

## FULL APPLICATION SUMMARY

<b>Proposed Charter School Name</b>	Rochester College and Career Charter School <sup>1</sup> (Formerly Rochester Charter School for Applied Technologies)						
<b>Proposed Board President Name</b>	Sarah Armignacco						
<b>Proposed Board President Email Address</b>	[REDACTED]						
<b>Proposed Board President Telephone Number</b>	[REDACTED]						
<b>Public Contact Name</b>	Sarah Armignacco						
<b>Public Contact Email Address</b>	Sarah.Armignacco@wegmans.com						
<b>Public Contact Telephone Number</b>	585.328.2550 (x6013)						
<b>District of Location</b>	City of Rochester						
<b>Opening Date</b>	August 16, 2016						
<b>Proposed Charter Term</b>	2016-2021						
<b>Proposed Management Company or Partners</b>	N/A						
<b>Projected Enrollment and Grade Span During Charter Term</b>	<b>Projected Enrollment Table Over the Charter Term</b>						
	<b>Grades</b>	<b>Ages</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>
	<b>K</b>	4-5	66	65	100	100	100
	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	5-6	62	64	75	100	100
	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	6-7	62	60	65	75	100
	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	7-8		60	60	65	75
	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	8-9			60	60	60
	<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>	9-10				60	60
	<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>	10-11					60
<b>Totals</b>		<b>190</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>560</b>	
<b>Projected Maximum Enrollment and Grade Span</b>	K-6; 560 students at end of charter term						
<b>Mission Statement:</b>							
The mission of Rochester College and Career Charter School is to provide a world-class education to Rochester students so that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in both college and family-sustaining careers.							

RCCCS will be modeled upon the successful work of the Charter School for Applied Technologies in Buffalo, New York. As such, RCCCS will begin as an elementary school, but our ultimate aim is to one day include a high school program that focuses on preparing students for college and careers in high growth, high demand industry sectors and early college high school instruction. This vision served as a driving force in our planning, as we worked backwards to create the key design elements of the elementary and middle school program, with the guidance and support of our colleagues at CSAT. The resulting programmatic components are described more fully below. The key features that are core to the school's overall design include:

- 1. A Focus on Learning and Standards Mastery:** In order to ensure that we attain the goals set forth in our mission, our first priority will be to ensure that each child receives individualized instruction that allows him or her to master all grade level standards, leaving RCCCS on track to succeed in the high school of his or her choice. To that end, RCCCS will not rely on compliance with a specific way of delivering instruction (a focus on teaching) and/or using only a specific set of materials/programs in

<sup>1</sup> We listed our name as "Rochester Charter School for Applied Technologies (RCSAT)" in the Letter of Intent. We are still planning to model our school upon the Charter School for Applied Technologies in Buffalo, NY; however, we felt that we needed a name that more accurately reflected our mission and objectives, which strive toward college and career preparation. As a result, we decided to change the school name to Rochester College and Career Charter School.

order to ensure progress. Instead, the school will rely on analyzing the outcomes (learning) to select a great variety of inputs (teaching). At the outset of each year, grade level teams will review the essential standards and build a curriculum. We will incorporate career touches into the curriculum, by using them as a means to teach the content and grade level standards, as aligned to the NYSCCLS. The teams will then agree on how students will demonstrate mastery for each standard and ensure a common understanding of what evidence will be required. From there, individual teachers will be allowed a great deal of latitude in the delivery of instruction, provided that all techniques and methods are scrutinized once assessment data is available. In other words, the effective practices are not predetermined; rather, they become evident upon data analysis. Best practices are then shared amongst grade level teams and school wide, as appropriate. In order to glean these trends in an expedient manner, the entire school will use eDoctrina® software, which was developed at CSAT and is now used at schools throughout the country, to track formative and summative assessment data. This real time data software system builds the capacity of teaching teams to engage in deep analysis of achievement data on a daily basis. A “no zero policy” and mastery based approach to learning will ensure that students are provided several opportunities throughout the year to demonstrate mastery of standards, and teachers are expected to reteach the material until students have done so.

2. **Professional Development in the Context of Teamwork:** The school will be comprised of highly effective same-grade level teams in grades K-6 and a combination of grade/subject area teams in grades 7-8, who will meet daily and perform as professional learning teams. Following a focus on learning, teachers will be empowered to request professional development help at the moment they identify an area of need rather than being mandated to participate in a one size fits all approach to professional development. Teachers will receive the career development, resources, and opportunities that talented professionals deserve. As such, they are empowered to take ownership of student learning and their own development, delivering outcomes and solving problems as needed. Our most talented teachers will work with administrators to design and implement professional development and support the induction and development of new teachers.
3. **School to Career Focus:** We believe that every one of our students, regardless of his/her academic performance, socioeconomic standing, or personal goals, is headed for the “World of Work.” While RCCCS will be a K-8 program, the ultimate goal is for the school to serve students in grades K-12. To this end, we will build our K-8 programming in such a way that it prepares and supports students for the rigorous high school program implemented at CSAT. Some may enter the workplace after receiving a diploma from RCCCS (once it is offered), while others will do so after college. Either way, our students will need to be armed with the skills and knowledge that will allow them to succeed during high school and beyond. And, just like CSAT, our students will embrace the motto that “Every day is career day.” As a result, we aim to expose our K-8 students to as many career touches as possible during their foundational years, including read alouds, field trips, guest speakers, and projects. These career touches will be woven into our curriculum, and used for several purposes, including, but not limited to: (1) increasing student knowledge and understanding around family sustaining career opportunities; (2) creating a foundation for students’ reflection on their work and what they hope to contribute to the community once they enter the “world of work;” (3) providing context, meaning, and value for the lessons and objectives that they are learning in school each day, to increase investment, understanding, and interest in school; and (4) helping motivate students in the short term towards achieving their long term goals. To achieve these objectives, we will ensure that the career touches are not merely one off experiences for students; moreover, we will weave them into our curriculum and use them as another tool to engage students, in a way that is aligned to the NYSCCLS and curriculum.

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# I. Mission, Key Design Elements, Enrollment, and Community

## A. Mission Statement and Objectives

**Mission:** The mission of Rochester College and Career Charter School<sup>1</sup> is to provide a world-class education to Rochester students so that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in both college and family-sustaining careers.

**Objectives:** The RCCCS objectives are aligned to the mission and key design elements of the school, and the applicable New York State and federal regulations:

- RCCCS students will perform at or above grade level in all core subject areas when they enter high school, so that they are on track and prepared to graduate with a Regents diploma; and
- RCCCS will ensure that students are exposed to and engaged with a rich variety of college and career opportunities that will lead to personal and professional satisfaction and future leadership of our region.

**Education Law §2850(2) Objectives:** RCCCS will materially further the following objectives, specified in Education Law Section 2502(2):

- **Improve student learning and achievement:** RCCCS will improve student learning and achievement by creating and implementing a rigorous, Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-aligned curriculum, ongoing formative and summative assessments, and a reflective, mastery-based approach to instruction, driven by real time data reporting and analysis. Specifically, the staff will use the curriculum to collectively determine evidence of student learning and mastery. Teachers will then be permitted great latitude in how they deliver instruction, provided that all approaches and methods are scrutinized once assessment data is available. Effective practices, therefore, will not be predetermined; rather, they will become evident upon data analysis. Use of the eDoctrina® software, originally developed at Buffalo CSAT, will allow teachers to access student data on a regular and ongoing basis. The school-to-career focus will serve as the underpinning of our instruction, as described in more detail below, and will help to engage students, families, and the community in our work.
- **Increase learning opportunities for all students, with a special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at risk of academic failure.** Harvard professor, Robert Schwartz, recently argued that it is a “critical priority” nationally that we “increase the proportion of low-income kids—especially African Americans and Latinos—attaining four-year degrees.” Yet, as Schwartz points out, research indicates “the risks of putting all of our eggs in the four-year college pathway are huge,” as we “now have 5.5 million 16–24 year olds who are not in education, employment, or training.”<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, of all the students from the bottom two income quartiles who enroll in college, only about 30% complete it within six years, which means that “the economic returns of ‘some college’ (i.e. those who drop out with no degree or an occupational certificate) are no different than for those with only a high school diploma.” As a result, Schwartz argues, “It’s time to focus on building some alternative pathways for getting most kids not only through high school, but also through to some form of postsecondary credential with value in the labor market.”

RCCCS will begin as an elementary school, but our ultimate aim is to one day include a high school program that focuses on preparing students for college and careers in high growth, high demand industry sectors, spanning grades 9-12. Students will be exposed to both college and family sustaining career pathways, with the expectation that each student will be prepared for entrance and success in a four-year college, if they decide to enroll. A “family-sustaining career” is one in which compensation is enough to sustain a middle class existence for both the individual who holds the job

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<sup>2</sup> <http://edexcellence.net/articles/the-case-for-career-focused-charter-schools>

and her or his immediate family. All family-sustaining jobs are also self-sustaining. However, not all self-sustaining jobs are family sustaining. A student who avails herself of a family-sustaining job must have benefited from an education that effectively prepared her for college and career. As a result of a RCCCS education, said student will also benefit from effective school-to-career experiences, guidance, and the opportunity to incorporate financial literacy, during high school, in her selection of a career pathway. For example, students will understand, for instance, that financing certain careers through student loans may negate the family-sustaining capacity of this career path, if he or she finishes school with a significant debt obligation. Thus, an RCCCS student will engage in a strategy of applying the outmost effort to her high school courses in order to maximize opportunities for scholarships and/or avoid using student loans to finance lifestyle items.

All students not only need to be college and career ready but they also need to understand that we all end up involved in the world of work. An effective school-to-career approach makes the K-12 education experience relevant, goal oriented, and, therefore, engaging. At RCCCS, we will aim at all students being prepared to avail themselves of family-sustaining careers as a result of the K-12 experience, and embrace our motto “Every day is career day.”

We plan to collaborate with regional employers and local college leaders to design a program that is aligned to the economic needs of our regional community. To do so, we will create an advisory board, or partner with the Regional Economic Development Council in Rochester, who will take the lead on investigating the needs of the Western New York economy and making recommendations to our board. We worked backwards from this vision as we designed the elementary and middle school program described within this application to ensure that our students will be ready to thrive when they eventually enter high school, regardless of where they choose to enroll.

Our career-focused, expanded learning opportunities will begin as soon as kindergarten. These “career touches,” as we refer to them, will evolve as our students progress throughout our program. A career touch is any experience through which students learn about college and career paths with the help of teachers and/or persons and resources from the community at large. To illustrate, in elementary and middle school, career touches will include read-alouds, field trips, guest speakers, and projects about family-sustaining career opportunities, which will be woven into our curriculum, and driven by the CCLS. At the high school level, however, these career touches will become far more nuanced, and will include ongoing workplace exposure, such as job shadowing, training, and paid internships.

By designing our program in this manner, we seek to address this “critical priority” that Schwartz highlights, by preparing our students to thrive in high school, so they are prepared to enroll in and graduate from four-year colleges and universities. To his latter point, we will also include exposure to additional pathways, designed to prepare students for valuable employment and training opportunities upon high school graduation.

As detailed in the Community to be Served and the Special Student Populations sections, we will ensure that we meet the needs of all students when striving towards these objectives, including those students with special needs, students who are English language learners, and students who qualify for Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL), by providing differentiated services and ongoing student and family support. By holding a longer school day and school year, we will have adequate time to provide the instruction, resources, and preparation that all of our students need to enter high school on or above grade level, and eventually attain their college or career goals.

**Reflected Throughout:** The mission statement and the objectives of the school have guided all programmatic, fiscal, and operational decisions for the school. As such, they are woven throughout the full application and discussed in greater detail.

## **B. Key Design Elements**

**An Educational Program Aligned to Education Law §2850(2):** RCCCS will be modeled upon the successful work of the Charter School for Applied Technologies in Buffalo, New York. As such, RCCCS will begin as an elementary school, but our ultimate aim is to one day include a high school program that focuses on preparing students for college and careers in high growth, high demand industry sectors and early college high school instruction. This vision served as a driving force in our planning, as we worked backwards to create the key design elements of the elementary and middle school program, with the guidance and support of our colleagues at CSAT. The resulting programmatic components are described more fully below.

The RCCCS educational program will materially further the following objectives, as specified in Education Law §2502(2).

- Improve student learning and achievement; and
- Increase learning opportunities for all students, with a special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at risk of academic failure.

To further these objectives, we have designed the following key elements, which will guide all programmatic and fiscal decisions of the school, and are directly aligned to our mission and objectives in order to ensure that all students meet the New York State academic achievement standards.

**Key Design Elements:** The key features that are core to the school's overall design include:

- 1. A Focus on Learning and Standards Mastery:** In order to ensure that we attain the goals set forth in our mission, our first priority will be to ensure that each child receives individualized instruction that allows him or her to master all grade level standards, leaving RCCCS on track to succeed in the high school of his or her choice. To that end, RCCCS will not rely on compliance with a specific way of delivering instruction (a focus on teaching) and/or using only a specific set of materials/programs in order to ensure progress. Instead, the school will rely on analyzing the outcomes (learning) to select a great variety of inputs (teaching). At the outset of each year, grade level teams will review the essential standards and build a curriculum. We will incorporate career touches into the curriculum, by using them as a means to teach the content and grade level standards, as aligned to the NYSCCLS. The teams will then agree on how students will demonstrate mastery for each standard and ensure a common understanding of what evidence will be required. From there, individual teachers will be allowed a great deal of latitude in the delivery of instruction, provided that all techniques and methods are scrutinized once assessment data is available. In other words, the effective practices are not predetermined; rather, they become evident upon data analysis. Best practices are then shared amongst grade level teams and school wide, as appropriate. In order to glean these trends in an expedient manner, the entire school will use eDoctrina® software, which was developed at CSAT and is now used at schools throughout the country, to track formative and summative assessment data. This real time data software system builds the capacity of teaching teams to engage in deep analysis of achievement data on a daily basis. A "no zero policy" and mastery based approach to learning will ensure that students are provided several opportunities throughout the year to demonstrate mastery of standards, and teachers are expected to reteach the material until students have done so.
- 2. Professional Development in the Context of Teamwork:** The school will be comprised of highly effective same-grade level teams in grades K-6 and a combination of grade/subject area teams in grades 7-8, who will meet daily and perform as professional learning teams. Following a focus on learning, teachers will be empowered to request professional development help at the moment they identify an area of need rather than being mandated to participate in a one size fits all approach to professional development. Teachers will receive the career development, resources, and opportunities that talented professionals deserve. As such, they are empowered to take ownership of student learning and their own development, delivering outcomes and solving problems as needed. Our most talented teachers will work

with administrators to design and implement professional development and support the induction and development of new teachers.

- 3. School to Career Focus:** We believe that every one of our students, regardless of his/her academic performance, socioeconomic standing, or personal goals, is headed for the “World of Work.” While RCCCS will be a K-8 program, the ultimate goal is for the school to serve students in grades K-12. To this end, we will build our K-8 programming in such a way that it prepares and supports students for the rigorous high school program implemented at CSAT. Some may enter the workplace after receiving a diploma from RCCCS (once it is offered), while others will do so after college. Either way, our students will need to be armed with the skills and knowledge that will allow them to succeed during high school and beyond. And, just like CSAT, our students will embrace the motto that “Every day is career day.” As a result, we aim to expose our K-8 students to as many career touches as possible during their foundational years, including read alouds, field trips, guest speakers, and projects. These career touches will be woven into our curriculum, and used for several purposes, including, but not limited to: (1) increasing student knowledge and understanding around family sustaining career opportunities; (2) creating a foundation for students’ reflection on their work and what they hope to contribute to the community once they enter the “world of work;” (3) providing context, meaning, and value for the lessons and objectives that they are learning in school each day, to increase investment, understanding, and interest in school; and (4) helping motivate students in the short term towards achieving their long term goals. To achieve these objectives, we will ensure that the career touches are not merely one off experiences for students; moreover, we will weave them into our curriculum and use them as another tool to engage students, in a way that is aligned to the NYSCCLS and curriculum.

**Mission Alignment:** In order to achieve our mission, we have selected the following key design elements of (1) a focus on learning and standards mastery; (2) professional development in the context of teamwork; and (3) a school to career focus, all of which are directly aligned to our mission of providing a world-class education to Rochester students so that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in both college and family sustaining careers. In furtherance of our mission and key design elements, we will embrace a mastery based approach to learning, which will be guided by ongoing data driven instruction, to ensure that students are mastering state standards and on track for graduation and beyond. As an organization, we will give teachers great latitude in their approach to instruction, while maintaining that their primary focus be on student mastery; allowing this level of flexibility will ensure teamwork around our shared, primary goal of increasing student outcomes. And, finally, our budget reflects a staffing model, and student and staff supports (i.e. Family Resources Coordinator, multiple counselors and Consultant teachers, ongoing professional development and access to eDoctrina®, etc.) that will allow us to achieve these goals.

**Core Beliefs and Values:** The key design elements are indicative of the group’s core beliefs:

- 1. A Focus on Learning and Standards Mastery for All Students:** We believe that all students in Rochester deserve a high quality seat that prepares them for success in high school, college, and career, and we believe that if given multiple opportunities to master grade level standards, access to excellent teachers, and adequate social emotional support, all students will learn and achieve at high levels. We recognize that to meet that goal and achieve our mission, we will need to ensure that our students leave each grade having mastered all of the standards required to do so. Our focus on learning, and use of data driven instruction, as discussed further in the Curriculum and Instruction section, will allow our grade level teams to ensure that they are reteaching material until students demonstrate mastery on valid and reliable assessments.
- 2. Professional Development in the Context of Teamwork:** We believe in our staff and value their time. Therefore, we believe that professional development should be targeted on the most high leverage opportunities and areas of growth, as identified by student actions, teacher actions, and, ultimately,

student achievement data. We also believe that our teachers are our greatest resource in influencing student achievement, and we will, therefore, provide them with opportunities to learn, challenge, and grow from each other. We will rely on a very rigorous selection process to ensure that we recruit and retain the most talented teachers for our students. That said, our teachers will be regarded as the consummate professionals that they are and will be expected to demonstrate a solutions oriented approach to increasing academic outcomes for our students. Our commitment to our teachers is visible in our professional development and evaluation plan, and in our daily schedule, which demonstrates the multiple opportunities that our staff will have to work with and learn from each other each day.

- 3. School to Career Focus:** Even though we will start as a K-8 school, we believe that exposing children at a young age to career opportunities is essential to their investment in learning and our community. As discussed above, we recognize the need for alternative family sustaining pathways in the Rochester community and believe that every effort should be made to help students identify the pathway of interest to them from an early age.

**Enrollment Preference:** RCCCS's mission is to serve students in the city of Rochester. As outlined in the "Community to be Served Section," there are very few high performing elementary, middle, or high schools in the RCSD, and so the children that reside there, who choose to attend public schools, are at risk of academic failure. As a result, we will provide an enrollment preference to students who reside in the RCSD and to students whose siblings already attend the school.

**Serving All Students:** The key design elements will serve the diverse needs of all students as follows:

- 1. A Focus on Learning and Standards Mastery:** By relying on real time student achievement data, we will be able to identify which students have mastered each standard or objective, and which students have not. We recognize that all students come to us with a variety of strengths and needs, and some students may benefit from additional instructional time or small group instruction. As discussed further in the Special Student Populations section, each grade level will have a special education teacher that will push into classrooms, and we will also provide individualized instruction for those students who have been identified as English Language Learners or with special needs, to ensure that all students, regardless of ability, are mastering standards ready for the next grade level.
- 2. Professional Development in the Context of Teamwork:** By allowing our teachers to collaborate for at least two periods a day, we will provide many opportunities for them to share best practices and discuss strategies for reaching and supporting struggling learners. By holding Professional Learning Hours, as discussed further in our Professional Development section, we will allow teachers to coach each other on the most effective means for reaching struggling learners.
- 3. School to Career Focus:** RCCCS will serve the diverse needs of all students by exposing students to a variety of career paths, until each student finds a path that motivates him or her in working towards that goal. We recognize that our students will have varied interests and will work to increase their career touches to the extent possible, so that they can discover opportunities that most excite them.

**Evidence of Success:** RCCCS will be modeled upon the successful work of CSAT in Buffalo, New York. The 2014 graduation rate at CSAT was 95%, and since its first graduating class in 2008, CSAT has graduated 98% of its students (553 of 562 students). In fact, three of those senior classes have graduated 100% of its class. These outcomes are well above the Buffalo Public Schools graduation rate (53%), state (74%), and national (74%) averages. The CSAT graduation rate is the highest in the Western New York area, and the foundation for that success begins with their elementary and middle school programs.

### **C. Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention**

**Projected Enrollment:** RCCCS will begin year one with 190 students: 66 in kindergarten, 62 in first grade, and 62 in second grade, with approximately 20-22 students per class. We will add an additional 65 or 100 kindergarten students each year thereafter until we reach capacity at grade six. Following is our

projected enrollment:

Projected Enrollment Table Over the Charter Term						
Grades	Ages	2016 - 2017	2017 - 2018	2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021
K	4-5	66	65	100	100	100
1 <sup>st</sup>	5-6	62	64	75	100	100
2 <sup>nd</sup>	6-7	62	60	65	75	100
3 <sup>rd</sup>	7-8		60	60	65	75
4 <sup>th</sup>	8-9			60	60	60
5 <sup>th</sup>	9-10				60	60
6 <sup>th</sup>	10-11					60
<b>Totals</b>		<b>190</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>560</b>

**Application, Admissions, and Enrollment Process:** The proposed RCCCS application will require only necessary information to admit new students and is not considered a pre-registration form. The application will reflect the guidelines set forth by the New York State Department of Education<sup>3</sup>. Applications will be available on our website and will be distributed in hard copy to local community organizations, including (but not limited to) The Boys and Girls Club of Rochester, Head Start programs, and Hillside Children’s Center. Families or guardians of students interested in enrolling in the school must submit a completed application by April 1 each year. Applications, once completed, can be hand-delivered, mailed, or e-mailed. The school will provide email or postcard confirmation for all applications received by the April 1 deadline. Students who submit applications after the April 1 deadline will be added to the waitlist. The waitlist will expire annually at the lottery drawing for the next school year.

*Public Lottery:* If the number of applicants exceeds the number of open seats in the school, a random lottery will be held to select the students. The lottery will either be conducted by a third party or video-taped, in order to ensure a fair process for selection. Preference will be given to students residing in the RCSD and to students whose siblings are enrolled in the school. Students who are not selected from the lottery will be placed on a waitlist in the order in which their name is drawn from the lottery. For a more detailed description of the RCCCS admissions policies and procedures, see Attachment 1.

**Vacancies:** In the event that vacancies become available during the school year, students on the waitlist will be invited to attend the school in the order that they appear on the waitlist. However, we will no longer invite students to fill vacancies after October 31st each year.

**Rationale for Enrollment:** The rationale for selecting our enrollment size is as follows:

- RCCCS plans to enroll elementary school students from the RCSD. Since many students in the RCSD enter kindergarten already behind their more affluent peers, we firmly believe that starting our school at the elementary level, providing a solid foundation, particularly targeting vocabulary development and literacy skills in the early years, will allow us to have the greatest impact on our students.
- By opening in year one with only kindergarten, first, and second grade, we can invest our students and their families in our mission and school culture from day one. This way, a longer school day and school year will be a routine part of students’ and families’ school experience from the very beginning.
- Each class will include less than 25 students, which, when accounting for our Consultant Teachers and Teacher Aides at the kindergarten level, will allow for a student-to-teacher ratio of at least 12:1. This individualized student attention will provide excellent opportunities for differentiated instruction and will ensure that all students are provided several opportunities for reteach, intervention, and standards mastery.
- While we support our teachers’ right to organize, we wanted to allow the school to be fully operational

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/documents/NYSCSUniformAppFormDirectionstoCSforUseNov2011.pdf>

for two full years before providing the option to do so. As a result, we kept our enrollment under 250 students during the first two years of operation.

- And, finally, we anticipate an annual attrition rate of approximately 10%. By allotting 190 students in our founding year, and expanding our kindergarten class size to 100 (from 65) with four classes in year three of operation and to 75 students in first grade in year three, we have proactively accounted for any attrition that may occur. We will combine these enrollment strategies with the retention strategies outlined below, in order to ensure sufficient revenue to support a strong academic team and program that will be essential to the success of the school.

