



FULL APPLICATION SUMMARY

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District of Location	Community School District 13 in Brooklyn, NY
Opening Date	Summer/Fall 2016
Proposed Charter Term	Five years; 2016-17 through 2020-21
Proposed Management Company or Partners	N/A
Projected Enrollment and Grade Span During Charter Term	Grades 6-8; 354 students
Projected Maximum Enrollment and Grade Span	Grades 6-8; 354 students
Mission Statement	<p>Prime’s mission is to ensure that all students master college- and career-ready standards, demonstrate healthy habits of mind and body, and develop creative or career-driven expertise in an area of their choice. We achieve this by empowering teachers to design personalized learning environments in which students can realize their academic and personal potential within a loving and challenging community.</p>

Prime Public Charter School (“Prime”) is a proposed charter school opening in Brooklyn’s CSD13 in 2016-17, starting with grade 6 and growing to a full 6-8 middle school. Prime’s mission is to ensure that all students master college- and career-ready standards, demonstrate healthy habits of mind and body, and develop expertise in a passion of their choice. Our innovative model allows families to learn about and match to one of several core academic teaching teams, each with a unique approach and focus. As a team demonstrates success, it can take on additional students, allowing the team to earn more and hire support staff for the team. We supplement this challenging college-ready environment, Prime Core, with dedicated time each day for personal development during Prime Journeys, as well as Prime Studio, where students work alongside the surrounding cultural and commercial community to develop real-world expertise in an area of their choice. This whole-child approach is aligned to our belief in comprehensive personalized learning. The name PRIME is itself an acronym for the ways we personalize learning:

Pacing and Pathways: Each student at Prime has a Personalized Learning Plan that we build using assessments, surveys, and conversations. Our flexible Prime Core model—which includes



individual goal-setting and adaptive online learning—allows students to move at their own pace on their own path to master rigorous academic standards and meet personal growth goals.

Relationships: We know that a critical part of personalization involves strong teacher-student relationships, so we help students and their families choose from several Teaching Practices — teams of teachers who work together to teach core content areas. Families can meet teachers to get a sense of which Practice might work best. If the student is achieving her/his goals, s/he can loop with a Practice for multiple years, but if not, we continue to work with each student to identify a teacher who will have a transformative influence on the student’s academic trajectory.

Interests and Identities: Great teaching requires motivating students to take ownership of their own learning. To achieve this, the daily Prime Studio time allows students to gain experiential expertise in a career or creative passion area. In addition, we help students to navigate their different and changing identities through Prime Journeys, a personal development course led Prime teachers with support from outside counselors that supports students to become effective leaders, teammates, and citizens who value their own and others’ identities.

Methods and Modalities: To personalize by teaching method and modality, each of our Teaching Practices has a somewhat different specialty and method of instruction. For example, some teachers will emphasize online learning while others will emphasize Socratic seminars. Teaching Practices also offer differing schedules and learning environments; some have more rigid and consistent time blocks, and others have longer and more fluid time blocks. As we work with students to take more ownership of their learning, they will develop their own learning strategies and increase their ownership over their own time and space, both during and after the school day.

Evidence of Learning: Prime personalizes the evidence that we use to determine whether students have reached mastery of a particular competency. Within our three main environments (Prime Core, Prime Journeys, and Prime Studio), the evidence that students use to show what they know varies, from online learning to performance tasks to Studio projects such as group presentations, a short film, or a working product. Prime students can express their knowledge in more creative ways that are often neglected in school but celebrated and rewarded in the modern workplace.

For Families: We provide students with highly qualified, committed teachers, as well as a school where parents play a key role from the start. We will provide structures for parents to learn about their children’s academic progress, participate in the selection of their child’s Teaching Practice, and contribute their own expertise to our Prime Studio teams. Parents will receive frequent progress reports and can offer feedback to Teaching Practices.

For Teachers: We offer teacher teams the opportunity to start and manage their own Teaching Practices, which receive both support from the Principal and significant autonomy. New Practices start with fewer students and get more intensive support. Once a Practice demonstrates strong results, the Principal can approve a Teaching Practice’s growth, allowing our best Teaching Practices the opportunity to earn more, hire associate staff, and reach more students.



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

A. Mission Statement and Objectives

Prime Public Charter School (“Prime”) is a middle school proposed for grades 6-8 in Brooklyn’s Community School District 13 (“CSD13”). Prime’s mission is to ensure that all students master college- and career-ready standards, demonstrate healthy habits of mind and body, and develop expertise in a passion of their choice.

Prime believes that in order for every child to become college and career-ready, we must implement innovative and flexible school structures that are built around the needs, strengths, and motivations of each child. To achieve this, we: (1) Create a unique teacher-student matching process, with significant family input, to ensure that we assign students to the teaching team that will help each child master Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in a personalized environment (“Prime Core”); (2) Develop students’ personal development skills, such as self-reflection, conflict resolution, time management, diversity competencies, and leadership, which they will need to succeed in high school, college, and beyond (“Prime Journeys”); and (3) Ensure that students explore and achieve expertise in an area of passion (“Prime Studio”).

Prime will measure success using several metrics, including proficiency on the New York State English Language Arts and New York State mathematics exams, yearly student portfolios and exhibitions, and student and parent feedback. Given this unique model, students will leave Prime with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to succeed in high school and the world beyond.

Prime will address several of the purposes of Education Law §2850(2). Our model will improve student learning and achievement through a personalized and interdisciplinary core academic model that uses data early and often to inform instruction and to determine additional supports that students need. Upon enrollment, families opt into one of several Teaching Practices – unique core academic teaching teams – all of which include an interdisciplinary model and school day structure that are unique among middle schools in CSD13 (See sections regarding *Key Design Elements*, *Achievement Goals*, *Curriculum & Instruction*, and *Assessment System*, below, for more information on Teaching Practices.). This flexibility and personalization will enable Prime to increase learning opportunities for all students, particularly those with special needs. Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs) will be developed for every student at the intake process, aligned with Individual Education Programs (IEPs), language development needs, and/or other areas of strength or challenge. Our flexible use of instructional time and technology (enabled through laptops for each student) will ensure that we normalize the individuation found in IEPs.

Finally, because we offer an innovative teacher growth and career pathway, with a corresponding compensation model based on demonstrated results and impact, we will create new professional opportunities for teachers, providing them with greater structured autonomy over time, under close principal supervision. Please see sections *Evaluation* and *Professional Development*, below.

B. Key Design Elements

Prime is a 6-8 middle school innovatively designed to meet the diverse needs of Brooklyn students. In order to achieve our mission of a) college- and career-readiness for all b) personal development and c) passion-driven expertise, **our model brings together the culture of high expectations and**

talent development used in high-performing “no-excuses” charter schools while concurrently adopting structures to add relevance, meaningful relationships, and deeper learning to each student’s experience. With a longer school day and longer school year, we can provide all students—even students who come to us significantly below grade level—with a variety of learning environments that address all parts of our mission.

To achieve personalization, in our model, students learn each day in three environments. A typical day at Prime includes the following:

- **Prime Core:** Teams of two teachers¹ (one of whom is generally dual-certified in special education) lead a Teaching Practice that collaboratively teaches STEM and Humanities content that aligns to rigorous Common Core State Standards. Over time, if the Principal raises the student cap for a Practice, it may experience greater demand and grow to add more students and more staff; however, the two founding “Partners” (see p. 8) will still lead it. There are three key benefits to this approach:
 - **Interdisciplinary Learning and Longer Periods:** Teachers will use the curriculum frameworks (See *Section IIc* for detailed curricular frameworks) and then hone interdisciplinary projects and lessons using principles from Wiggins and McTighe’s *Understanding by Design* (1998) in order to ensure that all students can access the curriculum in ways that lead to greater retention and transfer.² We know that many of our students will enter below grade level, and thus we have allocated significant time each day for both ELA instruction with targeted intervention through Wilson Reading (including a specialized writing workshop 2 times per week) and for math (including an online program in a math lab that can identify and accelerate students who enter below grade level). Students **spend approximately five hours daily** working in Prime Core.
 - **Flexible Groupings to Address Individual Needs:** The two primary teachers in a Teaching Practice may occasionally co-teach all students in a large group during interdisciplinary thematic unit introductory lessons, but it will be more common for teachers to split the group as needed into smaller groups of students, with each group taught by one of the Practice’s teachers. In Year 1, the three Practices will each have two main teachers, but over time Practices may add students and staff, allowing great flexibility in student groupings. Since Practices have varying numbers of students based on how many students match to that Practice, we will need large, flexible spaces and significant technology to accommodate the less rigid nature of class sizes. For students who reach middle school and need remediation, the teachers have flexibility to meet with such students in targeted small groups based on frequent formative assessment data or to use online learning programs to accelerate growth. **Prime will also have a floating Special Education teacher who can pull out and push in as necessary in order to meet the needs of students with IEPs.** This teacher, one of the two Practice teachers, or Prime Studio Specialist Teachers thus has co-teaching flexibility to implement an intervention program such as Wilson, Just Words, or to supervise an

¹ For a sample of how this looks on a weekly basis, see *Attachment 3a*, where we show how teachers divide core academics into STEM and Humanities and either lead teach (if it is in their core content area) or support teach (if it is outside their area).

² For information on the research base behind *Understanding by Design*, see <http://jaymctighe.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/UbD-Research-Base.pdf>

adaptive online remediation program. The special education teacher will track the push-in/pull-out IEP goals for any students with special needs. This teacher will also make sure that any students who require a small classroom environment are provided with one. In addition, the teachers in a Practice can pull in a Prime Studio Specialist to support instruction as needed. For example, in a 7th grade unit on Early America, the Arts & Culture Studio Specialist (see more below) may assist the Prime Core teachers in implementing a unit that includes a trip to see “Hamilton,” a new Broadway musical that explores the life of Alexander Hamilton using hip hop as the musical backdrop. The Arts & Culture Studio Specialist will also have ESL certification in order to provide ELL students with required supports throughout the day. The flexible nature of this model will help all students, but because of the opportunity for dynamic pull-outs and push-ins, it will be particularly effective for students with disabilities, English Language Learners, or students who are struggling academically. Instead of stigmatizing push-ins, pull-outs, and small-group tutoring, these formats will become a normalized part of a personalized learning environment. Given that the timing of Prime Core changes depending on the Practice (partly in order to make sure students are not all in the lunch room or physical education area simultaneously), we will work during the planning year to create schedules among the different Practices such that we can still schedule appropriate times for lunch and physical education.

- **Lower Total Student Loads For Better Assessment and Closer Relationships:** Each grade level will contain approximately three Prime Core Teaching Practices covering ~ 108-118 students, for an average of 36-40 students per Practice. Compared to a typical middle school teacher, who may teach well over 100 students in the course of one school day, our Teaching Practices have the ability to offer students much more detailed assessment feedback and to build more meaningful relationships. We recognize that while 36-40 is an average, the actual size of a Practice varies based on how many students match with each Practice; in order to minimize the logistical challenges of this structure, we will keep the range of sizes small at first to mitigate the challenges of a wider range. Because our Practices vary in size, though, we are searching for spaces with larger classrooms that can be subdivided as necessary into small groups.
- **Prime Journeys:** During Prime Journeys, students learn through a robust personal development and college-readiness curriculum that ensures that they develop the social-emotional toolkit necessary to navigate diverse environments. Particularly for students with behavioral or emotional challenges, Prime Journeys will provide a space to peacefully resolve conflicts, explore changing identities, and develop a “growth mindset”³ that enables students to act on the belief that effort can yield significant academic and personal progress. In order to ensure continuity, in Year 1 our Teaching Practices split up their students from Prime Core into approximately three groups (with two led by the Teaching Practice teachers and one led by a Prime Studio Specialist) so that the Prime Journeys classes are small (about 12-16 students). In future years we will ensure a staffing and schedule model that maintains small classes. The development and implementation of Journeys is supported by our school counselor/s as well

³ For information on the research behind growth mindset, see <https://www.mindsetworks.com/webnav/whatismindset.aspx>

as PowerTools LLC, an outside group that specializes in professional development for school advisory models. Students spend 50 minutes per day in Prime Journeys.

- **Prime Studio:** Studio classes are led by a Studio Specialist Teacher, who coordinates with community-based organizations and local professional experts to offer students opportunities to discover a new expertise through the creation of authentic products and projects on behalf of the outside organization. In a traditional middle school, many of the students who enter below grade level quickly lose confidence and interest in school, whereas our model helps these struggling students to reengage in school through real-world learning. As an illustration of how this looks in practice, in the 6th grade, students will rotate through two-week modules with each of three Prime Studio Specialists. The three Prime Studio Specialists we anticipate hiring for Year One will specialize in Arts & Culture, Health & Fitness, and Design & Engineering. Thus, in any given six-week period, students will gain exposure to all three of these areas through a two-week module in which the Specialist co-teaches with local volunteers from creative, commercial, or cultural organizations. After the six-week period, the Studio Specialist and volunteer/s will have taught all 6th graders a given unit. By analyzing the data and student work products in a given unit, the Specialist then prepares a second unit, and so on, so that over the course of a 42-week school year, each Specialist will teach approximately six units (assuming days for testing, student orientation, trips, etc.). In 7th and 8th grade, units get longer as students dive deeper into particular areas. In 8th grade, students complete an apprenticeship outside of school. Students spend 90 minutes per day in their Prime Studio teams.

Key Design Features to Achieve Personalized Student Learning: While Prime’s personalization will help all students to accelerate their pace toward mastery of standards, it is designed in particular to support students who are struggling academically, students with special needs, and English Language Learners. We have designed our program to ensure that these students are in a Teaching Practice with at least one certified special education teacher, a Prime Journeys team supported by counselors who understand adolescent development, and a Prime Studio experience with a community organization that taps each student’s specific interests. Below we share some additional tools and processes, in addition to the three main environments, which support personalized learning for all.

Teacher Practice Matching Profile (TPMP): One of the most innovative parts of our model is our unique teacher-student matching process ensures that upon matriculation, the Principal meets with each student and his or her family to fill out a TPMP, which helps each family determine which Teaching Practice is the right fit, based on a match of identities/interests, areas of expertise, and teaching methods. **Families can watch videos of each Teaching Practice, meet with teachers in prospective Teaching Practices, learn more about each practice’s pedagogical styles and areas of expertise, and receive support from the Principal in the match process.** If one Practice has more demand than it can accommodate, families will rank-order their preferences and generally receive their 2nd choice.

Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs): All students at Prime are given diagnostic assessments (such as the widely used NWEA and surveys such as the Renzulli Learning Profile) that help students to

work with their teachers to craft a PLP. The PLP serves as a way to gauge individual goals and demonstrations of mastery over time, and it serves as the roadmap for individualized learning. This creates a common understanding of where each student is academically, and it creates a starting place for discussions, support structures, remediation, and extensions for each student. Because our classes are taught in teams and can receive support from Studio Specialists, teachers have the time to meet one-on-one with students to discuss their PLPs. PLPs are shared with all stakeholders: students, teachers, parents, and Prime administrators. In particular, we will translate our PLPs into Spanish and other languages as needed to support our communication with parents of ELL students.

