring adequate resources to achieve the mission
- Monitoring implementation and oversight of all programs as described in the charter
- Advocating for the school financially and politically
- Holding school leadership accountable for achieving the school’s mission and goals and ensuring compliance with the charter and all applicable laws and regulations

Board Structure and Procedures. Our Board will have between five and 15 members with staggered five-year terms. The Board values input from all stakeholders and will work with the Parent and Family association to notify and encourage parents to attend board meetings. S2 will explore holding joint meetings between the board and the Parent and Family association. S2 will also notify the public through our school website, in messages to parents, and in local media, such as the Bronx Free Press, at least one week in advance of monthly public meetings at the school. Meetings will be driven by detailed agendas that include a public comment period to allow for community input. The Board will adhere to the Open Meetings Law but may go into executive session for appropriate matters, such as private personnel matters, litigation strategies, and contract negotiations.

Board leadership includes the President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The President presides over meetings and the Secretary is responsible for minutes of every meeting. The Board will have four standing committees—Governance, Finance, Community Outreach, and Accountability. It may create ad hoc committees as needed for tasks such as hiring, nominating, evaluating leader or partners, or fundraising. The Board will expect the ED and other school leaders to attend meetings and provide regular reports as well as a dashboard of pertinent data with which to monitor the health of the school, e.g. attendance, budget to actuals, and state test results.

Recruitment, Selection, and Development Plans. Criteria for joining the Board includes commitment to the mission, understanding the charter bargain of autonomy in exchange for accountability, knowledge of governance role and responsibilities, ability to make the necessary commitment of time and focus, and relevant skills and experience. In proposing a robust twelve member founding board we feel we have aggregated a team with the requisite skill sets to effectively oversee S2. We are committed to timely self-examination in order to continually assess our efficacy and to finding new members who share our passion and add to our capacity. S2 has a nominating committee that screens potential new members.

Thus far, the applicant group has been very effective at identifying quality board members but may utilize other means, such as Board matching programs, to recruit new members. All candidates will be provided with a Board job description, tour the school, and attend at least one Board meeting before being recommended by the Executive Committee to the full Board for approval. The board has also reviewed committee roles and responsibilities and selected officers and committee chairs.

All Board Members will receive a comprehensive “Board Book” that includes—among other documents—the charter application, the charter, Board by-laws and code of ethics, policies

approved by the Board, and Board meeting agendas and minutes. New members will participate in an orientation facilitated by the Governance Committee that will review policies and practices.

The Board will establish annual goals for itself each summer for the coming school year around meeting participation and timely decision-making, and will annually evaluate itself through self-assessments by individual Board members and feedback from school leaders, staff, and families. The Board will use this to inform its ongoing plan for Board development and will commit to implementing research-proven governance practices, attending local and national conferences, and participating in explicit board training by governance experts. In addition, S2 has contracted with Charter Schools Business Management (CSBM) to lend financial and decision-making expertise.

C. MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

Staffing Plan. Our organizational chart presents our vision for staffing for the first five years of S2 and creates a clear delineation of responsibilities.

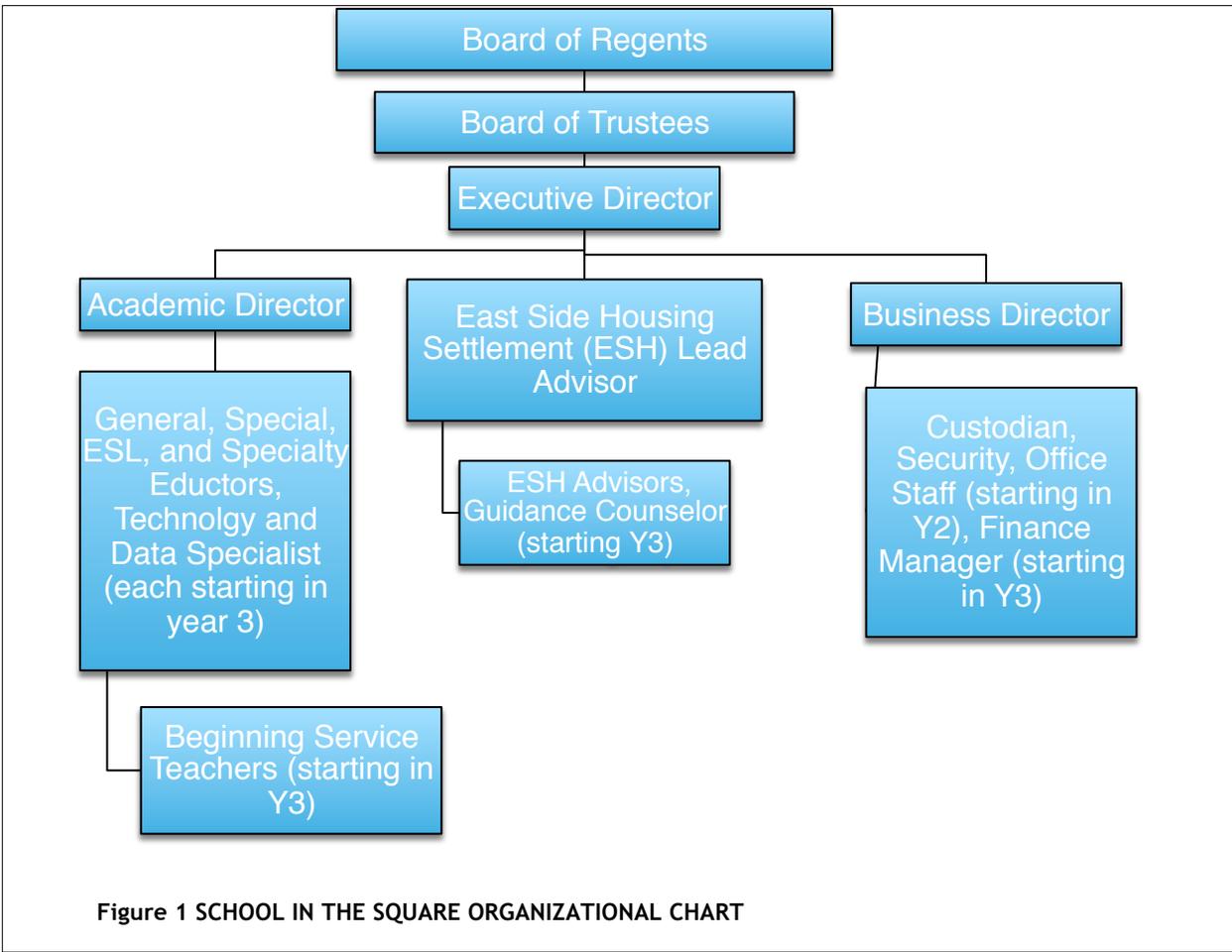


Figure 1 SCHOOL IN THE SQUARE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Leadership Team. The Executive Director (ED) will report directly to the Board and be held accountable for all aspects of the school. He will directly supervise the Academic Director (AD), the Business Director (BD), the ESH Lead Advisor, and CSBM. The AD and BD will respectively supervise the instructional and operations teams. This distributed leadership model was selected based on the experience of other successful charter schools that have found it effective to separate operational and academic responsibilities to allow for more specialized attention to each area. Below

are summaries of the School Leadership Team (SLT) responsibilities with more detailed job descriptions and qualifications in Attachment 8a.