**Growth Strategy:** The growth strategy for the school is to add one grade level each year, beginning in our second year of operation. As indicated on the above enrollment table, we plan to begin with grades kindergarten through two, and to add a new grade level each year, until we reach grade eight. We have chosen to only add one grade per year in order to maintain the quality of our program and a strong school culture as we grow. Like the CSAT team, we hope to eventually open a high school for our graduating eighth graders. However, we recognize that our efforts at the present time must be acutely focused on the performance and outcomes of our elementary and middle school students, which is why we are focusing on grades K-8 exclusively.

**Meeting or Exceeding Enrollment Targets:** In order to meet or exceed the enrollment and retention targets established by the Board of Regents, we are conducting ongoing recruitment and outreach at organizations that serve students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch, students with disabilities, and ELL students, including (but not limited to) the Monroe County Social Services, the Carlson Metrocenter YMCA, and Hillside Children's Center, provider of care for youth and families with a wide range of emotional, behavioral, or life-circumstance challenges. We also plan to place ads in or on local urban and Spanish language media outlets in high visibility areas. We will continue to distribute flyers in areas with the highest poverty and at refugee outreach organizations. Finally, we will reach out to families directly by sending direct mailings to Rochester City residents and going door-to-door to share information about, and an application for, RCCCS.

As further described in our Public Outreach section, we have already received 481 signatures from community members indicating support for our program. Of the 481 signatures, 240 represent parents who are both supportive of our program and reside in the target community, and these parents have at least 350 children, based on the information that they shared with us. Given the current level of interest in RCCCS, and the ongoing and extensive recruitment that we plan to conduct once authorized, we are confident that we will be able to meet our projected enrollment goals of 190 students in the first year, and 560 at capacity.

**Recruitment and Retention Plan:** CSAT has had success in recruiting and retaining a broad cross-section of students to their schools. To illustrate, Buffalo CSAT is now the largest charter school in New York State and serves approximately 1,940 students from 19 different school districts in Western New York. As such, we will adopt a similar approach, while including any strategies that have proven to be successful with local Rochester charter schools as well, as measured by their enrollment and retention of target student populations and their current waitlist.

**Recruitment Plan:** Our recruitment plan will include the strategies listed below and will begin (or continue, as applicable) immediately upon charter approval:

- *Ongoing Advertising:* We will continue to communicate information about our program in accessible formats and languages with local media outlets, including radio stations, news organizations, and local parent websites. And, providing we can afford to do so, we will post advertisements on billboards and television channels. We will send direct mailings to parents and families who reside within a five mile radius of our proposed school location in the RCSD, and we will continue to use social media as a tool for communicating information about our program to a broad cross-section of the community.

- *Ongoing Community Outreach:* We will continue to partner with local religious groups, community centers, and organizations, as well as state and local officials to notify them of our program, the students that we are planning to serve, and means for obtaining further information. We will continue to hold town hall meetings at libraries and public locations throughout the community in order to notify as many community members as possible about our work. We have created an email address and website where community members and parents can direct any inquiries about the program as well.
- *Parent Engagement:* We will continue to solicit parent feedback and input on our program, by creating a parent association, sending out surveys, and creating a parent recruitment committee, so that we can continuously meet the needs of the community and improve, but also so that we can actively engage with parents and notify them of all that RCCCS has to offer. We will organize events at locations that have high levels of interaction with school aged parents, such as early childhood centers, churches, and libraries, in order to make sure we are reaching as many parents as possible.
- *Open Houses and School Social Events:* Once our school is operational, we will invite prospective parents to tour the school and join our staff and current families for social events. This approach will allow prospective families to gain familiarity with the school model, ask current families about their experiences, and engage with the staff.

These recruitment strategies will be ongoing in order to sustain continuous enrollment throughout our charter term.

**Retention Plan:** The crux of our retention plan will be effective parent engagement and communication, as we know that effective communication with parents will be essential to assessing their satisfaction with our school, addressing any concerns, and keeping them abreast of student progress. Specifically, we will use the following strategies to increase parent engagement:

- Parent association membership and meetings;
- Social events, such as breakfasts, spaghetti dinners, potlucks, and ice cream socials;
- Choosing an accessible location for the school, and assisting with transportation concerns where necessary; and
- Parent satisfaction surveys, inquiring about “intent to return,” and reasons behind a parent’s decision to do so (both positive and negative).

We will use the following strategies to ensure effective, personalized, and strategic parent communication:

- Parent orientation at the outset of the year that explains our handbook, the School Wide PBIS system, student and family expectations, and introduces families to the staff and each other;
- Contracts with parents at the outset of each year, explaining what families are expected to assist students with in order to yield greatest outcomes for performance (i.e. homework help, reading with child for 20 minutes, etc.);
- Ongoing communication from our principal, notifying parents about upcoming important events and school expectations; and
- Regular calls home to the parent, informing them of student progress (both positive and areas of growth).

**Recruiting & Retaining Students with Disabilities, ELLs, and FRP:** In addition to the general strategies listed above, we will apply the following strategies to recruit and retain students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch (FRPL) program.

*Recruitment Plan:* In order to recruit students with disabilities, we will continue to reach out to organizations and agencies serving children with special needs and their families to let them know we will have staff and resources available to meet the needs of students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans (504 Plans). For example, one such agency is Hillside Children’s Center – a

provider of care for youth and families with a wide range of emotional, behavioral, or life-circumstance challenges. Hillside offers mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice, special education, safety net, and developmental disabilities services to children and families throughout Central and Western New York. We have collaborated with Hillside to host a community meeting at which we offered materials about our program and addressed any questions or concerns that parents had about RCCCS.

To reach families with limited English proficiency, we will translate promotional materials into Nepali, Somali, and Arabic – the most commonly spoken languages by immigrant and refugee families in the area. We will advertise in non-English media outlets, and reach out to organizations and agencies serving ELL families. We have, and will continue to, connect with local refugee organizations, including Catholic Family Center's Refuge, Immigration, and Language Services Department, the Somali Center, and RCSD's Rochester International School (RIA), to recruit refugee and immigrant families to the school and ensure linguistic diversity.

Finally, in order to ensure that we reach students who qualify for the FRPL program or whose families may be less informed about available school options, we will conduct direct outreach efforts, including going to door-to-door in high poverty neighborhoods throughout Rochester to notify parents about our program, and sending out direct mailings with information about RCCCS with a copy of the application to families residing in the RCSD. We will also continue to partner with early childhood centers that serve students in high poverty neighborhoods.

*Retention Plan:* In order to retain special education students, RCCCS will hire the necessary teachers and administrators with special education certification and ensure that instruction is provided in accordance with students' IEPs or 504 plans. Special education programming and related services support (e.g., speech-language) will be provided per a student's IEP and then based on identified need, impacting academic performance and growth. Regular screening, assessment, and progress monitoring is planned to benchmark performance and track growth. Individualized learning/intervention plans will be developed for all students who would benefit from additional support to accelerate academic growth. We will provide ongoing communication to all parents, but particularly to parents of students with IEPs, to ensure that they are aware of both progress and concerns related and unrelated to the student's disability or area of need.

In order to retain ELL students, RCCCS will engage an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teacher who will work with staff to provide appropriate instruction to students, as well as work one-on-one or in small groups to help students acquire English. Communications with families will be in the home language to the extent reasonably possible. We will have translators available for parent conferences and school events, so that ELL students and families can be full participants in the RCCCS experience.

In order to retain students who qualify for the FRPL program, or whose families may be less informed about available school options, we will provide wraparound services to address student needs, including a full time nurse and a social worker. We will also hire a Family Support Coordinator to strengthen its students and families through school, community, and parent collaboration in order to promote student success and well-being. For a full description of these supports, please refer to the Special Student Populations and Related Services and Family and Community Engagement sections.

**Ensuring Adequate Enrollment and Allowing for Full Accessibility:** In order to continuously meet or exceed the enrollment targets set forth by the Board of Regents throughout our charter term and retain students from our target community, we will continue to conduct outreach and advertise throughout the Rochester community as described above. Our proposed school is located in a central area, accessible to parents and families by public transportation. Furthermore, we will ensure that the school facility is accessible to all enrolled students.

#### **D. Community to be Served**

**Value of the School:** If approved, RCCCS will add tremendous value to the Rochester community, as

our counterparts in Buffalo have demonstrated in their community. To illustrate, Buffalo CSAT has achieved the highest graduation rate in the Western New York area. Similar outcomes in Rochester would be unprecedented for a public school in our community. To illustrate, there are few high quality educational options within the RCSD, and many of the schools in the District are not adequately preparing students for the rigors of the CCLS, the requirements for graduating with a Regents diploma, and the strong foundation required to successfully complete college or access a thriving career. Similarly, there are currently no schools for students in grades K-8 that combine rigorous academic instruction with a school to career emphasis.

See below for additional information about the great need in our area and how RCCCS will aggressively address that need.

**Student Population to be Served:** RCCCS will recruit and serve students from the RCSD, which has the highest poverty rate among the NYS Big 5 districts. Twenty-two percent of schools in the RCSD have a poverty rate of 90% or higher. The current student population in the RCSD<sup>4</sup> is as follows: 60.1% African American/Black, 25.6% Hispanic, 10.2% White, and 4.1% Asian/Native American/East Indian/Other; 84% eligible for free/reduced-price lunch; 16.5% with special needs, and 10% with limited English proficiency; and 87 different languages are spoken. The RCSD has a graduation rate of 43%, and of 54 schools, only nine are in good standing, 29 are focus schools, and 16 are priority schools. Furthermore, the 2013-2014 State tests<sup>5</sup> indicate that overall proficiency for students in grades 3-8, or students who scored at levels three and four, is 5% in ELA and 7% in mathematics.

**Identification of Student Needs and How the School Will Address Those Needs:** As detailed in the Special Student Populations and Assessment Plan sections, RCCCS will conduct ongoing assessments to identify students' academic and social needs. RCCCS will address those needs through academic intervention services, ELL services, and social emotional services and supports. We will also continue to use what information we know about the District population to plan strategically to support student and family needs. In order to address this need, RCCCS will provide rigorous academic instruction, emphasize teamwork and strategic teaching strategies, while engaging students and families around family sustaining career opportunities. By keeping students in school for a longer day (8 hours) and a longer school year (199 days), we will ensure that students and teachers have adequate time to reach our mission and objectives.

**Rationale for Selecting Rochester:** We chose to open our school in the City of Rochester because we care tremendously about the City, and we see a great need, since there are very limited options for students to attend high-performing public schools in the RCSD. As Rochester community members, business owners, educators, and parents, we value education and believe it is the vehicle toward ensuring Rochester's success in the future. We are motivated, committed, and passionate about implementing a school to career program, even for our youngest students. We are inspired by the work of the CSAT team and aim to harness the best practices that they have established, so that we, too, can create a rich and engaging school to career focused program. Rochester is known for its deep history in technology and advanced manufacturing, and it is an area that we know will spark student interest.

**Ability to Serve the Rochester Community:** Our skill sets, both individual and collectively, will allow us to govern RCCCS successfully and, thereby, serve the students of the RCSD quite well. To illustrate, all members of the applicant group reside in the greater Rochester community and are invested members of the community. Collectively, we bring a variety of skills from the business, education, and nonprofit sectors, including, but not limited to: human resources, strategic partnerships, philanthropy, finance, accounting, nonprofit management, special education, technology and innovative teaching strategies, small business

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.rcsdk12.org/domain/8>

<sup>5</sup> <http://data.nysed.gov/reportcard.php?instid=800000050065&year=2013&createreport=1&38ELA=1&38MATH=1&48SCI=1>

management, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and consulting.

**Rationale for how RCCCS will Enhance/Expand Educational Options:** If approved, RCCCS will be the first K-8 college and career focused school located within RCSD school limits. We believe that providing this option for students will greatly enhance and expand the educational options for students in this community. Our program will introduce students to family sustaining career options and rigorous and engaging instruction. Specifically, students will benefit from ongoing “career touches” as aligned to family sustaining career paths most in demand in our region, beginning in kindergarten and expanding through eighth grade. These career touches are described more fully in our Curriculum and Instruction section.

**Evidence of Family & Community Support:** In addition to extensive community outreach endeavors, many of which were directed at parents and families (see Section E), the applicant group shared an overview document that outlined program and timeline details with parents in the community and asked them to sign a petition if they were interested in learning more and/or potentially enrolling their children in the proposed school; 481 signatures were collected; all 481 indicated support for our program, and at least 348 of the 460 reside in the target community. 240 represent parents who are both supportive of our program and reside in the target community, and these parents have at least 350 children. Additionally, the RCCCS team distributed a survey to gauge parent interest and demand. The majority of participants indicated that they support the development of new charter schools in the RCSD, and 87% of participants indicated that a college and career focused charter school would benefit students academically and in their future aspirations. In addition to the above outreach, RCCCS conducted focus groups with parents in the Rochester community, many of whom who reside in the City of Rochester and have children that attend the RCSD, to specifically solicit parent feedback on our educational program. Several parents indicated concern about the lack of high quality school options that exist for their children in the City schools. One parent, specifically, indicated “we have a couple more years to enjoy the City before we will move to a suburb” due to the lack of high quality school options. Several parents expressed their support for a college and career focused charter school and were hopeful that RCCCS will open in the RCSD. We are continuing our outreach and recruitment efforts, but the support garnered so far indicates that there is a strong demand and interest for a college and career focused charter school in the RCSD.

#### **E. Public Outreach**

The RCCCS applicant group has conducted community outreach in order to understand the needs of the community, gauge support for the school proposal, and elicit feedback to enhance school design. Specifically, the RCCCS team has held information sessions, attended community events, visited community organizations and met with various community and business leaders. A detailed list of the outreach efforts is included in Attachment 2, and several of the outreach efforts were conducted in collaboration with other proposed charter elementary schools.

**Means Employed to Ensure Community is Informed About the Proposed Charter School:** To ensure that the Rochester community was fully informed about RCCCS, our proposed location, student population, grades and educational program, we created and distributed a letter, detailing the specifics of our program and mailed it to local news outlets, City and State officials, community organizations, local colleges and universities, faith based organizations, and existing charter schools in the RCSD. We also created websites and Facebook pages, with information about our program, which were distributed to parents and community groups during our outreach efforts, beginning in May. In addition, we also went out into the community on approximately 50 different occasions to share information with parents and community members about our program and invited them to provide feedback or follow up with any questions or comments.

**Evidence of Public Meetings:** The RCCCS outreach team held seven information sessions in the month of June, and provided notice for these meetings on June 8, 2015. The meetings began on June 8,

2015 and continued through June 20, 2015. The RCCCS outreach team also held four information sessions during the month of August, and provided notice for these meetings as summarized in the table below.

Date of Event	Where	Eventful	Eventbrite	WHAM13	WROC	WHEC	RocParent (GV Parent)	City Newspaper
8/5/15	RMSC	8/4/15	8/4/15	8/4/15	8/4/15	8/4/15	8/4/15	8/4/15
8/10/15	Seneca Park	8/5/15	8/5/15	8/5/15	8/5/15	8/5/15	8/5/15	8/4/15
8/11/15	Boys & Girls Club	8/5/15	8/5/15	8/5/15	8/5/15	8/5/15	8/5/15	8/4/15
8/11/15	Sully Library	8/6/15	8/6/15	8/6/15	8/6/15	8/6/15	8/6/15	8/6/15

**Means Employed to Solicit Community Input:** In our outreach letter, on the websites, and at all outreach events, we encouraged parents to provide feedback on the charter school program and the needs of students in the RCSD. In addition, we invited community members to complete the following survey, to gauge parent interest and demand: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SRWBXXN>. The majority of participants indicated that they support the development of new charter schools in the RCSD, and 87% of participants indicated that a college and career focused charter school would benefit students academically and in their future aspirations. In addition to the above outreach, RCCCS conducted focus groups with parents in the Rochester community, many of whom who reside in the City of Rochester and have children that attend the RCSD, to specifically solicit parent feedback on our educational program. Examples of the parent feedback are provided below. A full summary of the parent focus groups is available upon request.

- One grandparent indicated that she is hopeful that her granddaughter will be able to attend a charter school in the future, and that her granddaughter is currently on the waitlist for an existing Rochester charter school.
- Many parents shared questions around where the school will be located and the process for enrollment.
- Several parents expressed their support for a college and career focused charter school and were hopeful that RCCCS will open in the RCSD.
- One parent attended a charter school when she was a child in New York City, and has three children on waiting lists for charter schools here in Rochester. She indicated that the City needs more schools with a unique approach to learning, and expressed disappointment that her children are on a waitlist because she believes that the education that they will receive in a charter school will be superior to that in the District. She indicated that smaller class size, more attention, and more motivated students contribute to an environment that facilitates success.
- One mother of a foster child expressed the need for all schools, both district and charter, to offer more emotional and behavioral supports.
- Several parents indicated concern about the lack of high quality school options that exist for their children in the City schools.

**Response to Comments:** The RCCCS community outreach team diligently recorded parent feedback in order to incorporate it into our program design and to inform future student recruitment and outreach efforts. For instance, given the amount of questions about the school location and the enrollment process, we will be sure to make parents fully aware that we are opening in an accessible location, and that all students are welcome to apply to the school. As we conduct student recruitment, we will be sure to have clear directions and steps around the enrollment process; specifically, we will hold open houses to help parents who wish to apply, but might have further questions, we will distribute applications to parents during outreach events so that they can ask questions on the spot, if they have them, and we will be sure to provide applications in English, Spanish, and other languages, as feasible, to reach as many families as possible.

Additionally, given the feedback around smaller class sizes, attention, and emotional and behavioral

support, we have ensured Teacher Aides are available for our younger students, that at least one Consultant Teacher, certified in Special Education, is staffed on each grade level, and that we have adequate staff to provide Behavior Intervention Support within the building.

**Ongoing Approach to Engage with the Community and Solicit Public Input:** We will continue our community outreach in the same manner as we have conducted it to date: emails, letters, websites, social media, and in person outreach and information sessions to media, community members and organizations, and parents. We will continue to share our survey and solicit parent input and feedback on our program. Our board has already begun sharing information about RCCCS with their respective networks, and they will continue to do so. Similarly, we will continue to keep our outreach partners within the community – the Rochester Museum and Science Center, the Boys and Girls Club of Rochester, and the YMCA, for example – updated about our progress and how we can work together to recruit students once the school is opened.

**How Students in the Community Will Be Informed About the Charter School:** As described above, we have conducted extensive outreach throughout the Rochester community to notify them about our proposed school program. Yet, we have made a particular effort to reach those parents with students in the RCSD who may not otherwise be informed of all school options by specifically targeting our outreach efforts to the neighborhoods in the community where our target population resides.

**How Students in the Community Will Be Given an Equal Opportunity to Attend the Charter School:** To ensure that all students in the community will be given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school, we will continue to engage the neighborhoods in which students and families from the RCSD reside, with a particular focus on the sections of the City with families who may not be as informed about school options and those neighborhoods with a high concentration of students/families in poverty.

#### **F. Programmatic and Fiscal Impact**

**Schools in the Area:** The Rochester City School District currently offers 27 elementary (pre K-6 or K-6) schools, 14 K-8 or K-12 schools, and 25 secondary schools<sup>6</sup>. The RCSD currently serves approximately 30,000 students, with approximately 20,000 students enrolled in grades K-8.

**Programmatic Impact:** RCCCS does not anticipate having a negative programmatic impact on other K-8 schools in the Rochester area. Our review of the current school options indicate that the added students at RCCCS will not dramatically impact enrollment at either traditional public or other public charter schools in the Rochester city and surrounding areas. RCCCS would provide tremendous value in the community, since no other elementary school has a school to career focus in the Rochester area.

Even at full capacity, we will have approximately 560 students, or approximately 2.8% of the RCSD population. Considering the large number of elementary students in the Rochester area, the unique and innovative school design, community outreach efforts, and the waitlists at other Rochester- area elementary charter schools, RCCCS does not anticipate challenges with enrollment (capacity) or retention of students.

**Fiscal Impact:** The expected fiscal impact of RCCCS on the RCSD budget is less than 9/10ths of 1%. The adopted FY 2014-15 RCSD budget is \$788,259,462, premised on a projected enrollment of 28,119. In Year 1, RCCCS expects to enroll 190 students (0.7% of current RCSD enrollment) and receive per pupil revenue of \$2,344,600 (0.3 % of current RCSD budget). In Year 5, RCCCS expects to enroll 560 students (2.0% of current RCSD enrollment) and receive per pupil revenue of approximately \$6,910,400 (0.9% of current RCSD budget). The fiscal impact on other public and non-public schools in the area cannot be defensibly calculated, but it is reasonably expected to be equally immaterial.

## **II. EDUCATIONAL PLAN**

### **A. Achievement Goals**

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<sup>6</sup> [www.rcsdk12.org/domain8](http://www.rcsdk12.org/domain8)

RCCCS will utilize the renewal benchmarks as the framework for our proposed school goals, as we believe the framework will accurately measure our performance and will be a valuable tool in ensuring student achievement. See our academic achievement goals below.

**Goal 1: RCCCS students will perform at or above grade level in ELA.**

*Student Progress Over Time (Growth)*

**Method 1 (Aggregate Growth):** Each year, under the state's growth model, the school's mean unadjusted growth percentile in ELA for all tested students in grades 4-6 will meet or exceed the state's unadjusted median growth percentile (50%).

**Method 2 (Subgroup Growth):** Each year, under the state's growth model, the school's mean unadjusted growth percentile in ELA, for all tested students with special needs and ELL students in grades 4-8, will meet or exceed the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.

**Method 3 (Performance Index: Aggregate Growth to Proficiency):** Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Level Index (PLI) will meet the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) as set forth in the NCLB accountability system.

**Method 4 (Performance Index: Subgroup Growth to Proficiency):** Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Level Index (PLI), for students with special needs and ELL students, will meet the AMO as set forth in the NCLB accountability system.

**Student Achievement (Attainment)**

**Method 5 (Aggregate Proficiency):** By year three of the charter term, 40% of students who have sustained enrollment in RCCCS for at least two years will attain a level 3 or 4 on the New York State ELA exam. By year four of the charter term, 50% of students who have been enrolled in RCCCS for at least two years will attain a level 3 or 4 on the New York State ELA exam. By year five of the charter term, 60% of students who have sustained enrollment in RCCCS for at least two years will attain a level 3 or 4 on the New York State ELA assessment.

*Since the 2014 current statewide proficiency for ELA is approximately 31% and the Rochester proficiency for ELA is approximately 6%, we believe that the goals above are rigorous and reasonable considering the many variables that we must take into account when planning our students' academic success. As indicated by the goals above, we aim to nearly double the statewide proficiency rate in ELA by the end of our charter term. In the first two years of our charter term, our students will not take the state exams, but we will ensure that they are on track to meeting the aforementioned goals, as described further below.*

**Method 6 (Subgroup Proficiency):** By year three of the charter term, 15% of students with special needs or ELLs, who have sustained enrollment in RCCCS for at least two years will attain a level 3 or 4 on the New York State ELA exam. By year four of the charter term, 25% of students with special needs or ELL students who have been enrolled in RCCCS for at least two years, will attain a level 3 or 4 on the New York State ELA exam. By year five of the charter term, 35% of students with special needs or ELL students who have sustained enrollment in RCCCS for at least two years, will attain a level 3 or 4 on the New York State ELA assessment.

*Since the current statewide proficiency for ELA is approximately 5% for students with special needs and 3% for students with limited English proficiency and the Rochester proficiency for ELA is approximately 6% for students with disabilities and 0% for students with limited English proficiency, we believe that the goals above are rigorous and reasonable, considering the many variables that we must take into account when planning our students' academic success. As indicated by the goals above, we aim to have our students with special needs and ELL populations exceed the current proficiency rate, for all students, by the end of the charter term. In the first years two years of our charter term, our students will not take the state exams, but we will ensure that they are on track to meeting the aforementioned goals, as described further below.*

**Method 7 (Similar Schools Comparison):** Each year, RCCCS will exceed its predicted level of performance on the New York State ELA exam by an effect size of at least 0.3 (performing higher than expected to a small degree), as measured by an annual comparative regression analysis, controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.