Unique Learning Pathways Towards Mastery: In Prime Core, teachers use a variety of methods, from blended learning rotations (in which students rotate from small-group to collaborative to online adaptive learning) to peer tutoring, to help students master Common Core Standards according to the most efficient and effective pathway for that student, which is described in his or her PLP. Over time, we will scaffold students toward more independence so that they take ownership of their learning. Teachers plan rigorous, whole-group, differentiated class discussions that allow students at all levels to learn together, utilizing the principles of Universal Design for Learning⁴, a model that gives every student a variety of ways to access content within the same space. For example, in a unit on animal cells, a teacher might allow students to choose whether to use an online video simulation, a textbook, or a peer discussion to start a lesson on how cells produce energy. The content and rigor across these stations are similar, but the means of access differ based on student needs.

Data-Driven Instruction and Intervention: Prime will give each student a comprehensive set of academic and social assessments aligned to the three parts of our mission, and then align each student's program to these assessments. Prime teachers, under the supervision and support of the Principal, will look at formative data (behavioral as well as academic) at regular intervals to ensure that students are on track toward grade-level mastery. This allows us to **intervene early with students who may initially struggle with a more self-paced learning environment**. To ensure high levels of rigor and appropriate progress, we use the Response to Intervention (RtI) model to identify at-risk students and provide them with proactive targeted support. Students with IEPs will have PLPs that match them to special education-licensed teachers, and English Language Learners will likewise have PLPs that use tools such as the NYSITELL to determine ELL status and match them to teachers with expertise in ELL instruction.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: At Prime we believe that personalization includes valuing each student's unique identity and culture. Following the principles of the NYCDOE's Expanded Success Initiative, Prime will bring the ideas of culturally relevant and responsive curriculum to the middle school level, with a special eye to engaging adolescent Black and Latino males. Prime will engage with The National Equity Project, the Center for Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning, and/or other similar organizations to ensure that our teachers have adequate training in culturally responsive pedagogy.

⁴ See Pisha, B., & Coyne, P. (2001). Smart From the Start The Promise of Universal Design for Learning. *Remedial and special education*, 22(4), 197-203.

Key Design Features to Achieve Professionalized Teacher Practice: To truly serve all students, we need a highly skilled professional workforce, and we believe that more than one skilled teacher is necessary in a classroom to ensure that we can flexibly meet students’ varied needs. Prime uses research showing that teachers are the biggest in-school factor contributing to student learning⁵; to this end, the school seeks to increase teacher professionalization in several ways:

Teaching Practices: Rather than assigning the same number of students randomly to each teacher, we match students to a variable-sized Teaching Practice that teaches Prime Core and Prime Journeys. Teaching Practices have two “Partner” teachers (see the chart below), one of whom is generally dual-certified in special education. Under the close supervision of the Principal, Teaching Practices will have substantial autonomy within a set of mandated structures to organize their classrooms and class times, as well as the allocation of resources that the school provides to each team. Since teachers work in teams and across content areas, they have much lower total student loads, which has been shown to increase student achievement.⁶

Teacher Growth: Prime will have a range of support programs for new teachers as well as specified pathways, based on proven results shown by student growth, to progress through a continuum of roles, each with greater autonomy, responsibility, and compensation as it is earned:

	Partner	Fellow	Resident
Description	A Partner starts a new Practice with a co-Partner. They have significant responsibility for curriculum development and new teacher development. If successful, these teachers can add students to their Practice, hire new Residents, and earn more over time.	Fellows work within an existing Practice, sometimes in preparation to open their own Practice. They learn how to coach new teachers in preparation to become Partners.	A resident is a relatively new teacher who works within an existing Practice and is coached by both the Partner and the Principal. They teach under the supervision of a Partner or Fellow.
Level of Experience and Achievement	All Partners have at least three (and usually more) years of teaching experience and demonstrated ability both to improve student learning and to coach/mentor new teachers.	All Fellows have at least two years of teaching experience and demonstrated ability to significantly improve student learning.	All residents have at least one year of teaching or relevant experience and demonstrated potential to significantly improve student learning.

Teacher Support: To ensure that teachers develop as professionals, we provide them with significant support (six weeks per year, in addition to daily planning time and weekly workshops) and hold them to high standards in three areas: Performance, Pedagogy, and Personal Development (See *Professional Development* for additional details). Performance is assessed through

⁵ See Hattie, J. (2003). *Teachers make a difference: what is the research evidence?*(p. 4). Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.

⁶ See Ouchi, W. G. (2009). *The secret of TSL: The revolutionary discovery that raises school performance*. Simon and Schuster.

student work products, student surveys, and student test score growth. Pedagogy is assessed through frequent administrative and peer classroom observations. Prime will use the Marshall Teacher Evaluation Rubric to build a common vocabulary that helps to define excellent pedagogy. Teachers will also maintain a portfolio of unit and lesson plans and showcase knowledge of key teaching concepts. Teachers will also participate in ongoing Instructional Rounds to share what works across Teaching Practices. Personal development is assessed through twice-yearly 360 reviews from students, peers, and families, as well as a personal reflection process detailing the ways in which teachers demonstrate personal growth.

C. Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention

Grades	Ages	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
6 th	11-13	118	118	118	118	118
7 th	12-14		118	118	118	118
8 th	13-15			118	118	118
Totals		118	236	354	354	354

Note: The table above represents the maximum number of students we will enroll at Prime. Our initial goal is to enroll 108 students in each grade, but we have the ability to add more students, up to 118 per grade.

Application and Lottery: Prime will actively and diversely solicit eligible applicants. Prime applications will be translated, at a minimum, into Spanish, French, Haitian Creole, and Mandarin. As indicated above, Prime will enroll up to 118 6th grade students in the first year and expand to up to 354 students across grades through 8, with up to 118 students in each grade. We chose this enrollment target based on the research that has shown that small schools have increased positive impacts on student learning⁷, which is why the school should not be any larger than 354 students. In the event that there are more applicants than available seats, Prime will conduct a lottery that complies with the requirements of the charter law. Students who are not selected through the lottery will be placed on a waitlist in the order in which they are drawn. Prime intends to backfill seats that are vacated during the school year up until March 1 of a given school year, using this waitlist as the primary means to fill seats. If the waitlist is exhausted, Prime’s Director of Operations will engage in additional recruit efforts to ensure that all seats are filled. Prime intends to backfill seats lost to attrition between school years using a similar process.

Recruitment:

Prime is committed to recruiting a diverse group of students in CSD13 with a variety of learning needs. Over the last four years, there has been a clear trend of reduced 6th grade enrollment relative to 5th grade enrollment, with 215 graduating 5th graders leaving CSD13 in 2014-15. Based on conversations with CSD13 parents, educators, and youth-serving community based organizations, we believe that many of these families would prefer to keep their children in CSD 13 if they had additional options for middle school. Additionally, in the 2014-15 school year, CSD13 had 2,543 applicants for 1,096 charter seats, which means that more than half of all applicants were not admitted due to a lack of available seats. We believe that this data – combined

⁷ See Raywid, M. A. (1998). Small schools: A reform that works. *Educational Leadership*, 55, 34-39.

with conversations with hundreds of parents, over 100 signatures of support from interested families, and a successful engagement effort with the community (see below) – will allow us to meet our recruitment targets.

Local elementary schools: We have made a concerted effort to engage with local elementary schools. We have met with the incoming principal of P.S. 11, who has expressed her support, as well as the PTA President of P.S. 11, who has written us a letter of support (See *Attachment 2*). We have also reached out to P.S. 307, P.S. 133, P.S. 43, P.S. 94, P.S. 270, and P.S. 54.

Local community groups: We have met with the director of youth programs at Ingersoll Community Center, which intends to help us recruit economically disadvantaged families. In addition, we have met with and received support from the Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA (See *Attachment 2* for letter of support) and the Brooklyn Public Library, which has distributed our flyer and offered to host future community outreach meetings. We are also scheduled to meet with Caitlin Brazil, the VP of Strategic Partnerships for CAMBA, which provides employment, youth services, and business development services throughout the communities we intend to serve. We are working with Ekoyo Atkins, a local community organizer and Community Board 2 member, to engage additional community groups in the coming months.

After-School programs: We have received written support from the MLK Strivers After School Program (See *Attachment 2*), the Paul Robeson Freedom School (with whom we have begun collaborating), Prospect Heights Kumon Center (one of our proposed Trustees is the owner and has started recruitment) and have reached out to Brown Memorial Church, Church of St. Matthew and St. Luke's, and Emmanuel Baptist Church to recruit families who are struggling financially and students with special needs. In addition, CSD13 is home to the Auburn Family Residence, a large family shelter that we have contacted; we are eager to support these homeless children and their families. While Prime founding staff will build relationships with CSD13 teachers, administrators, and guidance counselors who serve 5th grade populations, we will actively canvass for students at community events, local places of worship, and public housing complexes. We will ensure that our lottery candidates reflect the mandated enrollment targets, as set by NYSED. We believe that if our candidate pool meets these requirements (89.4% free and reduced priced lunch, 3.8% limited English proficiency, and 14.3% students with disabilities), this will result in a student body that is reflective of such requirements. While we collect lottery applications, we will track our progress of recruiting students in each category and review our status on a monthly basis before our April 1 lottery. If we see that by December we are not meeting the necessary enrollment targets, we will adjust our strategies and rely on our community and district to strengthen our applicant pool.

Free and Reduced Lunch: We have analyzed the data on CSD13 elementary schools with high percentages of students eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch, and as a result we have reached out specifically to PS 133 (100%), PS 44 (96%), PS 93 (94%), and PS 56 (91%). By actively recruiting students from these schools, we hope to meet or exceed the New York State's enrollment target of 87.4%. Prime has met twice (February 2015 and August 2015) with CSD13 Superintendent Barbara Freeman in order to collaboratively determine the best way to build relationships with the principals and guidance counselors of these schools, and we will continue to engage in direct outreach to local community groups such as the Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA, Ingersoll Center, CAMBA, and other groups that serve economically disadvantaged students.

Students with Disabilities: We have completed the same data analysis for special education students, and we have reached out specifically to PS 307 (29%), PS 270 (21%), and PS 54 (19%). One of our Advisory Board members runs a highly-regarded STEM program at P.S. 307, and we hope to leverage this relationship to ensure that we are recruiting students there. We will work with the Brooklyn CSE to evaluate any students who may have disabilities, and ensure that we meet our enrollment target of 13.6%. As stated above, we are working with district administration to determine a strategy to forge relationships with the schools mentioned above and will actively recruit families with students with IEPs. We know that the transition to middle school can be particularly challenging for students with disabilities, and we plan to create a specific transition plan for these students within our student orientation, which runs for nearly two weeks at the start of the school year.

Students with Limited English Proficiency/English Language Learners: While CSD13 does not have a relatively high level of English Language Learners, we will translate and distribute our informational fliers in multiple languages and reach out to the above social service organizations to see if there are recently immigrated families who are interested in attending Prime. Additionally, we will also seek out community organizations that serve families where English is not the language spoken at home, such as CAMBA and Immanuel & First Spanish United Methodist Church, so that Prime can meet its enrollment target of 2.8%.

Retention of Students with Disabilities: The three different learning environments in our model (see above), our PLPs, which normalize individualization, as well as our Special Education certified teaching staff ensures that we will serve and retain students with disabilities. Additionally, we will have several teachers who are certified in various RtI methods, such as Wilson Reading, and all Prime teachers will be trained in RtI strategies during our Summer Institute (See *Professional Development* below). We have built-in structures so that families can preview Teaching Practice and work with the Principal to select a practice with an expertise in supporting students with particular disabilities. Our Prime Journeys curriculum will be particularly useful for students who have suffered from trauma or who need to process complex and challenging emotions in safe and healthy ways. Moreover, our holistic and thoughtful approach to school culture and discipline (See *School Culture & Climate*) and the presence of a Dean of Culture and Support from the start will help to proactively address the challenge that students with disabilities often encounter.

Retention of English Language Learners: Our model will work well to retain English Language Learners (ELL) who need customized support to ensure that they develop their first language while learning to speak, read, write, and listen in English at and above grade level. Depending on the number of ELL students who enroll, we may create a Prime Journeys section specifically geared toward the needs of ELL students. We believe in an English as a Second Language (ESL) model and will capitalize on our teachers with ESL expertise to help all teachers address the needs of and contribute to the retention of our ELL students. Our Board of Trustees has a native Spanish speaker familiar with the needs of ELLs and our Advisory Board has experts in ESL. We will use their expertise to improve our retention strategies as needed.

Retention of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch: Research shows that income level is highly associated with academic performance⁸ and that economically disadvantaged students often experience high levels of anxiety. Our school’s design, with its weekly community meeting (“Prime Time”), close teacher-student relationships, PLPs, culturally relevant pedagogy, and Prime Journeys environment, all help to ensure that students are held to high expectations while given scaffolds they need to address the stress caused by persistent poverty. Our close relationship with both local district and charter elementary schools, and especially their guidance counselors, will ensure that the students who will benefit the most from an education at Prime have the opportunity to apply. We also will partner with local after-school groups, such as the Ingersoll Center, the Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA, local churches, CAMBA, and the MLK Strivers After School Program, to ensure that economically disadvantaged students have a range of supports outside of the regular school day.

Our model recognizes and honors student differences among all students, and our use of PLPs to monitor and support progress, alongside the range of individualization in classrooms, will attract diverse learners and students who may have previously struggled. We believe that this will allow us to recruit, serve and retain at least our target numbers of free and reduced lunch, special education students, and ELLs. For both students with disabilities and ELLs, as well as students generally, our Board will monitor and assess our recruitment and retention rates based on the targets set by the State as well as our own goals. If we are not meeting targets or goals the board will request implementation of action plans from staff, and if necessary, move to amend the charter to create admissions preferences for ELLs and/or for students with disabilities.

D. Community to be Served

We selected CSD13 for three reasons: it is an area whose students are leaving during middle school due to sharp disparities in academic achievement across schools and neighborhoods; our founding team is rooted in and has support from this community; and our model has innovative elements that foster parent engagement and address the whole child, which is a constant demand from many of the families with whom we have spoken.

Prime’s **target population should roughly mirror the demographics of CSD13** (18% Asian, 52% Black, 16% Hispanic, 11% White), but with a specific goal to reach our enrollment targets for underserved students. Our program addresses these particular students through our key design elements (See *Key Design Elements*) that focus on early intervention for students with special needs, an engaging variety of learning environments, and PLPs for every student, developed during a unique intake process that uses surveys and diagnostic assessments to create a fuller picture of each student’s strengths and areas for improvement.