Executive Director (ED): As school leader, the ED will model learning and create conditions for all to learn. The ED is responsible for managing day-to-day responsibilities and external affairs, including fundraising, and will delegate responsibilities as needed. The ED will articulate the school's mission, vision, and goals to all stakeholders and the public and will communicate regularly with the board, serving as the point of contact for our authorizer and other external organizations. He will supervise and evaluate the leadership team, be actively involved in resource development, and manage partnerships. The ED will work with CSBM to manage budgeting and forecasting, expense control, school funds, purchases, inventories, office operations, and facilities. The ED will also assist the AD in evaluating instructional staff and making staff retention and promotion decisions. Our proposed ED is Evan Meyers, who has 25 years of business, education, and not-for-profit experience and skills that make him uniquely qualified to lead a charter school (See Attachment 8b).

Mr. Meyers began his professional career as a commodities trader and in 1992 founded York Commodities. As the sole owner, he set strategic direction; managed nearly 20 employees; developed foundational financial, research, analytical, and organizational skills; and created and implemented budgets. He became an educator after a 20-year career in finance, obtaining a Master of Arts in Teaching of Social Studies from Columbia University and serving as a founding faculty member of the High School for Language and Diplomacy. He taught for five years and completed the Leaders in Education Apprenticeship Program (LEAP) in June 2014 resulting in receipt of the School Building Leader (SBL) certification. He has a proven ability to create programs, establish outside partnerships, and secure financial funding for these initiatives. Examples include founding a nationally-recognized Community Service Club and securing SAT tutoring for an entire grade. He serves on the Advisory Board for the non-profit Facing History and Ourselves (Mr. Meyers will resign from the FHAO board if it is determined to be a conflict of interest) and formerly on the Board of Directors for Let's Get Ready. Through this, he has experienced high functioning boards with effective governance, which he will leverage to build culture and competence with S2's proposed Board.

Academic Director: As the instructional leader of the school, the AD will coordinate the academic program, including implementation of the school's curriculum, instructional methods, assessment system, and professional development of academic staff. The AD will be a regular presence in classrooms, observing and coaching teachers, and will hold regular data meetings and trainings to increase the capacity of the staff. The AD will also model best practice teaching in order to push his or her own practice and develop credibility among the other instructional staff, the frequency of which will be determined by the organization's needs. We anticipate that the AD will spend approximately 20-25% of his or her time in the classroom during Years 1-3 and approximately 10-20% thereafter. The qualifications of the AD are described in Attachment 8a.

Business Director: Responsible for non-academic functions of the school, the Business Director (BD) will ensure effective implementation of operational matters such as transportation, food, health services, procurement, and reporting. Under the supervision of the ED, the BD will manage facility and security issues; oversee the nurse, custodial, and security personnel; and coordinate financial management of the school with CSBM, which will transfer to an internal Finance Manager in Year 3. Like the AD, we anticipate that the BD's responsibilities will shift in response to the organization's needs. For example, in Year 1, with only 108 students, the BD will execute secretarial functions and be supported by the ED in delivering S2's non-academic services. In Year 2, the BD will transfer responsibility for these functions to the newly hired office manager. Commensurate with increased managerial responsibilities the BD's salary will increase from \$65,000 to \$80,000.

Other Key Positions

ESH Advisors. Through our partnership with East Side House, advisors will be embedded at the school to address student and family needs. Each grade will have a dedicated ESH Advisor with experience in youth development who will be integrated into the grade team. A Lead Advisor will manage the overall program. The ESH Advisors will build relationships with families, provide access to the supports each child needs, address attendance and punctuality issues, teach Adolescent Issues classes, and promote restorative justice practices. The ED will decide on hiring and retention.

cPaths Coaches. cPaths rigorously vets Coaches, selecting those with a record of doing outstanding work with middle grade students and a commitment to fostering motivation and mastery. cPaths contracts are for 6-10 week cycles, and anyone deemed unsatisfactory based on student satisfaction and quality of projects and performances isn’t asked back for the next cycle. Top charter network Summit Public Schools in CA embraces elements of the cPaths approach in its Learning Expedition Cycles. Success of the cPaths program will be determined by student satisfaction, observations by the ED and cPaths Director, and completion and quality of student projects and performances, which will be reflected upon in student-led conferences.

Beginning Service Teachers. Beginning in Year 3, the school will implement a 3:2 model with a team of three teachers for every two classes of 27 students. The teacher team will include a newly certified apprentice teacher working with experienced humanities and STEM teachers. This team will enable new learning formats and configurations, and foster interdisciplinary connections between the two core subject areas. By Year 5, eight educators—two humanities, two STEM, two Beginning Services Teachers, one ESL teacher, and one special educator—will serve four classes on each grade. This model will support co-teaching and small group instruction in all core classes and provide growth opportunities for novice teachers. By Year 2, we anticipate placing student teachers in classes in partnership with Teachers College (see Attachment 2), creating an expansive support network of adults for all students at the school. We will benefit from the teacher apprentice program in that it:

- Gives our experienced staff an opportunity to practice coaching, mentoring, and training
- Establishes a teacher pipeline with our university affiliate, Teachers College at Columbia
- Provides clinical experience to novice educators in a highly professional environment

S2’s staffing plan was informed by the demographics of CSD 9-10, the board’s experience, and community input. The number of teaching positions across each of the subject areas is based on projected annual enrollment. As the school expands, the number of staff will increase to ensure that students’ academic and non-academic needs are fully and effectively addressed. Our ELL and SPED students will benefit from the skills of our combined staff of five educators and be further aided by the additional trained adults in classrooms as our apprentice program gets built out.

Position	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Executive Director	1	1	1	1	1
Academic Director	1	1	1	1	1
Business Director	1	1	1	1	1
Office Manager	-	1	2	2	2
Finance Manager	-	-	1	1	1
ESH Lead Advisor	1	1	1	1	1

ESH Advisors	1	2	3	3	3
Guidance Counselor	-	-	1	1	1
Paraprofessional	1	1	1	1	1
School Aide	1	1	2	2	2
Teachers – Core	4	8	12	12	12
Teachers – Beginning Service	-	-	2	4	6
Teachers – Specialty	1	2	3	3	3
Teachers – SPED	1	2	3	3	3
Teachers - ELL	1	2	2	2	2
Technology Specialist	-	-	.5	1	1
Data Specialist	-	-	1	1	1
Custodian	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Nurse contracted	1	1	1	1	1

Recruitment and Retention. Our planning group has connections to local schools of education, the vast Facing History network (see Attachment 2), and their own professional networks of educators to provide a pipeline of teacher candidates. In addition, S2 will advertise through our website and other job posting websites, teacher job fairs, and program newsletters. Finally, S2 will leverage our relationships with ESH and cPaths, to spread the word among like-minded educators interested in a unique teaching experience. We will use these networks as well as new leader training programs to recruit for leadership positions. Similarly, we will use these networks and local community organizations and resources to recruit non-instructional staff.