**Method 8 (District Comparison):** Each year, students who have sustained enrollment in RCCCS for at least two years will outperform their grade level counterparts in the RCSD by 10 percentage points in proficiency, as measured by the percentage of students at levels 3 and 4 on the New York State ELA assessment.

**Method 9 (District Comparison, Subgroups):** Each year, students with disabilities and ELL students who have sustained enrollment in RCCCS for at least two years will outperform their grade level counterparts in the RCSD by 10 percentage points in proficiency, as measured by the percentage of students at levels 3 and 4 on the New York State ELA assessment.

**Charter Specific Growth Measures**

**Method 10 (Growth):** By the end of each year, 95% of students will have achieved their growth target in reading based on mean growth in the latest norming study for students who had a starting RIT score in the same 10 point block, as measured by performance on the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA-MAP) assessment.

**Goal 2: RCCCS students will perform at or above grade level in mathematics.**

*Student Progress Over Time (Growth)*

**Method 1 (Aggregate Growth):** Each year, under the state's growth model, the school's mean unadjusted growth percentile in mathematics for all tested students in grades 4-6 will meet or exceed the state's unadjusted median growth percentile (50%).

**Method 2 (Subgroup Growth):** Each year, under the state's growth model, the school's mean unadjusted growth percentile in mathematics, for all tested students with special needs and ELL students in grades 4-8, will meet or exceed the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.

**Method 3 (Performance Index: Aggregate Growth to Proficiency):** Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Level Index (PLI) will meet the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) as set forth in the NCLB accountability system.

**Method 4 (Performance Index: Subgroup Growth to Proficiency):** Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Level Index (PLI), for students with special needs and ELL students, will meet the AMO as set forth in the NCLB accountability system.

**Student Achievement (Attainment)**

**Method 5 (Aggregate Proficiency):** By year three of the charter term, 50% of students who have sustained enrollment in RCCCS for at least two years will attain a level 3 or 4 on the New York State mathematics exam. By year four of the charter term, 60% of students who have been enrolled in RCCCS for at least two years will attain a level 3 or 4 on the New York State mathematics exam. By year five of the charter term, 75% of students who have sustained enrollment in RCCCS for at least two years will attain a level 3 or 4 on the New York State mathematics assessment.

*Since the 2014 current statewide proficiency for mathematics is approximately 35% and the Rochester proficiency for mathematics is approximately 7%, we believe that the goals above are rigorous and reasonable considering the many variables that we must take into account when planning our students' academic success. As indicated by the goals above, we aim to nearly double the statewide proficiency rate in mathematics by the end of our charter term. In the first two years of our charter term, our students will not take the state exams, but we will ensure that they are on track to meeting the aforementioned goals, as described further below.*

**Method 6 (Subgroup Proficiency):** By year three of the charter term, 15% of students with special needs or ELLs, who have sustained enrollment in RCCCS for at least two years will attain a level 3 or 4 on the New York State mathematics exam. By year four of the charter term, 25% of students with special needs or ELL students who have been enrolled in RCCCS for at least two years, will attain a level 3 or 4 on the New York State mathematics exam. By year five of the charter term, 35% of students with special needs or ELL students who have sustained enrollment in RCCCS for at least two years, will attain a level 3 or 4 on the New York State mathematics assessment.

*Since the current statewide proficiency for mathematics is approximately 7% for students with disabilities and 10% for students with limited English proficiency and the Rochester proficiency for mathematics is approximately 7% for students with disabilities and 1% for students with limited English proficiency, we believe that the goals above are rigorous and reasonable, considering the many variables that we must take into account when planning our students' academic success. As indicated by the goals above, we aim to have our students with special needs and ELL populations exceed the current proficiency rate, for all students, by the end of the charter term. In the first years two years of our charter term, our students will not take the state exams, but we will ensure that they are on track to meeting the aforementioned goals, as described further below.*

**Method 7 (Similar Schools Comparison):** Each year, RCCCS will exceed its predicted level of performance on the New York State mathematics exam with by an effect size of at least 0.3 (performing higher than expected to a small degree), as measured by an annual comparative regression analysis, controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.

**Method 8 (District Comparison):** Each year, students who have sustained enrollment in RCCCS for at least two years will outperform their grade level counterparts in the RCSD by 10 percentage points in proficiency, as measured by the percentage of students at levels 3 and 4 on the New York State mathematics assessment.

**Method 9 (District Comparison, Subgroups):** Each year, students with disabilities and ELL students who have sustained enrollment in RCCCS for at least two years will outperform their grade level counterparts in the RCSD by 10 percentage points in proficiency, as measured by the percentage of students at levels 3 and 4 on the New York State mathematics assessment.

**Charter Specific Growth Measures**

**Method 10 (Growth):** By the end of each year, 95% of students will have achieved their growth target in reading based on mean growth in the latest norming study for students who had a starting RIT score in the same 10 point block, as measured by performance on the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA-MAP) assessment.

**Goal 3: RCCCS students will perform at or above grade level in Science.**

**Method 1 (Absolute):** Each year, 85% of students who have sustained enrollment in RCCCS for at least two years will attain a level 3 or 4 on the New York State science assessment.

**Method 2 (Comparative):** Each year, students who have sustained enrollment in RCCCS for at least two years will outperform their grade level counterparts in the RCSD by 10 percentage points in proficiency, as measured by the percentage of students at levels 3 and 4 on the New York State science assessment.

*While we value social studies education tremendously, we have prioritized science education in order to stay laser focused on the school's mission and key design elements. Students will still receive social studies instruction and will be regularly assessed to ensure that they are mastering grade level social studies standards.*

**Goal 4: RCCCS will achieve an Accountability Status of "In Good Standing" each year, as measured by the NCLB accountability system.**

**Method 1:** RCCCS will achieve an Accountability Status of "In Good Standing" each year, as measured by the NCLB accountability system.

**B. School Schedule and Calendar**

**School Calendar and Schedule:** The weekly student and staff schedules and proposed school calendar are in attachments 3(a) and 3(b) respectively. The table below illustrates the daily and weekly total instructional time in each subject area:

K-5 Subject Areas		
Subject	Total Daily Instructional Time	Total Weekly Instructional Time
ELA	90	450
Math	90	450
Writing	60	300
Social Studies	30	150
Science	30	150
Physical Education	50	250
Art	50	50
Music	50	50
Technology	100	100
Spanish	50	50

6-8 Subject Areas		
Subject	Total Daily Instructional Time	Total Weekly Instructional Time
ELA	90	450
Math	90	450
Social Studies	50	150
Science	50	150
Physical Education	50	250
Art	50	50
Music	50	100
Technology	50	250
Spanish	50	100

**Length of School Day and Year:** The RCCCS school day will begin at 8:00 am and end at 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The school year will begin on August 16, 2016, and continue through June 30, 2017. RCCCS will have 199 instructional days, with 7 full school days of the 199 allocated exclusively for professional development. We will not hold summer school programming during our first charter term. Professional development time throughout the year, and during the school day, is discussed in more detail below.

**Core/Supplemental Intervention and Electives:** Core intervention will be integrated in the regular instructional blocks by using various whole and small group differentiated learning techniques, as detailed in the Special Students and Populations section. The Consultant Teachers and the Teacher Aides will work to support and facilitate small group sessions with the lead teacher. Consultant Teachers and Teacher Aides will be with the students in their grade level or homeroom class at all times throughout the day and will support students during specials classes as determined by Individualized Education Plans or student need. There will be at least one Consultant Teacher per grade level, whose involvement will be determined during the common planning periods, based on student progress and need, as agreed upon by the PLC. The Consultant Teacher will provide support during all subjects, including intervention, and will work to support students from his or her grade level team.

Students who need additional intervention/supplemental instruction, on top of that provided during the regular and intervention blocks, will receive push in support from the Consultant Teacher or the Academic Intervention Support (AIS) Teacher during the regular instruction periods and pull out intervention services during art or physical education class as needed. The AIS Teacher will develop and provide evidence-based and data-driven academic intervention services for students enrolled at RCCCS and will collect ongoing performance and progress data to inform instruction. Students will receive at least 90 minutes of ELA and mathematics instruction each day, so they will have time for small group instruction and re-teach, if needed. However, we have also included a daily half hour block set aside exclusively for additional intervention as well, as we recognize the importance and the effectiveness of small group and individualized instruction opportunities in attaining our goal of standards mastery.

**Supplemental Instruction:** As discussed above, there will be a set intervention period for all grades for 30 minutes per day in addition to the core intervention that takes place during each class period. During this block, students will be grouped by skill level, in math or reading, as determined by benchmark and formative assessments. Teachers will use this block to provide targeted, small group instruction, to ensure that all students are mastering grade level standards. Students with special needs will receive individualized instruction, per their IEP goals. However, this time of day will allow for additional individualized academic support, without having to pull students from another subject area. Similarly, students who are ELLs may be grouped during this time to promote English language acquisition and support with the core instruction. Groups will vary in size, depending on students' skill level and progress toward the standard. For instance, if students are very far behind and/or struggling learners, teachers might find groups of 2-3 most effective. Students who are not receiving intervention will read independently or work on additional assignments during this time, allowing teachers to work with those students who will benefit from more individualized attention.

Students will also receive art, music, Spanish, or technology instruction each day. Our elementary school students will receive 50 minutes of art, music, and Spanish, and 100 minutes of technology each week. Our middle school students will receive 50 minutes of art, 100 minutes of music and Spanish, and 250 minutes of technology each week. We allocated this time, based on our mission and objectives with our students. To illustrate, in the younger grades, we will provide a greater exposure to a variety of areas, while at the secondary level, we expect our students to develop proficiency in technology, Spanish, and learning to play a musical instrument, as we believe that these skills will be critical as our students pursue their college and career aspirations. All students will receive 250 minutes of physical education, and similar

to CSAT, we will expect our physical education program to promote fitness, health, and a positive self-awareness. The physical education curriculum will focus on the integration of NYS Standards and on team-building, cooperative learning, sportsmanship, and fair play. Diverse exposure to sports and fitness activities will allow for life-long, well-rounded healthy individuals, which will only help to further their goals.

**Student Organization:** Students will be grouped heterogeneously in all classes, except intervention. During intervention, students will be grouped homogeneously by skill level, and all grade level teachers, with the support of the Consultant Teachers and Teacher Aides, will provide targeted reading and math instruction during this time. Teachers will be grouped as indicated in the attached Sample Weekly Teacher Schedule in Attachment 3(a).

**Teachers' Workday:** As indicated by the proposed school calendar and the Sample Weekly Teacher Schedule, teachers will begin school on August 15, 2016. The last day of school will be June 30, 2017. Students will begin school on August 22, 2016, and will attend school for a half day the first school week. Since we are beginning with kindergarten, first, and second graders, many of whom may never have been to school before, we believe that it is important to have half days to help them transition properly. Even though students will have an early dismissal during the first week, teachers will be expected to stay for the full school day (i.e., until 4:00 pm), which will allow for additional individual and common planning time.

As noted in the schedule, full time teachers will teach from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday, with at least 100 minutes of common grade level planning time and/or professional development (discussed further below) and 30 minutes for lunch. Part time teachers (i.e., art and music teacher) will teach from 8:50 am until 12:30 pm, Monday through Friday, and will receive at least 50 minutes of common planning time.

Teachers will lead or attend professional development from August 15-20<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 am-4:00 pm. New teachers will attend RCCCS 101, modeled off of CSAT 101, as discussed further in the Professional Development section, either in Rochester, led by veteran teachers or the Principal, or in Buffalo, led by CSAT veteran teachers there. Veteran teachers, who are not leading RCCCS 101 sessions, will begin evaluating and modifying grade level curriculum maps during this time.

Similar to CSAT 101, the majority of the professional development will be teacher identified and teacher led, as described further in the Professional Development section. Professional Learning Hours will take place during common planning time, and the Principal will provide coverage for teachers who wish to attend and are not already free at that time. Outside of daily PLCs and monthly PLHs, there will be seven full professional development days for staff, as indicated on the proposed first year calendar in Attachment 3(b). The first five will take place at the outset of the year for RCCCS 101 and common planning, and the remaining two will take place after the first and second (out of three total) benchmark assessments are administered. Teachers will hold a "Data Dive" and action plan from the benchmark assessments, after reflecting on school wide data trends.

### **C. Curriculum and Instruction**

**Plan and Framework for Curricula Development:** RCCCS will adopt the same plan and framework for curricula development as CSAT. That is, during the planning year, the Leadership Team will review the Common Core Learning Standards and the third grade state tests. The Leadership Team will use this information to create the curriculum maps for kindergarten, first, and second grade to ensure that power standards and important skills are prioritized and reviewed throughout the year. We will divide the curriculum maps by grade, subject, and modules (units of study). As the school adds a grade level each year, this process will be repeated for all grade level and subject areas. Once the school reaches full capacity, the grade level teams, or Professional Learning Communities (PLCs, described more fully below) will use student achievement data from the year before, and the existing curriculum maps, and any changes to the state standards or assessments, to revise and improve the curriculum map for the

upcoming school year.

RCCCS will divide its teaching teams by grade level for grades kindergarten through five and by a combination of grade/subject area in grades six through eight. These teams will be referred to as Professional Learning Communities or PLCs. Each PLC will include a Consultant Teacher, or a floating teacher who is certified in special education, and works with the PLC to support the individual needs of the students in the PLC's particular grade level or content area. Each PLC will collaborate interdependently in support of all students in their grade and/or students learning their subject specialty. The PLCs will be afforded common planning time at the outset of the year and each day, which will be used for the ongoing development of the curriculum.

During this time, PLCs will create module maps, or units, that are aligned to the curriculum maps for the year. The module maps will contain the essential questions for guiding instruction and learning throughout the course of the year, and concepts, skills, and vocabulary that must be taught in each unit, as aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. PLCs will use the concepts, skills, and vocabulary for each unit to create unit objectives, which will be phrased in student-friendly "I can" statements. From here, each PLC will then create the unit assessments, so that they share a common understanding and agreement on what standards mastery will look like for all students in that grade level and subject area. Individual classroom teachers, with additional input from the grade level Consultant Teacher, as needed, will then use the "I can" statements to create daily lesson objectives, and, as discussed in more detail below, will use their knowledge of their students, and their professional discretion, as they determine the best instructional approaches for leading students to mastery of that objective.

In addition to unit assessments, the Leadership Team will create benchmark assessments, as aligned to the curriculum maps for each grade level and subject area, that will be administered at the beginning, middle, and end of each year. These assessments will be created using eDoctrina®, which has a database of NWEA questions, past state test questions, and questions from the *Core Knowledge Sequence* and EngageNY resources. The benchmark assessments will be used to measure standards mastery but also to inform progress, growth, and areas for reteach and review throughout the year.

This continued process ensures tight horizontal alignment of the curriculum. The process also guarantees that students will be exposed to the same rigorous and viable curriculum, since it will continue until the school reaches full capacity. From there, the curriculum maps will be available to PLCs each year to modify and improve, as needed.

Furthermore, RCCCS's professional development days for returning teachers at the outset of the year will focus on vertical alignment of the curriculum. Multi-grade teams in grades kindergarten through eight and subject area teams in grade six through eight will meet and follow protocols to review the scaffolding nature of the curriculum and make adjustments in expectations, pacing, and rigor. The results of this process will ensure alignment across grade level and content areas.

**Theoretical Base for Curriculum Development:** As discussed above, our approach to instruction will be completely standards based. Once PLCs have identified the objectives and shared assessments for each unit, teachers will be permitted to use the following instructional resources to support their implementation of the curriculum and their daily lesson planning. And, as previously discussed, teachers will be granted great deference as to what materials they use to create their lessons, and the manner in which they teach it, so long as students are mastering the standards on the shared, pre-determined assessments. This approach, as outlined in *Understanding by Design*, by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, casts assessment as the central role of teaching and learning, by arguing that assessment should not be an afterthought, but rather the central point of instruction<sup>7</sup>. Wiggins and McTighe argue that we will not know if students have learned anything after a lesson unless we assess them with questions that are

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/interview-grant-wiggins-power-backwards-design-ben-johnson>

aligned to the lesson. The “UbD Framework,” as it is often referred to, is based on seven key tenets<sup>8</sup>:

1. Learning is enhanced when teachers think purposefully about curricular planning. The UbD framework helps this process without offering a rigid process or prescriptive recipe.
2. The UbD framework helps focus curriculum and teaching on the development and deepening of student understanding and transfer of learning (i.e., the ability to effectively use content knowledge and skill).
3. Understanding is revealed when students autonomously make sense of and transfer their learning through authentic performance. Six facets of understanding—the capacity to explain, interpret, apply, shift perspective, empathize, and self-assess—can serve as indicators of understanding.
4. Effective curriculum is planned backward from long-term, desired results through a three-stage design process (Desired Results, Evidence, and Learning Plan). This process helps avoid the common problems of treating the textbook as the curriculum rather than a resource, and activity-oriented teaching in which no clear priorities and purposes are apparent.
5. Teachers are coaches of understanding, not mere purveyors of content knowledge, skill, or activity. They focus on ensuring that learning happens, not just teaching (and assuming that what was taught was learned); they always aim and check for successful meaning making and transfer by the learner.
6. Regularly reviewing units and curriculum against design standards enhances curricular quality and effectiveness, and provides engaging and professional discussions.
7. The UbD framework reflects a continual improvement approach to student achievement and teacher craft. The results of our designs—student performance—inform needed adjustments in curriculum as well as instruction so that student learning is maximized.

This approach embodies our first key design element, as it calls for a “focus on ensuring learning happens, not just teaching,” as measured by standards mastery, and as stated above. Furthermore, teachers are more apt to lead students towards achieving the standards, to an adequate level of rigor, if they know what mastery looks like from the outset, and they have broken down each standard at the beginning of the planning process.

**Research Based Curricular Resources:** We will adopt highly regarded, Common Core aligned, curricular programs and resources to support instruction around the CCLS. Teacher will use these resources as they see fit to help students access and learn the standards taught in the core subject areas. Each subject area is discussed in more detail below:

*English Language Arts:* As discussed in the School Schedule and Calendar section, students will receive approximately 150 minutes of ELA instruction each day in grades K-5 and approximately 90 minutes in grades 6-8.

Grades K-2: Teachers will plan ELA instruction using the balanced literacy framework. With a balanced literacy approach, “teachers integrate instruction with authentic reading and writing and experiences so that students learn how to use literacy strategies and skills and have opportunities to apply what they are learning<sup>9</sup>.” Students will engage a Reading and Writing Workshop each day. The Reading Workshop will be structured as follows:

- **Mini Lesson:** Teacher addresses the group in a Read Aloud, Shared, or Guided Reading piece to introduce and model an effective reading strategy (as aligned to CCLS);
- **Independent Practice (Individual, Small Group, or Centers Based):** Students then engage independently, in pairs, or at a listening or computer center to engage with the task.
- **Debrief/Whole Group Share:** Students will come together as a class to discuss what they learned during this process.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.pearsonhighered.com/samplechapter/0131190768.pdf>

The Writer's Workshop will take a similar approach, in that the teacher will model a writing strategy, as guided by the steps of the writing process (collect, develop, draft, revise, edit, publish), and lead students through a mini-lesson on this topic. Students will engage in similar differentiated independent practice and/or conferencing with the teacher. And, finally, students will come together to share their process with the group.

To plan for each section of the balanced literacy framework, teachers will have access to the following resources:

Our early elementary school teachers will have access to *The Core Knowledge Sequence* to guide their ELA instruction. The *Core Knowledge Sequence* is a detailed outline of specific content and skills to be taught across all subject areas, including language arts, history, geography, mathematics, science, and fine arts. As such, there will be an interdisciplinary component to our ELA instruction, which will further content knowledge of other core subject areas of science and social studies. The *Core Knowledge* program maintains that reading, listening, writing, and speaking with understanding require a shared body of common knowledge, and that to be proficient speakers and writers, students must not only have the skills to read and write, they must understand the context in which they are doing so, in order to reach their intended audience. The intention of this program, therefore, is to create a body of well-educated, literate Americans, who can communicate effectively.

The *Core Knowledge Language Arts* (CKLA) program for grades K-2 is composed of two strands: a Skills Strand and Listening and Learning Strand. This way, students can master the sounds and letters for fluent decoding and encoding during one part of the day and then have additional time to master the skills essential for strong comprehension, such as knowledge, language, and vocabulary. Teachers will focus on the "Listening and Learning" strand of the CKLA program during read aloud. During guided reading, teachers will rely on the "Skills" portion of the Core Knowledge sequence to teach students the necessary techniques for developing fluency and comprehension skills to progress to the next reading level. Shared and independent reading will allow students time to practice these strategies with their peers and individually. While an emphasis will be placed on different strands during each part of balanced literacy, the two strands will be taught in tandem to ensure that students are receiving comprehensive literacy instruction that provides a strong foundation for both decoding and comprehension.

Grades 3-8: Our teachers in grades 3-8 will be encouraged to utilize the modules and resources available on the EngageNY website. EngageNY offers valuable instructional resources, professional development materials, sample questions, video resources, and a toolkit for parents and families in implementing the CCLS standards. The modules are directly aligned to the CCLS, and include all the components of a well-designed unit plan, including guiding questions and big ideas, aligned assessments and performance tasks, a list of the standards and objectives, central texts, and a weekly breakdown of learning targets.

The third through eighth grade modules focus on reading, writing, listening, and speaking in response to high quality texts. Each module is intended to last a quarter of the school year, with additional modules added for teacher choice. The modules sequence and scaffold the content, as aligned to the CCLS for ELA and Literacy. Each module includes an end-of-module performance task, which we will align with our benchmark assessments and track using eDoctrina®. Modules also include daily lesson plans, guiding questions, recommended texts, scaffolding strategies, examples of proficient student work, and other classroom resources.<sup>10</sup>

Teachers of all grade levels will have access to leveled readers, aligned with the Fountas and Pinnell reading levels, either through books donated or bought by the school, or through programs like Reading A-Z, to plan for and use as resources during guided, shared, and independent reading. The Fountas and

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.engageny.org/english-language-arts>

Pinnell benchmark assessments will inform student's reading level and teacher planning for the skills required to help that student develop fluency and comprehension skills required to move to the next level, as discussed further in the Assessment Plan section.

*Mathematics:* Students will receive at least 90 minutes of math instruction each day. Teachers in grades K-8 will utilize the EngageNY modules to guide mathematics instruction and planning. The result is an integrated math program consistent with an instructional approach that is conceptual, uses manipulatives, and emphasizes skill introduction and development through real-life problem application. These programs are highly consistent with New York State's Learning Standards for Mathematics, Science, and Technology, which similarly emphasizes inquiry, investigation, conceptual application, and math integration.

The math modules include fewer topics, but require more in-depth engagement with the material, by integrating “the CCLS, rigorous classroom reasoning, extended classroom time devoted to practice and reflection through extensive problem sets, and high expectations for mastery<sup>11</sup>.” As a result, the amount of time spent on each module will vary, as the mathematical content is the focus for the module. For instance, a concept may be introduced briefly at the start of the year and then continue to develop through exposure to additional strategies and problem solving over the course of the year. The modules contain the additional materials necessary to build on this topic and provide student practice as they progress.

*Science and Social Studies:* In the elementary school grades, students will receive approximately 60 minutes of science or social studies instruction each day, and teachers will try to alternate units of study based in science and social studies as they plan their ELA instruction, in order to provide even greater exposure to these content areas.

K-2: To plan for science and social studies, teachers in grades K-2 will draw upon the cross-curricular concepts in the *Core Knowledge Sequence*, to ensure alignment and continuous content exploration across subject areas.

3-8: In grades 3-8, teachers will use the EngageNY modules to plan for Social Studies, while also trying to incorporate grade level content from both areas into ELA instruction as well. To plan for Science, teachers will use the Elementary Science Program (ESP) of the Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES. The Elementary Science Program provides a “hands on interdisciplinary curriculum that converts the elementary classroom into a science laboratory.<sup>12</sup>” The curriculum is aligned to the CCLS for mathematics and Science and Technology.