We selected this community based on parents’ expressed desire for high-quality middle school options. As mentioned earlier, 215 graduating 5th graders left the CSD in 2014-15, and we believe that we can reach our anticipated enrollment in part by convincing these parents to stay in-district. In the months prior to submitting this application, the founders of Prime convened families and local residents of CSD13 to discuss why families were leaving and heard clearly that families feel

⁸ Reardon, S. F. (2013). The widening income achievement gap. *Educational Leadership*, 70(8), 10-16.

that there are few great middle school options beyond 5th grade. The data bears this out. In the most recent NYCDOE School Quality Reports, within CSD13 K-8 and middle schools, nearly 70% were either not meeting or approaching School Progress or Student Achievement targets, and 76% were either not meeting or approaching School Environment targets. High-quality options within CSD13, including P.S. 8, Arts & Letters, Community Roots Charter School and Brooklyn Prospect Charter School, all enroll students from their elementary schools, leaving few available seats for rising 6th graders. As NYC Councilwoman Laurie Cumbo noted recently at an event demanding more middle school options, “I think the need for a middle school has been more pronounced than any other conversation I had heard from educators...We’re at a place in history where people want as many choices as possible. It’s not only capacity, it’s also about selection of choice to find a school that’s more tailor made for your child’s interest.”

Additionally, our founders are based in the community. Our primary founder lived in Prospect Heights for many years, and another member of our founding team is a CSD13 parent whose child attends P.S. 11 and is an active member of a larger community that includes parents from P.S. 9, P.S. 20, P.S. 56, Brooklyn Prospect Charter School, Achievement First Endeavor Charter School, and Compass Charter School. We have spent years building relationships with the community that will serve us well upon opening. See *Attachment 2* for additional letters of support from local parents, Assemblyman Walter Mosley, the Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA, the MLK Strivers After-School Program, the P.S. 11 PTA President and Parent Coordinator, and a member of Community Board 2. We also plan to work with local low-performing middle schools to share best practices, and we have met twice with CSD13 Superintendent Barbara Freeman to start fostering a collaborative relationship from which struggling middle schools in the district can benefit. We have also already reached out to several low-performing elementary school principals (P.S. 44, P.S. 93, P.S. 56, P.S. 133, and P.S. 270) so that we can begin to work together to share more about our proposed model.

Finally, **our model will enhance the educational options available to students in CSD13.** In particular, our unique Teaching Practice matching model enables families to choose from among several teaching teams, which grow slowly over time as they demonstrate mastery. We also have an innovative approach to personal development and real-world learning through our Prime Journeys and Prime Studio experiences. In particular, parents in this community told us at meetings last January and February that they were interested in middle schools that would leverage the wealth of community resources to help motivate their children toward career goals, as well as schools that would tell parents exactly where their children needed support, where they were thriving, and what they needed to do to make sure their children were ready for high school and beyond. Prime’s model addresses these concerns.

The data presented above regarding families who are leaving CSD13, in addition to hundreds of conversations, signatures of support (well over 100), letters of support, and survey responses we have received, lead us to believe that there is strong demand for a quality middle school option with our program elements and that we will meet our enrollment targets.

E. Public Outreach

We have informed the community about Prime, including the intended general location, the grades to be served, the target student population, and a description of our program. We held

three public community meetings with public notice; met with representatives of the local Congressman, State Assemblyman, and City Councilwoman; spoke before Community Board 2; received letters of support from three local non-profits; distributed flyers throughout the community; met with the incoming principal and PTA President of P.S. 11; contacted the principals of several other local elementary schools; and met with hundreds of parents at various community events.

In January 2015, Prime founders attended P.S. 11's Readathon Celebration, Compass Charter School's Book Fair, and Congressman Hakeem Jeffries' State of the District Address, where they discussed Prime and collected over 20 signatures of support from interested families. We also talked directly with NY State Assemblyman Walter Mosley, himself a P.S. 11 parent, who acknowledged a middle school crisis in CSD 13 and expressed interest in our model.

On February 27, we held a community meeting at Bija, a local preschool, publicized through our growing Facebook page, our website, and through informal community leaders. On February 28 we met with P.S. 11's incoming Principal Abidemi Hope to discuss our curricular and personal development plans for Prime students. We attended P.S. 11's Saturday Academy (February 28) and met with 20 families, Brooklyn Museum's First Saturday and met with about 15 families, and Councilwoman Laurie Cumbo's State of the 35th District Address (March 1), where we met with around 30 families, including the presidents of the parent associations for both P.S. 11 and P.S. 9. On March 9, Prime founders attended the Fort Greene Association's General Public Meeting for Parents of Young Children at Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church to discuss Prime. On April 18, we held our third public Community Meeting. On June 21, we met with Community Board 2 to discuss our plans for Prime and to answer any questions or concerns. In addition, on July 22 we met with Samantha Johnson, a youth director of the local Ingersoll Center, who is also a member of Community Board 2. On July 28, we held a fourth public Community Meeting, with attendance from more than 20 local parents and residents, as well as a representative from the offices of Councilwoman Laurie Cumbo and State Assemblyman Walter Mosley. We also met with local community leaders: On July 27, we met with Rodney Deas, founder of the Paul Robeson Freedom School, who expressed support for our work, as well as Renee Mintz, Director of the MLK Strivers After School Program. (See *Attachment 2*). Ms. Mintz, a longtime Brooklyn educator, attended our July 28 meeting and expressed support for our plans and interest in a partnership. We have also received support from the Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA (see *Attachment 2*), Brown Memorial Church, and the Brooklyn Public Library's CSD13 branch, which distributed our flyer.

Public Notice: Prime publicized the February, April, and July meetings widely: In early February, we distributed a press release to The Brooklyn Reader and The New York Times' The Local blog. In March, we distributed a Public Notice to The Brooklyn Reader, The New York Times' The Local blog, and Fort Greene Focus announcing our April public meeting. We also put up flyers for this meeting, in addition to spreading the word through one of our Board members, who owns a local Kumon Center. We did the same for our July public meeting, in addition to posting on the calendar of Fort Greene Focus and flyering around the community. We were also on the public agenda for the June 21 Community Board 2 meeting. In addition to our meetings, community members can provide input through our website, which has garnered several emails, as well as our Facebook page, which has garnered almost 250 "Likes."

Submission of Comments: We collected comments at each of our public meetings, through a Google survey we distributed this summer, as well as through our website and Facebook page. Parents have told us that want a school where they can have a clear picture of where their child is, what he or she still needs to learn, and what the teacher’s aspirations are for the child. Parents also expressed that they wanted to be authentically involved in their child’s school and have real decision-making power. **We used this feedback to modify our program description and to ensure that parents can receive both interim and quarterly progress reports on their students’ progress.** At another public meeting, we heard that parents were excited about the opportunity for their children to pursue community-based projects with local businesses. In particular, parents were excited about our plan to address students’ social-emotional needs through Prime Journeys. Parents did express some concern about a potential co-location in an already crowded building, and **as a result we met with CPEX, a real estate firm, to help us identify potential private space.** We have also written many individual emails to address the unique concerns of several parents, particularly parents whose children have learning disabilities.

District Leadership Outreach: We have engaged CSD13 leadership directly in an attempt to forge a strong partnership between our school and the district in the event that Prime is approved. In March, we met with CSD13 Superintendent Barbara Freeman, who shared concerns about a shortage of available seats for rising sixth graders within the district and gave us her blessing to speak directly with local school administrators and guidance counselors if we are approved to open in the fall of 2016 (See *Attachment 2*). We met with Superintendent Freeman again on August 4.

Ongoing Process of Engagement: Going forward, we plan to hold parent focus groups every 4-6 weeks in order to update parents on our progress and get suggestions for how to modify or enhance our approach. We have already received support from the Brooklyn Public Library on Washington Avenue, which has offered to host these meetings going forward. We applied for a grant that will allow us to hire community organizers to help engage parents as leaders in this work. We also publish a monthly email newsletter and post regularly to our Facebook page. We have distributed a comprehensive community survey to collect data and input about particular family needs and preferences around potential school facilities, curricula, and other needs. Finally, members of Prime’s Advisory Board, which includes CSD13 parents, will participate in teacher interviews and serve on a hiring committee as we interview new staff members.

F. Programmatic and Fiscal Impact

Programmatic Impact: There are currently no district, charter, or private schools using the Prime model of flexible Teaching Practices that can grow over time, enabling parents to become an integral part of teacher selection through a unique student matriculation process. We also believe our focus on new teacher roles and career ladders, combined with our emphasis on developing experiential expertise through real-world learning, is unique to the CSD13 middle school landscape. We do not foresee any adverse impact on any local charter, district, or private schools.

We also intend to partner with local charter and district schools to share our lessons. We have met with staff from P.S. 11, P.S. 9, and Compass Charter School, and we have spoken with the leaders of Unity Prep Charter School and Brooklyn Prospect Charter School in order to forge strong

relationships. In addition, we have reached out to the principals of P.S. 9, 11, 20, and 56 in order to ensure that we are forming close relationships with district schools as early as possible.

There is clearly a need and a desire for additional high-quality options within CSD13. In the 2014-15 school year, CSD13 had 2,543 applicants for 1,096 charter seats, which means that more than half of all applicants were not admitted due to a lack of available seats. Our hope is that Prime can help close this gap so that more families are able to send their children to their first choice school, by offering seats and by partnering with district and charter middle schools within the district to strengthen the entire cohort through a professional learning community.

Fiscal Impact: For the 2014-15 school year, the NYCDOE’s total operating budget is \$20.6 billion. Our first year operating budget is approximately \$2.47 million, representing 0.012% of the total DOE budget. Prime will thus have a minimal impact on the NYCDOE’s budget and those of private schools, with whom we are not competing for students.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Prime Expenditures	\$2,344,855	\$3,679,472	\$5,694,672	5,847,137	6,067,061
NYCDOE	\$20.6	\$20.6	\$20.6	\$20.6	\$20.6
Expenditures	billion	billion	billion	billion	billion
Prime % of Total Budget	.01%	.02%	.03%	.03%	.03%

II. EDUCATIONAL PLAN

A. Achievement Goals

At Prime, we will make all decisions based on clear evidence of what will have the greatest impact on student learning. We believe that setting ambitious SMART (specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, and time-bound) goals is a critical way for every member of the community to take responsibility for ensuring that all students graduate from Prime ready for success in high school and beyond. These goals also help to ensure that teachers, school leadership, and the Board of Trustees understand where we can improve so that we can quickly adjust our resources and approaches to achieve the highest possible level of academic achievement.

Goal 1: Prime Public Charter School students will demonstrate knowledge of English language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science at or above grade level standards, as indicated by the Common Core State Standards.

Metric 1: The Median Adjusted Growth Percentile for Prime students will be at least 70% in English and 80% in Mathematics.⁹

Metric 2: The percentage of Prime’s students scoring at a Level 3 or higher on NYS exams in ELA and math will be at least 10% higher than the district average for middle schools, and we will strive to exceed that goal.

Metric 3: Prime will meet or exceed targets for student achievement as set out by the NYCDOE School Quality Guide.

⁹ As compared to 63.4% for ELA, citywide, and 61.3% for math, citywide.

Metric 4: 100% of students will show growth in English and math through the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress or Brigance Assessment of Basic Skills.

Goal 2: Prime Public Charter School will make Adequate Yearly Progress.

Metric 1: Under New York State’s NCLB accountability plan, Prime will be designated as in “Good Standing.”

Metric 2: The school’s Performance Index will meet the Annual Measurable Objectives set by the state in English language arts and mathematics for all groups.

Goal 3: Prime students will demonstrate healthy habits of mind and body in ways that allow them to make positive contributions to their community.

Metric 1: All students will complete and present a yearly personal development portfolio that captures their growth and strongest work in categories of “meets” or “exceeds” across all subject areas.

Metric 2: Average daily attendance will be 95% or higher as recorded by the NYC DOE’s data system, Automate the Schools (ATS).

Metric 3: Student year-to-year retention rate will be 93% or higher as recorded by ATS (excluding students who leave Prime due to travel hardships caused by moving.)

Goal 4: All Prime students will gain expertise in a creative or career-driven passion of their choice, resulting in students being able to demonstrate learning, insights, and skills related to their Prime Studio work.

Metric 1: All students will identify at least two mentors in the surrounding community during their academic career at Prime.

Metric 2: All students will demonstrate grade-level expertise in at least three Prime Studio offerings (e.g. Arts & Culture) per year in 6th grade, two in 7th grade, and one in 8th grade through a learning exhibition that meets or exceeds “proficiency” according to a grade-by-grade school-wide rubric.

The expectations for and specificity of student expertise increase over the three years at Prime.

Metric 3: In 8th grade, all students will work in an apprenticeship for at least one semester and present their work during a final exhibition

B. School Schedule and Calendar

Schedule and Calendar Basics: For a full calendar and several examples of student and Teacher Practice schedules, please see *Attachment 3A* and *3B*. Below we offer an overall description of how we hope to extend the school day and year while making both more flexible, personalized, and varied. To ensure that students, and particularly students who come in below grade level, have sufficient learning time and minimal summer learning loss, Prime is in session for at least 190 days per year, excluding our orientation. We generally follow the New York City Department of Education calendar (NYCDOE), but our school year extends into July and orientation starts in late August. Within those 190 days, teachers participate in the equivalent of ten full days of professional development, including four half-days devoted to analyzing student data and adjusting student PLPs and interventions. In addition, teachers participate in four weeks of professional development each summer, for a total of six weeks of professional development each year.

Prime’s academic day will be Monday to Friday from 8:15 a.m. (check-in) to 4:25 p.m. with early dismissal on Wednesday to enable teacher professional development. On a typical day, Prime will

offer approximately 5 hours of Prime Core (core academics), 50 minutes of Prime Journeys (personal development), and 90 minutes of Prime Studio (experiential community-based learning), in addition to physical education three times per week and daily lunch. Students spend at least 200 minutes in each core content area (See *Attachment 3A*), with extra time in math (typically 320 minutes per week) to ensure appropriate time for remediation/enrichment, and ELA (typically 370 minutes per week) to ensure adequate time for independent reading and writing. In addition, Prime will stay open after school three days per week until 6:00 p.m. to provide a community resource for parents who want their students to have a safe and respectful environment after most middle schools are closed for the day. We plan to partner with non-profits that have existing funding for this, which is why these expenses do not appear in our budget. If this is not possible, we will adjust our budget as needed to ensure an after-school program, although it may be more limited in the first year.

As mentioned above, students at Prime are matched to one of three Teaching Practices, and each Practice has a somewhat different schedule to account for the particular needs of students and staff. In *Attachment 3A* we have given a single example of a student schedule, a 6th grade Prime Core STEM teacher schedule, and a Prime Specialist Teacher schedule. Within each Teaching Practice team, one teacher will generally have dual-certification in special education. Prime also has a special education teacher not tied to any Practice, whose sole role is to provide students with IEPs with the instruction that is required according to that IEP. One of our Prime Studio Specialists will have ESL certification and can support any students who may be English Language Learners. Our Teaching Practice model, in which teachers know a smaller group of students whom they teach together, enables easy communication around particular student needs and thus will allow us to pull out small groups, tutor one-on-one, or otherwise support students who may need additional support throughout the day. In addition to the above, our whole community meets together for a weekly community session called “Prime Time” where we discuss and celebrate our community’s common values, share community announcements, and engage in silent meditation and focused breathing or physical activity.