We will use a screening process inclusive of a group and/or individual interview, demonstration lesson, written response to a problem-based situation, such as revising a lesson plan and demonstrating reflection skills by analyzing video of instruction (e.g., Teaching Channel videos) and explaining how they would improve it. Finally, we will use group interviews and activities to gauge candidate’s collaboration skills, which are essential for our model. Potential leaders will participate in the interview process noted above with a focus on instructional leadership, data analysis skills, and strength in designing and leading adult professional development. Non-instructional staff will participate in a screening process inclusive of group and/or individual interview, demonstrated experience with the skills relevant to their job duties, role-plays for situational problem solving, and ability to work in an environment in which families will be a frequent presence.

Our primary strategy for retaining effective teachers is to provide a highly professional work environment that fosters continuous improvement through targeted professional development and feedback. We aim to develop a faculty that is as interested in learning as it is in teaching. As noted in Section 1A, we have objectives, deliverables, and criteria for success for adults as well as students, including the cultivation of a collaborative work environment, 80 minutes daily of common planning time, and supportive critical feedback. S2 will provide teachers with dedicated time planning and

development, including two weeks of summer training and weekly PD periods. In keeping with our democratic principles, teachers will have voice in development of the curriculum and instructional methods. Administrators will honor, promote, and support the informal leadership that teachers exercise. Finally, S2 will offer competitive salaries and a 5% salary match for retirement. This professional culture will be effective in retaining school leadership, providing the time and resources necessary to support the development of teachers and instructional practice. Non-instructional staff will work collaboratively and meet regularly with the ED and AD, with opportunities to enhance their skills and be promoted within the organization.

Salary Determination. Starting salaries will be based on an individual assessment of each teacher's experience and demonstrable skills. We have budgeted for 15% more than the DOE step and lane salary for a teacher with an average of four years' experience.

C.1. *Does not apply as we do not intend to contract with a charter management organization.*

C.2. Partner Organization: East Side House Settlement (ESH);

Public contact information: Natalie Lozada, (718) 665-5250, nlozada@eastsidehouse.org, 337 Alexander Ave., Bronx, NY 10454-1108

Proposed affiliation. Though our relationship with ESH does not meet the NYSED definition of a partner, our school views ESH as a key stakeholder in the school. (See Attachment 7 for memorandum of understanding and contract.) The Lead ESH Advisor will monitor the program with school-based staff and ESH Program Director Natalie Lozada and report directly to the ED.

ESH will collaborate with S2 to implement the school-wide mission to know each child well and supply him or her with the resources and support needed to flourish. Fully staffed in Year 3, ESH will provide a lead advisor and one full time advisor for each grade. S2 will work with ESH to hire its school-based staff with S2 retaining final say on all staff decisions. The Lead advisor will be responsible for building out and implementing our Restorative Justice Program.

Using a Primary Person model, wherein every student has contact with at least one dedicated ESH advisor, ESH's program will provide students with social, emotional, and academic services to improve their middle school experience. The ESH team will also institute a program for ensuring robust attendance with three objectives: maintaining an attendance incentive program, promotion and recognition of excellent student attendance, and facilitation of regular activities around attendance. Weekly, S2 staff will collaborate with ESH to decide on interventions such as calling homes of absentee students and making home visits as necessary, which ESH will then implement.

ESH will assist in creating a culture of acceptance by providing a range of services including student recruitment and outreach, new student orientation, and leading a weekly Adolescent Issues class. Through intensive case management services, workshops, and counseling, students will be provided with tools that will help them succeed in completing middle school. (Please see Attachment 7 for detailed description of the services ESH will provide.)

D. EVALUATION

To maintain high instructional standards across classrooms, our culture and structures for improvement will facilitate efforts to improve and sustain quality. We will implement high quality evaluative structures that foster learning and growth for teachers, school leadership, the Board, partners, and students.

Teacher Evaluation. S2's teacher effectiveness system will support the development and retention of teacher excellence. S2 organizes teacher time to foster reflection on goals and documentation of their growth with peer support and feedback. Our system seeks to measure performance, recognize

outstanding work, and provide focused opportunities for continual professional growth. The ED or designee will formally evaluate teachers twice per year, at mid-point and end of year. Evaluations will be based on frequent informal observations, extended formal observations, teacher responses to feedback, and student achievement data.

S2 has selected the Danielson Framework for Teaching as an evaluation tool as it aligns with the planning, instruction, classroom culture, and professional community we envision. The Framework captures a holistic picture of teaching practice inside the classroom and outside the classroom.

Evidence of teachers supporting student growth will draw from multiple measures of achievement, including standardized test scores and performance levels on teacher-generated, standards-based rubrics. S2 will use teacher observation data to effectively design and facilitate PD, make informed decisions (i.e. assignment, retention), and develop personalized coaching plans that support teacher growth. Teachers with significant performance shortfalls will be provided a Teacher Improvement Plan by the ED that outlines specific objectives, strategies, and deadlines for improvement. The plan will include identification of resources and staff who work with the teacher to improve practice.

School Leader Evaluation. Before each school year, the ED will create and be held accountable for measurable outcome-focused goals consistent with the school-wide mission and charter goals. The Board's Accountability Committee will oversee school leader evaluation and monitor progress toward goal achievement through a mid-year review and a formal end of year summative. The evaluation will include a "360°" assessment to gain insight into the school leader's performance in multiple domains, inclusive of the academic, operational, and financial success of the school.

The evaluation process will consider: 1) the ED's self-assessment; 2) family and staff satisfaction as measured by surveys, student and staff retention, and grievances; 3) progress toward meeting benchmarks in SED's Performance Framework, particularly student progress and achievement; 4) financial status and audit results; and 5) SED monitoring visit reports and other authorizer feedback. The Board committee will meet with the ED to discuss the results of its evaluation, solicit feedback, revise its findings if necessary, and then share the final results with the full board. The Board will use the ED evaluation to make decisions about job retention and salary. Should the evaluation unearth serious deficiencies, the Board will develop an improvement plan with the ED that identifies specific expectations, a timeline, and the support and guidance the Board will provide.

Leadership Evaluation. The ED will evaluate leadership team members using a 360° strategy to include input from the stakeholders with whom each leader interacts. All leaders will establish clear and measurable annual goals for measuring progress and achievement, with mid-year review and end of year summative evaluation. When evaluating the AD, the ED will use a research-based framework (such as the Marzano School Leader Evaluation model). Key domains examined will include: development of a culturally responsive college preparatory curriculum, continuous improvement of instruction, implementation of a data-driven culture, and promotion of collaboration, reflection, and democratic practices within the faculty. When evaluating the BD and other non-academic staff, there will be clearly identified measures of success and an established way to measure their performance. For example, an independent audit will reveal the BD's effectiveness. For a role like parent coordinator, S2 will administer qualitative surveys and use parents' feedback as a key evaluation metric. Ultimately, the ED will assume responsibility for ensuring the articulation and fidelity of the tools and processes used.