The ESP program emphasizes student-centered investigation, and is “hands-on, inquiry based, and includes interdisciplinary connections to math and language arts standards.<sup>13</sup>” ESP provides “mini units” that integrate science into ELA and math instruction, in a manner that’s aligned with the CCLS. The program aims for students to “DO science” by creating opportunities for students to share common experiences and provide an opportunity to read, talk, listen, and reflect orally and in writing about what they are learning. When the program is integrated with math, mathematical concepts such as data tables, graphs, and interpreting mathematical concepts in writing are all explored more fully. The program provides units that are directly linked to the NYSCCLS. Sample ESP unit descriptions<sup>14</sup> for grade four are listed below: Teachers will use these units to select content in ELA instruction but also to plan for the science block.

- **Birds & their Adaptations:** Students observe birds to learn about their physical and behavioral properties, and how they are adapted to their environment. Food chains, food webs and habitats are also taught. Suggested length: 10 weeks.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.engageny.org/mathematics>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.espsciencetime.org/files/1379634/complete%20guide%20to%20esp%20units.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.espsciencetime.org/files/1379634/complete%20guide%20to%20esp%20units.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.espsciencetime.org/teachers.cfm?subpage=329006>

- **Crayfish:** Students practice humane treatment of animals while they learn about the structure and behavior of crayfish by observing respiration, reaction to stimuli, feeding habits and territorial behavior. Suggested length: 7-13 weeks, fall only.
- **Design Technology:** Wheels: students research, plan, construct, test and evaluate models of their own design. Models will be built to scale from drawings made on centimeter grid sheets. Suggested length: 6 weeks.
- **Electrical Circuits:** Students construct and test simple circuits. Investigations include series and parallel circuits, conductors, resistance and how to make a fuse. Suggested length: 9 weeks.
- **Magnets:** Students explore the properties of magnets and magnetic materials. Suggested length: 4 weeks.
- **Mystery Matter:** Students investigate the physical and chemical properties of powders as they try to match the properties of a powder found at the scene of a crime. Students observe the interactions of these materials with a variety of chemical indicators. Suggested length: 6 weeks.

*Additional Subject Areas:* In addition to the aforementioned subject areas, we will provide art, music, technology, Spanish, and physical education instruction. Exposure to these subject areas in elementary and middle school will lead to excellence in these areas in high school, ultimately assisting our students in attaining their college and career aspirations.

**School to Career Theme:** We believe that the focus on career cannot be understated, and research supports the notion of how important this focus is for our students. To illustrate, The Thomas B. Fordham Institute has recently completed a great deal of research on this topic, and findings from a recent report are listed below:

The Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce has released several reports providing further evidence that the returns to education are not simply a function of how much you have had, but what skills you have acquired. According the Center's studies, there are now very significant overlaps between the earning of those with licenses and one-year post-secondary certificates and those with two-and-four year degrees. Most striking, nearly one-third of those with two-year degrees are out-earning the average four-year degree holder. In Florida, for example, those who graduated in 2009 with two-year technical degrees were, within two years, out-earning the average four-year degree holder by about \$10,000. More recent research from the Federal Reserve Board of New York has documented the struggles of younger four-year-degree holders more generally, reporting that over 40% of them are working in jobs that historically did not require a college degree. Given the rising costs of college-plus the average debt burden of \$26,000 young graduates are carrying-these numbers are causing many parents to question the assumption that an investment in a four-year degree is a guarantee of economic security for their children.<sup>15</sup>

For the reasons outlined above, we will emphasize both college and career pathways for our students, while reiterating the importance of obtaining a *family-sustaining career*. We recognize that every student's path to a family sustaining career will look different, and it will be our goal to ensure that they are set up for success in whatever path they decide on – whether they head straight to college or pursue a career after graduation.

Regardless of each student's choice, the college and career focus will serve as the central underpinning of our school. We will use college and career focus to invest students in their learning and understand the role of education in this path. As discussed earlier, our ultimate goal is to create a college and career focused high school, similar to CSAT, which will provide college and career pathways, as determined by projections for high demand career opportunities in 10-15 years. At the high school level,

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<sup>15</sup> <http://edex.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/Schwartz-Hoffman%20Paper-KLM%20%281%29.pdf>

this focus will require a robust staffing structure, including college and career counselors, internship coordinators, and qualified staff that offer Advanced Placement, vocational, and training opportunities for our future high schools students.

At the elementary and middle school levels, however, we will take a foundational approach. Exposure to family sustaining career opportunities will be woven into the curriculum, where appropriate and aligned. For instance, students might explore these opportunities during a read aloud, a research report, or a class presentation. To accomplish these goals, the Leadership Team will collect data from New York State at the outset of each year about the jobs and career path that are projected to have the greatest demand in Western New York over the next 10-15 years. From there, teachers at each grade level will be expected to create at least four meaningful “career touches” around these family sustaining career opportunities and integrate those career touches into the curriculum. As described earlier, these career touches could include field trips, interviews, class visits, or documentaries, for instance, about various career opportunities and how individuals ultimately landed in their roles.

As we know from CSAT, this approach will go a long way in ensuring the curriculum helps students understand the relevance of what they are being asked to learn and in encouraging that learning happens within the context of practical applications. And, further, the embrace of the Common Core Learning Standards ensure the rigor necessary for the development of the skills and habits of mind that are necessary to succeed in college and in a meaningful career.

**Approach to Instruction:** RCCCS will not employ pre-determined universal instructional practice expectations. Similar to CSAT, we will rely on analyzing the outcomes (learning) to select a great variety of inputs (teaching). More specifically, after teams select the essential learning and agree on a common evidence of learning, individual teachers are allowed a great deal of latitude in the delivery of instruction provided that all techniques and methods are scrutinized once the assessment data is available. In other words, the effective practices are not predetermined but they become evident upon data analysis. Our focus, instead, therefore, will be on learning. The model does not rely on mandating school-wide instructional practices that are considered effective. On the other hand, all effective practices become evident upon analysis of the data conducted by teams.

Having implemented this approach for several years now, our colleagues at CSAT have discovered several effective practices as a result of their ongoing data analysis, which they have come close to considering school-wide practices. Examples of these practices include do-now activities, communicating teaching goals to students using “I can” statements, guided practice, shared practice, exit tickets, collaborative work, and many others. We will, of course, rely on these strategies that have proven to be effective in increasing student achievement, particularly in our founding years.

**Determining Best Instructional Practices:** In order to glean our best instructional practices, PLCs will take time to identify and “unwrap” essential learning goals, as dictated by the CCLS and isolate the crucial concepts and skills. From there, common formative assessments will be created and will be used specifically to measure student needs and the impact of teaching. To accomplish this goal, the school will rely heavily on the shared daily planning periods and the real time reports generated by eDoctrina®. Specifically, all PLCs will meet each day to focus discussions and to make decisions specifically from their common formative assessments. The purpose of classroom assessments is to assist teachers in knowing and understanding the impact of instructional decisions on student achievement, and to learn from each other’s successes and areas of growth.

In addition, teachers will coach and challenge each other to ensure that any assessment of student learning is also serving as an assessment of the quality and degree of teaching strategies during their PLC and Professional Learning Hours (PLHs, See Professional Development section). Intentionally creating tools for common formative assessments will ensure that incorrect choices or distracters offer insight to gaps and misconceptions. Teachers will be able to teach with a more focused interventional approach. This

process will increase consistency in content taught as well as learning. Teachers will see for themselves where students fall prior to instruction, during, and after. Grade level (elementary) and discipline-specific (secondary) teams will meet around data daily to evaluate student progress, different teaching strategies, and set goals for themselves as well as their students.

**Implementing Effective Instructional Practices:** Once best practices have been gleaned from student achievement data, teachers will be expected to share those best practices with their PLC and with the school as a whole. The Leadership Team will assist in sharing these practices, and will create opportunities (during PLH) for PLCs to share effective strategies for instruction across grade level and content teams.

Professional development will be centered around the following areas, as noted by our colleagues at CSAT, to ensure effective implementation of curriculum and instruction: common collaborative planning, standards based decision making that does not confuse instructional materials with curriculum, development of common formative and summative assessments, team capacity to analyze the resulting data and create interventions, systemic interventions in addition to team-based ones, no-failure policy that provides multiple opportunities to learn, and professional development in the context of the team.

#### **D. Assessment System**

**Assessment System and Mission, Objectives, and Key Design Elements Alignment:** The assessment system at RCCCS will rely heavily on the adoption and implementation of eDoctrina® software. The eDoctrina® software was created at CSAT and is now used at schools throughout the country to develop, implement, and track assessment data. RCCCS will use eDoctrina® to do just that: (1) develop rigorous, Common Core aligned assessments that will drive planning and instruction; (2) track student progress towards standards mastery based on formative and summative assessment scores; and (3) provide real time data and reporting tools so that teachers know at any moment how a student is performing and what he or she can do to improve student outcomes.

This approach to assessments is directly tied to our mission, objectives, and key design elements. Since our mission is to prepare students for college and career, we need to provide our students with a strong foundation in elementary and middle school so that they thrive in the high school of their choice. Without being able to identify and measure student progress towards their grade level standards and objectives, we will not be able to equip our students with that foundation. We will require teachers to provide multiple opportunities to master grade level standards, and we will expect our teachers to reteach and reassess the content until all students have done so. Similarly, we will have a “no zero” policy, as this diminishes student investment, and indicates that a teacher has not provided sufficient opportunities for the student to engage with and demonstrate their knowledge of the standards. eDoctrina® is essential to our success in fulfilling that obligation to our students.

Furthermore, our objectives and key design elements encompass standards mastery and common planning (use of PLCs). RCCCS will need rigorous and aligned assessments to identify student progress and areas of growth, so that grade level teams can work together to analyze this assessment data, and leverage team wide, shared best practices to ensure student learning and mastery. eDoctrina® is directly tied to these objectives, as it will serve as our means for generating and aligning assessments to grade level standards and provide the reports necessary for teachers and the leadership team to engage in common planning and professional development.

**Process for Administering and Analyzing Assessments and Developing Action Plans:** RCCCS plans to use a variety of assessments throughout the year, and eDoctrina® will play a critical role in this process. For instance, RCCCS will use eDoctrina® to generate benchmark assessments for all grade levels in ELA and math at the outset of the year, which we will use to align the grade level curriculum maps in each subject area (described more fully in the Curriculum and Instruction section). These benchmark

assessments will be administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year to track student growth and ensure that students are on track to master grade level standards, and that our instruction is aligned to the State exams and the CCLS. To generate these assessments, our team will evaluate the CCLS, the New York State assessments, and the EngageNY modules. Teams will use this information to select standard-aligned items from a bank of research-based (NWEA) questions provided through eDoctrina®. Further details about the types of assessment, what information we hope to obtain, and how this information will be used are discussed below.

**Diagnostic and Benchmark Assessments:** RCCCS will utilize the following assessments for both diagnostic and benchmark purposes. The initial assessment will serve as the diagnostic and the following assessments will provide data to allow us to measure student progress and benchmark student growth. Further details about each assessment are included in the table below.

Assessment, Grades, & Dates	Purpose	Ensuring Reliability and Validity	Who Administers	How Results are Collected, Analyzed, & Used by Staff
<b>Fountas &amp; Pinnell Benchmark Assessment, K-5, Quarterly</b>	Assess student's reading ability, including fluency, accuracy, and comprehension.	Curriculum coordinators will observe administration to promote quality control amongst teachers; results will be compared to other reading data to ensure reliability.	All teachers	Teachers will grade students and enter results in tracking tool; data is used to track student reading level growth throughout the year and inform instruction.
<b>Kindergarten Screening, Grade K, Fall</b>	Assess fine motor, gross motor, basic number and literacy concepts, vocabulary, and hearing.	Kindergarten teachers will receive training on proper administration and evaluation of this assessment during August professional development; the school leader and the curriculum coordinator will observe implementation to make sure that teachers are normed.	All kindergarten teachers	Teachers will score assessments and use to inform instruction and any necessary intervention with kindergarten students.
<b>NYSITELL, K-8, Fall and Spring</b>	Identify ELL students	The test will be administered in accordance with all state mandated requirements.	Teachers who have received training in NYSITELL administration	Results are submitted to NYSED; used internally to reflect on curriculum, alignment, and areas of growth.
<b>Common Benchmark Assessments, K-6 and 7-8, Beginning, Middle, and End Of Year</b>	Evaluate student progress towards standards mastery, evaluate different teaching strategies, and improve instructional approach.	Grade level teams will collaborate to create common benchmark assessments aligned to the standards, pulling from a bank of researched based (NWEA) questions and EngageNY end of unit module assessment questions.	All teachers	Teachers will collect and organize assessment data, relative to student goals and generate reports by standard, subject, grade level, school and district. These assessment will be used to inform how well aligned our teaching and learning is to the NYS CCLS and exams.

**Formative Assessments:** Teachers will be expected to create clear and measurable objectives for each lesson, with a corresponding check for understanding, to ensure that the lesson objective was met. As a result, teachers will rely heavily on formative assessments to guide their own instruction and to invest students in their individualized learning goals. Teachers will use, but are not limited to, the following formative assessments listed below.

Assessment, Grades, & Dates	Purpose	Ensuring Reliability and Validity	Who Administers	How Results are Collected, Analyzed, & Used by Staff
<b>Informal Fountas and Pinnell Testing, K-5, Ongoing (At least monthly)</b>	To assess students' reading fluency, growth, and comprehension and make sure they are progressing towards their reading level targets.	School leader and curriculum coordinators will select a student to read with at random to ensure that his or her stated reading level is accurate. If the principal or curriculum coordinator notices a discrepancy, he or she will observe the teacher during a re-administration of the assessment to make sure the teacher is administering properly.	All teachers	Teachers grade the assessments and enter them into a student growth tracker; data is submitted to the curriculum coordinator each month and reviewed to make sure students are on track to reaching reading level targets.

<b>Common Formative Assessments, Ongoing</b>	Evaluate student progress towards standards mastery, evaluate different teaching strategies, and improve instructional approach.	Grade level teams will collaborate to create common formative assessments aligned to the standards, pulling from a bank of researched based (NWEA) questions and EngageNY end of unit module assessment questions.	All teachers	Teachers will collect and organize assessment data, relative to student goals and generate reports by standard, subject, grade level, school and district. These assessment will be used to inform how well aligned our teaching and learning is to the NYS CCLS and exams.
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**Summative Assessments:** Students will be evaluated on their mastery of the New York State CCLS, as measured by the exams listed below.

Assessment, Grades, and Dates	Purpose	Ensuring Reliability and Validity	Who Administers	How Results are Collected, Analyzed, and Used by Staff
<b>New York State ELA and Math Assessments Grades 3-8, Spring</b>	Understand how students are learning and retaining the NYS ELA and math standards.	The test will be administered in accordance with all state mandated requirements.	All teachers, grades 3-8	Results are submitted to NYSED; used internally to reflect on curriculum, alignment, and areas of growth.
<b>New York State Science Assessment, Grade 4, 8 Spring</b>	Understand how students are learning and retaining the NYS science standards.	The test will be administered in accordance with all state mandated requirements.	All fourth and eighth grade teachers	Results are submitted to NYSED; used internally to reflect on curriculum, alignment, and areas of growth.
<b>New York State Alternate Assessment, All Eligible IEP Students, Spring</b>	Understand how students are learning and retaining the goals set forth in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP).	The test will be administered in accordance with all state mandated requirements.	All special education and intervention staff	Results are submitted to NYSED; used internally to reflect on curriculum, alignment, and areas of growth.
<b>New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, Grades 3-8, Spring</b>	To assess students' English language acquisition	The test will be administered in accordance with all state mandated requirements.	Teachers who have received training in NYSESLAT administration	Results are submitted to NYSED; used internally to reflect on curriculum, alignment, and areas of growth.
<b>Core Knowledge Unit Assessments, K-2, Ongoing</b>	To gauge progress on listening and literacy skills	Teachers will receive guidance on how to administer the assessment and will norm in grade level teams on scoring and interpreting results.	All teachers, grades K-2	Tests are graded and tracked using eDoctrina®.
<b>Teacher Created and ESP Science Unit Assessments, 3-8</b>	To gauge mastery of unit objective	Teachers will administer each unit assessment at the end of each unit.	All teachers, grades 3-8	Tests are graded and tracked using eDoctrina®.

**Determining Progress Toward Objectives:** Once assessments are developed and administered, the data will be tracked using eDoctrina® as well. The school will be able to use this data to generate detailed data reports, with a multitude of ways for displaying student outcomes at the group and individual level. Examples of these reports<sup>16</sup> are listed below:

- **Individual Student.** These reports are designed to be given back to students when they complete an assessment. Each displays student progress on the assessed learning standards.
- **Class Summary.** These provide teachers with a summary of class (or grade level) performance. Customizable color codes allow for quick identification of students in need of extra assistance. Also included is a table that provides the data necessary for educators to make more measurable and accurate goals for themselves.
- **Item Analysis.** This report breaks down student performance by question and reveals information about what learning standards need to be stressed (and, possibly, re-taught) and question quality.
- **Class Comparison.** This report compares different classes/sections to each other and can be run to show results by assessment question or learning standards.
- **Student-Standards.** This report allows users to see which skills individual students are mastering and/or struggling with. With a click, results can be reordered to highlight those youths whose results fall

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.org/assessments>

below a specific benchmark and may be in need of intervention. This report can also be run over a length of time, producing insight into long- or short-term trends.

These reports, coupled with teacher observation, will serve as the heart of how we evaluate student progress towards our objectives. Teachers will use these reports daily when they meet with their PLCs to plan and determine interventions. The Leadership Team will review these reports weekly to determine school wide trends and areas for staff professional development.

**Using Data to Inform Key Decisions:** The assessment system is designed to have multiple units for analysis and application at the class, grade, and school levels. Explicit training and instruction will be provided to teachers during RCCCS 101 and PLHs around data driven instruction. Specific details on how various stakeholders in the RCCCS community will utilize academic achievement data to improve student outcomes are listed below.

*Teachers:* Teachers will use formative and summative assessment data on a regular basis, during their PLC meetings each day. Specifically, teachers will be expected to use assessment data to summarize, and plan for intervention and reteach and personal and team professional development (observation, more collaborative planning, soliciting feedback on a new teaching strategy, etc.).

*Students:* Teachers will share student performance with each student. Students, in turn, will be expected to engage in self-reflection and analysis to identify what actions (both positive and negative) led to the outcomes and what actions that they will take to improve. These reflections will take place during written self-reflections and individualized student conferences. Teachers and students will log reflections and refer back to them as a means for monitoring progress and building student investment.

*Parents:* Staff will use eDoctrina® to generate reports to parents indicating student progress and noting areas of strength and growth. Teachers will couple these reports with strategies for parents and families, so that they can provide targeted support in helping students attain standards mastery.

*School Leadership:* The Principal and Leadership Team will be expected to use assessment data to summarize and plan for school wide trends that indicate staff wide professional development or support is needed, grade level teams in need of greater support during common planning hours, and/or individual teachers who may be struggling. Similarly, the Leadership Team will use these reports to generate positive trends around school wide, group, and individual strengths, in order to leverage and continue those best practices.

*Board:* For further details on how the RCCCS board will use student achievement data to improve academic outcomes, please see the “Reporting” section below.

**New York State Testing Program:** Please refer to the Assessment System Table to note the timeline and administration details for NYS mandated assessments.

**Methods for Obtaining Valid and Reliable Measures of Student Outcomes:** We will make great efforts to ensure that our assessment implementation and evaluation is valid and reliable, as indicated in the assessment tables above. For instance, teachers will receive in depth training on each assessment, and school leaders will observe implementation for quality control. Checks, such as informal school leader assessment of reading level, are in place to ensure that teachers’ evaluation of student performance is reliable, and, in the event that it is not, additional monitoring and professional development will be provided.

Furthermore, we have included the NWEA MAP questions in the eDoctrina® question bank because of its validity and reliability and the significant size of the norm group that it draws upon when providing norm-referenced scores. If necessary, we will also contract with an external partner to help us administer and evaluate assessments, particularly since so many elementary school assessments require one on one administration, in order to yield reliable results.

**Reporting:** Academic data, and other sources of critical data (e.g., enrollment, retention, behavior), will be entered into eDoctrina®. The variety of reporting tools embedded within this software promotes data driven decision-making at all levels of the school program. The wide variety of data reports encourage all

users, including administrators, to monitor student growth and the effectiveness of classroom instruction on a regular basis by analyzing performance on standards-based assessments. Instructional leaders will be able to disaggregate outcomes by standard, subject, and grade level, and student groups. These types of desegregated reports will serve as the basis for conversations among teachers and administrators and will be an integral part of monitoring performance within the school(s).

We will also use a quarterly report card system to inform parents of their child's academic and behavioral performance. Report cards will be distributed during designated parent teacher conference days throughout the year, as indicated on the proposed "First Year Calendar" in Attachment 3b. The report card template will be shared with, and explained to, parents at the outset of each year, so they know the expectations for their child and the learning goals for that year.

In addition, parents of students receiving special education services will be kept abreast of student progress towards short term and long term IEP goals. A performance summary will be distributed quarterly with the student's report card. All parent communication will be in the family's home language, and every effort will be made to meet with parents one on one to discuss the child's performance.

### **E. Performance, Promotion, and Graduation Standards**

**Promotion Standards and the School's Mission, Educational Program, and Assessment System:** The mission of RCCCS is to provide a world-class education to Rochester students so that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in both college and family sustaining careers. To achieve this mission, we must ensure that our elementary and middle school students are leaving on or above grade level, excited about learning and the opportunities that await them. As a result, we will require teachers to provide multiple opportunities to master grade level standards, and we will expect our teachers to reteach and reassess the content until all students have done so. Similarly, we will have a "no zero" policy, as this diminishes student investment, and indicates that a teacher has not provided sufficient opportunities for the student to engage with and demonstrate their knowledge of the standards. Further, our educational program will provide students with ongoing "career touches" to invest and excite them in school and in learning, so that they can pursue their career or path of interest. And, finally, we will not be able to achieve any of the above goals without the use of our real time assessment system, eDoctrina®, which will provide leadership and staff with the ongoing student data that they need to gauge student progress towards standards mastery. Since our school will be K-8, there are no graduation standards, but the promotion policy is detailed below.

**Proposed Policies and Standards for Promotion:** RCCCS will expect students to master grade level standards in the core subject areas of ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies in order to enter high school on track to graduate with a Regents diploma. Examples of these standards are listed below.

The same promotional criteria will apply to students with special needs and ELL students. However, if a student's IEP indicates that (s)he will be held to an alternate standard for promotion, the school leader will incorporate the criteria listed in the IEP when making any retention or promotion decisions. Similarly, student performance on the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) will be taken into consideration as well, as applicable.

At the end of the year, principals will receive a list of students for each grade level, who did not meet the requisite performance standards for promotion, as referenced above. The Principal will make the final decision about whether or not to promote the student, based on the following variables:

- Performance on the New York State ELA, mathematics, and science exams;
- Performance on summative assessments, such as unit tests;
- Performance on beginning, middle, and end of year benchmark assessments;
- Reading growth made throughout the year, as measured by the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark assessment;

- Performance on homework, projects, and other material assignments, as measured by holistic rubrics, throughout the year;
- Behavior and maturity, provided that the student does not have an Individualized Education Plan;
- Attendance;
- The interventions provided to the student throughout the school year; and
- Teacher reflections about the student and his or her academic needs and performance.

In order to ensure that students are promoted and retained on an objective basis, teachers will be expected to track the items listed above using eDoctrina® throughout the year. Students at risk of retention will be flagged in eDoctrina® quarterly and sent to the Principal for review. As soon as any issues or concerns in student performance arise, parents will be notified immediately. We will ensure that we have communicated these concerns effectively throughout the year, so that parents are fully aware of concerns before the time comes to make a decision about retention. Interventions will be made throughout the year to support students at risk of retention. In addition, we will make every effort to support these students throughout the summer months and into the following school year to ensure that they ultimately reach grade level proficiency, even if they are retained.