Teacher Time: On average, Prime Core teachers within each Teaching Practice teach or co-teach for approximately 5 hours per day, teach a Prime Journeys class for 50 minutes (aside from Wednesdays when it is 35 minutes), plan for 90 minutes, and break for 60 minutes. See *Attachment 3A*, where we have modified our teacher and student schedule to ensure sufficient time in each core area based on feedback from NYSED. Our Prime Studio Specialists generally push-in to a Prime Core class or plan for 120 minutes, directly teach a 90-minute Studio class, co-plan for 90 minutes, and break for 60 minutes. In our attached example, the Specialist also teaches physical education to all students in a grade. The Specialists have a slightly reduced teaching load and thus earn somewhat less than the Prime Core teachers.

All teachers and specialists also have a weekly Wednesday 90-minute professional development workshop. Teachers work in teams that flexibly manage their instructional time to meet the needs of every student. Teachers will have the autonomy to adjust schedules and configurations within their Practice based on insights into student need gained through data analysis.

C. Curriculum & Instruction

Our academic program is grounded in a strong curriculum that skilled teachers can adapt as needed; in response to feedback from NYSED, we have included a foundational curriculum for each subject area below, subject to change as improved curricula are identified. Teachers study this foundational curriculum but adapt it to meet the particular needs and interests of their students. The Principal is responsible for coaching teachers in the refinement of unit and lesson plans based on this curricular framework. Teachers will work over the summer, prior to the school year (see *Professional Development*) to study the existing curricular frameworks and develop appropriate thematic projects based on Common Core Learning Standards and existing curriculum. Teachers will use the *Understanding By Design* (Wiggins 1998) planning approach to ensure that all curricular units help students achieve “enduring understandings” that increase retention and transfer. The staff will use the Collaborative Inquiry Process (see *Professional Development*) to monitor the success of Learning Outcomes and interim assessment data to make necessary curricular changes.

In order to support our teachers to be successful in tailoring instructional methods, we have identified a set of instructional frameworks that have been shown to be effective with diverse student populations and that align with our educational vision. These frameworks are described below. Teachers will have access to guiding materials and training in each.

Our Principal will serve as the instructional leader at Prime. S/he will spend most of her or his time observing classrooms, providing feedback to teachers, analyzing evidence of student learning across Practices, and developing a set of supports that allows Practices to share what works across the school and gain access to outside expertise when necessary. The Principal will also coach teachers in tailoring research-based and data-driven curricula¹⁰ and teaching strategies that ensure that we identify each student’s needs. At Prime, in order to ensure high levels of rigor and appropriate progress, we use the Response to Intervention (RtI) model to identify at-risk students and provide them with targeted support. We follow the RtI model of a multi-tiered approach: We administer baseline and diagnostic assessments to all students before the first day of school, in order to best match them to Teaching Practices that will support their needs (see *Assessment*, below). Students who qualify for Tier II RtI supports in English or math will receive them in a small group pull-out model, while students requiring Tier III support will receive services in a one-on-one pull out setting with a certified RtI teacher. Student progress is monitored closely in order to assess the learning rate and level of performance of each RtI student, and Prime teachers make decisions about the frequency and duration of interventions, based on individual student progress. Below we show the frameworks that we will use in each core subject area, including RtI strategies for Math and English Language Arts:

English Language Arts (ELA): For the study of English, teachers will follow the EngageNY curriculum modules for middle school, as written by teachers and published through Expeditionary Learning. The Expeditionary Learning modules will be at the heart of the teaching of English Language Arts, and Prime will ensure that all students participate in all modules of study, over the course of three years. The Expeditionary Learning modules offer a Common Core-aligned balance of nonfiction and fiction and multiple styles of writing under various conditions

¹⁰ Prime will use *Leverage Leadership* (Bambrick-Santoyo 2012), which has been used at many highly successful CMOs such as Uncommon, to provide a framework for the principal’s observations and teachers’ data cycle.

that address the Common Core instructional shifts. In addition, one of the reasons we chose this curriculum is because the philosophy behind Expeditionary Learning performance tasks lends itself to our interdisciplinary approach to instruction and a project-based approach to assessment. While each Teaching Practice will have its own unique “take” on how these modules are implemented, using this curriculum ensures that instruction is aligned to college- and career-ready standards. For example, Teaching Practices may opt to extend the time spent on specific lessons or units, create lesson-specific scaffolds to support student learning, or develop lesson or unit-specific extensions that further enrich student learning. Additionally, teachers will have the opportunity to teach students the Expeditionary Learning modules in flexible numbers, based on student need; for example, some students will best benefit from reading closely with a teacher guiding them, while others will benefit from having their writing edited collectively, by peers, in a large group.

ELA Instructional Methods:

- **Discovery-Based Lessons:** Teaching Practices begin these types of lessons with a provocative question, problem or experience. Students then take ownership of learning and are encouraged make sense of the issue at hand, thus building key skills, vocabulary, and conceptual understandings.
- **Protocol-Based Lessons:** Teaching Practices use multi-step protocols as a portion of a lesson or as the entire lesson. These protocols, such as critique sessions and Socratic seminar, are formats for discussion that increase the quality of classroom discourse.
- **The Workshop Model:** Teaching Practices use the workshop model to introduce and directly teach necessary skills, concepts, and strategies that help students master specific Common Core Learning Standards.
- **Other formats such as labs, work sessions, book clubs, interactive video sessions, asynchronous learning opportunities, or lecture:** Teaching Practices will choose specific instructional methods depending on whether they are facilitating students in applying knowledge and skills to tasks or if content knowledge is the focus of the lesson.
- **Flexible Student-to-Teacher Ratios:** Teaching Practices are configured to allow for students and teachers to work in groupings that best meet the needs of the learners.

ELA Instructional Materials:

- **Engage NY/Expeditionary Learning:** This is a curriculum written for teachers by teachers that is centered around rich content through complex texts (as opposed to excerpted literature) and the Common Core shifts. The Expeditionary Learning curriculum focuses on effective literacy instruction through the use of informational and literary texts while embedding opportunities for students to use evidence, such as doing research for a real and relevant purpose. The Expeditionary Learning curriculum is an ideal fit for Prime’s core values, as its performance tasks ask students to write, critique their peers’ writing, and share their final writing with an authentic audience.
- **Hochman Writing:** The Hochman Writing Method is a series of structured, sequential, evidence-based instructional strategies which, coupled with professional development, builds teachers’ capacity to deliver comprehensive writing instruction through a series of highly effective writing strategies that can be embedded into every subject area. The Hochman

Method of Writing has been proven to increase students' writing abilities resulting in higher test scores in English Language Arts.¹¹

- ELA RtI Supports:
 - *Just Words*: Just Words is based on the research-validated Wilson Reading System that is a multi-sensory decoding and spelling program that best address students who have word-level deficits. Exposure to the Just Words sequence assists students in making significant notable gains with phonetically regular reading and spelling skills and is especially helpful for students who are multiple years behind their peers in reading.
 - *Phonics Blitz and Phonics Boost*: Blitz and Boost are two methods for rapidly accelerating students' reading abilities. Prime will use this option to help students learn to read in lieu of the Just Words program, depending on internal baseline results.

Mathematics: For the study of math, students will study the Common Core Learning Standards as structured by the Eureka Math, the basis of the EngageNY curriculum. Unlike other curricula, Eureka Math was designed specifically for the CCLS rather than merely aligned to them after-the-fact. The Eureka curriculum will be the anchor of our math program because of its real-world approach that asks students to explain their reasoning, do math in their head, and develop a deeper conceptual understanding of mathematical concepts. The curriculum also provides lessons that reflect the Common Core instructional shifts. For example, in a 6th grade unit on ratios, students are encouraged to come up with their own ratio examples, to communicate their reasoning and answers in both small and large groups, and to transfer their knowledge of ratios to novel situations. In addition, students engage with manipulatives and graphic organizers that help to make abstract mathematical reasoning more tangible. This kind of multi-modality learning is also particularly effective for students with special needs. Teaching Practices will anchor their work in these units but can supplement the curriculum with a number of outside resources.

We have chosen this curriculum based in part on the thorough report by Ed Reports, which analyzed 11 different math curricula for middle school.¹² The group analyzed each curriculum in terms of a) focus and coherence b) rigor and math practices and c) usability. Across the board, Eureka surpassed every other curriculum we examined in its alignment to the Common Core Standards. We intend to employ regular formative assessment through our units to help our Teaching Practices align their targeted intervention and scaffolded support, and we intend to use a number of assessment resources from the Shell Center for this work. Teachers can supplement this curriculum with additional problems and mentoring from the Math Forum at Drexel University. During the unit students will experience a variety of instructional methods including group work, classroom discussion, problem based learning, blended learning, and independent work. For 8th grade students who are ready for high school math, Prime will offer them a full year of coursework in 9th grade Integrated Algebra that culminates in the Integrated Algebra Regents.

Math Instructional Methods:

- **Problem-Based Learning:** Teaching Practices will begin most lessons by working on a single problem or question that requires students to think about a deep math topic. These problems

¹¹ See Tyre, P. (2012). The Writing Revolution. *The Atlantic Monthly*, 310(3), 96-101.

¹² See <http://www.edreports.org/reports/compare.html?level=secondary>

have multiple entry points and thus can be approached by students with a variety of different learning styles. By exploring these problems regularly, students gain confidence and resilience.

- **Group or Partner Work:** It is important that students are comfortable discussing their reasoning and building off of their understandings, so group or partner work will be a key part of our math classes. Students will be given group work tasks, as provided by the curriculum or teacher-made tasks, which are informed by Strength in Numbers by Ilana Horn.
- **Classroom Discussion:** Students will frequently get an opportunity to share and discuss mathematics with the whole class, or in smaller groups, as moderated by a teacher. The Socratic method of this style of teaching is to help students understand the kind of academic discourse that is valued in school, and in college.
- **Other formats such as station rotation, individual work sessions, interactive video sessions, asynchronous blended learning opportunities, or project work:** Teaching Practices will choose specific instructional methods depending on whether the focus of the lesson is facilitating students in applying knowledge and skills to tasks, demonstrating the mathematical practices, or mastering content knowledge.
- **Flexible Student-to-Teacher Ratios:** Teaching Practices are configured to allow for students and teachers to work in groupings that best meet the needs of the learners.

Math Instructional Materials:

- **EngageNY:** The EngageNY modules will be used by the Teacher Practices to supplement their lessons and provide well-structured and aligned problems through which the teachers can provide enrichment and additional support for individual students and selected small groups.
- **Online Adaptive Learning:** We plan to provide our students with individualized mathematics instruction for enrichment using programs that provide adaptive learning, such as Dream Box or Aleks. The goals for these programs are to develop in students a habit of independent learning, exploration, and skill building while gaining facility with computers.
- **Shell Center Assessments:** The math assessments at Shell Center are well-documented tasks, lessons, and multi-day mini-projects that give information about what content student know, and what kinds of mathematical practices they can demonstrate. Prime’s Teaching Practices can use these assessments to inform student grouping, interventions, and curricular decisions.
- **Math RtI Supports:**
 - **Do The Math Now!** This intervention program reinforces foundational concepts that are critical for algebra and high order math and specifically gives students extensive practice with in order to build fluency with basic number and operation skills.
 - **ALEKS and DreamBox** will be used to support students requiring Tier II RtI support as both programs can adapt to support students in a small group setting.

Social Studies: Prime will follow the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) social studies scope and sequence and use that as the roadmap for curriculum, until full units and lessons become available in 2015. The current scope and sequence follows ten unifying themes which are used as lenses through which students explore a coherent sequence of historical events, ranging from “individual development and cultural identity” to “global connections and exchange.” The NYC DOE scope and sequence focuses on a yearlong study of the ancient Eastern Hemisphere in sixth grade and a two-year study of the United States, with an emphasis on New York History, in seventh and eighth grades. As a supplement, Prime will use unit and lesson plans

from Facing History and Ourselves and History Alive!, which correspond to the NYCDOE's roadmap. Throughout students' social studies experiences, Teaching Practices will embed Common Core aligned-shifts, ensuring that students continue to develop habits that reinforce learning, such as close readings and argument writing.

Social Studies Instructional Methods:

- **Experiential Exercises:** Teaching Practices can choose to incorporate experiential exercises that draw on intrapersonal and body-kinesthetic intelligence and allows students to feel the drama of history.
- **Writing for Understanding:** Teaching Practices build students' writing skills and stamina by crafting historical experiences; these experiences become springboards for writing about history.
- **Skill Builder Exercises:** Teaching Practices may group students into pairs or small groups to work collaboratively to complete fast-paced, skill-oriented tasks and then receive immediate feedback from teachers.
- **Small group work:** Teaching Practices can choose to group students to work on collective responses or to problem solve around a specific task. This promotes the use of interpersonal skills and has student practices their critical thinking skills.

Social Studies Instructional Materials:

- **Facing History and Ourselves:** The Facing History program integrates high-interest content and rigorous inquiry that is guided by insights and questions from teachers and students. Through Facing History, history and literature are combined with opportunities for ethical decision-making, the promotion of respect for the rights of others whose views differ, and an awareness of the danger of discrimination. At the heart of the curriculum students explore the complexities of world history to help them better comprehend the range of human behavior; this enables students to reflect on the choices they confront today and consider how they can make a difference in their world.
- **History Alive!:** History Alive! is a comprehensive social studies curriculum that is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standard and incorporates various learning activities that appeal to different modes of learning. History Alive! offers lessons in print as well as asynchronous learning opportunities that are modified to meet the needs of various learners.
- **Hochman Writing:** Using the Hochman Method of Writing, students in social studies frequently engage in written responses to texts, such as summaries and notes, and answering questions about texts in writing. This constant emphasis on writing and thinking allows students to improve in their abilities to turn words into meaningful sentences and coherent pieces of writing.

Science: For the study of science, Teaching Practices will follow the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) as a roadmap for student performance. As the NGSS emphasizes a deeper understanding and application of content, Teaching Practices will use units and lessons developed by Project-Based Inquiry Science and JASON Learning that match NGSS' Disciplinary Core Ideas relating to life, earth/space, and physical sciences. Prime will implement the National Geographic JASON Curricula to foster a deeper understanding of science concepts through exploration,

project based learning and to meet the educational needs of a diverse student population. The JASON curricula utilize real scientific problems, faced by real scientists, and challenges students to demonstrate mastery of content in many different formats. This curriculum also contains interactive web-based learning activities as well as in class hands on lab activities. The entire curriculum is scaffolded so that it can support Prime's goal of having students demonstrate mastery at or above grade level as indicated by the NYS Intermediate Level Science Core Curriculum and the NGSS. Additionally, in 8th grade, Prime will offer students a full year of coursework and labs in Living Environment that will culminate in the Living Environment Regents.

Science Instructional Methods:

- **Project-Based Learning:** Students work to answer a 'big question' or 'big challenge' through high-interest, relevant, and sequenced learning experiences that provide hands on opportunities for students to develop long-term scientific understandings while building their problem-solving and critical thinking skills.
- **Active Learning:** In Prime's science classes, students will think and act like scientists. While developing a knowledge base, students have the opportunity to design investigations that generate data, are asked to evaluate the authenticity of their data, interpret the data to make claims and justify the claims they make. They are participating in opportunities that require them to observe like scientists and develop explanations. Through active learning, students practice collaborating and communicating, while learning through exploration and discovery.
- **Engineering Design Model:** Teaching Practices focus on providing students with rich opportunities to innovate, improve, and problem solve. Teaching Practices guide students through research, brainstorming, prototyping, testing, data analysis, and documentation. Students have the opportunity to troubleshoot, revise their designs, and retest while thinking creatively and analytically.