Board Evaluation. Each August, the Board of Trustees will embark on a strategic planning process in tandem with school leadership to define annual goals. With the goal of obtaining a full-term renewal, annual goals will align with the SED Charter School Performance Framework. Each Board member will submit an annual letter of commitment outlining individual responsibilities and duties.

In June, each Board member will complete a self-assessment, assessment of the full Board, and a peer assessment of at least two other Board members. The board will also solicit feedback from school leaders about their interactions with the Board and the impact of its decisions on their work. The Board may employ an external consultant to observe the Board in action, review its work and decision, and provide feedback. As noted in section IIIB, the Board is committed to its own improvement and will use evaluation results to inform its development.

Partnership Evaluation. With each partner, S2 will establish annual program implementation and outcome driven goals. Each partner's Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) will outline expectations and serve as the framework for evaluation. The ED will report partner evaluations to the Board and recommend changes as necessary. Should ongoing evaluation reveal that the value of a partnership is not being realized, the board may decide to terminate a partnership.

Family and Student Satisfaction. S2 will evaluate family and student satisfaction through a school designed survey as well as the annual NYCDOE surveys. In addition, S2 will invite families and students to enter the square and express themselves in Forum, at which issues and concerns will be documented, analyzed and addressed. In addition, our Adolescent Issues classes provide opportunities for students to raise concerns. S2 will also gauge family and student satisfaction by student retention and attrition and make every effort to determine why a student leaves our school.

Programmatic Audit. The Board's Accountability Committee will work with school leadership to monitor implementation of the school program promised in the school's charter and to evaluate whether the school has achieved its goals and accomplished its mission. Each year, the school will produce an annual report that collects, analyzes, and presents data addressing all of the metrics associated with the school's goals (see Section II.A), including academic performance and other indicators of organizational and financial well-being. These will be organized to align with the benchmarks of the Charter School Performance Framework so the board can determine whether the school is likely to have its charter renewed. The annual report will be submitted to the school's authorizer in August and posted on the school's website. The board will use the report to inform its evaluation of school leadership, its review and revision of policies, and its own efficacy. School leaders will use the report to inform strategic planning and goal setting.

Operational Effectiveness and Fiscal Soundness. S2 leadership and staff will use data and analysis at weekly meetings to monitor student achievement. Each Friday, students will be formatively assessed on long-term skills (i.e. critical reading, argument writing, public speaking) and surveyed about their school experience during PLT, and educators will analyze the data during 90-minute full-staff meetings. The analysis and collaborative interpretation will yield implications curriculum and groupings. Each year, a financial report will be given to the board within six months of the conclusion of S2's fiscal year.

The Finance Committee will review financials monthly and update a five-year projection annually to ensure the financial soundness of the school. Likewise, the Accountability Committee will monitor the school's adherence to its charter. The full Board will receive a monthly dashboard of key indicators, including enrollment, staffing, student performance and financial data so they can ask informed questions and hold leadership accountable. They will also consider data from authorizer evaluation visit findings, compliance reporting timeliness, parent and staff surveys and complaints, and audit findings. The Board will also consider critical feedback from CSBM regarding financial management, particularly with respect to effective use of systems and procedures that adhere to the Financial Policies and Procedures manual. Leveraging all of this analysis, the Board in tandem with school leaders will monitor the effectiveness of school operations including fiscal management.

E. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional Development and Training Plan. Ron Berger, Chief Program Officer of the successful Expeditionary Learning network, offered the founding team this wisdom: “The quality of your student culture will never exceed the quality of your adult culture.” If we want students to undertake challenges, use feedback reflectively, and persevere in accomplishing meaningful tasks, our teachers must consciously model these behaviors. S2’s professional development and training plan develops teacher effectiveness in the following ways:

- Providing teachers 80 minutes daily for PD, collaborative planning, and/or data analysis
- Clarifying and cultivating support for S2’s mission-related outcomes to support a culture of learning (Danielson Domains 1 and 2)
- Engaging staff in “unwrapping” high-leverage standards, reviewing the curriculum, and troubleshooting curricular issues and challenges (Domain 1)
- Collaborative analysis of gaps between desired results and existing levels of performance and how to address them (Domain 3 and 4)
- Ensuring that all staff (new to teaching and experienced) are prepared to address the diverse student population of S2 including students at risk of academic failure, students with disabilities, and English language learners.
- Coaching and supporting both novice and experienced educators through inquiry cycles centered on pedagogy and reflective professional practice (Domains 2, 3, and 4)

Implementation

Full Staff PD: During the school year, S2 has designed a schedule that creates significant time each week for professional development. Every Monday, teachers will meet in content teams, grade teams or as a full staff to deepen content knowledge and pedagogy. Monday PD will be designed to address anticipated needs, such as specific instructional strategies to support writing across the content areas. PD will also be responsive to emerging areas of need based on classroom observations, such as classroom management strategies teacher requests for particular topics like technology integration. These PD sessions will also enable teachers to develop their skills in supporting students with disabilities, ELLs, and at-risk students. Teachers will learn how to effectively design curriculum with multiple entry points so that all students have ample opportunity to build and demonstrate mastery of the standards. Consultants from organizations such as Teaching Matters will be invited to share techniques for differentiating instruction. Research from “All Kinds of Minds” will be shared to augment teachers’ knowledge of how children learn and how to use a neurodevelopmental framework to create instruction geared to varied learning styles. Teachers will learn and practice selected strategies, such as the use of UDL and UBD during these PD sessions as well. Special education and ESL teachers will facilitate training so that every educator will also gain the capacity to implement Tier I, II, and III interventions.

Team Meetings. Teachers have structured time weekly to meet in various team configurations. They will meet with their subject teams twice per week to develop and share curriculum, lesson plans, and assessments. They will meet twice per week, in content and/or grade teams, with support of the AD and consultants (when necessary) to assess student work, analyze data, identify next steps, and strategically group students. They will meet once a week with the grade-level special education and ESL teachers to understand and develop strategies to meet student’s needs. They will also meet weekly with their grade team to coordinate common expectations, plan events, and collaborate on projects. Teams will be expected to keep a record of their meetings and submit reports to the AD with updates on the effectiveness of planning and interventions. Bi-weekly, teachers will meet with the ED, AD, or Coach to discuss observations and goals (See below, “Clinical Supervision”).

Summer Institute. All staff will attend S2's Summer Institute, an eight-day program guided by the ED, AD, school partners, and educational consultants. Summer Institute will include the review of the selected curriculum and teacher guides for their content areas. This work will provide the foundation for curricular planning in teams during the school year, including the scope and sequence of core units aligned to standards. Staff will develop concrete plans for effective scaffolding, multiple entry points, differentiation, and the creation of school wide rubrics, with particular attention to the needs of ELLs, SWDs, and students at risk of academic failure. During the Institute, teachers will undergo initial training in our innovative curriculum programs. They will review the MindUp curriculum and Academic Mindsets programs for PrimeTime, learning about their expanded roles as coaches and advisors. They will become familiar with the Forum/Debate framework and curriculum resources. Staff will also become familiar with and contribute to the design of school wide expectations. Together, we will review grading policies as we finalize S2's standards-based progress and report cards. They will also gain foundational knowledge regarding the work of key partners such as Facing History and Ourselves, ESH, and cPaths that will inform the school's culture and curriculum.