Furthermore, for students in grades kindergarten through two, where a student may be meeting some of the standards, but not yet quite on grade level, the recommendation will be to promote that student and make every effort to support him or her during the summer months. However, in cases in which a first or second grade student is severely behind grade level expectations for literacy, we would likely retain that student, since research indicates that third grade students who are not reading at grade level are four times more likely to drop out of high school than proficient readers.<sup>17</sup>

**Sample Promotion Standards:** As discussed in the Curriculum and Instruction section, the Principal and the instructional staff will create curriculum maps at the outset of the school year that include all CCLS and NYSLS standards for each grade level, providing a clear sense of what students will know and be able to do by the end of each school year. Teachers will use these curriculum maps to create assessments, and backwards plan their units, ensuring full coverage of all standards. We are unable to include a sample table of these standards here due to constraints around space, but we are happy to provide it upon request.<sup>18</sup>

#### F. School Culture and Climate

**Student Discipline Policy:** Please see Attachment 4 for a detailed version of our Student Discipline Policy, or Code of Conduct. RCCCS will adhere to all federal, state, and local laws in connection with enforcing student discipline and maintaining a safe and productive school culture.

**Culture of the School:** The culture of the school will be a positive one, centered on setting and maintaining high academic and behavioral expectations for all students. When walking through the schools of RCCCS, a culture of high expectations and warmth will be tangible. Students will engage with each other, with adults, and with guests cheerfully and politely, and it will be evident that they enjoy their school and take pride in being a part of it, similar to their peers at CSAT.

The culture of high expectations will be visible throughout the school: a pulsing sense of urgency will exist throughout the building, shared amongst teachers and students, making it clear that there is a lot of work to be completed and that time cannot be wasted. Excellent student work will decorate the hallways and classrooms, and pictures of various careers and inspiring quotes will be posted on the walls throughout the building. The building will be bright, clean, and well maintained, and students will take part in keeping it that way. Students will wear uniforms, and teachers will be dressed professionally at all times.

This culture will serve as the centerpiece of our college and career focus, and we will ground our high

<sup>17</sup> See [http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-Early\\_Warning\\_Full\\_Report-2010.pdf](http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-Early_Warning_Full_Report-2010.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> See [http://emsc32.nysed.gov/ciai/common\\_core\\_standards/pdfdocs/nysp12ccismath.pdf](http://emsc32.nysed.gov/ciai/common_core_standards/pdfdocs/nysp12ccismath.pdf) and [http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/common\\_core\\_standards/pdfdocs/p12\\_common\\_core\\_learning\\_standards\\_ela.pdf](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/common_core_standards/pdfdocs/p12_common_core_learning_standards_ela.pdf)

expectations for students in this ultimate goal. As such, we will expect students to demonstrate the behaviors that they will one day embrace in their professional careers, as demonstrated in the Student Rights and Responsibilities table included below.

Student's Rights	Student's Responsibilities
To a free public education in the least restrictive environment.	To attend school every day and be in class on time and prepared to learn unless legally excused.
To a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to learning.	To conduct themselves in a manner that contributes to the ability of the class to learn.
To be treated with respect by all members of the school community.	To treat themselves, others, and property with respect and dress appropriately for school and school functions.
To competent instruction that deals with the individual needs of the learner	To meet the goals and objectives of the curriculum and ask questions when they do not understand.
To feel secure in their personal safety and integrity.	To respect the rules, regulations, and procedures of the District, and to seek help in solving problems that might lead to disciplinary action.
To experience professional, ethical relationships with all staff.	To conduct themselves in an appropriate manner toward staff and contribute to a respectful school environment.
To express themselves in a socially acceptable manner.	To react to direction given by teachers, administrators, and other school personnel in a respectful, positive manner, and work to develop mechanisms to control their anger.
To a co-curricular and extra-curricular program that is based on student interest.	To become involved to the fullest level of their interest and ability; to seek help in solving problems that might lead to disciplinary action; conduct themselves as representatives of the District when participating in or attending school-sponsored extracurricular events; and to hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct, demeanor, and sportsmanship.
To know the school rules and their consequences.	To familiarize themselves and abide by school rules, regulations, and procedures, and all District policies, rules, and regulations dealing with student conduct.
To a clean, well-maintained educational facility.	To contribute to maintaining a safe and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning, and to show respect toward other persons and property.
To experience the democratic process.	To abide by the decisions made in the democratic process.
To be able to report violations to the Code of Conduct without fear of retaliation.	To respect the rights of others and act in an honest and civil manner.

**Strategies for Developing and Sustaining a Safe and Orderly School Climate:** To maintain a safe and orderly school climate that supports the achievement of our educational goals, the Leadership Team will collaborate with the teaching staff to design and implement a School Wide Positive Behavior Implementation and Supports (SWPBIS) system. “SWPBIS refers to a systems change process for an entire school or district. The underlying theme is teaching behavioral expectations in the same manner as any core curriculum subject.”<sup>19</sup> A SWPBIS team will be established, led by the Leadership Team of the School, to determine three to five central behavioral strands that are stated positively and easy to remember. The school will focus on what students should be doing, as opposed to what they should not. Once the team creates these expectations, they will be taken back to the entire staff in order to gather feedback and invest staff in the chosen expectations. From there, the team will create a matrix for what the expectations look like, feel like, and sound like in all areas of the school, including the time spent outside of the classroom. A sample matrix<sup>20</sup> is included below:

Respect Property			
<b>Bus</b>	Keep feet and hands where they belong.	Throw unwanted items in wastebasket.	Keep food and drinks in backpack.
<b>Cafeteria</b>	Place tray on kitchen window shelf after scraping leftovers into wastebasket.	Wipe table with sponge provided.	Clean food spills off floor.
<b>Restroom</b>	Flush toilet after use.	Use two squirts of soap to wash hands.	Throw paper towels in wastebasket.
<b>Playground</b>	Report any graffiti or broken equipment to adult on duty.	Return playground equipment to proper area.	Use equipment as it was designed.

The Leadership Team and the SWPBIS team will work to align the chosen 3-5 positive behaviors to the culture of the school and our expectations around Student Rights and Responsibilities. From there, the SWPBIS team will norm around how the behaviors will be explicitly taught to students at each grade level. To do so, they might create sample lesson plans to ensure consistent implementation of the program. We will expect teachers to teach these lessons in a realistic manner. So, for instance, if they were teaching a lesson around how students are to behave in the cafeteria, they should bring the class there, and

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.pbis.org/school/swpbis-for-beginners>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.pbis.org/school/swpbis-for-beginners>

encourage students to practice the behaviors as they would implement them during lunchtime the following day. Students will be rewarded both individually and collectively (i.e., as a class), for demonstrating the positive behavior expectations.

The ultimate goal of the program, therefore, is that all staff who interact with students throughout the school day, including the bus driver, will hold students to the same high behavioral expectations and will reward the same positive behaviors. Students will gain immense clarity around behavior expectations and the consistent positive reinforcement will lead to positive behavior outcomes both individually and school wide.

To ensure effective and consistent implementation of PBIS, we will include a PBIS training at the outset of the year, during RCCCS 101, so that teachers understand how to lesson plan and teach behaviors and when and how to issue students a reward. From there, we will engage in ongoing reflection and norming exercises with teachers and staff to ensure that rewards are being issued consistently and accurately throughout the school during common planning time and Professional Learning Hours (PLH). We will ask staff to engage in a self-reflection about implementing the SWPBIS expectations, in order to identify trends and areas of support.

**Approach to Student Behavior:** We will use the above outlined SWPBIS system to manage behavior will all students, including students with special needs. PBIS is particularly effective for students with special needs, as it sets clear, explicit expectations, provides modeling of those expectations and an opportunity for practice, and consistent feedback for students on implementation. For groups of students who require more intervention, a small group or individual PBIS plan may be necessary. And, for those students with special needs, all supplemental PBIS plans will be created with the Special Education Coordinator and/or the Consultant Teacher, keeping the student's Individualized Education Plan in mind.

And, as described in the attached Student Discipline Policy, we recognize that it may be necessary to suspend, remove, or otherwise discipline students with disabilities to address disruptive or problem behavior. To that end, we are mindful of the procedural protections that our students with special needs may require. We are committed to ensuring that the procedures for suspending, removing, or otherwise disciplining students with special needs are consistent with the applicable laws and regulations, as described further in the Attached Student Discipline Policy.

**Encouraging Family Involvement:** We will host a family night at the beginning of each year to share PBIS and our Student Discipline Policy with our families and students. Parent attendance will be required, and we will make every effort to meet with parents who are not able to attend at the scheduled time, in order to ensure that families have a full understanding of the behavioral expectations at RCCCS. To the extent possible, we will encourage parents to implement the positive behavior expectations and reinforcements at home to ensure consistency for students. We will also include questions about the school culture in our parent survey. For instance, we want to ensure that parents feel welcome in the school at all times and that they believe students are thriving both socially and academically.

**Methods by Which the School Will Evaluate the Environment Is Safe and Conducive to Learning:** In order to ensure that we are creating and maintaining the positive and productive school culture that we are striving for, we will track student behavior using eDoctrina®. The Leadership Team will reflect on this data each month, and will follow up with individual teachers, or with the staff as whole on any trends. For instance, if the staff notices that the rewards or consequences are being issued inconsistently amongst the staff, we will suggest that staff meet to review implementation during Professional Learning Hours. We will also work with our partners at CSAT to conduct ongoing walk-throughs of the school to illicit their feedback on the school culture. At the outset of the year, we will create a rubric with them around school culture, which they will use for these walk-throughs each time, in order to gauge progress or continued areas of growth.

## G. Special Student Populations and Related Services

**Responsive, General Education Classroom:** RCCCS's "focus on learning" and mastery approach to instruction will provide for a responsive, general education classroom that supports all learners. The timely use of data to inform instruction will allow teams to clearly identify the gaps in skills. In that way, intervention is provided with a clear focus on the specific skill to be mastered and in a consistent, timely manner. More importantly, our insistence that students will master all grade level standards and corresponding "no zero" policy requires teachers to provide for flexible, small group instruction, and elicits multiple opportunities for student learning. That is, if a student fails to master a skill, the intervention plan provides for re-teaching and re-assessment. Once a student attains mastery of the standard, the student receives the final (mastery) score only, rather than an average of the attempts. For instance, if a standard is taught, assessed, and retaught, on several different occasions, including a formative assessment, a graded quiz, and a summative unit assessment, and the student was not able to master the material until the summative assessment, the summative assessment score will be the sole grade that counts for the student. This policy will encourage students to keep trying, regardless of how long it takes them to achieve mastery, as we will not let one low grade skew a student's overall performance or deter them from putting forth continued effort. Keeping the final score will provide incentive for our struggling learners to keep working hard towards their academic goals.

**Meaningful Access to the General Education Curriculum:** RCCCS will educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, with their non-disabled peers to the extent allowed by each student's individualized education plan (IEP) prepared by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) of the student's district of residence and in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations, including the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). The school will ensure that programs and services, as dictated on each student's IEP, are provided directly to the student during school hours. The school will not discriminate in admission and enrollment practices on the basis of a student having or suspected of having a disability. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of students with disabilities from the regular educational environment will occur only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in the regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily, in accordance with the IEP.

Similarly, we will expect all instructional staff to utilize effective strategies for reaching English Language Learners to ensure we are engaging students with limited English proficiency in a responsive, general education curriculum. For instance, we will encourage our teachers to use small groups to allow children to work together during shared and independent practice, as helpful, and we will expect our teachers to utilize culturally responsive teaching practices to ensure that students feel welcome and engaged in the curriculum, regardless of their home language or culture.

**Processes and Procedures for Specialized Instruction:** At the beginning of each school year, the Principal and the Special Education Coordinator will coordinate meetings with all teachers and review the IEP requirements of all students in their classes. The entire document will be reviewed to cover student's needs, learning style, supplemental aids, test modifications, etc. Teachers will only be provided access to IEPs for the students they will be teaching. During the school-year, additional meetings will be held to share the IEP with teachers of any newly identified or newly enrolled identified students.

**Settings in Which Services Will be Delivered and the Qualifications of Individuals Who Will Be Recruited to Deliver Services:** Each grade level team will have a certified special education teacher, who will provide direct instruction to students with special needs and consultation to the general education teachers on the grade level team, as needed. Similarly, a certified special education teacher will be assigned to each of the grade level/subject area teams in grades 6-8. Most of the special education support will be provided in an inclusive, push-in setting. In some instances, short-term, pull-out groupings will be used. In

these cases, non-identified students may join the small groupings if they can benefit from the instruction. Additionally, we will provide our own language and speech therapists but will contract with the districts of residence for physical and occupational therapy services. We will also provide resource room accommodations for students with special needs, as needed.

Common grade-level formative assessments will be administered to students with disabilities in accordance with their IEPs. We will provide adaptations and/or accommodations for instruction, formative, and summative assessment administration, as dictated by each student's IEP. We will follow the same protocols during state testing, as permitted by the state, and will implement alternate assessments for students, where applicable. RCCCS will provide IEP progress reports to our parents, in accordance with the reporting directives of the student's IEP. Parents will also receive report cards on a quarterly basis.

RCCCS will ensure that parents/guardians of students with special needs are informed of student academic progress, as well as, progress on annual IEP goals on a quarterly basis. Students with an active IEP will receive the standard school report card and a separate IEP report card that provides information on the student's progress toward their personal IEP goals. Students with special needs will receive all notices concerning school-sponsored programs, activities and services.

**How the Instructional Program Will Be Evaluated:** As described in the Assessment Systems section, eDoctrina® will allow us to disaggregate data by a variety of measures. As such, we will be able to monitor all special student populations to ensure that we are meeting all goals set forth for these particular groups, including retention targets and AYP. We will use this information to evaluate our progress and make any programmatic changes in areas where gaps are defined.

**IEP Record Keeping:** RCCCS will follow all applicable requirements of the IDEA and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") and will implement regulations relating to the confidentiality of student records (34 CFR §300.560-577 and 34 CFR Part 99). All staff will be trained in such requirements, and the Special Education Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of personally identifiable information within student records. In accordance with FERPA, parents will be allowed to inspect and review all of their student's educational records.

Before disclosure of any personally identifiable student information to someone other than the parent or eligible student, RCCCS will obtain a signed and dated written consent of the parent or eligible student. Personally identifiable information will be released without the prior consent of the parent or eligible student to school officials and teachers only if RCCCS determines that such persons have "legitimate educational interests." All files required by law to be kept confidential are kept under lock, in a place and manner that restricts access to only those individuals who are authorized to view these records. More specifically, special education records shall be kept under a locked file cabinet under the supervision of the Principal or the Special Education Coordinator in his or her secure office.

A sign-out and dissemination log will be kept with student records to track access. Student information with personally identifiable information will not be shared with outside parties without prior parent/guardian written permission. RCCCS will allow district or county social service workers to access these files when a legitimate educational interest is specified. Parents/guardians will have access to their child's records to inspect accuracy and content without undue delay and within 10 days of the parent/guardian request.

**Child Find Process:** RCCCS will comply with the federal Child Find requirements, which require schools to have a process in place for identifying, locating, and evaluating students with disabilities. A team of Consultant Teachers will screen all students who are enrolling in RCCCS for the first time to identify any indication that the child may need a specialized or Intensive Education Program, or referral to the CSE of the student's district of residence. The Special Education Coordinator will work with the grade level Consultant Teacher to schedule a separate time and location for screening new students. The Consultant Teacher for each grade level will be responsible for conducting the screening and referring the student, as needed. Similarly, we will use a Response to Intervention model to identify enrolled students with possible learning

disabilities that should be referred to the CSE of the student's district of residence for an evaluation.

**Response to Intervention Process:** RCCCS will implement a three-tiered Response to Intervention (RTI) model, which will allow the school to identify students with disabilities. The Special Education Coordinator will oversee the RTI process, ensure that it is aligned with the assessment plan, and closely monitor students using common formative assessments. The initial data from these assessments will be used to identify in-class supports that may be helpful for the student. These will be Tier 1 supports, and will be provided in the classroom setting. Teachers will work with the Consultant Teacher at their grade level to ensure that lesson plans are targeted and differentiated sufficiently to reach all learners in the general education setting. From here, if we find that the intervention strategies in Tier 1 are not helping students make significant progress, we will provide Tier 2 supports, which will include supplemental small group instruction either in the general education or during the Intervention block, or both. The general education teacher will continue to work with the Consultant Teacher to create differentiated lesson plans during this time to ensure a variety of teaching strategies, such as graphic organizers, group or partner work, and so forth. The Consultant Teacher may sit with the student during this time as well, if helpful. And, finally, we will move to Tier 3 supports, if we find that the student is still not making adequate progress. Tier 3 supports will be provided in very small group settings, with about 1-2 students, and will be designed to include more intensive strategies and instruction than the Tier 2 supports. Students may receive "push in" support from the AIS Teacher and/or Consultant Teacher and/or individual or small group support during the Intervention block. Students in need of Tier 3 support will participate in 30-to-60 minutes of intervention at a minimum of four days per week. If assessment results indicate that students have made necessary growth, they will exit Tier 3 interventions.

All teachers and staff involved with the student and providing intervention services will record all results of the provided services. These records will be shared with the Special Education Coordinator on an ongoing basis. If there remains a suspicion of a disability, the student may be referred in writing to the CSE Chair of his or her district of residence by RCCCS or by the parent, in writing/phone call/email/in person, in order to obtain an individual evaluation and determination of eligibility for special education programs and services. Referrals will be made in accordance with the New York State Part 200 Regulations. Referrals will include reason(s) for referral, teacher reports, test results, intervention services and reporting of delivered services, and parental contact regarding the disability concern. A copy of the referral with the Procedural Safeguards Notice will be sent to the parent and, when appropriate, to the student, in accordance to 34CFR §300.504. Parents will be notified of any concerns at the outset of the RTI process, and we will document the provided interventions at each step to continuously keep them informed. All records of the interventions will be placed in the student file.

**Teacher Participation in CSE Meetings:** The Principal, by way of the Special Education Coordinator, will coordinate all meetings with the appropriate CSEs. The Principal will ensure that the appropriate special education teacher(s) and at least one regular education teacher meet with the appropriate CSE on a regularly basis to ensure compliance and to keep the CSEs informed of students' progress in accomplishing the goals of their IEPs. RCCCS will ensure appropriate staff participation at CSE meetings, and to do so, the Principal will make necessary provisions (such as hiring substitutes) to allow the teachers of a child to attend CSE meetings in the child's district of residence.

**Process by Which the Proposed School Will Work With the Districts or Residence:** Upon being made aware by self-disclosure on the part of the parent at the moment of enrollment, or by the receipt of transfer documentation, that a student has an IEP, the Principal will send a letter to the district notifying them of said enrollment. If the IEP is active and valid, services will commence immediately. If the IEP has expired, comparable services will be provided, and the CSE will be notified immediately, with a request for emergency review. Should the IEP call for substantially restricted services with no possibility of inclusion, the Principal will file a request for a CSE meeting for review. The resulting IEP will be implemented as

developed. From there, the Principal will coordinate all special education activities and work closely with the Special Education Coordinator and the CSE to ensure that all IEPs are met.

**Ensuring Comparable Services and Fair Financing:** The Principal and the Special Education Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring the collection, maintenance, and reporting of all data regarding students with disabilities. The reports will be shared with the school district of residence and the State Education Department, as required. RCCCS will use this information to conduct an analysis to ensure that our students are receiving comparable services to other students in the districts of residence. Similarly, the Principal and the Special Education Coordinator will work closely with Director of Finance and Operations, who will closely monitor services that the district is providing and any corresponding costs.

**Processes and Procedures That RCCCS Will Employ to Identify ELLs:** RCCCS will follow the New York State requirements for the identification and support of Limited English Proficiency of non-native English Language Learners. The initial identification process will begin with the completion of a Home Language Questionnaire by all incoming families as part of the enrollment process. For families that report that only English is used as home language, the process will end here, as the child is now categorized as a native English speaker. If the Questionnaire reveals that a language other than English is used at home, an interview will be conducted with the parents in their native language and in English. To accomplish this task, the RCCCS will identify staff members who are bilingual and/or contract with individuals who provide interpretation services through the districts. If the family declares that, although a language other than English is used in the home, yet the student only understands and speaks English, this student will be classified as not LEP and will join the general education program. If, on the other hand, the family reports that the child uses a language other than English, an initial assessment process will be used in which English proficiency is determined by the use of the NYSITELL. If the student scores at the proficient level, he/she will be classified as not LEP. If the student scores at the beginning, intermediate, or advanced level, the student will be eligible for ELL services. ELL or LEP identified students will participate in annual administration of the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). When the student scores at the proficient level, he/she will no longer be considered an LEP student.

**Processes and Procedures That RCCCS Will Employ to Assess ELLs:** The proficiency of the identified ELL students will be measured on an annual basis to determine their continuation in the program. RCCCS will evaluate each student's performance in the academic content area to determine progress in core subjects. RCCCS will use the New York State English as a Second Language Test (NYSESLAT) to assess all ELL students as required by NYSED. The scores on the NYSESLAT indicate proficiency level, on a Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced level. These scores will determine a student's participation in or exit from the program. If an ELL student fails to show appropriate progress in these academic areas, modifications to the instructional programming will be made. Students scoring high enough based on the NYSESLAT will be deemed no longer in need of services. No student will exit the program unless his or her reading, writing and English comprehension is sufficient to participate in a meaningful way in the schools program.

**Processes and Procedures That RCCCS Will Employ to Serve ELLs and Corresponding Setting:** Students with limited proficiency in English will receive specialized services from certified ESL teachers. Given the multiple representations of native languages, support in first language will not be feasible. We will determine the number of ELL teachers that we need based on the projected enrollment of ELL students, as commensurate with the RCSD. We have currently budgeted one ELL teacher for year five, but we will adjust as needed. Whenever possible, ESL services will be provided in an inclusive setting, though pull-out groupings of students with similar needs will be used as well. RCCCS believes that a structured English immersion program, where students receive explicit instruction around English language development, will be the most beneficial way to serve our ELL population. The variety of languages involved and the low incidence within the same age group will prevent the effective implementation of other ELL models. We will provide

teachers of core subject areas with professional development to ensure they are properly prepared to support ELL students within their classroom. RCCCS will also ensure that students classified as English Language Learners (ELL) are not excluded from curricular and extracurricular activities based on an inability to speak and understand the language of instruction.

**Support Services and Qualifications of Those Implementing Services:** RCCCS will provide all necessary staff and specialized curriculum materials to encourage ELL students to achieve proficiency. Staff will be “highly qualified” pursuant to the provisions of the NCLB Act, and any instructors hired or contracted will be certified in accordance with New York State regulations. Facilities and curricular materials will not be inferior to those used for the general student population. We will provide or make referrals to appropriate support services needed to assist every student to achieve and maintain satisfactory academic performance, including, but not limited to, individual or group counseling, home visits, and parental guidance. The school will address students’ needs if they are struggling with the structured immersion program and determine what additional services are required for satisfactory achievement.

**Program Evaluation:** RCCCS will monitor the ELL program to see whether it is achieving the desired results. These results will be based on students making adequate progress in the acquisition of the English language while, at the same time, making academic progress. This review and evaluation will take place regularly using eDoctrina® reports, which can disaggregate the data for our ELL population. Using similar reports, the Leadership Team will annually review whether programmatic modifications are necessary, and the school will evaluate regular education students and ELL students by using academic progress and standardized test scores. The school will also monitor student progress over multiple years in school. We will monitor progress for both students receiving and exiting these programs.

**Ancillary and Support Services:** As described in our “Family and Community Engagement” section, the school will use its health clinics, health educators, counselors, social workers, and behavior intervention specialists to ensure the best socio-emotional services possible. The school will also have a Family Support Center, staffed by a licensed social worker and which will provide facilities in which RCCCS families access socio-emotional services provided by a variety of qualified agencies in our community.