Science Instructional Materials:

- **Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS):** NGSS is a set of standards that help middle school students develop deep understanding of a wide range of topics, such as in Earth and space science, life science, and physical science. These standards build upon science concepts from elementary school while incorporating more advanced content, practices, and themes.
- **Project-Based Inquiry Science:** This STEM-based curriculum provided hands-on learning experiences for students through inquiry activities that are embedded throughout each unit. Project-based Inquiry Science is fully aligned to NGSS's Disciplinary Core Ideas and incorporates the latest research on how students learn.

Personal Development Curriculum (Prime Journeys): Prime's Personal Development curriculum, used in Prime Journeys, creates a safe time and space for our adolescent students to learn essential skills that help them better understand, cope with, navigate, and ultimately help them feel more secure and comfortable about the world in which they live. We plan to use Power Tools' curriculum (www.powertoolsforprogress.org) as well as training from Big Picture Learning to help advise us on our Prime Journeys curriculum. Specifically, Prime has consulted with Nina Dibner, the founder of Power Tools LLC (and a former employee of Engaging Schools), who has decades of experience working with schools, including Brooklyn charter middle schools, to create powerful

advisory models that increase student engagement, reduce behavior issues, and provide students with safe spaces to exercise leadership and self-reflection.

PowerTools' curriculum is tailored to the school but based on tools used by Engaging Schools, whose students have reported improved attendance, course completion rates, and lower rates of disciplinary referrals and detentions. We plan to train all of our teachers on the PowerTools advisory model. Once trained, teachers will guide students in strategies for self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. Students participate in exercises that foster empathy, provide skills for conflict resolution and peer mediation, and develop respect for diversity and divergent points of view. Some groups may be gender-specific, age specific, and there may be a group for students who are questioning and exploring their sexuality and identity. However students are matched, they work in small groups of 12-16 students with an adult who acts as a coach and builds meaningful relationships with his or her cohort of students.

Prime Studio Curriculum: Prime Studio provides an environment in which students will gradually gain expertise in an area of their choice. In order to facilitate this, students go through a three-year sequence of exposure, exploration, and expertise. When we recruit Prime Studio Specialists, we will ask them to present a basic "exposure" curriculum outline for Prime Studio in one of three areas (Arts & Culture; Design & Engineering; or Health & Fitness), and hired teachers will expand on this curriculum during our Summer Institute with support from Big Picture Learning and community partners who co-develop authentic learning modules.

Exposure: In 6th grade, students rotate through three wide areas of study: arts and culture; design and engineering; and health and fitness. Students do this in two-week cycles, such that every six weeks students complete one round each from each of these three areas. By the end of the school year, students will have exposure to six different topics within each of these three areas. For example, students may complete an architecture unit within "design and engineering" as well as a graphic design unit where they learn to use PhotoShop and present their finished product.

Exploration: In 7th grade, the cycles become longer, and students begin to explore two of these areas in more depth. Students rotate through six-week cycles, such that every 12 weeks students complete one round from each area. By the end of 7th grade, students will have explored three longer units in two areas they choose. In 7th grade, students begin to leave the building to work on the site of a local organization for which they will produce a significant work product. Students in 7th grade will complete three exhibitions of their work throughout the year, and by the end of the year they will choose a single area of focus for 8th grade.

Expertise: In 8th grade, students focus on a single topic for a semester. They engage in an 18-week project in which they consult or apprentice with a local community organization. Students spend significant time working at the site, gaining real expertise in a project that they can present to the community during an end-of-semester exhibition. Students have two opportunities - one per semester - to demonstrate high levels of competency through their project. Students who demonstrate such expertise first semester can do a second project second semester or can become peer tutors, while students whose work needs improvement can receive significant coaching and feedback and present in the spring in order to graduate. Based on the work at Big Picture Learning, we will assess Prime Studio work in terms of a) effort and engagement b) professionalism

c) self-reflection and career awareness d) workplace knowledge and skill development e) organization and documentation.

D. Assessment System

Our assessment system is directly aligned to our mission of a) mastery of college- and career-ready standards b) demonstration of healthy habits of mind and body and c) expertise in a creative or career-driven passion. We thus focus on three broad areas of assessment: academics and critical thinking; personal development resulting in healthy habits of mind and body; and exhibitions of expertise on student-driven projects. For each assessment area, we use diagnostic, formative, interim, and summative assessments, described in the table below. Note the variety of ways that we communicate this data to parents, teachers, and students.

	Mastery of College- and Career-Ready Standards (Prime Core)	Healthy Habits of Mind and Body (Prime Journeys)	Creative Real-World Expertise (Prime Studio)
Diagnostic	NWEA Assessments	Student Self-Reflections; Surveys on Self-Regulation, Motivation, and	Renzulli Interest Surveys; Project Launch assessments
Formative	Online adaptive quizzes; teacher questioning; student participation; exit slips	Teacher questioning; student participation; reflective journals; exit slips	Student participation assessment; Peer and teacher review protocols; benchmark progress reflections and assessments; exit slips
Interim	NWEA assessments; mid-module EngageNY assessments	Progress Reports; Student-led conferences; journals and surveys	Progress Reports; student-led conferences; surveys
Summative	NYS assessments; exhibitions of learning	Report Cards; Student portfolios; journals and surveys; end-of-year conference	Exhibitions of student work graded according to schoolwide rubric
Communication Methods for Parents & Students	Progress Reports (Interim); Report Cards (Summative); Prime Learning Management System (all); student-led conferences (formative; interim); school-wide exhibitions	Progress Reports; Report Cards; Prime Learning Management System; student-led conferences;	Progress Reports; Report Cards; School-wide exhibitions; Prime Learning Management System

Using Assessments to Drive Improvement: Based on community meeting feedback, parents have told us that they want “frequent access to what my child still needs to learn to be on grade level and what she needs to do to go beyond that.” Using this feedback, we have developed a robust assessment system that will inform students and families about student progress in easily accessible ways. Families will have easy access to student progress and assessment results via the Prime Learning Management System. Prime students will use assessment results to help them to articulate their academic strengths and weakness and help drive self-advocacy around their education. The Principal will use Wednesday PD sessions to coach teachers in using multiple types of assessment data to modify existing curriculum, tailor lessons, and group students. In addition, two half-days per semester will be “data days” (See *Attachment 3b*) dedicated to the use of interim

assessment data, at the class, grade, and school levels, to adjust unit pacing, determine intervention plans for each student, and evaluate existing curricula. Additionally, the Board of Trustees will use overall student assessment data to evaluate the performance of the school leader, evaluate the effectiveness existing school policies and progress toward Prime goals.

Diagnostic Assessment: Students entering Prime School will participate in a thorough diagnostic process. Students will participate in multiple assessments, such as the Northwest Evaluation Association's (NWEA) Common Core-aligned Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) for math, reading, and language use. Prime has chosen MAP because it is a short, adaptive, online assessment that is easy to administer. The results of MAP are nationally normed, so teachers are able to access rich comparative data while seeing if students are on track for grade level proficiency. Additionally, Prime will administer a learning styles assessment, a personal interests survey, and a measure of student self-regulation and motivation. This data, coupled with information gained through an intake interview process with staff and the Principal, and the student's previous grades and state exam results, Prime develops a holistic portrait of the student, and that student is matched, with input from the family, to a Teaching Practice that will best support that child. For instance, a student who scores at grade level for math but well below grade level for reading may be matched to the Teaching Practice that has one teacher who is an expert in creating challenging math extensions alongside a Wilson-reading trained teacher, who will then use all existing data on the students to build a PLP. Additionally, this student data will allow Prime to be responsive when scheduling students with RtI services.

Formative Assessment: Since formative assessment is used to improve instruction immediately and provide just-in-time feedback for teachers on their instruction, it is essential that teachers in all three learning environments become experts in this method of assessment. Teachers will use a variety of formative assessments, such as exit slips, student observations, graphic organizers, questioning strategies, and peer and self-assessment, to check for understanding.

Interim Assessment: The NWEA MAP assessment will be given to students three times throughout the year. MAP assessments are online, untimed exams that we will administer to ensure both teachers and families have real-time reporting of how their children are performing, relative to state and grade level standards. The rich and valuable data that is captured from the MAP assessment, such as students' performance levels across Common Core Learning Standards as compare to the nation, is analyzed by the Principal and teachers and acts as a road map for their Teaching Practices; it drives the necessary instructional modifications and extensions to curriculum, unit tasks, and lesson plans to ensure that all students are receiving individualized instruction, as per their PLPs, and are making academic progress. The EngageNY curricula in ELA and math also often have mid-module and end-of-module assessments that teachers can use to modify instruction. The combination of pre-made, teacher-made, and MAP assessments will give teachers a wealth of data to inform their instruction. However, should a teacher need to gain more information about a specific student's current level on a specific skill, the teacher will consult with the Principal and they will make a decision as to administer a portion of the Brigance Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills (CIBS II). In Prime Journeys, student journals and student-led conferences will provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their personal

growth, and in Prime Studio, a peer and teacher review process, in addition to student reflections, will be used to inform both the teacher and the student about needed mid-course corrections.

Summative Assessment: Prime will use performance-based assessments (PBA) at the end of every unit of study. Teaching Practices and Studio Specialists will use existing tasks from our curricula or, if needed, develop additional tasks that showcase learning through a variety of methods that are aligned to Common-Core Learning Standards. Our curriculum will be aligned to Common Core “learning outcomes,” which are skills and content standards that which students have the opportunity to show mastery of these standards in multiple ways.

Every teacher will use performance tasks and share rubrics and sample exemplars with students. Teaching Practices will develop appropriate scaffolds and supports to ensure that all students are able to meet or exceed learning outcome expectations. Additionally, students will also participate in and be evaluated on New York State ELA and math exams. When applicable, students will also participate in the New York State Intermediate-Level Science Exam and Regents-level math and science exams. Finally, students will have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning at Prime Exhibitions, where they present their learning to a panel of teachers, peers, family, and experts. These pieces of work demonstrate multiple means of meeting Learning Outcomes through on-demand artifacts and revised tasks, final projects, as well as results from state and MAP assessments, providing a larger representation of what a student has learned over time. This type of summative assessment¹³ accommodates a wide range of learning abilities and styles. This real-world presentation of learning helps students see the connection between learning subjects and mimics defense presentations that students will encounter in high school, college, and the workplace. pIn in 7th and 8th grade, students who are working with outside organizations in internships will be assessed according to the rubric categories in the third table below, adapted from Big Picture Learning, which specializes in these types of internships.

E. Performance, Promotion, and Graduation Standards

Standards for the Next Grade Level: In order for students to be promoted to the next grade, they must demonstrate proficiency in core academics aligned to grade-level standards measuring college- and career-readiness (Prime Core). While students will not be retained if they miss learning outcomes related to healthy habits of mind and body (Prime Journeys) or expertise in career or creative projects (Prime Studio), they will need to demonstrate proficiency in all three areas to graduate from 8th grade. We define learning outcome as the tangible indicator that a standard has been met, and all Practices, regardless of their unique approach, will use the same learning outcomes to ensure that all students are receiving the same high-caliber education.

To earn promotion to the next grade, students must meet or exceed proficiency on at least 85% of the grade-level learning outcomes in each area, as demonstrated through NWEA or state exam performance (Prime Core). Teaching Practices will communicate to parents and students the learning outcomes for each unit of study (included in the student’s PLP), and students must demonstrate mastery (either 85% on a test or “proficient or above” on rubrics) in order to move to

¹³ See Darling-Hammond, L., Ancess, J., & Falk, B. (1995). *Authentic assessment in action: Studies of schools and students at work*. Teachers College Press.

the next unit. Over the entire year, students must demonstrate mastery of at least 85% of grade-level outcomes in order to be promoted. Any outcomes that students have not mastered will be added to the student’s PLP so that they can receive remediation in the following year as needed. Students have an opportunity to show mastery on missed outcomes through work completed after-school or during school holidays and summer vacation.

We want parents to have a clear sense of where their students are vis-a-vis our promotional standards. For all grades, promotional requirements will be documented and shared with the entire Prime community. We will create a clear monthly progress report for parents in addition to a quarterly report card. Our overall progress reports and report cards will display information about student performance in Prime Core, Prime Journeys, and Prime Studio, as well as clear indicators about whether the student is on-track or off-track for promotion. Each progress report will display not just an overall grade for a subject area, but also the particular learning outcomes for that time period as well as the overall percentage of outcomes mastered. For students who are off-track for promotion, this will be clearly labeled, and we will meet with the parents of those students before the next progress report comes out. Promotional policies will be made clear to students and families through various communications, such as at intake sessions, parent-teacher conferences, and in our learning management system. Since Prime personalizes for all students, Teaching Practice are acutely aware when a student is not making adequate progress toward meeting necessary learning outcomes and can adjust the student’s PLP to reflect this. In addition to providing the necessary support and scaffolds for a struggling student, the Teaching Practice will also follow the Kid Talk protocol (see *Professional Development*) along with extensive family outreach, in order to provide the necessary support to help the student return to a trajectory that will make him or her ready for 9th grade.

Exit Promotional Standards for Graduation: Samples of Prime’s promotional standards for 8th grade are illustrated in the tables below. Please note that these are just examples, and that our focus is on mastery of all the key concepts in each of the Common Core State Standards and our standards for Prime Journeys and Studio. The academic outcomes, as well as Prime’s full set of promotional outcomes for all subject areas, are aligned the Common Core Learning Standards.

8th Grade Exit Standards for Prime Core

Subject	8 th Grade Promotional Standard	Methods for Demonstrating Mastery
English: Informational Texts	The student can cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	MAP interim assessments (85% mastery) Teacher-generated assessments Expeditionary Learning assessments Performance Based Assessments aligned to Learning Outcomes, such as: After reading the poem, “Saigon is Gone,” and listening to and reading the transcript from “Forgotten Ship: A Daring Rescue as Saigon Fell,” students answer the question, “In this text, what is the message each author is intending to convey about the fall of

		Saigon? Explain how specific word choices help create a tone that contributes to the text’s meaning.” Performance on the NYS ELA exam
English: Reading	The student can write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.	MAP interim assessments Teacher-generated assessments Expeditionary Learning assessment Performance Based Assessments aligned to Learning Outcomes, such as: After reading Michael Pollan’s <u>The Omnivore’s Dilemma</u> , students write an essay that addresses, “Which of Michael Pollan’s four food chains would you choose to feed the United States?” Performance on the NYS ELA exam
English: Speaking and Listening	Students will present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; students will use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.	MAP interim assessments Expeditionary Learning assessments Performance Based Assessments aligned to Learning Outcomes, such as: students use their research findings on consequences of each food chain to write and present a speech that answers “Which of Michael Pollan’s four food chains would best feed all the people in the United States?”
Math: The Number System	Students will know that numbers that are not rational are called irrational. Students will understand informally that every number has a decimal expansion; for rational numbers show that the decimal expansion repeats eventually, and convert a decimal expansion which repeats eventually into a rational number.	MAP assessment interim assessments EngageNY assessments Performance Based Assessments aligned to Learning Outcomes Performance of the NYS math exam
Math: Geometry	Students will use informal arguments to establish facts about the angle sum and exterior angle of triangles, about the angles created when parallel lines are cut by a transversal, and the angle-angle criterion for similarity of triangles	MAP assessment interim assessments EngageNY assessments Performance Based Assessments aligned to Learning Outcomes Performance of the NYS math exam
Social Studies: History of the US and NY	Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the	Teacher-generated assessments History Alive! assessments Performance Based Assessments aligned to Learning Outcomes

	United States and New York.	
Science: Earth's Systems	Students will construct a scientific explanation based on evidence for how the uneven distributions of Earth's mineral, energy, and groundwater resources are the result of past and current geoscience processes.	Teacher-generated assessments JASON assessments Performance Based Assessments aligned to Learning Outcomes Performance of the NYS Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Test Performance on the NYS Living Environment Exam, where applicable.