Staff Assessment. Administrators will assess staff understanding of S2's mission, principles, and core practices, identifying staff members who can assume leadership and support roles with colleagues. Misconceptions about teaching and learning on the part of staff will be identified and addressed prior to students' arrival.

Work Products. Educators participating in the Institute will collect their resulting work products in individual portfolios, along with reflections and self-assessments of progress toward their goals. Administrators will review and assess portfolios using criteria from Domain 1 (Planning and Preparation) of the Danielson framework and identify areas for further development.

Institute Evaluation. Participants will complete surveys evaluating each session's usefulness and effectiveness. At the conclusion of the Institute, surveys and focus groups will provide insight on what worked, what changes could improve future Institutes, and what PD supports are needed.

Intervisitations and Learning Walks. Providing teachers with opportunities to visit each other's classes and see models of strong practice in other classrooms and at other schools is an essential part of teacher development. S2 will support these opportunities by scheduling a substitute for class coverage so that teachers may participate in:

- *Peer observation and coaching.* The visiting teacher offers feedback to colleagues after visits.
- *Learning Walks.* Conducted independently or a teacher joins administrators.
- *Off-site professional development.* Without disrupting student learning, a teacher or small team visits another school or attends a professional development series.
- *Collaborative assessment design and tuning protocols.* Teachers will use National School Reform Faculty protocols to refine curriculum, assessments, and lesson plans.

Clinical Supervision. Each S2 educator will have a designated instructional coach (the AD, consultant, or ED.) Coaching entails biweekly classroom observations (with frequency increasing dependent upon educator needs), followed by timely debriefs providing actionable feedback aligned to the Danielson Framework. Administrators will co-teach or collaborate with teaching colleagues (e.g. planning units and lessons, "unwrapping" the standards, or using UBD), and will debrief with their colleagues. Administrator collaboration with teachers can take many forms, such as co-facilitating a week of instruction with a high-needs class, participating in a lesson requiring a lower student-to-teacher ratio, working with a small guided group, or modeling a whole-class reading strategy with the educator observing. We view modeling vulnerability, demonstrating expertise, and seeking feedback in the spirit of participatory action as an effective way to help colleagues develop their practice, signifying S2's holistic commitment to professional growth and learning.

Evaluation. Ultimately the efficacy of professional development will be determined by student growth and achievement. We will use the following strategies to assess our PD program:

- *Reflective Journaling.* As S2 teachers engage in collaborative research and action, they will take notes on and review their process, reflect on their progress, and set new goals in a continuing cycle. These entries become part of their reflective journals, providing evidence they can include in their portfolios, evaluations, and meetings with peers or supervisors. Educators will also set next steps at the conclusion of PD to which they will be held accountable.
- *Portfolio of work products.* Teachers will collect artifacts in their portfolios (e.g. unit and lesson plans, copies of student work with feedback, instructional materials) along with reflections and self-assessments of progress toward their goals. Administrators will review and assess portfolio work products quarterly using criteria from Domain 1 (Planning and Preparation) of the Danielson framework and identifying areas for further development.
- *Evidence of Teacher Growth.* All PD activities, whether collaborative or independent, will be back-mapped to competencies detailed in the Danielson Framework. All PD will be followed by feedback surveys to determine the session's clarity and effectiveness.
- *Ongoing Surveys.* Administrators will survey staff to identify successful aspects and areas for improvement in the school's collaborative practices. Subjects identified in these surveys and conversations will serve as PD topics for upcoming Summer Institutes and ongoing PD.

F. FACILITIES

In compliance with the Facility Access Process for New York City Charter Schools (2014/2015), S2 will formally request that the NYC Department of Education (DOE) attempt to identify a co-location opportunity for S2 in CSD 9 or 10. If space is unavailable, S2 will secure private space that fits the needs of our school and students. Recent conversations with the DOE's Division of Portfolio Planning (DPP) revealed that CSD 9 and 10 are functioning at 90% and 102% capacity, respectively. We quote Ronald Caccioppoli, head of planning in the Bronx: "There is no current available space really in the Bronx, but especially so in Districts 9 and 10. Everybody knows that." While we will continue to work with the DOE regarding any status change within CSD 9-10, we've focused efforts to date on identifying viable private options using the following three-step process:

Established Needs. The architectural firm of Gertsler and Wentz has partnered with S2 on a pro bono basis. Over the course of several meetings S2 shared its educational vision and they developed a facility layout aligning to our core philosophy of active school community interaction. This document is available upon request and can be summarized as follows: Assuming Year 3 enrollment of 324 students, we will require approximately 85 ft² per student or a 27,500 ft² facility. This includes 12 classrooms each 875 ft², 4 support classrooms/labs each 600 ft², a multi-purpose room of 3,600 ft², a conference room of 120 ft², 680 ft² for administrative offices, 1,300 ft² of staff areas and cubicles, 500 ft² in total for bathrooms, and 450 ft² of mechanical, storage and miscellaneous uses. This plan offers us flexibility by allowing for a conservative program space loss of 25%.

Understanding the Market. The S2 team has met with brokers, consulted public listings, and visited other CSD 9 and 10 charters to understand the real estate landscape. Rents in CSD 9 and 10 can vary from \$20-35 ft², including base renovations. Using this as a guide, we identified a primary target location and three potential back up school sites, all with sufficient available space and SWD accessibility. Our options include a large school in University Heights, an office building in the Marble Hill Community, and a vacant religious school in the Fordham Community. Substantive discussions with the prospective landlords are underway and documented in our letter from Maureen Coughlin of the Charter School Facilities, Inc. (Attachment 2) We have held promising

preliminary discussions about tax code incentives with L and M Development Partners, who have a large portfolio of affordable housing around NYC, and partner with community organizations and schools, placing them on the ground floor of their buildings.

Securing Temporary and Long-term Space. Board member Scott Gottlieb has a long successful career as one of New York City’s premier real estate brokers (See Attachment 5a). Scott has worked with Evan Meyers to understand the Bronx marketplace and the school’s needs. Upon receipt of the charter, Scott will leverage our local connections and access his firm’s vast network to secure short-term space while simultaneously working on a long term solution. With Scott driving these efforts we are confident we will secure space that will allow S2 to flourish.

Budgeting. Attachment 9 presents our budget, prepared on the basis of locating S2 in a private facility. This budget was derived in large part from the actual budgets provided by a landlord of a potential location. Hard numbers with respect to utilities, security, janitorial service, and maintenance are used. These basic operating costs total \$282,880 with 3% yearly increases before any further negotiation on our part. Please note our budget assumes \$29 ft² including renovations for base rent. This is conservatively set at a 10% premium to the rent which we have been quoted.