### III. ORGANIZATIONAL AND FISCAL PLAN

#### A. Applicant Group Capacity

**Applicant Group:** The current employment, relevant experiences, and qualifications of each Applicant Group member is summarized below:

- **Sarah Armignacco, Board Chairperson:** Sarah Armignacco is the Director of Educational Initiatives at Wegmans Food Markets, Inc. in Rochester, NY, where she has worked in management and human resources for 20 years. In her current position, Ms. Armignacco ensures alignment of Wegmans’ educational initiatives to workforce objectives. She oversees the Wegmans’ partnership with Hillside Children’s Center and is responsible for strategic development of sustainable philanthropic sources of funds. Ms. Armignacco’s previous experiences include senior level roles in management, strategy, and human resources. Ms. Armignacco began her career as an early childhood teacher and currently serves on the board of Discovery Charter School.
- **Mark Brewer, Chair, Finance Committee:** Mark Brewer currently serves as the Chief Financial Officer of the Loyola Recovery Foundation in Pittsford, NY. Mr. Brewer has over 20 years of experience in non-profit management, accounting, and finance, and he is currently responsible for managing \$5-6 million dollar annual budget. Mr. Brewer also has counseling and human development experience, including direct service work with counseling teenagers through times of trouble.
- **Rosemary Hodges:** Rosemary Hodges is currently the Co-Head of the Norman Howard School in Rochester, New York. The Norman Howard School (NHS) is an independent, state approved, day school for students in grades five through 12 that provides a quality education program for students

with special learning needs including those with classifications of Learning Disability, Other Health Impairment, Speech and Language Impairment, or Autism. Ms. Hodges is working towards a Ph.D. from the University of Rochester, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, in Psychological Development, and is currently ABD. Since then, Ms. Hodges has published several works on various learning needs, child development, and teacher education. Ms. Hodges regularly presents on these topics locally and throughout the country.

- **Jeffrey Miceli:** Jeffrey Miceli has owned and operated his own home appliance service company, Appliance Service Works, Inc., since 2003. In this role, he is responsible for all operations, strategic planning, corporate compliance and daily management of the company. Mr. Miceli brings over 30 years of experience in organizational management, finance, human resources, marketing, development, training, and customer service.
- **Darren McCarty:** Darren McCarty has served as a Social Studies Teacher at East Ridge High School since 1997. Mr. McCarty has been the Curriculum Leader and an Advancement Via Individual Determination<sup>21</sup> (AVID) Trainer, since 2012. Mr. McCarty brings a wealth of experience in innovative teaching strategies, implementing technology in the classroom, and creating a positive school culture. Mr. McCarty developed the online review tool, Bubbabrain.com, for grades K-12 and is currently developing another interactive website for schools.
- **Norman West:** Norman West is the Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of West Advisory Group, where he partners with community organizations, non-profits, schools, and corporate clients to promote financial literacy and college attendance in urban learning environments. Mr. West has extensive experience coaching individuals of all age groups and socioeconomic backgrounds with career services, financial literacy education, and life skills.

**Identifying Board Members:** In order to select each proposed board member, we evaluated our mission and academic program, and identified individuals within the community who had the knowledge, skills, and relationships to help achieve our mission with students in the Rochester community. Each member of the applicant group, listed above, is a proposed board member. We selected Ms. Armignacco as our Board Chair because of her vast management, human resources, and education experiences. Similarly, we selected Mr. Brewer to Chair our Finance Committee because of his expertise and extensive experience successfully managing financial and accounting systems for non-profit organizations.

Each member of the applicant group brings a rich variety of experiences to the table, but we all share the common ground of wanting better educational outcomes for students in our City. As such, we have ensured that all members of our founding team have adequate time to commit to the rigorous process of starting a new school.

We have not yet identified a Principal for the school, but the board is currently conducting a search process, which will be followed by a highly rigorous interview and selection process, to ensure that we have found the best individual to lead our school's efforts.

**How the Applicant Group Came Together:** The founders of RCCCS share professional contacts in Rochester and joined together based on our desire for and recognition of the need for an effective school to career program in Rochester.

**Planning and Writing Process:** The RCCCS applicant group met at least once per month collectively, and then individually, as needed to complete their respective tasks in the school planning process. In addition, individual board members met with Efrain Martinez, CSAT Superintendent, and with the CSAT Board of Trustees regularly to ensure understanding and faithful implementation of the CSAT model. The

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<sup>21</sup> AVID is not only a college-readiness system focused on raising achievement for all students, it is also a professional learning organization providing training and resources to both AVID member and non-member districts, schools, and educators. Ongoing professional learning is critical to supporting student and teacher success. Each year, AVID Center offers numerous professional learning opportunities. <http://www.avid.org/professional-learning.ashx>

full applicant group reviewed all parts of the application in the development and submission stages.

**Primary Author and Paid Consultants:** Machael Sherry and Sarah Rapa, of SchoolWorks, were paid consultants on the application and worked as the primary author and content reviewer, respectively. Steve Gleason, of Education Enterprise of New York Foundation, wrote and provided support with the operational aspects sections of the application.

## B. Board of Trustees and Governance

**Administrative Relationship between RCCCS and the Board of Regents:** Our Founding Board understands the responsibility of governing a public charter school. The Board will have a performance contract with the Board of Regents that provides the school with the autonomy to design and operate its academic performance, organizational viability, and fiscal soundness.

**Proposed Governance Structure:** The Board of Trustees will govern the school. A list of our proposed Board of Trustees, whether they will be a voting member, and the length of their initial term is summarized in the following table.

Trustee Name	Voting	Position	Length of Initial Term
Sarah Armignacco	Y	Member	3
Mark Brewer	Y	Member	3
Rosemary Hodges	Y	Member	3
Jeff Miceli	Y	Member	3
Darren McCarty	Y	Member	3
Norman West	Y	Member	3

The Board of Trustees brings a wealth of experience from both the public and the private sector, including knowledge about management, operations, budget procurement and oversight, performance evaluation, human resources, fiscal operations, including finance and accounting, organizational management, in both the public and private sector, school culture, school staff development, community and parent engagement, teaching and entrepreneurship. Sarah Armignacco is currently serving on the board of Discovery Charter School in Rochester. For a more detailed summary of the Board qualifications, see the previous section, Applicant Group Capacity.

As indicated in the By-Laws, except for the Initial Board of Trustees, every Trustee shall be approved and elected to the Board of Trustees by the Board of Trustees, and before being seated as a voting member of the Board of Trustees, the new Trustee shall complete and submit a Trustee Questionnaire for approval by the New York State Education Department.

**Conducting and Publicizing Monthly Board Meetings:** The Board will meet no fewer than 10 times per year; all meetings will be properly noticed as required by the Open Meetings Law of the State of New York. The agenda will be developed by the Chairperson in consultation with the School Director and will include a written or oral report by the Principal, a report of the Finance Committee, other committee reports as appropriate, and opportunity for public comments. Minutes will be taken at all Board and committee meetings, copies of which will be posted on our website and archived in the school office.

**Organizational Structure of the School:** RCCCS is organized in a way that will promote efficiency and academic achievement. The Board of Trustees will hire the Principal, who will report directly to the Board and be responsible for day-to-day management of the school. The Principal will be the leader of the school and will manage the Assistant Principal, who will assist the Principal in managing all teaching staff and instructional aides. The Principal, in collaboration with the Board of Trustees, will also hire and manage a Director of Finance and Operations, who will oversee all Technology Specialists, maintenance, and food service staff members. The staff structure for each year of the charter term is detailed further in the Management and Staffing section. We have not yet identified a leader for the school. Key qualifications include high expectations for learning and behavior, demonstrated success in raising student achievement with low-income urban students, experience with start-up environments, experience with a PLC model, and management skills. Responsibilities/qualifications for other key positions are provided in Attachment 8a.

**Promoting Parental and Staff Involvement in School Governance:** The Trustees and the Principal will actively encourage parents to attend Board meetings and will recruit an interested parent during the first school year. We will collaborate with the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) to advertise board meetings, and ensure that parents are notified of the dates, times, and location. A position on the board will be designated for a Parent Trustee, who will be responsible for attending all PAC and Board meetings, in order to relay parent feedback and concerns to the board each month. Similarly, the Principal will notify staff of board meetings, and encourage their involvement and participation. The Principal will rely on the Director of Finance and Operations when compiling her report on the school for the board meeting each month. In addition, RCCCS will create ways for parents to address governance issues via the website and developed a parent portal.

The Board will also encourage parent and staff input into the governance of the school. Board meetings will adhere to the Open Meetings Law and include an opportunity for public comment; representatives from the Parent Advisory Council will be invited to attend and report on their work. The Board will enact and publicize a complaint policy that contains a clear process for bringing issues to the attention of the Board and for the Board to respond in a timely fashion. Board members will also regularly visit the school and attend school community events to ensure that we are engaging parents both formally and informally.

**Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members:** As indicated by our By-Laws, our Board will consist of at least five and no more than 11 voting members, ten of whom will be At-Large Trustees, and one of whom will be a Parent Representative Trustee. The At Large Trustees will be community leaders and will be representative of the Rochester community at large. The Parent Representative Trustee will be a parent or guardian of a student(s) enrolled in RCCCS. This individual will be identified at the end of the first year of the charter and, after that, there shall be no less than one Parent Representative Trustee. The Principal will serve as a non-voting ex officio member of the Board of Trustees and will serve as a liaison with the staff of the school. All Trustees must be at least 18 years of age, strongly committed to improving public school educational opportunities for all children, and fully supportive of the RCCCS mission statement, goals, and objectives. Board of Trustee roles and responsibilities include:

- Implementing the school's mission and school design
- Ensuring adequate resources for implementation of the school program
- Approving the school's annual budget
- Recruiting, hiring, and evaluating the Principal [and Director of Finance and Operations]
- Approving major policies and regularly reviewing and revising them as necessary
- Preparing for and attending Board and committee meetings
- Making informed decisions to support the success of the school
- Monitoring program implementation and compliance with the charter agreement and relevant laws and regulations
- Facilitating long-term strategic planning
- Recruiting and orienting new Board members and assessing Board performance
- Recruiting partner organizations that will actively support the school's mission and academic approach
- Participating as appropriate in the grievance process
- Enhancing the school's public standing

*Trustee Qualifications include:*

- Belief in and support of the mission and design of the school
- The expectation that all children can, and will, achieve academic excellence
- Demonstrated understanding of Board duties
- Willingness to attend Board and committee meetings and volunteer for Board work

- Experience and expertise in a relevant field, such as: education, human services, business, management, finance/accounting, law, government, personnel, marketing/public relations, fundraising, and/or community relations or organizing
- The capacity to examine performance data, financial documents and management reports, and make informed decisions in the best interest of the school
- Be at least 18 years of age

**Board of Trustee Roles:** As noted in our By-Laws, the Board will have at least five members and include the following officer positions: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer. The various positions on the RCCCS board of trustees are listed below. The Board will select members to fill these positions based on their interest, prior experiences, and qualifications.

- **Chairperson** – The Chair is the senior volunteer leader of the Charter School who presides at all meetings of the Board and other meetings as required. The Chair is an ex-officio member of all committees of the organization, oversees implementation of Board and school policies, and ensures that appropriate administrative practices are established and maintained. Among the duties, the Chair works with the school leaders, other Board officers and Trustees, and committee chairs to develop the agendas for Board meetings, and presides at these meetings. In approval from other Board members, the Chair appoints volunteers to key leadership positions, including positions as chair of Board committees, and cultivates leadership succession; and works with the Board of Trustees in accordance with the school's By-Laws and mission, to establish and maintain systems.
- **Vice Chairperson** – The Vice Chair is the secondary volunteer leader of the charter school and as such, discharges the duties of the Chair as required in the Chair's absence. The Vice Chair supports the activities of the Chair, including sharing responsibilities as appropriate. The Vice Chair advises and assists the Chair on all matters relevant to the Board.
- **Treasurer** – Provides direction for the financial management of the school and facilitates the Board in meeting its financial oversight responsibilities. The Treasurer will serve as Chair of the Finance Committee, provide direction for the oversight of the school's record keeping and accounting policies, and ensure the presentation of timely and meaningful financial reports to the Board.
- **Secretary** – Provides direction for the keeping of legal documents, including minutes of all meetings of the Board. The Secretary will certify and keep at the school office the original, or a copy of the By-Laws, keep a book of minutes of all meetings of the Trustees and meetings of committees; and shall record time and place of meeting, whether regular or special, how called, how notice was given, the names of those present or represented at the meeting and the proceedings.

**Board Committees:** Committees of the Board shall include Executive Committee, Audit and Finance, Academic Accountability, and Human Resources, consisting of a chairperson and at least two other Trustees. The Executive Committee will likely meet more frequently than the full board and will consist of no less than five Trustees. The Executive Committee will have the power to act on behalf of the entire board, so long as it does so within the designated scope of its authority, as determined in the bylaws. The Audit and Finance Committee will be responsible for the fiscal health of the school. The Academic Accountability Committee will oversee student achievement data and monitor progress towards the school's annual achievement goals. The Human Resources Committee will be responsible for all human resources/personnel issues. The Board of Trustees will, by resolution, designate from its members other committees, as it deems necessary.

**Recruitment, Selection, and Development of Board Members:** As indicated above, RCCCS Board members maintain great ties to individuals throughout the City of Rochester. Board members will be expected to leverage these relationships, as needed, to engage other community members in the RCCCS work and to fill Board seats as needed. Board members are currently engaging in this process in order to

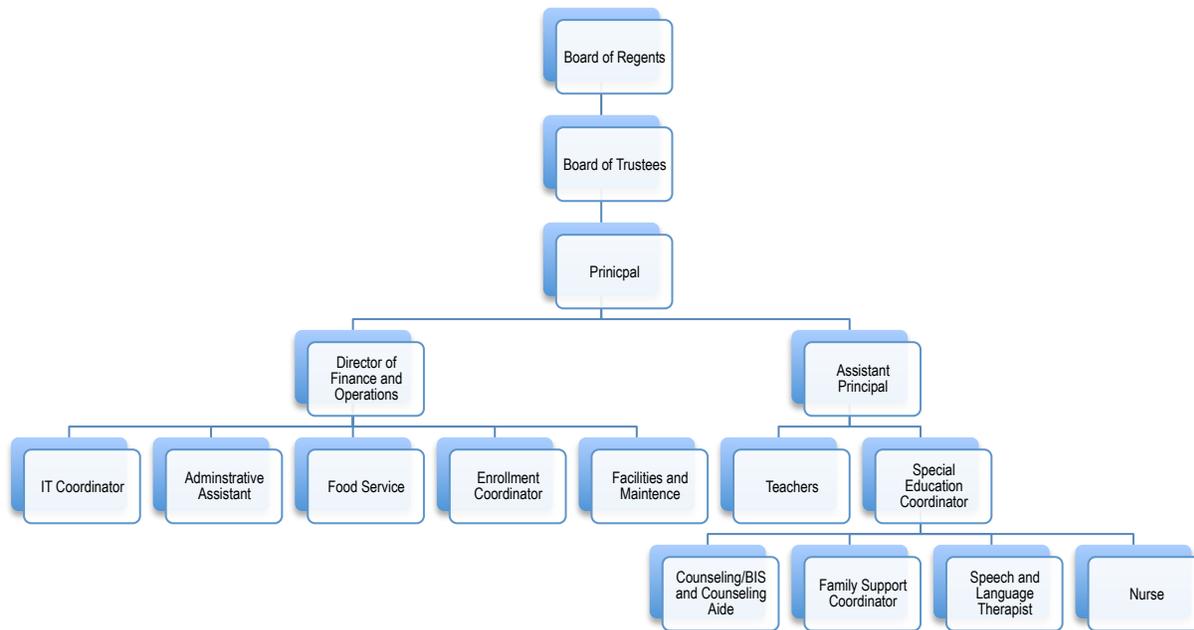
find an attorney, which we believe is a critical seat that needs to be filled on our Board in the near future.

In addition to the regular Board meetings, the Board will meet annually for a retreat, where they will discuss best practices, as indicated by the New York State charter school authorizers, the Northeast Charter Schools Network, The New York City Charter School Center, and CSAT Board of Trustees. During this retreat, the Board will set the strategic plan for the school year, with input from the Principal. The strategic plan will align with the academic and fiscal measures set forth in this application.

Further, when new Board members join the Board, they will be expected to attend a New Board Member Orientation; we will share the vision and strategic plan for the school. If the new Board member will be joining a specific committee, or serve in a specific role, we will also outline and discuss the ways in which the new member can best contribute, in order to achieve the goals set forth in the strategic plan.

### C. Management and Staffing

**Organizational Chart:** The RCCCS Organizational Chart, indicating our staffing structure and reporting responsibilities for the board, administration, and staff, is as follows:



**Organizational Structure of the School:** As indicated on the above organizational chart, and further described in Attachment 8(a), the RCCCS Board of Trustees (BOT) will report to the Board of Regents. The BOT will be directly responsible for the goals set forth in the charter agreement with the Board of Regents. The Principal, who will be hired by the BOT, will implement and manage progress towards these goals each day. The Principal, therefore, will be the instructional leader of the school, but will also manage the Director of Finance and Operations and the Assistant Principal. The Director of Finance and Operations will oversee finance, IT, food service, school enrollment, and facilities and maintenance. The Assistant Principal will support the principal in managing the Instructional Staff, including the teachers, the Special Education Coordinator, and the service providers. The Special Education Coordinator will support the Assistant Principal in managing the service providers more directly.

**Management Roles and Responsibilities of Key Administration:** Following is a high level summary of the management roles and responsibilities of key administration. For a complete description, please refer to Attachment 8(a), Section III.

- **Principal:** The Principal will be responsible to the BOT for planning improvements that directly address student achievement, school design, and family and student satisfaction; achieving outcomes requiring strong leadership as an instructional leader, site-based manager, and as builder of school culture.
- **Assistant Principal:** The Assistant Principal will be responsible to the Principal, and, in collaboration with the Principal, is responsible for planning improvements that directly address student achievement, school design, and family and student satisfaction; achieving outcomes requiring strong leadership as an instructional leader, site-based manager, and as builder of school culture.
- **Director of Finance and Operations:** The Director of Finance and Operations will be responsible to the Principal for directing, supervising, regulating, and implementing a full and accurate set of accounting and financial transactions reflective of the school's operation and subject to the Board of Trustees' and State Education Department's guidelines. The Director of Finance and Operations will create and implement systems and procedures that ensure daily school operations run smoothly and efficiently, thereby removing these concerns and allowing instructional staff to focus on student outcomes.
- **Special Education Coordinator:** The Special Education Coordinator will be responsible to the Principal and the Assistant Principal. The primary role of the Special Education Coordinator is to ensure that appropriate services are provided to students with Individualized Educational Plans, 504 Plans, or any student who falls under the protection of IDEA, so that they succeed in school. These responsibilities will include ensuring compliance with regulations and reporting, supporting the professional development of staff so that they can better serve all students, and parent communication and advocacy.

**Staffing Plan:** Please refer to our staffing plan below, which indicates our staffing needs for the pre-operational year and throughout the charter term.

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
	Pre-Ops	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
	Enrollment	0	190	249	360	560
<b>STAFFING:</b>	Classes	0	9	12	16	24
<b>Deans, Directors, Coordinators</b>						
	Principal	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Assistant Principal			1.0	1.0	1.0
	Director of Ops & Finance	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Special Education Coordinator		1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Enrollment Coordinator		0.5	0.5	1.0	1.0
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>
<b>Administrative Staff</b>						
	IT Coordinator		1.0	1.0	1.5	2.0
	Admin Asst	0.5	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>Teachers - Regular</b>						
	Classroom Teacher		9.0	12.0	16.0	24.0
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>16.0</b>	<b>24.0</b>
<b>Substitute Teacher</b>						
	Building Substitute		1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>Teaching Assistants</b>						
	Teacher Aides		2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>Specialty Teachers</b>						
	Technology		0.5	1.0	1.5	3.0
	Consultant Teachers (Spec Ed certified)		3.0	5.0	6.0	8.0
	AIS Teacher		1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
	English (Gr 6+ only)					1.0
	Math (Gr 6+ only)					1.0
	Science (Gr 6+ only)					1.0
	Social Studies (Gr 6+ only)					1.0
	ELL/ESL (Gr 6+ only)					1.0

Spanish			1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Media Specialist			1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Media Aide			0.0	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
Art			0.5	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
Music			0.5	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
Physical Education			1.0	1.0	2.0	4.0	4.0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>0.0</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>27.0</b>
<b>Therapists / Counselors</b>							
Counseling BIS			1.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	3.0
Counseling Aide				1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0
Speech & Language Therapist			2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Family Support Coordinator			1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>0.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>10.0</b>
<b>Other (Non-Instructional)</b>							
Food Service			1.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	2.0
Nurse - <i>n/a (RCSD-provided)</i>							
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>0.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1.5</b>	<b>31.0</b>	<b>38.5</b>	<b>54.5</b>	<b>64.0</b>	<b>77.0</b>

**Hiring and Personnel Policies:** Please refer to Attachment 8(a) for a detailed description of our hiring and personnel policies and procedures, including the qualifications that will be used in the hiring of teachers, school administrators, and non-certified personnel and other employees. Attachment 8(a) also includes a detailed description of staff responsibilities.

**Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Teachers and Staff:** RCCCS will have several recruitment and retention efforts in place to ensure that we are finding and retaining the most talented teachers for our students. We plan to develop a Human Resources Committee on the board that will strategically advertise for open positions and establish partnerships with top teacher graduate programs in the area.

We believe that our key design elements are our most effective strategy for recruiting and retaining teachers. To illustrate, we will hold our teaching staff to the highest of expectations, but in doing so, require them to deliver the student achievement results promised in our school mission. By allowing teachers great latitude in how they choose to obtain those outcomes, we will respect them as the professionals that they are, ultimately leading to increased interest in their work and outcomes for students.

In addition to ongoing professional development, planned time throughout the day for collaboration, and support staff, we believe that our competitive compensation package will assist in recruiting and retaining our teachers. Teacher salaries will be benchmarked against similar schools in the region and will include the following benefits:

- Paid time off
- Holidays
- Health insurance
- Dental insurance
- Life insurance
- Retirement plan
- Section 125 plan
- Shorter term disability
- Long term disability

Furthermore, RCCCS will recognize staff for their dedication and hard work and will prioritize work life balance, particularly for teachers. For instance, we will include public recognition for teachers who are going above and beyond; we will highlight effective teacher practices and innovative solutions; and we will invite teachers who are doing well to take on more leadership roles. At the same time, staff retention will be a focus area for our school, as we know the longer we keep teachers on staff, the greater their opportunity for continued development and increased student impact. Therefore, we will make sure that our teachers are supported sufficiently by leveraging our operational staff, teamwork and collaboration, and the Leadership Team, so that they do not feel overwhelmed and burnt out.

**Staffing Needs Aligned to Budget and Anticipated Enrollment/Growth:** Our staffing plan will ensure that there is adequate leadership in place to implement and oversee our key design elements, allowing

students to meet grade levels standards, ensuring ongoing collaboration and professional development for teachers, and exposing students to a variety of career touches that align with their skills and interests. Our approach for staffing towards each of these goals is described more fully below.

We expect students will need additional support so we invested significant financial resources into our staffing plan to ensure students had ample opportunities to receive support and more individualized instruction. Specifically, by including several special education teachers and service providers for both counseling and behavioral support, we will ensure a safe and positive school culture that will be essential in allowing students and staff to reach their goals. Similarly, our Family Support Coordinator will take the lead in engaging and supporting our families, making sure that our entire school community is thriving.

Additionally, the operational staff, as managed by the Director of Finance and Operations, will ensure that our instructional faculty can focus on student achievement outcomes, rather than operational issues, which often become a distraction. As indicated in the table above, as our student enrollment grows, we will add members to each of the teams to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of our students in all areas.