8th Grade Exit Standards for Prime Journeys

Indicator	8 th Grade Promotional Standard and Evidence
Area 1: Positive Self-Concept and Growth Mindset	Student always or almost always talks about academic deficits as challenges rather than unchanging indicators of worth; student demonstrates ability to make concrete action plans to address areas for growth and celebrates small steps toward improvement.
Area 2: Realistic Self-Appraisal of Strengths and Growth Areas	Student can evaluate (through case study project, reflective journals, and conversations) his or her personal and academic skills, abilities, and interests and uses this appraisal to establish appropriate educational plans. Student makes decisions and acts in congruence with personal values and other personal and life demands.
Area 3: Navigating Systems and Self-Advocacy	Student demonstrates (through a case study project or Personalized Learning Plan) an understanding of strategies to navigate and self-advocate in situations where others hold different identities and power roles (family, ethnicity, birth order, class, race, gender, sexuality, etc.).
Area 4: Preference for and Skill at Achieving Long-Term Goals	Student demonstrates self-regulation (through self-regulation survey, autobiographical case study, and ability to meet project deadlines, etc.) and the ability to show examples of foregoing short-term gratification in the interest of long-term success.
Area 5: Availability of and Support from Adult Mentors	Student has identified a transformational teacher and community member and can explain (through written or video reflection) why this person is a resource for academic and personal improvement.
Area 6: High Quality Leadership Experience	Student can articulate leadership philosophy or style, tied to that of other historical or contemporary leaders; student serves in a leadership capacity at school or in the community; student (through a case study video or written reflection) demonstrates an understanding of group dynamics and basic leadership principles.

8th Grade Exit Standards for Prime Studio:

Indicator	8 th Grade Promotional Standard
Effort and Engagement	Student completely understands and follows expectations of site/mentor; always or with rare exceptions asks questions when they do not understand a task or situation; frequently takes initiative always or with rare exceptions completes tasks at a high level of quality; makes a significant, high quality contribution to site/mentor

Professionalism	Student always, or with rare exceptions wears appropriate clothing; uses professional language; is present and on time; follows safety procedures & protocols; maintains positive and appropriate workplace relationships
Self-Reflection & Career Awareness	Student demonstrates a strong and sophisticated understanding and awareness of which aspects of their site experience connect to their interests and post-Prime plan (responsibilities, mentor's responsibilities, industry, type of organization, activities, mission, clientele, etc.)
Workplace Knowledge & Skill Development	Student has exceeded the expectations for acquiring workplace knowledge & skills as determined by their team, which may include: tools & technology; processes & techniques; concepts & vocabulary; factual knowledge, details
Organization & Documentation	Student's documentation is complete, thorough, reflective, and provides strong evidence of learning, which may include: time sheet; site logs/journals; photos/videos; site meeting notes; other materials appropriate to site.

F. School Culture & Climate

Our Approach: Prime Public's approach to creating a safe learning environment in which students can become happy, healthy, helpful, and honorable learners will be based on a combination of practice from the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Framework, which emphasizes the reinforcement and celebration of positive behaviors, alongside a Restorative Justice approach that helps us to uncover and heal from more serious conflicts that may arise at Prime Public. We have a three-stage approach to creating a school culture that contributes to our school's mission: Setting and Modeling a Common Vocabulary; Strong Relationship-Driven Teaching; and Data-Driven Diagnosis and Intervention.

Part One: Creating and Modeling a Common Culture: When the school opens, we will focus on establishing universal rules, management strategies, and behavioral expectations. These expectations are the core of our student orientation plan. We will explain that these expectations serve to provide students with an environment conducive to their academic success as well as long-term personal growth. Using the Big Picture Learning framework (see above) for personal development, we will model these behaviors, use paper and video-based case studies to examine what they these behaviors look like in practice, and help students to reflect on these behaviors during Prime Journeys. This information will be contained in the Prime Public Student & Family Handbook, which articulates the school's Code of Honor and Code of Conduct. It is critical that every Teaching Practice across the school use the same vocabulary and implement the same rules regarding student behavior. Additionally, Prime students will be elected to serve on a "Jury of Peers." These students evaluate disciplinary infractions, determine consequences, and outline the process of re-entry into the Prime Public community.

Part Two: Strong Relationship-Driven Teaching: Many disciplinary issues in classrooms can be preempted through purposeful, engaging, and differentiated teaching that allows teachers to a) know their students as individuals in order to understand their particular contexts and b) use evidence rather than hunches or implicit biases to make instructional decisions. In addition, since we will have an experienced teacher leading each Teaching Practice, we will not encounter the typical behavior management issues that are typical in learning environments that put novice teachers in control of a roomful of students with vastly different emotional and academic needs.

We believe that our teacher development model will reduce teacher turnover, which will also have a positive impact on student behavior. Finally, because our matching process is designed to help students find the teacher who can reach them, we believe that we can improve behavior by placing students with teachers in a non-random fashion that accounts for the particular interpersonal dynamic between teacher and student. Teachers will receive ongoing training, both at our Summer Institute as well as during weekly workshops on how to encourage and reward positive behavior. In particular, we want students to use their Prime Journeys Teams as a place to reflect on their decisions, both positive and negative, and to articulate the reasoning behind their behavior.

Part Three: Data-Driven Diagnosis and Intervention: Of course, there are students who may need additional support due to previous trauma, particular life circumstances, or the fact that teenagers are often experiencing rapid brain development and hormonal changes that make it difficult to make positive decisions. Rather than dismissing these students as “bad kids” we will engage in a three-part process to determine where the process lies.

Step 1: Identification: Teachers will identify students who have persistent behavior challenges and who violate the Prime Code of Conduct. These students will be referred to the school guidance counselor who will form a Student Support Committee (SSC) to help solve the problem.

Step 2: Problem Diagnosis: The social worker or guidance counselor will work with the SSC as needed (particularly the referring teacher) to create a problem diagnosis. Generally, the problem is instructional (the student is bored or bewildered in class and is acting out as a result of this instructional misalignment), interpersonal (the student has a particular conflict with a particular student) or intrapersonal (the student is experiencing difficulty regulating his or her emotions due to external stress or negative self-image).

Step 3: Intervention: If the social worker or guidance counselor determines that the problem is instructional, then we will work with the student on strategies to navigate their classroom environment until we can improve the learning environment. These practices might include roleplays during which the counselor helps the student anticipate boredom or “feeling lost” and create a plan for how to respond in that situation. Additionally, if the problem is instructional the Principal will work with the referring Teaching Practice to support instruction that is engaging the student at his or her level. If the problem is interpersonal in nature, then the guidance counselor or social worker will use Restorative Justice practices, such as a community circles or restorative meetings, to help resolve interpersonal conflicts in ways that help to heal the rift between the parties in ways that feel fair to both. If the problem is intrapersonal, then we will use the Prime Journeys Team in particular to create an appropriate social-emotional intervention. This could entail a pull-out session on conflict resolution, communication with the student’s family, and a plan for more intensive counseling to help the student access the necessary help to reduce the stress that is a key cause of misbehavior.

Step 4: Follow-Up Data-Tracking: Any student who receives an intervention will have the intervention recorded and tracked over time so that we can determine how well the intervention is working. Students who engage consistently in problematic behavior will be referred to the SSC to determine whether a formal evaluation is necessary. Prime Public plans to partner with service agencies that can provide more comprehensive supports for students who need them.

Discipline Procedures: The Prime Public discipline policy outlines the responses to infractions of Prime Public’s Code of Conduct. The policy is adapted from the NYCDOE Discipline Code,

which provides a range of possible disciplinary responses to be used in addition to the interventions and supports outlined above. In general, again, our approach is to promote positive behavior and to understand the root cause of the behavior prior to labeling the student or stigmatizing the student with punishments that do not contribute to solving the behavioral issue in the long term. We will restrict suspensions to in-school suspensions except in the most extreme cases, such as those that involve the safety and wellbeing of school community members. The following sections outline some of these specific policies.

Suspension: Students who violate the Prime Public Code of Conduct for infractions such as fighting, bullying, hazing, or sexual harassment will typically receive an in-school suspension. Students will be provided alternate instruction so that they receive all classroom assignments and are able to make adequate academic progress and participate in assessments. In extreme cases in which students are engaging in dangerous behavior, an out-of-school suspension may be warranted. Parents or guardians will then be notified and have the right to a hearing with the Principal to present their case and an opportunity to appeal a long-term suspension to the Board or a subcommittee of the board. Out-of-school suspensions in excess of 10 days will only be recommended when students commit the most serious infractions in Level 5 of the NYCDOE Discipline Code, such as bringing a firearm to school or assaulting a staff member. In such cases, formal hearings will be held with the student and family, as well as with anyone else involved in the incident, where they will be provided Due Process. Any student who is suspended will participate in a restorative circle upon return in order to ensure that the student is fully reintegrated into the community in ways that allow the whole learning community to heal and progress. In the rare case that a Prime student commits an infraction that warrants an expulsion, like with a suspension, the student is provided with Due Process, and all the rights afforded by State or Federal Law, including at a minimum, parental notice, a hearing, and the right to appeal. Final decisions will be made by the Prime Board of Trustees or a subdivision thereof.

Discipline For Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities (SWDs) will generally be held to the same standards as general education students and will be offered the same supports and interventions within the framework described above that incorporates elements of PBIS and Restorative Justice. However, when a student's Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) identifies specific consequences for specific behavior, the student will be disciplined according to the plan as a strategy for meeting that behavioral goal over time. If the intervention is ineffective and additional supports and interventions do not prevent the student from repeating the same infractions, then the student may be referred to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) for consideration of a change in the plan or change of placement. Students whose IEPs do not include any specific disciplinary guidelines will be disciplined in accordance with the standard Prime Public Discipline Policy. Students suspected of having a disability or who may be facing long-term suspension or accumulated suspension days will be referred to the CSE for a manifestation determination review to evaluate the relationship between the behavior and the student's disability.

To the extent possible, Prime Public will avoid punitive reactions to student behavior, such as suspensions, especially in the case of SWDs. In cases where SWDs demonstrate unacceptable behavior despite the above interventions, Prime Public will assess students for unidentified disabilities that may be the cause of the consistent behavior issue. To that end, functional

behavioral assessments will be performed to identify the cause of the infraction and potentially effective support mechanisms. The student's BIP or IEP will be reviewed annually by the SSC to ensure that the plan is up-to-date and accurate. If the student's BIP identifies specific consequences for certain kinds of conduct, the student will be disciplined according to the plan. If the specified intervention is ineffective and additional, targeted supports and interventions do not prevent the student from repeating the same infractions, then the student may be referred to the CSE for consideration of a change in the plan or change of placement within the school. Students whose IEPs do not include any specific disciplinary guidelines will be disciplined in accordance with the standard Prime Public Code of Conduct.

Prime Public, under the Dean of Culture and Support's leadership, will work closely with the CSE to create clear and easily understood guidelines for communication, decision-making, and recourse regarding disciplinary actions for parents of SWDs. Written documentation and records will be maintained for all suspensions, including those assessed to SWDs. Such documentation will include the following information, at minimum: the student's name, a description of the infraction, a description of the response from the school, the names of Prime Public staff members involved in the incident, a description of the school's response, the number of days suggested for suspension, and an explanation regarding the necessity of suspending the student. All documentation and student records will be kept in locked file cabinets, in a secure location within the school. Anyone who accesses or reviews student records will be noted using a record access log. As required by law, Prime Public will ensure that students who are suspended are placed in an alternative educational setting and provided adequate instruction. Prime will ensure adequate academic progress of students who are suspended out-of-school through instruction organized by our Dean of Culture and Support that is aligned with instruction from the student's Teaching Practice. Prime will give the student opportunities to remain current with all classroom learning.

G. Special Student Populations and Related Services

Prime values and prioritizes its students with disabilities and its English Language Learners (ELLs). Our school model, which personalizes learning for students by matching them with a Teaching Practice, stems from best practices for students with disabilities and ELL students. We are confident that these students will have their educational and social emotional needs met by staff at Prime. Teacher Practices will have daily time for co-planning. Each Practice always has one teacher with special education certification, and in addition, we have a dedicated Special Education licensed teacher who can push in or pull out students as needed, in addition to ensuring that we comply with all aspects of every student's IEP. As we grow, we add Special Education teachers. We also will have one Prime Studio Specialist Teacher with ESL expertise. These teachers will ensure that Teaching Practices follow the Universal Design for Learning model to ensure that all students have access to learning through multiple means of representations, expression, and engagement. Our general education program by its design provides meaningful opportunities for all students to thrive and participate, particularly students with special needs and ELLs.

Students with Disabilities: At Prime, because we place the development of PLPs are the forefront of learning; we believe in upholding every aspect of students' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and ensure compliance with all applicable law. We realize that the IEP is a roadmap that helps teachers understand how a student learns best and therefore Prime teachers will fully engage

in the process of initial evaluations, re-evaluations, and revisions of IEPs alongside the Committee on Special Education (CSE) (*see* 34 CFR §§300.22, 300.312 and 300.340 *et al*). Prime will implement all IEPs developed by the CSE and will ensure that all services, as recommended in IEPs, are provided to the students, including class size and teacher-to-student ratio. Prime is committed to the inclusion model of education and all classrooms will be staffed appropriately to meet the need of students with disabilities. Our special education licensed teachers will serve students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment possible, and we hope that within three years we can move students to less restrictive settings or, when appropriate, declassify them altogether. If and when there is a perceived need for change in an IEP, Prime will contact the CSE to convene an evaluation of the student and consider revising the IEP. Under IDEA and the federal regulations and state law, Prime will continue to provide the appropriate accommodations to the student during the CSE review and evaluation process.