G. INSURANCE

Based on the experience of CSBM and charter schools similar to S2, we expect to secure the following insurance policies, each containing a clause that requires the State Education Department to receive notice within 30 days of any material changes, non-renewal, or termination.

General Liability	\$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$4,000,000 aggregate
Property Loss	Based on value of facility and equipment
Personal Injury	\$25,000 per occurrence and \$250,000 aggregate
Student Accident	\$4,000,000 limit
Miscellaneous	\$1,000,000 limit per occurrence for property loss and physical injury

Directors & Officers Liability	\$1,000,000 per occurrence
Employee Benefits Liability	\$1,000,000
Employment Practices Liability	\$1,000,000
Educators’ Legal Liability	\$1,000,000
Sexual Misconduct Liability	\$1,000,000/occurrence; \$2,000,000 aggregate
Workers Compensation	New York statutory limits

H. HEALTH, FOOD, AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Health Services. S2 is committed to developing both the physical and emotional health of its students and has designed a number of programs accordingly. In addition to physical education classes, our partnership with cPaths will offer students athletic outlets. In addition, our Adolescent Issues course will use a curriculum focused on the social emotional development of adolescents.

Our staffing plan includes on-site ESH staff to provide S2 students with access to medical/health care, crisis intervention, and assistance with finding housing or other community supports. ESH will also provide support groups at the school tailored to specific needs, such as asthma, grief, foster care, and peer mentoring. ESH will provide referrals to appropriate community organizations including Mt. Sinai Adolescent Health Center for individual and group counseling and prevention services and South Bronx Mental Health Council for group counseling and psychotherapy. In addition, mental health services within the scope of ESH's Social Service Department will be made available to any student in need.

If S2 is co-located in a DOE building it will utilize the on-site nurse; if located in private space the school will seek a nurse from the Office of School Health (OSH). The primary responsibilities of the nurse will include maintenance of health records, administration of medication, and treatment of minor illnesses or injuries. Should a nurse not be present at any given time, a staff member will be designated and trained to handle issues that can be legally delegated. Our floor plan includes a nurse's office. At least two staff members will be trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of automated external defibrillator (AED) equipment, which will be accessible during the school day and at any on-site school-sponsored event. Cumulative health records will be stored in locked filing cabinets accessible only by authorized staff members. These records will include proof of immunization and authorization for administration of medication. All visits to the nurse, including reason and treatment, will be documented in each child's file.

S2 will adopt and disseminate to parents a policy and procedures for the administration of medication. The school will only administer medication to students during school hours. The school will require, orders from a licensed prescriber and permission from parents/guardians in writing to administer medication. Parents will be required to provide an adequate supply and the school will provide locked storage, including refrigeration if required, within a secure health office.

Food Services. We anticipate most of our students will be eligible for free and reduced price meals and will pursue the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) that allows all students to receive free meals through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. The Business Director and office staff will work with families to collect eligibility forms, including providing them with access to computers to complete their forms online. The BD will also be responsible for all record-keeping and reporting requirements and will maintain accurate data to facilitate audits.

For at least the first two years, we anticipate utilizing DOE Office of School Food and Nutrition Services for breakfast, lunch and snack and will coordinate the delivery and service of meals with the. Identified facilities offer the requisite food storage and serving space as well as space for students to eat outside of classrooms.

Once the school is established we may consider private vendors to provide meals cost effectively along with nutritional programming. The criteria to select a food services provider will include: cost, menu options, nutrition, logistics, and capacity. Regardless of provider, S2 will adhere to all federal nutrition guidelines, and certified food handlers will serve all meals.

Transportation. The primary target location for the school is accessible to students via numerous bus routes and subway lines. Based on this, S2 will not provide transportation for students. Instead, S2 will work with the DOE Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) to provide eligible students with MetroCards for bus and subway transportation. Middle school students may receive full- or half-fare MetroCards based on their home's distance from the school. Because S2 will operate with an extended school year, we have budgeted for transportation on those days when DOE schools are not in session. Students with disabilities may receive transportation based on mandates in their IEP.

We will coordinate with the Committee on Special Education (CSE) to ensure appropriate transportation is required and provided.

I. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Integrating families and the community into the planning, implementation and program design of S2 is a key element of our strategy. Our outreach activities have already led to strong community participation with community leaders joining our board and others taking on advisory roles. In addition, we continue to receive and consider feedback to improve our plan.

Some design elements that have already been influenced by parent and community input are:

- An extended day (8AM-5PM) to provide a safe environment for children while parents work.
- A curriculum that goes beyond academics to include high interest activities like arts and sports.
- An emphasis on social-emotional growth that helps every child feel a part of the school, well known and cared for by adults and peers.

S2 will also engage families in the daily life of the school. As guest speakers in classes they can enliven and deepen student understanding of everything from career opportunities to historical events to applications of science and math in the world outside school. As volunteers, they can assist with logistics of special events. Their welcome presence as audience members at academic presentations and Forums will prepare the ground for them to act as essential collaborators when we must work through issues facing the school in community meetings. Below are some of the ways the school will engage families and the community:

- *Communication.* Weekly written communication will be sent from the ED's office, including news, information, events, deadlines, and other material that keeps all members of the community (staff, families, students) in the loop and recognizes progress toward school-wide goals. In addition, the Cortex digital assessment platform will record student progress relative to his/her goals. This system will provide timely information to students and families. In addition, the AD will hold monthly events for parents. Topics might include: what my middle schooler is learning this month, analyzing my child's work exhibitions, and supporting my child's path to college.
- *Forum.* These sessions are intended for all stakeholders to participate in conversations about issues related to the school, community, and larger world. Parents will be informed of the dates and purposes of each. They will be encouraged to share issues discussed at Forum with the PTA.
- *Student-led Conferences.* S2 will invite parents to attend a conference led by their child who will present evidence of their academic and social-emotional growth at the end of each trimester.
- *East Side House.* The role of ESH in the school is critical to making S2 a true community school. Through our partnership with ESH we will provide information and programs to assist families with critical issues impeding academic development, e.g., housing, financial crises, medical issues and family dynamics. The two ESH staff members will help family's access social services.
- *cPaths.* Parents will be welcomed at cPaths events at cultural institutions so that conversations with their children will be enriched by joint participation in exciting learning experiences.

S2 will support an active Parent and Family Association by providing space to meet, access to communication tools, and information to organize their activities. ESH will serve as a liaison and attend meetings and events sponsored by the Association. The school leadership and board governance committee will have an open door policy to hear parent concerns. Parents and community members will also be encouraged to offer input during the open comment period of each Board meeting. A representative of the Association will be invited to attend Board meetings to offer updates on pertinent developments. These robust structures and consistent interactions with

families will ensure meaningful contributions to the leadership of the school so all students feel supported by school and home.

J. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

S2 has developed a staffing model to ensure productivity and accountability in all school operation domains. Having spoken to many charter school leaders and recognizing the manifold challenges of opening and growing a charter school, we have elected to outsource financial services for the first two years to Charter School Business Management, Inc. (CSBM) based on its reputation in the charter community and the price of services offered. In conjunction with the applicant group, CSBM developed our proposed budgets and will assist during the planning year with establishing financial systems, a chart of accounts, and payroll. In the first two years, the ED and BD will manage this relationship and submit all paperwork and data to CSBM, review and analyze all financial reports, and ensure the school's books are kept in a manner that aligns with GAAP. The BD will present to the Board on the school's finances and work directly with the Treasurer and the finance committee. In Year 3, the school will hire a full-time Finance Manager and bring CSBM's responsibilities in-house. An attractive part of CSBM's agreement with S2 is its willingness to assist with recruiting, hiring, and training the Finance Manager to take on its responsibilities. The board will adopt a Financial Policies and Procedures manual that will be regularly reviewed and revised to meet the needs of the school and ensure responsibility for taxpayer's funds.

Budget Process. The annual budgeting process will reflect the needs and priorities of the school while maintaining a sound organization with contingency funds available if needed. The SLT will solicit input from each department and conduct a needs assessment that takes into account past spending patterns, as well as projections that consider anticipated growth of student enrollment, personnel, programs, and facility space. Each spring prior to the end of the fiscal year, the SLT will develop a draft budget for submission to the Board's Finance Committee. The Board is responsible for ensuring that the budget is sufficient to achieve the mission and meet the goals of the school. The school will also maintain a five year budget projection, revised annually based on current information and long-term strategic plans.

Budget Modification. Budgets will be monitored on a monthly basis and the BD and the Finance manager who will track all revenues and expenditures. They will generate and disseminate reports to the Finance Committee, which will review the financial health of the school monthly prior to the full board meeting. At each Board meeting, the Finance Committee will report on the financial condition of the school. If there are significant variances from the board-approved budget, the Finance Committee will consider all possible modifications to the budget and make recommendations to the full board. The Board has sole power to change the annual budget.

Annual Audit. S2 will conduct an annual audit by an independent New York State certified public accountant who is not involved in the regular accounting and finances of the school. Annual audits will be conducted in accordance with GAAP standards and government auditing standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. The Board Finance Committee will evaluate auditor candidates and recommend one to the board for its approval thereafter. The audit will cover all required financial reports, including a statement of financial position, a statement of cash flows, a statement of activities, and a schedule of functional expenses. The audit will also include any significant findings or material weakness in the financial processes of the school should they exist. The auditor will present findings to the Finance Committee each year, which will report on these findings to the full board and develop a plan and timeline for addressing feedback. The audit report will be shared with the authorizer and available to the public.

Data Management. The Business Director will be responsible for establishing and maintaining a student information system to ensure accurate tracking of enrollment, special education, free and reduced price meals, and other critical information required for compliance. S2 will work with the DOE to set up an ATS system for recording attendance. S2 will upload and verify all data and will protect financial information in accordance with city and state policies.

K. BUDGET AND CASH FLOW

A proposed budget and fiscal plan for S2's initial charter term is provided in Attachment 9. Given current space restraints in the district, the budget assumes locating in private space. By way of comparison, our co-located spending projections are much lower over the first five years. We anticipate that our per pupil rent allowance will approximately equal our rent payments so most of the additional expense is derived from costs of operating the facility (utilities, maintenance, security, upkeep, etc.). The budget supports S2's mission and educational plan in the following ways:

- *Strong Relationships.* Our partnership with East Side House will supply ESH Advisors for each grade plus a Lead Advisor to facilitate culture building. See Attachment 7 for the MOU.
- *Extended Day.* Provides opportunities for a) student time to apply and extend learning, b) an extended school day from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, and (c) teacher planning and collaboration time.
- *3:2 Teaching Model.* A teacher apprenticeship model that trains new teachers, creates teacher leadership and professional development opportunities, and allows flexible scheduling.

Budget Design and Assumptions. The budget was prepared with support from charter school finance experts, including CSBM and operating charter schools. It is based on several conservative assumptions, which lend confidence to the financial viability of our model:

1. *Enrollment.* Our revenue estimates assume we will achieve 95% of our target enrollment in Y1.
2. *Constant Per Pupil.* The per-pupil rate is held constant over five years.
3. *Competitive Salaries.* Salary structure is DOE step plus 15% and assumes average staff service time of four years.
4. *CSP Funds.* S2 will use existing funds to support planning year budget until CSP funds arrive in April.
5. *Fully Funded Start-Up.* S2 has secured donations and pledges for \$600,000 of which \$300,000 is included in our planning year budget. These funds come from 35 committed philanthropists, no single donation exceeds \$50,000 and none represents a major gift for the giver. These funds will be available upon receipt of the charter; the planning team can provide more information if desired. S2 anticipates leveraging other well-established relationships with major philanthropic institutions with commitment to charter schools. Despite our certainty in the receipt of at least \$600,000 we include only \$300,000 in our budget to account for any potential short falls. This will allow S2 to hire early, move safely into private space and embed our key partners into the fabric of our school from day one and ensure a smooth transition to school operations.
6. *No Reliance on Future Contributions.* As aforementioned, S2 is confident in our ability to access additional donors and foundations upon receipt of a charter. However, our budget does not rely on donations in years 1-5.
7. *Planning for the Unknown.* We understand that five-year projections of any new entity entail many unknowns (in our case, especially around Real Estate) and are committed to allocating resources responsibly in the present while planning thoughtfully for the future. We have created a conservative budget that allows us to serve our community well while guaranteeing financial viability. We project a surplus in every year, and the board will allocate this surplus, along with any additional funds raised, in consideration of S2's needs. This begins with segregating six

months of operating expenses and could include saving for the purchase of a private facility, unanticipated expenses, or additional programming.

Charter School Program (CSP) Grant. Our budget assumes the base amount of \$500,000, though we believe S2 will receive the entire \$750,000 based on the following:

- *Underserved Student Populations Priority.* Our recruitment plan is designed to ensure that we will serve a disproportionately low-income and ELL community.
- *Authorizer Program Design Priority:* S2 is specifically designed to meet the learning needs and raise the achievement of ELLs and SWDs. In addition to an extended day and school year, our model allows for co-teaching in every core subject and staffing for our scheduled intervention/enrichment period (Personalized Learning Time).

Contingencies. In the event of unanticipated conditions resulting in budgetary shortfalls, we have established several contingencies that would eliminate such shortfalls. These contingencies include:

- Draw on existing surpluses
- Secure additional donations
- Delay the beginning of our teacher apprentice program
- Delay capital purchases of smart boards and tablets

Pre-Opening Budget. We assume \$450,000 in revenue, with \$150,000 from CSP funding and the remainder in already committed donations. The ED, AD, and BD will go on salary in January 2016. We will also begin funding our partnerships to establish programs for the school and contract with CSBM to set up our finance systems. Additional funds are for recruitment, board development, and fundraising. We expect to carry over a cash balance of \$223,564 to the first year of operation.