**Staffing Needs to Implement the Educational Program:** In order to determine the staffing needs at RCCCS, we evaluated the key positions and management structures necessary for implementing and attaining the key design elements of our program. Our staffing needs, as they relate to the key design elements that will be implemented in our program, are described more fully below:

- **A Focus on Learning and Standards Mastery:** RCCCS will not rely on a specific way of delivering instruction, but, rather, we will glean the best instructional practices based on reflection and analysis of student achievement data. And we will commit to grade level standards mastery for all of our students. To that end, we included an IT Coordinator, who will be responsible for assisting our Leadership Team and teaching staff in generating ongoing, real time student achievement reports, indicating which students have mastered a grade level standard, and which students have not. To help teachers ensure mastery, we will require them to reteach material for students who have not yet mastered it. As such, we have Consultant Teachers and Teacher's Aides available to allow targeted, small group reteach and remediation. The Consultant Teachers will also ensure that students with special needs are receiving the individualized support that they need to achieve grade level standards and IEP goals. The Special Education Coordinator will work with the Consultant Teachers, the AIS Teacher, and other service providers to ensure that all staff, including the Counselors and Behavior Intervention Specialist (BIS) Aides, are providing students with the academic, social, and emotional supports necessary to focus on their academic goals.
- **Professional Development in the Context of Teamwork:** As indicated above, it will take a team of teachers and staff members to reach the standards mastery goals that we have set for our students. We have allowed for a minimum of four teachers (including the Consultant Teachers) at each grade level – moving to five as the year grows—in order to provide greater support as PLCs analyze students' progress and try to improve their own skills in helping students master the objectives. At the same time, the PLCs are small enough that teachers will know each other's strengths and areas for growth as well, and can plan professional development, or distribute work accordingly, based on their shared strengths. Similarly, in allocating resources towards an operations team, we will allow the Principal and the Assistant Principal to be true instructional leaders and resources to the instructional staff. The time that they will not spend on the operational components of running the school will be devoted to promoting rigorous instruction and professional development for their teachers.
- **College and Career Focus:** While we will not have staff members devoted exclusively to the college and career focus at the K-8 level, it is something that we expect all of our staff members to value, implement, and prioritize with our students.

**Salaries:** Salary increases will be determined on an annual basis, and we will take several variables into

consideration when determining whether or not a staff member is eligible for a raise, including, but not limited to, effectiveness in his or her role, as measured by our annual evaluation and student achievement data (as applicable); tenure with the organization; ability to collaborate with a team and increase the team's effectiveness; and specific roles and responsibilities (i.e. leadership positions, involvement in extracurricular activities, etc.).

**Addressing Human Resource Challenges:** Despite our efforts, we recognize we may face human resource challenges down the line. In the event that occurs, we plan to employ the following strategies:

- **CSAT Support:** We will rely on the talent pipeline locally, but we will also use the human resources support provided by CSAT.
- **College and University Partnerships:** We will establish relationships with various graduate and undergraduate programs throughout Rochester in order to reach recent graduates.
- **Flexible scheduling:** As indicated in our professional development section, we will prioritize retaining our top talent. If needed, and on a case-by-case basis, we will implement flexible scheduling policies to ensure our teachers are not forced to resign.
- **Investing in the current team:** During times of shortage, we may be able to leverage the strength of our current team by providing them with different or greater opportunities that will allow them to grow and develop.
- **Recruitment director:** If the budget permits, we may employ a part time recruitment director to conduct ongoing outreach and recruitment in order to make sure that we have an established talent pipeline.

**Using Student Assessment Data to Drive Key Human Resource Decisions:** As further outlined in the Evaluation and Professional Development sections, RCCCS will use student assessment data to drive key decisions aimed at the recruitment, evaluation, retention, and support of the leaders and the teaching staff. We will specifically seek to recruit and hire high achieving individuals with a track record of achieving academic success with students from low-income communities. Finally, student achievement data will be tied closely with our evaluation plan and will guide ongoing teacher coaching and support.

### C.1. Charter Management Organization

We do not intend to contract with a charter management organization.

### C.2. Partner Organization

**Name of Organization and Contact Info:** As referenced throughout the application, RCCCS is modeled upon the Charter School for Applied Technologies, in Buffalo, New York. In order to fulfill our mission and objectives, and successfully implement our key design elements, RCCCS will partner with the Charter School for Applied Technologies Board of Trustees and Superintendent. The contact information for the Superintendent of CSAT, Efrain Martinez, is as follows: Mr. Efrain Martinez, Superintendent, Charter School for Applied Technologies, 2303 Kenmore Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14207. Mr. Martinez can be reached by phone at 716.876.7505 ext. 5102.

**Nature and Purpose of Partnership:** As further outlined in Attachment 7, CSAT will support RCCCS during the pre-operational year and throughout the initial charter term in curriculum development and implementation, including training and use of eDoctrina® software; talent recruitment and teacher and leadership development; and establishing and maintaining a positive and productive school culture, where students feel motivated and inspired about college and career opportunities.

While the CSAT BOT was not interested in directly replicating their school, they were extremely supportive of our bringing their model to Rochester, as they are aware of the challenges that exist for students in the RCSD and the need for high performing elementary and middle school options. As a result, the BOT has agreed to provide ongoing support and a critical lens, as we plan and implement their model here in Rochester. The goal of this partnership, therefore, is to ensure fidelity to CSAT model, implement our key design elements effectively, and ultimately achieve the goals set forth in our mission.

## D. Evaluation

**Data and Process for Evaluating Educational Programs:** As discussed in the Curriculum and Instruction section, the standards will be selected, unpacked, and mapped at the outset of each year, per the *Understanding by Design* approach. At that point, assessments will be selected or created, to align to these standards, and mastery will be tracked throughout the year using the eDoctrina® software. The teachers and administrators will use the student data generated from these reports to evaluate the educational programs, curricular resources, and strategies used at the school.

The Principal and the Leadership Team will rely on student achievement outcomes based on these reports, anecdotal evidence from teachers, and direct observations to evaluate the educational program, including curricular resources, schedule, intervention, instructional strategies and best practices, and professional development. The reflection on the educational program will be ongoing, but the leadership team will debrief the program annually at the end of the academic year to note if any changes should be made moving forward.

**Methods for Determining Progress Towards Achieving Objectives:** As discussed further in the Assessment System section, eDoctrina® can generate a host of different reports, disaggregating student achievement data by almost any known variable. As discussed in the Professional Development section, the Leadership Team will use any trends from these reports to select topics for Professional Learning Hours and the full week of professional development (RCCCS 101 and common planning time) that will occur for five days at the outset of each school year. The Leadership Team will also use these reports to glean best practices at the school, grade level team, and individual teacher level. Similarly, the Leadership Team will notice downward trends at these levels as well, and will provide supports during the common planning time, as needed. Since teachers will also be engaged in similar analysis on a daily basis with their PLCs (grade level teams), as described further in the Professional Development section, they will be expected to be using these reports constantly to glean best practices around student learning and teacher performance, and to share those strategies with their PLC and the staff as a whole.

**Information Used to Evaluate the School's Operational Effectiveness:** Operational effectiveness will be judged via two broad categories of performance: (1) Successful support of the academic mission of the school within budget allocations, and (2) compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations pertaining to all aspects of school operations. The Board Finance committees will be responsible for establishing the measures and procedures necessary to effectively monitor performance with respect to these categories on a monthly and annual basis. The Board will assess and make any necessary modifications to this framework on an annual basis to support continuous improvement of operations.

The Principal and Director of Finance and Operations will be responsible for managing and reporting on school operations to the Board and relevant committees of the Board consistent with this framework. Any significant variances from expectations or other concerns identified in the review process will be assessed and reported to the Board for action as warranted.

**Process Used to Evaluate the School's Fiscal Soundness:** The Principal and the Director of Finance and Operations of RCCCS will be responsible for developing and maintaining the annual budget and the five-year budget forecast. Each spring, an annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year and an updated five-year budget forecast will be developed for Board consideration and adoption. These documents will be based on current year-to-date actual data and year-end projections, as well as a careful assessment of anticipated changes in operations and the operating environment, which will impact revenues and expenditures in the upcoming budget and forecast period.

The budget construction philosophy will continue to be one of conservatism with respect to revenue and expenditure projections in order to protect the current and long-term financial sustainability of the

school. The Finance Committee of the Board will review the budget and five-year budget forecast and recommend a final budget and forecast for Board adoption no later than May, prior to the start of the next fiscal year. The Finance Committee will review and report budget performance to the Board on a monthly basis. The review will include adopted budget vs. actual performance, projected year-end performance, and cash flow and balance statements. Key indicators to be reviewed will include: (1) Near Term Indicators: Current ratio; unrestricted cash on hand; and enrollment variance, and (2) Sustainability Indicators: Total margin; debt-to-assets (if applicable); cash flow; and debt coverage (if applicable). Any significant variances from budget or other concerns identified in the review process will be assessed and reported to the Board for action as warranted. Materiality thresholds for budget amendment action will be established in the financial policies and procedures adopted by the Board.

**Teacher Evaluations:** The Principal will be responsible for evaluating all teachers and support staff formally on an annual basis. RCCCS will be committed to supporting the development of effective teachers and administrators. Plans for Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) of teachers and administrators will be developed in accordance with applicable laws, Commissioner's Regulations, and the Rules of the Board of Regents. To that end, the primary purposes of the evaluations are as follows: (a) to encourage and promote improved performance; (b) to guide professional development efforts; and (c) to provide a basis for evaluative judgments by applicable school officials. Informal evaluations, including observations, one on one coaching opportunities, or PLC support, will be ongoing and driven by the eDoctrina® data reports, as discussed above.

The APPR for each teacher will result in a single composite effectiveness score and a rating of "highly effective," "effective," "developing," or "ineffective." The composite score will be determined as follows: (a) 20% - student growth on state assessments or a comparable measure of student achievement growth (increases to 25% upon implementation of a value-added growth model); (b) 20% - locally selected measures of student achievement that are determined to be rigorous and comparable across classrooms as defined by the Commissioner (decreases to 15% upon implementation of a value-added growth model); and (c) 60% - other measures of teacher/principal effectiveness consistent with standards prescribed by the Commissioner in regulation. The ratings scale based on composite scores has been established as follows: (a) Highly Effective = composite effectiveness score of 91-100; (b) Effective = composite effectiveness score of 75-90; (c) Developing = composite effectiveness score of 65-74; and (d) Ineffective = composite effectiveness score of 0-64.

If a teacher is rated "developing" or "ineffective," the School will develop and implement a teacher improvement plan (TIP). Teachers with a pattern of ineffective teaching or performance, defined as two consecutive annual "ineffective" ratings, may be charged with incompetence and considered for termination.

Per the above protocol, RCCCS will use student achievement reports generated from the eDoctrina® software, performance on state assessments, and one formal and two informal observations throughout the year to complete the teacher evaluation. The observation component of the evaluation will be guided by Framework for Teaching proposed by Charlotte Danielson. The framework is grouped into four broad dimensions: (1) planning and preparation; (2) environment; (3) instruction; and (4) professional responsibility. The first three aspects of the framework are directly observable actions and behaviors in a classroom or instructional context. The domains of planning and preparation, environment, and instruction are all included in the instructional observation. A rubric of expectations relating to each domain guides the instructional observation across the domains and can serve as a guide for the educator in targeted areas of professional growth. The fourth domain, professional responsibility, is not directly observable in an instructional observation, but is noted in a summative evaluation.

The School will ensure that all evaluators are appropriately trained consistent with standards

prescribed by the Commissioner and that an appeals procedure is locally developed.

**School Leader Evaluation:** The Board of Trustees will conduct a formal performance evaluation of the Principal annually. The purposes of this evaluation are: (a) to improve administrative effectiveness; (b) to encourage and promote self-evaluation by the Principal and the Leadership Team; (c) to provide a basis for evaluative judgments by the Board; and (d) to make decisions about continued employment with the School. At the outset of the year, the Board will work with the Principal to establish formal procedures used to complete the evaluation, which will be filed in the school office, and made available to any individual who wishes to review them. The formal performance procedures shall include written criteria, a description of the review procedures, provisions for post-conferencing, and methods used to record results of the evaluation.

Since the Principal will be responsible for planning improvements that directly address student achievement, school design, financial management, and student and family satisfaction, and achieving outcomes requiring strong leadership as an instructional leader, site-based manager, and as builder of school culture, the Board will align the evaluation tool to these competencies, and the sub goals associated with each competency, at the start of each school year. Once the tool is completed, all trustees will review the tool at an executive session meeting to ensure understanding of the items assessed by the rubrics.

The Board will then have the opportunity to complete a review individually and forward the completed document to the Human Resources/Personnel Committee Chair. The board will use qualitative (student surveys, staff surveys, observations, etc.) and quantitative (student achievement data, etc.) to rate the Principal's leadership performance in each competency as (4) Exceeding Standards; (3) Meeting Standards; (2) Working Toward Standards; and (1) Not Meeting Standards. The Committee tabulates the results, transcribes the comments, and reviews the results with all trustees in a second executive session. Once all trustees are satisfied that the evaluation results reflect the most accurate assessment possible, the Chair will meet with the Principal and review the evaluation.

**Board of Trustee Evaluations:** The Board will review the effectiveness of its internal operations at least once annually and will formulate a plan for improving its performance. The Principal and others who work regularly with the Board may be asked to participate in this review and to suggest ways by which the Board can improve its functioning as a decision making body. To conduct this evaluation, the board will rely on the quantitative and qualitative evidence on the academic, fiscal, and operational health of the school. This evidence will include, but will not be limited to, student achievement data on internal and external assessments, financial audits, parent surveys, and evaluations of key staff and leadership.

**Student and Family Satisfaction:** Family and student satisfaction will be gauged in a number of ways. First, we plan to send out an annual survey to parents, which we will include with our "Intent to Re-enroll" form in order to encourage as many parents to participate as possible. The survey will ask about overall satisfaction in the following areas: school experience; quality of feedback on their child's performance; principal and school leadership; teachers; communication and involvement; school transportation; equipment and facilities; safety and environment; and whether or not they would recommend RCCCS to a friend or family member. The results of the survey will be compiled and shared with the administration and the staff, in an effort to highlight and encourage areas of strengths and create a plan to address areas of growth.

We will also pay attention to the number of students on our wait list, as our enrollment is an excellent source of understanding parent satisfaction and demand, presuming that satisfied parents will express their satisfaction to friends and family, and encourage them to enroll. And, finally, we will encourage parents and families to be involved in the school in as many ways as possible. We will ask teachers to make regular calls home each week to encourage parent involvement and solicit their feedback.

**Publicizing Family and Student Results:** Once we have collected the results from our family satisfaction surveys, they will be summarized, analyzed, and reviewed by the Leadership Team. The

Leadership Team will draft a memorandum reflecting on the results, noting areas of strength, growth, and recommended next steps, based on the results and feedback. The Leadership Team will submit the survey results and the memo to the BOT. The BOT will review this information and make any necessary changes. From there, the Leadership Team will submit the survey results and a corresponding action plan to the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) for their review and comment. Once a final version is created, using the PTO input, the survey results and action plan will be distributed to families before the upcoming school year begins.

**Evaluating the Effectiveness of Organizational Partnerships:** At the end of each academic year, the Board will evaluate the support received from CSAT, as outlined in the attached MOU, particularly as that support correlates with student achievement data, staff satisfaction and development, and Board and Leadership reflections and analysis. For instance, the Board and the Leadership team will highlight the areas that the partnership was most useful and the ways that it might improve in the future. To gather the anecdotal evidence, the Board and the Leadership Team will use surveys and written reflections for staff, and for the CSAT team, around areas of strengths and areas of growth. The RCCCS board will communicate these results to the Leadership and the CSAT team to plan strategically for the upcoming school year.

### **E. Professional Development**

**Training Plan for All Instructional Staff:** Prior to each school year opening, returning faculty members will participate in five professional development days. During this time, the Leadership Team will provide training and planning opportunities focused on vertical alignment of the curriculum. All grade level and subject area teams will review the curriculum and make adjustments in expectations, pacing, and rigor to ensure adequate alignment across grade levels and content areas.

**Training Plan for New Instructional Staff:** Teachers new to RCCCS will be required to participate in a teacher-developed, teacher-conducted pre-training called RCCCS 101, which will be adopted, modified, and implemented from the CSAT 101 training used in Buffalo. This development opportunity effectively introduces the new staff to the RCCCS design, focus on learning, data analysis to inform instruction, special population needs, and general strategies for developing a culture of high achievement.

The RCCCS 101 training will occur over five days in August, before the school year begins, and will include foundational information, designed to orient new teachers to working at our school. It will include, but is not limited to, the following topics:

- **History and Landscape:** An overview of charter schools in New York State, including requirements to open and operate a charter school; the history of CSAT and RCCCS, including student populations and communities served;
- **Building Our Staff Community:** Staff introductions and ice breakers; professional etiquette; understanding the Professional Learning Community (PLC) structure; and overview of the employee handbook expectations;
- **School Operations:** Phone list, building map, and school logistics; protocols for field trips, extracurricular activities, and travel; master schedule; and student dress code;
- **Technology:** Computer policies and log on information; using technology securely; best practices; and understanding the eDoctrina® program;
- **“Career Touches” Planning:** The career touches that occur at the elementary and middle school level will be critical pieces of our programming. To that end, the Leadership Team will share the research indicating the professions that will be in high demand in the next 10-15 years, and teachers will be expected to research these professions and plan a minimum of four career touches around the professions each year. During the training, we will provide guidelines and concrete examples about what a “career touch” should include to ensure that they are rigorous and aligned throughout the

school;

- **Becoming the Best Teacher You Can Be:** Discussions and reflection on Harry Wong's *The First Days of School* and Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion* texts; creating lesson plans for the first week of school; understanding classroom observations; special education services and resources; culturally responsive teaching strategies; and best practices for effectively communicating with parents and families.

**Professional Development:** Professional development in the context of teamwork is a key design element at RCCCS. We will hold five school-wide professional development days in the beginning of the year and two over the course of the year, yet our greatest lever for increasing teacher performance, and thereby student performance, will be the professional development that takes place in our daily Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

The PLCs will consist of grade level teams for grades kindergarten through five and grade level/content area teams for grades six through eight. Student learning and achievement for *all* students in a grade level or content area will be the focus of all team interactions and meetings. The PLCs will be expected to work collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve.<sup>22</sup> The characteristics of the PLCs are as follows:

- Shared mission, vision, values, and goals;
- Collaborative teams focused on student learning;
- Collective inquiry;
- Action oriented;
- Commitment to continuous improvement; and
- Results oriented.<sup>23</sup>

All grade and content level teams will receive two common planning periods per day, where they will meet in their PLCs. This time will usually be spent on grade/subject level data analysis and planning, but teachers will be able to use it for professional development, as needed. For instance, if, upon reflection, teachers notice that one class was able to master the standards better than the others, the PLCs will evaluate and determine the teacher actions that led to that outcome. From there, the teacher who was able to generate high student mastery with students on that particular standard will share best practices and help the team to develop that skill, if necessary. The Leadership Team will support the PLCs in this skill building, and, if trends are noticed, it will be addressed school wide during Professional Learning Hours, described more fully below. As outlined above, each PLC will meet at the outset of the year and they will be expected to articulate a shared vision for what standards or outcomes their students will achieve by the end of the year and what evidence will indicate mastery of these standards. Once PLCs have normed on the outcomes that they wish to receive, they will then create shared assessments to measure student progress throughout the year. From there, the PLCs will meet each day to engage in collaborative planning exercises and collective inquiry on student performance. The PLCs will rely heavily on the real-time, formative and summative assessment data from eDoctrina®, and they will use this data to glean best practices. For instance, if there are three classes in each PLC, and one class mastered the objective, while the others did not, teachers would be expected to discuss what strategies they used that worked well in yielding student achievement results.

As a next step, the teachers who did not initially try that strategy, or struggled to implement it successfully, would be expected to do so, while assessing their own aptitude in doing so. For instance, if a teacher needs help or improvement teaching the subject matter or implementing a strategy, he or she

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<sup>22</sup> DuFour, DuFour, and Eaker; 2007 PLC Institute

<sup>23</sup> DuFour, DuFour, and Eaker; 2007 PLC Institute

would engage his fellow PLC members to observe him and provide feedback, or he may observe them. Since the entire team is held accountable for the entire grade's results, they are incentivized to support each other in achieving that shared vision.

In addition to the PLCs, teachers will be expected to engage in Professional Learning Hours (PLHs) each month. PLHs are school wide opportunities for teachers to share best practices or professional development on an area where they have demonstrated success. PLH topics will be largely decided by the needs of the teachers, as determined by principal observations and student achievement data. PLHs will be held for approximately one hour per month. In a given month, there are usually four to five different sessions that are offered, and staff will choose which session(s) that they would like to attend. The PLHs provide a differentiated approach to staff development, meeting teachers where they are and furthering their investment in the process. Sample PLH topics include:

- How to prepare and execute PLC Data Analysis Meetings
- Active Learning
- Cross-Curricular Planning and Teaching
- Home/School Connections
- Exercise and Stress Relief
- PBIS Implementation and Support
- Data Dives
- Building Your Professional Learning Network
- Improving You PLC Team
- Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Exemplary Career Touches

In addition to the daily and monthly professional development sessions (PLCs and PLHs), RCCCS will hold two professional development days, one after each of our benchmark assessments is administered. These days will be used to explore student achievement data school-wide, and will allow teachers and school leaders to glean positive trends and areas of growth. Teachers and administrators will then action plan on how to continue our areas of strength and minimize our areas of growth.

**Evaluating and Reviewing PD:** The most significant way to monitor the efficacy of our professional development experiences include the data analysis afforded by the eDoctrina® reports, participation in team planning and data meetings, continuous classroom walkthroughs using eObserve® protocols, and formal observations using the Danielson model. eObserve® is a component of eDoctrina®, which we will use to complete classroom observations and walk throughs. This tool allows us to communicate electronically with staff regarding our visits in their classroom. All of the rated areas reflect portions of the Charlotte Danielson observation model. Through this program teachers and administration can have ongoing dialogue about the great things happening in the classrooms and also any areas that may need improvement. Similarly, the Leadership Team can collect trends from the tool to evaluate walk throughs and observations. Surveys will be used to evaluate PLHs, full day professional development days, and August training. The feedback gathered from these surveys will be shared with, and reviewed by, the administration and the staff presenters.

**Ensuring We Address the Needs of All Students:** As described above, all teachers, both new and returning, will be expected to attend a five day professional development session at the outset of the year, where strategies for reaching all learners, including those with special needs and ELLs, will be addressed. The training will provide best practices for engaging all students in the curriculum, such as how to create a warm and welcoming classroom culture, and strategies for keeping all students engaged and on task, from the *Teach Like a Champion* text. Teachers will review culturally responsive teaching practices to ensure that students can relate to the curricular topics, so that it is interesting and relevant for all students. Training will also include the Response to Intervention (RTI) model, the Committee on Special Education (CSE) referral process, IEP development and implementation, as outlined in the "Special Student Populations and Related Services" section. The training will review IEP report cards, progress monitoring and the confidentiality of student records. During the course of each school year, teachers will be afforded the

opportunity to receive staff development, either on site or through outside in-service/conferences to update them on best practices for special education. Such training includes, in addition to other subjects, discipline, special education, and the intersection between the two.

Our Leadership Team will oversee this professional development at the outset of the year, and will monitor teacher performance and implementation over the course of the year. During the school year, the Consultant Teacher for each grade level will be expected to support all teachers with effective strategies for differentiated instruction, and the Leadership Team will intervene if additional support or Professional Learning Hours are needed to address gaps in this area. Additional support will be determined by observations, teacher reflections, and student achievement data.

The Principal and the Special Education Coordinator will ensure full compliance with IDEA and state requirements regarding suspension (including manifestation and the determination requirements as coordinated with the relevant CSE), alternative instruction, and due process.

**Establishing a Professional Climate:** RCCCS will ensure that our training and professional development programs leave teachers feeling prepared, supported, and equipped to meet the goals that they set for their students at the outset of the year. Furthermore, the PLCs will provide an opportunity for ongoing collaboration and peer support. We expect our teachers to be owners of their professional outcomes. By empowering and supporting our teachers in this way they will feel like the professionals that they are and will be rewarded for hard work and most importantly, collaboration.

**Teacher Planning and Collaboration:** Please see training and professional development program listed above.

**Sharing Resources and Best Practices:** Our key design elements embrace teacher driven collaboration and teamwork. To that end, we will expect teachers to own their development and be reflective about their practice. When teachers engage in ongoing data analysis, they are able to glean insights into what is most and least effective about their own practice. With the support of the Leadership Team, teachers will identify strategies for improvement. Similarly, teachers will be expected to identify and leverage their strengths with the team during PLCs or PLHs experiences. By placing this responsibility on the teachers, we will take a “bottom up” approach to professional development, which we believe will increase teacher’s ability to self-assess and self-correct quickly and effectively, ultimately leading to more rapid improvements for students. Similarly, teachers will be deeply invested in this process, as they are generating and contributing to their individual and team development directly.