Additionally, all teachers will follow Chapter 408 regulations and will be given hard copies of students' IEPs, ample time to review IEPs, and all copies of distributed IEPs will be kept in locked and secure locations, as well as being securely disposed of at the end of the school year. At the beginning of every summer year, under the supervision of a Special Education teacher, teachers will be given time to review IEPs of incoming students, be informed of specific responsibilities for implementing the IEP, and will receive specialized professional development on how to teach students with specific learning or behavioral needs. All teachers working with IEP students will receive access to the NYC DOE's Special Education Student Information System (SESIS), and Prime teachers will attend and participate in all Annual Reviews and necessary CSE meetings. The Principal will ensure strict adherence to the student goals and services provided for in the IEPs through observation of classes; parent and teacher meetings; and communication with students, when appropriate. All IEPs will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Should Prime suspect that a student may qualify for an IEP, under Child Find, the school will implement a series of interventions, including revised scheduling or a Teaching Practice change, academic interventions, and parent involvement. If, after exhausting all interventions, there is still a need for more intense service, the student would be referred to the CSE, where additional services may be recommended and Prime will provide the necessary services are required on the IEP. Additionally, Prime will work with the (CSE) to ensure student receive the necessary related services. Prime staff will serve as the advocates for students with disabilities, and we will work closely with the CSE to find, in a timely manner, appropriate agencies if Related Service Agreements are issued. If a student entering Prime without an IEP appears to be eligible for special education services, the school will issue a request in writing to the chairperson of the CSE for an initial evaluation. A copy of this request along with the procedural safeguards notice described in 34 CFR 300.504 (Parents Rights Brochure) will be sent to the student's family. This request will:

- Provide the reasons for the referral including any applicable test results, reports, or records;
- Outline the interventions taken prior to referral;
- Describe the family involvement throughout the Prime assessment process; and
- Provide relevant documentation generated during the pre-referral process.

Where possible, as indicated on students' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), Teaching Practices will embrace the Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) model. This could look like one Special

Education licensed teacher teaching with two co-teachers for Humanities and STEM. We will aim to place our Students with Disabilities in classes that are of the least restrictive setting, and we will ensure that students requiring Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) will receive push in or indirect SETSS, and students requiring speech and language services will receive them from a push-in model, whenever appropriate, and according to their IEP, and compliant with governing law and regulations. In keeping with the school's model of inclusion, we will utilize pull-out services only for skills remediation and executive functioning lessons, and possibly for occupational therapy and physical therapy. Our Dean of Culture and Support will be special education certified and can flexibly support students who require additional interventions.

Teaching Practices working with students with disabilities will be knowledgeable about students' annual IEP goals and will create PLPs that include those IEP goals. They will work together with families at the beginning of the year to ensure buy-in from all of the student's stakeholders. Prime will review and evaluate our support to students with disabilities in many ways: Principal review and evaluation of Teaching Practices; Peer review of Teaching Practices; Feedback from families; Student work artifacts; Student progress towards annual IEP goals; Student performance on various assessments, including the New York State ELA and math exam.

Additionally, Prime will implement several assessments to measure the progress of our IEP students, such as the NWEA MAP and the Brigance CIBS II. Prime's Kid Talk protocol (see *Professional Development*), as well as Prime's Pupil Personnel Team (PPT) and School Implementation Team (SIT) will ensure that we meet the varied needs of students with IEPs. Students with disabilities at Prime will have the opportunity to participate in the general education curriculum and will participate in New York State assessments in accordance with their IEPs. Under the direct supervision of the Principal with support from the Director of Culture and Support, licensed special education teachers will coordinate implementation of this policy. All special education teachers will be appropriately certified pursuant to applicable state and federal law. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that students and their families have access to the CSE, the Annual Review process, and that students with disabilities receive all the services provided for in the IEP. The Principal, or designee, will participate in meetings with the CSE. The Principal is also responsible for maintaining current CSE files at the school and to ensure that necessary information is shared with parents, teachers, the CSE. Timely notice of proposed meetings regarding special education services, including IEP updates, will be given to parents, staff, and students, as necessary. Prime will support teachers and related service staff who are responsible for implementing the student IEP to be present in person or by phone at CSE meetings.

English Language Learners: At the intake interview, all Prime families new to the public school system will be given a Home Language Survey to complete. Students who are identified as possible ELLs will then take the NYSITELL exam to determine their ELL level. During the first year at Prime, we will have at least one teacher who is licensed as an ESL teacher. This teacher's job will have three distinct parts: (1) He or she will co-lead a Teaching Practice for our students identified as ELLs. This Teaching Practice will cover all four core academic areas while providing freestanding ESL services in a push-in model; (2) The teacher will (by our third year) teach a foreign language, ensuring that all Prime students have received the minimum requirement of 108 hours of Language Other Than English (LOTE) by 8th grade. Students wishing to pursue language

studies in-depth and sit for LOTE exams will do so through the Prime Studio; (3) The teacher will lead professional development for staff around ESL scaffolding strategies and best practices for supporting freestanding ESL in Teaching Practices and participate in ESL workshops hosted by the NYC Charter School Center. Within Teaching Practices, ESL students will be taught in a team teaching model with an ESL-licensed teacher. Additionally, these students will receive the state mandated amount of freestanding ESL instruction as required by their ESL level: 360 minutes per week for beginning and intermediate levels and 180 minutes per week for advanced levels. Additionally, the Prime ESL teacher will implement several assessments to measure the proficiency levels of students, such as the NWA MAP and the Brigance CIBS II. Results from these measures will help Teaching Practices address student language needs and help them gain the skills they need to test out of ESL through the NYSESLAT exam.

Support for Families: Prime is a strong learning community that fosters both the academic and social-emotional well-being of all students; we value parent voice and welcome parent involvement and advocacy. To that end, we inform and involve parents of the important steps in their child's education. Our guidance counselors will work closely with families to ensure frequent communication is taking place and that families feel supported and respected throughout their years at Prime. For example, should a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) enter our school, we will ensure that our guidance counselors have been trained to provide parents with the mandated ASD family support. We may have students with families who require outside support, such as family counseling, we will work with community organizations to connect families with necessary services. To support ESL families, we will connect parents to adults ESL classes and, if necessary, to organizations that provide immigration support.

III. Organizational and Fiscal Plan

A. Applicant Group Capacity

The applicant group is led by proposed Executive Director Jonathan Skolnick, who has previously worked with two other members, Sompon (Sammi) Oerlemans and April Gariepy. His qualifications include experience as a successful NYC teacher, NYCDOE administrator for innovative programs such as School of One and the NYC iZone, charter school founding team member, and leadership training at Harvard University's Doctorate in Education Leadership Program. Through his work with iZone360, as a founding team member of a California charter school, as a consultant, and as a doctoral student, he has visited scores of middle and high schools across the country in an effort to understand what makes personalization work. Mr. Skolnick met Ms. Gariepy in 2007 when they worked together in the NYCDOE Office of School Leadership. He met Ms. Oerlemans when Children First Network 107, for which Ms. Oerlemans was a Deputy Network Leader, was selected as an "NYCDOE iZone360" network to engage in school redesign.

In Fall 2014, following conversations with Ms. Gariepy and Ms. Oerlemans about the lack of high-quality middle school options in CSD13, the group began planning an innovative middle school. Since the fall, the applicant group has been meeting weekly by phone or in person, in addition to holding a Planning Retreat, four community meetings, and exchanging countless emails. Mr. Skolnick and Ms. Oerlemans are the primary authors of Prime's charter application. The group also had the support and input of expert educators on the founding team to assist in the vision for

Prime's instructional methods and to develop a framework for Prime's curriculum. Additionally, Prime worked with the Charter School Incubator for assistance in developing the application. Please see *Table 1* for a detailed overview of applicant group members. Prime Public has also built a strong Advisory Board, which includes leading researchers such as Richard Elmore (Professor Emeritus at Harvard Graduate School of Education), innovative New York City principals (e.g. Brooke Jackson from NYC Lab School for Collaborative Studies,) and leaders in education reform such as Dan Weisberg, the CEO of TNTP (See *Attachment 2* for Mr. Weisberg's letter of support).

B. Board of Trustees and Governance

Development of Board of Trustees: Each member of the founding Board of Trustees was carefully selected for a specific skillset that would contribute to the overall success of the school and the effectiveness of the Board as a governing body. Our goal is to have a Board with prior charter school governance experience, expertise to provide academic oversight, financial planning and management experience, legal and real estate experience, and strong connections to the community of CSD 13. Prior to extending an invitation to join the founding Board, the founding team spoke with each prospective Board member to vet their commitment to the Prime mission, the depth and relevance of their professional experience, and their understanding of the responsibility that comes along with being a charter school Trustee. We feel that the composition of the founding Board is well suited to supporting the successful launch of the school, and to conducting rigorous and appropriate oversight of the academic outcomes, executive leadership, financial management, and legal and ethical compliance of the school during the pre-opening period and the first year of operation. During the planning year and first year of operation, it will be a priority of the Board to establish a governance committee that will ensure that both the membership of the Board and the Board's policies and procedures continue to be appropriate to the evolving needs of the school as it grows. We plan to add a parent representative to the Board of Trustees once the school opens, and we have already received letters of support from several parents (see *Attachment 2*). In the coming months, each member of the Board will join a specific sub-committee based on expertise, interest, and capacity, and we will identify the specific roles and responsibilities of sub-committee members. That clear explanation of role will enable us to provide Board members with the support they need to serve as stewards of Prime.

The Board Chair will be responsible for the overall development of Board members as well as oversight of any conflicts of interests or other ethical or legal issues that may arise. The Board will undergo a comprehensive development process in the first year, guided by training materials from the New York City Charter School Center, the book, "Board Meetings: A Guide for Charter Schools" by Marci-Cornell Feist, and guidance documents from the New York State Education Department Charter School Office. This process will focus on areas including: reviewing key charter and legal responsibilities; understanding accountability plan goals and monitoring progress toward these goals; financial oversight; evaluation of the Executive Director; transparency and ethics requirements; managing strategic growth & strategic planning. The Governance Committee will be responsible for recruiting future trustees with an eye towards filling identified skill and/or constituency representation needs. It will also develop a specific process to review and assess candidates as well as onboard them to the Board.

Board of Trustees Responsibilities: The Board and its committees will be ultimately responsible for the academic, fiscal, and regulatory oversight of the school. Board oversight consists of approval of all school policies and monitoring of policy implementation, hiring and evaluating the Executive Director, and working with the Executive Director and other staff to monitor the school's academic, non-academic, and financial performance.

Academic and Non-Academic Performance/Assessment: The school's academic and nonacademic goals relate to the three sections of our mission: (i) achievement of rigorous academic competencies (ii); developing healthy habits of mind and body and (iii) achieving expertise in a career- or creative passion. Trustees will be able to examine school performance on a regular basis through a "Dashboard," which will provide up-to-date statistics on the school, including current enrollment, average daily attendance, and various demographic, discipline, and academic statistics in both aggregate and disaggregated form, the latter by subgroup and gender. Moreover, the Principal and other staff will present to the Student Learning Committee at least monthly (and more frequently if requested) reports on where the school stands in meeting its semi-annual, annual, and multi-year goals. Such reports will be detailed and will give information by grade level, in aggregate and disaggregated forms.

Fiscal Oversight: The Board will work with the Executive Director and DoO to develop fiscal guidelines and policies, as well as tools for annual budgeting, fiscal oversight, and reporting on the school's fiscal health. The Executive Director and the DoO will meet with the Audit and Finance Committee monthly to report on where the school stands in meeting its budget and fiscal goals, and to review the budget for the subsequent year. In addition, the Audit and Finance Committee will meet periodically with the school's internal and external auditors regarding audits of the school's financial performance and fiscal soundness.

Other Responsibilities: The Board's other responsibilities include: (i) electing/removing Trustees; (ii) appointing/removing the school's leadership and agents, prescribing their duties, and fixing their compensation; (iii) managing the school's affairs, and implementing regulations with respect thereto; (iv) approving such contracts as necessary or desirable for the school; (v) overseeing the school's operation; (vi) causing the school to become exempt from federal income taxation; (vii) monitoring the school's operations and applying any surplus resulting from any business activity in which the school may engage; (viii) acting as trustee under any trust incidental to the school's purposes; (ix) acquiring/holding/disposing of property for the school; and (x) indemnifying and maintaining insurance for the school's Trustees, employees, and agents (subject to the provisions of the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law and the limitations under the school's By-laws).

Board Structure, Policies, and Procedures: The founding Board will consist of nine members, and will include as officers the Chair, the Secretary, and the Treasurer. The Chair will be responsible for the overall effectiveness of the Board as a governing body and ensuring that it effectively carries out the responsibilities described above. The Chair will work with the Executive Director to set the monthly meeting agenda. In addition, the Chair will be the primary point of contact for the State Education Department and Board of Regents on matters relating to the Board and the Charter (the Board will delegate responsibility for communicating with the State Education Department on academic, operational, and routine financial matters to school staff).

The Secretary will be responsible for ensuring that the Board meets the requirements of the Open Meetings Law. In particular, the Secretary will be responsible for ensuring that the calendar of Board meetings is posted on the school website and at the school. The Secretary will also ensure that each meeting of the Board or a Board Committee has a publicly posted notice, including the agenda as well as the time and place of the meeting, at the school and in local news media at least a week before the meeting, and that Trustees are properly notified as required by the by-laws. The Secretary will be responsible for ensuring that accurate meeting minutes are kept for each meeting, that these minutes are approved by the Board at the next meeting, and posted as required on the school website. The Secretary will also ensure that meeting materials are posted on the website prior to the meeting and otherwise made accessible at the meeting. Each meeting of the Board will be open to the public. The Treasurer will serve as the chair of the Finance and Audit Committee. This Committee will meet regularly and will present to the Board updates on the short term and long term financial health of the school. It will make a recommendation to the Board regarding the approval of the budget and any material modifications to the budget, and it will retain an auditing firm to conduct an annual financial audit of the school.

The Board will have four standing Committees and will establish ad-hoc Committees and working groups as necessary: 1) The Student Learning Committee, 2) The Finance and Audit Committee, 3) The Governance Committee, and 4) The Family & Community Engagement Committee. The Board will establish an evaluation committee each spring for the purpose of conducting a formal evaluation of the Executive Director. The regular Board Meeting Agenda will contain the following, subject to changes as necessary by the Governance Committee and/or the Chair:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| i. Call to Order | vi. Treasurer's Report |
| ii. Invitation for Public Comment | vii. Other Committee Reports (as needed) |
| iii. Executive Director's Report | viii. Continuing Business |
| iv. Family Representative Report | ix. New Business |
| v. Student Learning Committee Report | |

Families and school staff will be encouraged to attend Board meetings, and all meetings will be open to the general public. The Family Representative will ensure that enrolled families have a formal voice in the governance of the school, and school staff will be invited to participate in Board meetings through the Student Learning Committee.