First-Year Budget. Primary revenues this year include per pupil revenue of \$14,027 plus special education funds from the state (totaling \$2,005,045). In addition, we expect \$300,000 of CSP Funds and \$98,844 from NYC-DYCD (Department of Youth and Community Development).

For personnel, we will hire 4 teachers, a special education teacher, an ESL teacher, and two part time specialty teachers. We have allocated \$281,880 for lease costs and a total of \$486,880 in facility costs, which is 21% of our total expenses in Year 1.

Five Year Budget: Revenue assumes a flat per pupil rate each year. Salaries are assumed to increase by 3% annually. We add a Finance Manager in year 3 (with a commensurate reduction in financial consulting services) and additional office support staff. For each new grade, four teachers are hired. Beginning in year 3 one team also adds a Beginning Service Teacher to begin implementation of our 3:2 model which will be fully staffed by year five. An additional ELL teacher is added in Year 2 and a special education teacher in both Years 2 and 3. In year 3 we also add a data specialist. By year 5, administrative salaries are 22% of total salaries and, instructional staff account for 72%. While S2 will spend approximately \$25,000 for technology in year 1, thereafter it allocates almost \$45,000 per year to provide students and teachers with cutting-edge technology. Furthermore, as the school grows we add a technology specialist to the staff. Our estimated lease rises over the five years to \$918,140 and a total of \$1,139,104 for facility costs by year 5.

While the school ends Year 1 with a cash balance of \$275,571 this surplus rises to \$3,258,592 by year 5. We will put aside \$75,000 into an escrow account by year 3 for a dissolution fund.

L. PRE-OPENING PLAN

BOT=Board of Trustees; ED=Executive Director; AD=Academic Director; BD= Business Director; CSBM=Charter School Business Management; LA=Lead Advisor; T = Teachers

Committee	Action	Start Date	End Date	Responsible
Governance	Ratify bylaws and code of ethics	Nov 2015	Nov 2015	BOT
Governance	Appoint board officers	Nov 2015	Nov 2015	BOT
Governance	Create letter of employment for ED	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	BOT
HR	Create letter of employment for AD	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	ED
Facility	Conduct facility negotiations and execute lease	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	BOT, ED
Facility	Renovation: identify needs, secure contractor, establish timeline, complete punch list	Nov 2015	June 2016	BOT, ED
Operations	Obtain 501c3 status	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	ED
Finance	Approve fiscal policies and procedures	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	BOT
Finance	Establish financial systems, including payroll and benefits	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	ED, CSBM
Staffing	Recruit and hire Business Director	Nov 2015	Jan 2016	ED
Recruitment	Recruit students: develop and disseminate materials, host open-houses, go door-to-door	Jan 2016	Apr 2016	ED, BD
Recruitment	Hold lottery: secure system with preferences, conduct lottery, inform parents	Apr 2016	May 2016	ED, BD
Operations	Obtain student records: obtain permission from parents, contact previous schools, etc.	Apr 2016	Jul 2016	BD,
Support Services	Establish relationship with CSE; request and review known IEPs	Mar 2016	Jun 2016	AD
Staffing	Recruit school staff: draft and post job descriptions, interview candidates, check references	Jan 2016	Jun 2016	ED, AD, BD
Staffing	Hire school staff: negotiate salaries and deliver offer letters	Mar 2016	Jul 2016	ED, AD, BD
Academic	Research and secure curriculum resources	Jan 2016	Jun 2016	AD
Academic	Research and secure intervention resources	Jan 2016	Jun 2016	AD
Academic	Research and secure standardized assessments	Jan 2016	Jun 2016	AD
Technology	RFP for technology infrastructure	Jan 2016	Mar 2016	ED, BD
Finance	Develop FY16-17 budget and 5 year projection	Mar 2016	May 2016	ED, BOT
Finance	Approve budget for FY16-17	May 2016	May 2016	BOT
Operations	Secure food services via DOE	Apr 2016	May 2016	ED, BD
Operations	Secure transportation via DOE	Apr 2016	Jul 2016	ED, BD
Operations	Secure nurse via OSH	Apr 2016	Aug 2016	ED, BD
HR	Finalize staff handbook and personnel policies	Apr 2016	Jun 2016	ED, AD
Operations	Develop and distribute student handbook	May 2016	Jun 2016	ED, AD, LA
Technology	Develop technology plan; develop RFP; select vendors and install technology infrastructure	Feb 2016	July 2014	ED, BD
HR	Fingerprinting and background checking	May 2016	Jul 2016	BD
Academic	Prep school calendar and distribute to families	May 2016	Jun 2016	ED, AD, BD
Technology	Install software programs	Jun 2016	Jul 2016	ED, BD

Facility	Obtain Certificate of Occupancy	May 2016	Jun 2016	ED
Recruitment	Conduct open houses for admitted students	Jun 2016	Jul 2016	ED, AD, LA
Academic	Contract with Related Service Providers	Jun 2016	Aug 2016	BD
Operations	Secure insurance policies	Jun 2016	Jul 2016	ED, BD
PD	Prepare Summer training materials	Jun 2016	Aug 2016	ED, AD, LA
Finance	Complete Initial Statement of Financial Controls	Jul 2016	Jul 2016	ED, BD CSBM
Operations	Create a draft safety plan	Jul 2016	Aug 2016	ED, BD
PD	Develop staff growth plans	Aug 2016	Aug 2016	ED, AD,
Academic	Finalize curriculum maps and create unit plans	Aug 2016	Aug 2016	AD, T

M. DISSOLUTION PLAN

\$75,000 is allocated to cover potential costs associated with dissolution of the school, such as legal, accounting, and audit fees by setting aside \$25,000 for the first three years of operation. These funds will be maintained in a separate escrow account. In the case of dissolution, the assets of the school will first be used to satisfy any outstanding debts. All property the school has leased, borrowed, or contracted for use will be returned. Any remaining assets will be transferred to the DOE.

Should the school close, the Board will adopt a closure plan and create a board committee including the Chair and Treasurer as well as members of school management. The Board would delegate the responsibility for managing the dissolution process to the ED; should the ED be unavailable, the Board will designate another school staff member to implement the closure plan. After a date is established, the school would notify all employees of termination of employment and/or contracts, and notify benefit providers of pending termination of all employees.

Parents and legal guardians of students enrolled in the school would be notified of the closure plan within five days of the Board’s adoption of the plan. An up-to-date student roster will be sent to the district and within 15 business days of the Board adopting a closure plan, the school will transfer the school’s assets and student records to the district, notify parents and legal guardians of the transfer of such records, and send copies of each child’s records to the child’s parents or legal guardians. The school will maintain the privacy of all records and information that may personally identify students in accordance with state and federal guidelines. The school would convene multiple meetings for all parents and legal guardians to provide information about the closure plan and the options for enrolling in other schools. S2 would invite representatives from other charter middle schools and the DOE to describe available options and the transfer process. School staff would work with students and families to identify appropriate schools with programs best suited to meet individual students’ needs and to assist the students in enrolling in such schools. Every effort would be made to facilitate the students’ transitions in a manner that minimizes disruption to them and their families.