## F. Facilities

During the first charter authorization period, we anticipate the following facility needs based upon our projected enrollment:

- 24 classrooms (3 classrooms for each grade in Years 1 and 2, increasing to 4 kindergarten classrooms beginning in Year 3, and increasing to 4 classrooms for successive grades each year thereafter)
- 12 administrative offices
- 2 computer labs
- 1 art room
- Gym & locker rooms
- Kitchen & cafeteria
- Faculty break room

An assessment of potential sites in the City of Rochester has been conducted and two locations meeting the above criteria have been identified:

**1001 Lake Avenue:** This facility consists of a 101,000 square foot building and has sufficient space and amenities to accommodate the needs of RCCCS. The facility has historically been used as a school, with a portion of the building currently being occupied by a parochial, elementary school for a student population of approximately 200. If selected as the site for RCCCS, there is ample space for the co-location of both schools.

**180 Raines Park:** This facility consists of an approximately 40,000 square foot building providing sufficient space and amenities to accommodate RCCCS through Year 4 as currently constructed. The site has a long history of use as a non-public and parochial school serving grades K-12. It is currently unoccupied. Plans to expand the structure to meet the anticipated space requirements in Year 5 and beyond have been acknowledged by the building owner, and expansion opportunities have been identified by an architect.

For each of these sites the owner has agreed to make any necessary improvements to meet State Education Department requirements. This includes making improvements necessary to provide appropriate access for students and adults with disabilities, plus renovations necessary to provide the facility requirements described above in a safe and fully-functional fashion consistent with State Education Department requirements.

In addition to those improvements, \$75,000 has been budgeted in the Pre-Operations Year for building renovations. We anticipate a lease cost, including the cost of renovations, of approximately \$17,000 per month in Year 1, which is reflected in the budget. For both of these potential sites, the owner is agreeable to an initial 3-5 year lease term, but is unable commit to a lease until RCCCS has been granted a charter.

### G. Insurance

RCCCS is able and prepared to secure the insurance coverage, which approximates the following, consistent with policies obtained by similar charter schools. The anticipated annual premium for such coverage is approximately \$40,000, and is provided for in the operating budget.

General Liability	\$1,000,000 per occurrence; \$3,000,000 aggregate
Umbrella Liability	\$5,000,000
Property	\$250,000
Business Income with Extra Expense	\$500,000
Directors & Officers Liability	\$1,000,000
Automobile (non-owned)	\$1,000,000
Workers' Compensation & Employers' Liability	\$1,000,000
Student Accident	\$50,000
Catastrophic Student Accident	\$1,000,000

### H. Health, Food, and Transportation Services

**Health Services:** The delivery of health services to the RCCCS's students will be largely accomplished through the provision of a nurse from the Rochester City School District (RCSD), as it is anticipated that RCCCS will be located in the City of Rochester and the vast majority of students will be drawn from this district. These services will include treating students who are ill or injured, dispensing medication, and maintaining student health records. The responsibilities will be performed consistent with policies and protocols established by RCSD to promote student well-being and ensure the security of confidential information. Below is a summary of important practices that will be implemented.

Parents and guardians will be required to submit current student health information, a HIPPA release and a photo release before the start of school each year as part of the annual school registration process. Student health records will be maintained in locked file cabinets accessible only by authorized staff. Secured information will include records concerning student visits to the nurse, medication administration authorizations, and proof of immunizations.

Compliance with New York State immunization standards for entrance into and throughout attendance at the school will be required. To ensure this is accomplished, parents and guardians will be obligated to submit current documentation of immunizations which meet state and federal immunization schedules. In those instances in which a physician certifies that an immunization may be harmful to the student's health or the parent or guardian holds a genuine and sincere belief against such immunizations, a waiver consistent with New York State Public Health Law may be granted.

Many children who take medications require them during the school day. To ensure the safe and secure administration of medication to students, clear and strict policies will be maintained. In order to

administer medication to a student the following conditions must be met:

- All prescription medications must be brought to school in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacist or the physician.
- All over-the-counter medications must be in its original container and returned to the parent or guardian at the end of the school year or disposed of according to existing laws.
- The school must be supplied with a written order from a licensed prescriber.
- The parent or guardian must provide the school with written permission.

All medications will be dispensed by the school nurse or licensed practical nurse under the direction of the nurse. Other staff may be designated and trained by the nurse to assist self-directed students to administer their own oral, topical, and inhalant medication.

A minimum of two staff members will maintain certification in CPR and the use of an AED and Epi-pens. The Counseling Behavior Intervention Specialist will assume the responsibilities of the nurse when the nurse is not onsite.

**Food Services:** Providing students with healthy, nutritious meals so they can go about the business of learning is important to academic success, and is particularly critical for the low-income student population that RCCCS anticipates serving. The importance of nutritious meals, coupled with the complexity of running an efficient, compliant food service program, makes the outsourcing of food service operations a viable option for RCCCS.

RCCCS plans to contract with an established non-for-profit food service vendor to deliver breakfast, lunch, and snacks to students. Selection of the vendor will be based on their ability and experience operating successful food service programs for educational institutions; the variety, appeal and nutritional value of their menus; their compliance with state and federal mandates; and the cost of the program. In addition, RCCCS will employ Food Service Workers with Level 1 and 2 Certifications onsite to serve meals. It should be noted that both of the facilities identified to potentially house RCCCS are equipped with a school kitchen and cafeteria.

RCCCS intends to participate in the School Meal and Milk Programs available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture and State of New York. It is projected that the majority of our students will qualify for these programs through the direct certification process administered by New York State Department of Education. For those students who do not automatically qualify, applications will be sent to their parent or guardian. RCCCS anticipates that due to the high poverty population of the students to be served, the school may qualify for the universal lunch program through the Community Eligibility Provision.

In the event that all students do not receive free meals, families paying some or all of the cost of student meals will be billed in advance each month based on estimated participation. Adjustments for differences between estimated and actual participation will be accounted for in the following month's billing. Students will not be required to participate in the school's food service program, and can choose to provide their own school meals and snacks. There will be no additional cost charged to students with dietary restrictions. The confidentiality of students' free and reduced price meal status will be maintained and the Meals Served Report form will be submitted monthly to the NYS Child Nutrition Program.

**Transportation Services:** It is projected that RCCCS will be located in the City of Rochester and that the majority of its students will come from the Rochester City School District (RCSD). As such, RCSD will be responsible to provide transportation services to those students who provide proof of City residency and meet eligibility criteria for such services pursuant to New York State Education Law. Students who are residents of school districts other than RCSD and who meet eligibility criteria for public school transportation will be transported by their home school district. Students who do not meet the criteria to receive busing will be responsible for arranging their own conveyance to the school.

Special education students will be provided transportation services in accordance with their

individualized education programs. RCCCS will work closely with the Committee on Special Education on a case-by-case basis to ensure that appropriate transportation is available. RCCCS intends to utilize a school year that extends beyond that of traditional school districts', thus it is anticipated that RCCCS will have to provide transportation for its students for approximately 14 days annually when public school transportation is unavailable. These transportation services will be provided by a qualified vendor, which will be selected through a competitive procurement process. An allocation has been incorporated in the budget for this expense based on projected student population and current industry rates.

The school's Director of Operations & Finance will be responsible for coordinating all transportation services. This includes but is not limited to submitting the required eligibility forms to the appropriate school district transportation departments; coordinating communication with students' families concerning bus stop location and estimated pick-up and drop-off times; and educating and promoting bus safety to students.

### **I. Family and Community Involvement**

**Vision for Family and Community Involvement:** The mission of RCCCS is to provide a world-class education to Rochester students so that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in both college and family sustaining careers. Our vision for RCCCS family and community involvement is directly influenced by our mission, in that we hope to involve parents as partners in furthering our primary objectives of ensuring that our students are on track and prepared to graduate from the high school of their choice, and ensuring that students are exposed to and engaged with a rich variety of college and career opportunities that will lead to personal and professional satisfaction and future leadership of our region. The vision, therefore, will be to engage each parent in our mission and objectives so that we will work in unison towards helping students reach these two goals.

**Strategy for Family and Community Involvement:** Our main strategy for engaging parents in the school will be through our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), which will plan events for parents and provide a means for ongoing and direct parent feedback and communication with the school. Additional strategies for partnering with parents in our efforts to prepare all students to be on track from the high school of their choice are as follows:

- Parents come to the school for registration, where we share information and an overview about upcoming program dates, the academic and behavioral expectations, and the college and career focus;
- In the fall of each year, all parents will be expected to attend a "Welcome Night," where food will be provided, and each grade level team will share the academic goals for the parents, expected means and times for communication, and the Student Handbook, with a particular focus on the SWPBIS behavioral expectations;
- Once the school year begins, all core teachers will be expected to contact the parents immediately to, once again, introduce themselves, and share the academic and behavioral goals for the upcoming school year. In addition, teachers will inform parents of the different ways in which they are available for communication such as classroom phone, voice message, email, and website portal. The conversation will center around the importance of the parent teacher communication. Teachers will offer opportunities during morning, afternoon, and evening for ongoing conferences throughout the year. Automated calls and multiple reminders, using School Messenger, or a similar automated system, will also be established to help parents remember the event. If a parent fails to show up or to respond, the teacher will call and offer to provide all needed information in a phone conference. This phone conference is described as a perfectly acceptable alternative to the face-to-face conference and as a fulfillment of parent/school partnership.
- Once the teacher establishes the best means for ongoing communication with parents or guardians, the teacher will continue to communicate with the parent on both areas of growth and improvement.
- Teachers will be responsible for inviting parents to partake in PTO meetings and extracurricular events

offered at various points throughout the year (student concerts, art exhibits, science fairs, etc.). Our strategies for partnering with parents as we seek to expose students to a rich variety of college and career opportunities are as follows:

- Invite parents into classroom to share information about their chosen career path, what they did to prepare for that career path, and how our students might do the same;
- Include parents on field trips to local colleges and universities, and on site visits that will allow students to observe various careers firsthand;
- Invite parents to join the class to read aloud or listen to a story about a particular career (particularly during the days leading up to a field trip or site visit); and
- Suggest readings, activities, and talking points for parents to implement at home or during the summer months about family sustaining career choices, and the importance of hard work at school.

In addition, RCCCS will have a Family Support Coordinator to strengthen its students and families through school, community, and parent collaboration in order to promote student success and well-being. RCCCS believes that strong families mean successful students; therefore, any K-8 student and his or her family are not only welcome, but encouraged, to meet with the Family Support Coordinator and take advantage of his or her services and support. The Family Support Coordinator's goal is to foster family communication and well-being, healthy youth development, and success in school. In order to accomplish this, the Family Support Coordinator will facilitate and/or arrange a spectrum of services, including, but not limited to: individual and family counseling; support groups; parenting groups; and referrals and information to outside community resources. The Family Support Coordinator will assist the Director of Finance and Operations with other RCCCS services, including transportation, enrollment, and uniform purchases, making it easier for parents and families to take care of business in one trip.

**Involving Parents:** In our first charter term, RCCCS will focus our efforts on ensuring parent involvement from day one. Parents will be involved in planning, implementation, and program design of the charter school as described below.

*Planning:* As described further in the Public Outreach section, we solicited parent feedback on our programming through surveys and focus groups in order to help engage parents in the planning process. The feedback was very helpful as we think about the planning stages of our work, particularly design and implementation of our application and recruitment and enrollment process. Given the volume of parent questions around the enrollment process, we will be sure to make parents fully aware that we are opening in an accessible location, and that all students are welcome to apply to the school. As we conduct student recruitment, we will be sure to have clear directions and steps around the enrollment process; specifically, we will hold open houses to help parents who wish to apply, but might have further questions, we will distribute applications to parents during outreach events so that they can ask questions on the spot, if they have them, and we will be sure to provide applications in English and Spanish to reach as many families as possible. To encourage further parent involvement, and increase our effectiveness in reaching our target population, we will rely on our PTO to assist with outreach and enrollment efforts, and encouraging them to work as stewards and partners support parents and families throughout the enrollment process.

*Implementation:* We plan to adopt a similar approach to school governance as CSAT. Specifically, we will encourage the support of a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), who is responsible for planning social events, fundraising efforts, and encouraging parent involvement in the school through collaboration with teachers. In addition to the PTO, we will also have Parent Advisory Council (PAC), who will collaborate with the Principal and the Board on effectively implementing school policies. The Parent Trustee of the Board will attend all PAC meetings, and will direct all non-policy concerns to the PTO, to ensure that the PAC can focus their efforts exclusively on impacting school policy and governance. The Parent Trustee will attend all board meetings and relay all feedback from the PAC meetings to the Board each month. In addition,

RCCCS will create ways for parents to address governance issues via the website and develop a parent portal.

*Program Design:* As described further in the Public Outreach section, we solicited parent feedback on the elements of the program design, including college to career focus and the charter school option. Given the feedback around smaller class sizes, attention, and emotional and behavioral support, we have ensured Teacher Aides are available for our younger students, that at least one Consultant Teacher, certified in Special Education, is staffed on each grade level, and that we have adequate staff to provide Behavior Intervention Support within the building. Parents generally indicated great support for the college and career option, and students were excited about the potential to explore career choices. One parent expressed that schools need more unique approaches to learning and was excited to hear that we were investing students in their future options.

## **J. Financial Management**

The RCCCS Board of Trustees is comprised of several individuals who possess the financial and management skills and experience necessary to effectively structure, guide, and monitor the financial practices and performance of the school. These Board members include Mark Brewer, Chief Financial Officer of Loyola Recovery Foundation; Jeffery Miceli, President of Appliance Tec; and Norman West, Chief Executive Officer of West Advisory Group. Guided and overseen by these individuals, RCCCS will engage a qualified and experienced management consultant to provide the following services:

**Support annual independent audits.** The consultant will select and engage an independent certified public accounting firm to conduct at annual audits of the school's financial processes, records and activities, comparable in scope to those required of other public schools and in accordance with government auditing standards. The consultant will also establish necessary financial controls, prepare requested schedules and corresponding analysis, and coordinate with auditors to support accurate and timely completion of audit. The Board will review all audits, including meeting with the auditor in the absence of the consultant and school staff to assess the results. The Board will monitor all efforts by school leaders to address any deficiencies identified by the audit.

**Establish an accounting system compliant with generally accepted accounting principles.** This includes recommending financial policies and procedures for Board adoption, creating a chart of accounts, and implementing the adopted policies and procedures.

**Establish an accounts payable and accounts receivable processes.** This includes establishing a segregation of duties to ensure funds are safeguarded and properly deposited, establishing controls to ensure that all receipts and expenditures are properly recorded, and identifying payments and receipts in sufficient detail to support preparation of monthly financial reports.

**Create a payroll system.** The consultant will implement a payroll system using a qualified payroll provider. Further, the consultant will include defining the payroll schedule and process, post and reconcile payroll, and fulfill year-end reporting and documentation requirements.

**Establish and manage the purchasing process.** The consultant will recommend purchasing policies for Board adoption and will procure goods and services in accordance with the adopted the policies.

**Ensure fulfillment of grant requirements.** This will include adherence to grant restrictions and reporting requirements.

**Conduct routine daily and monthly accounting processes.** This will include but not be limited to processing deposits and disbursements, posting revenue and expenses, reconciling bank statements, and executing year-end closing of the books.

**Manage monthly, quarterly, and annual reporting.** Relevant reporting will be delivered to all constituents including the Board, school leadership team, and NYSED as required.

The finance and accounting functions identified above will be conducted by the management

consultant in conjunction with and under the oversight of the Board, School Director, and Operations Coordinator(s). It is not anticipated that the school will hire staff to perform these functions.

School staff (Principal and Director of Operations & Finance) under the oversight of the Board will be responsible to track and safeguard student information including enrollment, attendance, performance, eligibility for free and reduced-price meals, and special education and English language learner services. Education-industry computer software and other mechanisms currently utilized by other educational institutions for such purposes will be employed.

### K. Budget and Cash Flow

**Proposed Budget & Cash Flows.** The RCCCS budget is informed by reviewing the budgets of several local charter schools as they relate to the specific requirements of RCCCS as well as by obtaining quotes from potential vendors when appropriate. Conservative estimates were employed throughout the budget development process to ensure the integrity and viability of the projections, as well as to incorporate an appropriate measure of financial resiliency in the event of unforeseen operating challenges. For example, the following conservative approaches were employed in constructing the estimates for the two largest revenue and expense categories:

1. **Per-Pupil Revenue** - No increase in the current (FY 2014-15) Rochester Central School District reimbursement rate is assumed over the five-year period.
2. **Personnel Costs** - Estimates include a 2% salary and wage contingency in addition to a 3% annual inflation assumption. The 2% contingency is available for annual performance incentives or to relieve budget stress as necessary.

At such time as charter status is conferred by NYSED, RCCCS will also pursue securing a line of credit as a standby mechanism for addressing potential liquidity issues.

**Ongoing Budget Management.** Going forward, the School Principal and Director of Operations and Finance of RCCCS will be responsible for developing and maintaining the annual budget and the 5-year budget forecast. Each spring, an annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year and an updated five-year budget forecast will be developed for Board consideration and adoption. These documents will be based on current year-to-date actual data and year-end projections, as well as a careful assessment of anticipated changes in operations and the operating environment, which will impact revenues and expenditures in the upcoming budget and forecast period.

The budget construction philosophy will continue to be one of conservatism with respect to revenue and expenditure projections in order to protect the current and long-term financial sustainability of the school. The Finance Committee of the Board will review the budget and five-year budget forecast and recommend a final budget and forecast for Board adoption no later than June, prior to the start of the next fiscal year. The Finance Committee will review and report budget performance to the Board on a monthly basis. The review will include adopted budget vs. actual performance, projected year-end performance, and cash flow and balance statements. Key indicators to be reviewed will include:

1. **Near Term Indicators:** Current ratio; unrestricted cash on hand; and enrollment variance
2. **Sustainability Indicators:** Total margin; debt-to-assets (if applicable); cash flow; and debt coverage (if applicable)

Any significant variances from budget or other concerns identified in the review process will be assessed and reported to the Board for action as warranted. Materiality thresholds for budget amendment action will be established in the financial policies and procedures adopted by the Board.

### L. Pre-Opening Plan

Domain	Action	Start Date	End Date	Lead Responsibility
Governance	Appoint board officers	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	BOT
Facility	Identify facility for school	Aug 2015	Sep 2015	BOT
Governance	Recruit School Director	Sep 2015	Nov 2015	BOT
Facility	Conduct facility negotiations and execute lease	Sep 2015	Dec 2015	BOT

<b>Operations</b>	Obtain 501c3 status	Sep 2015	Jan 2016	BOT
<b>Finance</b>	Approve fiscal policies and procedures	Sep 2015	Oct 2015	BOT
<b>Governance</b>	Ratify bylaws and code of ethics	Oct 2015	Dec 2015	BOT
<b>Facility</b>	Renovation: identify needs, secure contractor, establish timeline, complete punch list	Nov 2015	Jun 2016	BOT, P, DOF
<b>Recruitment</b>	Recruit students: develop and disseminate materials, host open-houses, door-to-door marketing	Nov 2015	Apr 2016	P, BOT
<b>Finance</b>	Contract with provider to establish payroll and other financial systems	Jan 2016	Mar 2016	BOT, DOF
<b>Operations</b>	Contract with provider for operations support (operations coordination [OC] human resources, IT, other)	Jan 2016	Mar 2016	BOT, DOF
<b>Facility</b>	Obtain Certificate of Occupancy	Jan 2016	May 2016	DOF
<b>Staffing</b>	Recruit school staff: draft job descriptions, post positions, interview candidates, check references	Feb 2016	Jun 2016	P, DOF
<b>Staffing</b>	Hire school staff: salary negotiations and offer letters	Mar 2016	Jun 2016	P, DOF
<b>Academic</b>	Research and secure professional development	Mar 2016	Jun 2016	P
<b>Academic</b>	Research and secure curriculum resources	Mar 2016	Jun 2016	P
<b>Academic</b>	Research and secure standardized assessments	Mar 2016	Jun 2016	P
<b>Technology</b>	RFP for technology infrastructure	Mar 2016	Jun 2016	DOF
<b>Recruitment</b>	Hold lottery: secure system with preferences, conduct lottery, inform parents	Apr 2016	Apr 2016	P, DOF, BOT
<b>Operations</b>	Obtain student records: obtain permission from parents, contact previous schools, etc.	Apr 2016	Jul 2016	P, DOF
<b>Finance</b>	Approve budget for FY16-17	Apr 2016	Apr 2016	BOT
<b>Operations</b>	Secure food services: coordinate vendor evaluation of kitchen capacity, solicit proposals, select vendor	Apr 2016	May 2016	DOF
<b>Operations</b>	Secure transportation: contact RCDSD and other districts of residence, provide required information, inform parents of options	Apr 2016	Jul 2016	DOF
<b>HR</b>	Finalize staff handbook and personnel policies	Apr 2016	Jun 2016	BOT, P, DOF
<b>Operations</b>	Develop and distribute student handbook	May 2016	Jun 2016	P
<b>Technology</b>	Install technology infrastructure	May 2016	Jul 2016	DOF
<b>HR</b>	Complete fingerprinting and background checks	May 2016	Jul 2016	DOF
<b>Academic</b>	Prepare school calendar and distribute to families	May 2016	May 2016	P, DOF
<b>Recruitment</b>	Conduct open houses for admitted students	Jun 2016	Jul 2016	P, DOF
<b>Academic</b>	Contract with Related Service Providers	Jun 2016	Aug 2016	P
<b>Academic</b>	Conduct home visits	Jun 2016	Aug 2016	P
<b>Operations</b>	Secure insurance policies	Jun 2016	Jul 2016	DOF
<b>PD</b>	Prepare Summer Institute materials	Jun 2016	Aug 2016	P
<b>Finance</b>	Complete Initial Statement of Financial Controls	Jul 2016	Jul 2016	DOF
<b>HR</b>	Complete staff fingerprints and background checks	Jul 2016	Jul 2016	DOF
<b>Academic</b>	Create lesson plans for first weeks of school	Jul 2016	Jul 2016	P
<b>Operations</b>	Secure IEPs and student records	Jul 2016	Aug 2016	P, DOF
<b>Operations</b>	Create a draft SAVE plan and submit it to SED	Jul 2016	Aug 2016	DOF
<b>Operations</b>	Purchase AEDs and train staff	Jul 2016	Aug 2016	DOF
<b>PD</b>	Conduct Summer Institute	Aug 2016	Aug 2016	P
<b>PD</b>	Develop staff growth plans	Aug 2016	Aug 2016	P

Key: BOT=Board of Trustees; P=Principal; DOF=Director of Operations and Finance

## M. Dissolution Plan

In compliance with Education Law Sections 219 and 220, the school will work closely with appropriate NYSED representatives to develop and implement a dissolution plan that will ensure an orderly closure and dissolution process. We will utilize the matrix provided in the NYS Education Department's *Closing Procedures Guide and Checklist for New York State Charter Schools*. The dissolution plan will include a process for transferring students and student records, including:

- IEPs
- Attendance records
- Student health & immunization records
- Report cards

Prior to dissolution, the school will conduct a series of meetings for parents to provide information about the dissolution and to support them in making decisions regarding selection of educational programs for their children, including Rochester City School District schools, charter schools and non-public schools.

The Board will designate one trustee and one school employee to oversee the closing of the school from an operational and financial perspective. After the employee termination date is established, the school will notify all employees of termination of employment and/or contracts, and notify benefit providers of pending termination of all employees. Employees will be notified of eligibility for New York State Unemployment Insurance pursuant to any regulations of the New York State Department of Labor. The

dissolution plan will provide that all property, which the school has leased, borrowed or contracted for use, will be returned. The return of property will conform with contractual pre-arrangement, where applicable, or will be done with reasonable promptness.

The school will accumulate a reserve fund of \$75,000 by setting aside \$25,000 each year for three consecutive years, beginning with the pre-operations year, to cover debts in the case of the school's dissolution. In the event of dissolution of assets in excess of those necessary to meet liabilities, all remaining assets of the school shall be transferred to another charter school within the Rochester City School District as designated by the Board.