Relationship to Authorizer: The Board of Trustees recognizes that, should it be granted a charter, Prime will be a public school incorporated as a not-for-profit Education Corporation under New York State Law. The school will operate under and be bound by the terms of the charter issued by the Board of Regents, and will be responsible for complying with applicable state and federal laws and regulations. The terms of the charter will include academic and other performance goals, and the Board understands the school must demonstrate that it is meeting these goals in order to earn the renewal of its charter. As the governing body of the Education Corporation and the holder of the charter, the Board understands that it is the body that is ultimately accountable to the Board of Regents to ensure that Prime achieves its mission, that it is a financially and organizationally viable entity, and that it complies with legal and ethical requirements. In a more concrete sense, the Board is responsible for ensuring that school leaders deliver on the promises made to families, and that public funds are spent wisely and ethically. While the Board will not carry out the day-to-

day processes of the school (and indeed, will respect school leaders' autonomy to manage the school), it will be accountable to the Board of Regents for ensuring that these processes are effective. If the Board has reason to believe that the school is not on track to achieve its accountability plan goals or that there are concerns about the financial management, organizational viability, or legal compliance of the school, it will require that school leaders develop corrective actions. If the Board determines, through appropriate evaluation procedures, that the Executive Director is not meeting performance expectations, the Board will take appropriate actions, including, as a last resort, terminating the Executive Director.

C. Management and Staffing

Recruitment and Retention of Staff: Our budget reflects a belief that as much funding as possible should be used to support teachers who work directly with students on core subject areas (ELA, math, science, and social studies). To that end, our core academic teachers' salaries are significantly higher than the average NYC teacher salary. Our average teacher salary is approximately equivalent to that of a NYCDOE teacher with 8-10 years of experience and a Masters degree. To increase retention, we also offer health care benefits, significant professional development opportunities (six weeks per year), and a modest retirement plan. We offer this level of compensation and benefits because our model is based on allowing skilled professional teachers to run their own Teaching Practices and remain in the classroom as a career. To achieve that goal, we need to attract experienced teachers who are masters at their craft. See *Attachment 8a* for our full job descriptions and robust hiring process.

We also need to attract true professionals who are eager for autonomy and flexibility. Within appropriate constraints, and with the approval of the Principal, we allow teachers to make significant decisions about how to teach each subject, the size of their Teaching Practice, the configuration of their learning environment, and their use of resources such as adaptive learning technology. We believe that this combination of professionalism, autonomy, support, and salary will be effective at recruiting and retaining effective teachers. Given that we are likely to attract significant numbers of students below grade level, our recruitment efforts will focus on teachers who have taught in schools serving high-needs students who are often struggling academically. We will also recruit teachers who have worked in middle schools with advisory models, because Prime Journeys is an essential aspect of our model. For Studio Specialists, we aim to recruit educators who also have experience in areas such as film or TV production, fashion, design, and healthcare.

Retention: Whereas a typical school might ask a single subject-area teacher to teach all the students in a given grade, we reduce the total number of students for whom a given teacher has responsibility across the day as much as possible (around 36 students in Year 1). Research shows that lower total student loads can significantly improve student achievement.¹⁴ But over time, we plan to retain teachers by allowing them greater flexibility over resources and giving them the ability to reach more students and hire their own staff into that Practice, all while increasing their salary, which increases based in part on the number of students served. We will also use weekly Prime Time, Wednesday PDs, and other opportunities to provide staff with food and opportunities to celebrate their accomplishments.

¹⁴ See Ouchi, W. G. (2009). *The secret of TSL: The revolutionary discovery that raises school performance*. Simon and Schuster.

The chart below shows the number and types of staff we will have as we grow toward capacity. Approximately half of our teaching staff in the core academic areas will have Special Education dual certification. We believe that the opportunity to run one's own Practice and earn a substantial salary (approximately \$75,000) will enable us to recruit and retain teachers with dual certification in a core subject area as well as special education. Given the demands of the first year of a new school, we have the lowest staff-to-student ratio for that year. Over time, we have budgeted to add additional staff while also taking advantages of the cost savings that come with scale. For example, some of our Studio Specialists can teach additional students in the second year because their first-year workload will not be at capacity. In addition, some of our 6th graders will loop with their 6th grade Teaching Practice into 7th grade, and so on, enabling those Practices to add more students, earn more compensation, and hire more junior staff for support.

Educator Model:

	Prime Core Academic Teachers	Prime Studio (e.g. foreign language, Phys. Ed, design/engineering)	Special Education	Guidance Counselors
2016-2017 (108-118 Students)	6 (at least two dual-certified in special ed.)	3	1	1
2017-2018 (216-236 students)	11 (at least four dual-certified in special ed.)	5	2	2
2018-2019 (At Capacity - 324-354 students)	16 (at least seven dual-certified in special ed.)	7	3	2

Full Staffing Model:

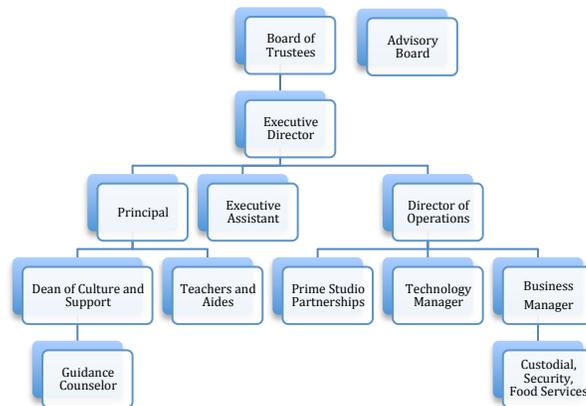
Subject/Area	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2021
Executive Director	1	1	1
Principal	1	1	1
Director of Operations	1	1	1
Executive Assistant	-	1	1
Business Manager	1	1	1
Dean of Culture & Support Aide	1	1	1
Technology Manager	-	1	1
ELA/Social Studies	3	6	9
Math/Science	3	6	9
Special Education	1	2	3
Prime Studio Specialists	3	5	7
Counselors/Social Work	1	2	2
Total	17	30	38

Leadership Model: Prime believes that the Principal must be an instructional leader who spends significant time observing and supporting teachers. See *Attachment 8a* for a description of the Principal’s role and responsibilities. In order to maximize the Principal’s time focused on academics, Prime’s model includes a Director of Operations (DoO) who is responsible for non-academic tasks, including food, transportation, security, and custodial services; community partnerships; and human resources. We also have a dedicated Dean of Culture and Support to ensure that we address student behavioral issues early; ensure compliance with all IEPs; establish clear rules and processes around student behavior; and create a supportive school culture. Our Executive Director is responsible for overall strategy and design; fundraising and public relations; supporting the development of the Principal and DoO; and research, development, and expansion of the school over time. The school will also hire a business manager in Y1 and add an administrative assistant in Y2. In Years 2-5, the school adds a technology manager to support our growing day-to-day technology needs, such as blended learning in Prime Core and multimedia tools for Prime Studio. Prime will have three leadership positions in Year 1, and we did this in part because our model requires innovations that are new to schools in NYC (and indeed, the country). In order to support these innovations, we will need to ensure that our Principal can be a full-time instructional leader and that our Executive Director can engage in partnership development and fundraising necessary to support the research and development of this innovative model.

Criteria for Instructional Staff: We have developed full Job Descriptions that list the experience and skills we require for teachers and other instructional staff. These Job Descriptions are attached in our appendix. For non-certified instructional personnel we will use a mix of skills, experience, and fit to make hiring decisions.

Use of Assessment Data to Drive Human Capital Decisions: Each year, we will conduct an evaluation of all our educators to ensure that they are meeting their goals in student performance/growth, pedagogy, and personal development (See *Section IIIId*). Our assessment program aligns with the State’s philosophy of allocating significant weight towards student growth while also integrating observations and peer feedback. We have included a cost-of-living raise for all our staff each year, but those core academic teachers who are most successful can also grow the size of their practice and receive significantly more compensation as they demonstrate success.

Organizational Chart (as of Year 2):



The Prime Leadership Team consists of the Executive Director, Founding Principal, and Director of Operations (DoO). The Board of Trustees selects, supports, and evaluates the Executive Director, who in turn selects, supports, and evaluates the Principal and DoO. For more information on evaluation, see *Section III d* below.

Executive Director: The Executive Director is selected by the Board and has overall responsibility for ensuring that the school is structured and funded in ways that enable it to fulfill its mission. Jonathan Skolnick, the founder of Prime, is the proposed Executive Director. His qualifications include experience as a successful NYC teacher, NYCDOE administrator for innovative programs such as School of One and the NYC iZone, charter school founding team member, and his leadership training at Harvard University’s Doctorate in Education Leadership Program.

- **Strategy:** Each year, the Executive Director works with the leadership team and the Board of Trustees to craft the school’s strategy and operational plan. This plan consists of the key goals and strategies in each functional area (academics, culture, community, finance, and operations) as well as cross-functional areas such as marketing, communications, expansion, and talent development. The Executive Director is responsible for meeting with each member of the leadership team to help him/her meet annual goals. He is also responsible for reporting to the Board and enlisting their assistance and support in order to achieve the school’s mission.
- **Fundraising and Partnerships:** The Executive Director is responsible for creating partnerships with outside organizations necessary to support the school’s fiscal stability, particularly in the time period prior to reaching full student capacity. In addition, he is responsible for reporting to such funders on the results of their investment in Prime. The Executive Director will also sign off on all school partnerships with local or national organizations.
- **Research and Development:** The Executive Director is responsible for creating structures to collect and analyze data about the efficacy of our model. He is also responsible for researching and developing new strategies and structures to improve the model over time. As we learn more about what works within the Prime model, the Executive Director is responsible for sharing this learning with the wider education community, and in particular, the district schools in CSD13 with which we want to partner.
- **Organizational Culture and Data-Driven Learning:** The Executive Director is responsible for making Prime a “learning organization”¹⁵ whose culture enables employees to direct their actions toward shared goals, to reflect in proactive ways on their strengths and areas for growth, and to collaborate effectively. The Executive Director distributes and models leadership as necessary in the service of the school’s mission of providing every student with an excellent education. The Executive Director is also responsible for recruiting, hiring, and evaluating the Principal as well as the DoO.

Principal: The Principal is selected by the Executive Director, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, and s/he serves as the instructional leader of Prime. Based on feedback from NYSED, this fall we will engage in a rigorous recruitment and interview process, including observations,

¹⁵ See Senge, P. M. (2014). *The fifth discipline fieldbook: Strategies and tools for building a learning organization*. Crown Business.

simulations, written assignments, and family input, to select an outstanding Principal. See *Attachment 5a* for more details on the hiring process.

- **Staff Recruitment, Development, and Evaluation:** The Principal is responsible for hiring, developing, and evaluating teachers. S/he does this through a rigorous recruitment and hiring process (See *Attachment 8a*); frequent teacher observations with timely feedback based on the Kim Marshall teacher evaluation rubric, and 1:1 coaching. Alongside teachers, the Principal will develop structures that enable staff to learn from one another and the broader education sector. Additionally, the Principal will hold teachers accountable for high levels of performance through 360 evaluations and personalized development plans.
- **Curriculum and Assessment Development and Analysis:** The Principal is responsible for articulating a set of clear learning outcomes, based on Common Core State Standards; the Principal and teachers will define how students will demonstrate mastery of such competencies. The Principal will work with staff to engage in regular data cycles that identify areas of strength and weakness and support teachers in the adjustment of instructional and structural supports accordingly.
- **Family Advocacy and Teacher Matching:** The Principal is responsible for engaging families as partners in the school. This starts with the matching process, in which the Principal works with families to match students to an appropriate Teaching Practice, and continues through regular communication and collaboration with families around the school's progress, community events/projects, safety and logistical issues, and other issues that arise over time.

Director of Operations (DoO): The DoO is responsible for ensuring that Prime is a safe, fiscally responsible, well-resourced, and inclusive community that addresses the needs of the whole child.

- **School Environment and Resources:** The DoO is responsible for ensuring that the school's mission permeates all aspects of our operations, including our opening and closing procedures, our lunchroom activities, our physical environment, our technology, and so forth. The DoO will supervise a Business Manager around operations in conjunction with the Executive Director when necessary.
- **Community Partnership Development:** The DoO is responsible for ensuring that we build effective community partnerships to support the Prime community. He or she will work with the Executive Director to develop partnerships both to support school events and projects and also to serve as apprenticeship sites for the Prime Studio. As a result, the DoO will be responsible for managing these partnerships, with support from the Principal as needed.
- **Human Capital:** The DoO is responsible for ensuring that our hiring and evaluation processes for all staff are aligned with our mission and culture. He or she will develop clear job descriptions, hiring and onboarding processes, and evaluation structures.
- **Student Recruitment and Enrollment:** The DoO will recruit widely and fairly, enrolling and orienting students in a way that sets them up for successful participation at Prime.

In addition to the DoO, we plan to contract (See *Budget*) with Charter School Business Management (CSBM) for additional financial and operational services, such as annual audits, accounting reports, compliance activities, etc.

Individual Base Salary Determination: Our base salary for resident teachers who work within a Practice run by an experienced Partner is no less than \$50,000. Our Fellows who are just starting their own Practices earn around \$65,000, and more experienced teachers who are Partners in a Teaching Practice can make well over \$80,000. In our budget, we have estimated an average Prime Core teacher salary of \$75,000 and an average Studio Specialist salary of \$58,000, in part because in Year 1 we will only have Partners teaching in the Teaching Practices, since they will not have expanded yet. As mentioned above, we are putting significant resources into our teacher salaries in an effort to recruit effective, entrepreneurial, and professional teachers who can coach and learn from their colleagues and have significant input over the use of the resources in their classrooms.

D. Evaluation

Evaluation of the School: Prime will undergo a Quality Review twice a year. The purpose of this review is to evaluate the school's effectiveness and its progress in meeting its achievement goals as well as its operational and fiscal efficiency. Reviews will be modeled after the NYCDOE's Quality Review and will focus on the efficacy of the instructional core across classrooms, school culture, and structures for improvement. Both reviews will last two days, and areas in need of improvement (as identified in the fall Quality Review) will anchor the spring review. Both reviews will be administered by 5-6 experienced educators acting as critical friends: members of the Prime Advisory Board, fellow middle school principals, and, when available, the CSD13 Superintendent. For the operational and fiscal review we will utilize Charter School Business Management (CSBM), external critical friends and consultants to review our operational processes as well as fiscal policies, practices, and position. Evaluation data will be used by the Board and staff to develop improvement plans and to identify and amplify effective practices.

Evaluation of Teachers: To ensure that teachers develop as professionals, we provide them with significant support (six weeks of professional development per year in addition to common planning time) and evaluate them in three areas: Performance, Pedagogy, and Personal Development. The Principal is the primary evaluator for teachers at Prime.

Performance: Teacher Performance is assessed through multiple measures, such as student work products, student surveys, and student test score growth. Because Prime tracks several types of data, we are able to measure student learning across all disciplines. Using both state test scores and the results of NWEA MAP, Prime can measure student growth and teacher value add for teachers of English and mathematics. Prime will also track how many students complete learning outcomes within a given unit and a given year. This will apply to all teachers, including those for whom there is not a NYS or interim assessment. This data will be essential to a teacher's yearly review, rating, and renewal of contracts. Our evaluation system, which involves a mix of student test score growth and performance, observations, and peer review, is aligned to the State's approach.

Pedagogy: Pedagogy is assessed through frequent administrative and peer classroom observations. Prime will use the Marshall Teacher Evaluation Rubric to give staff a common vocabulary around excellent pedagogy. The Marshall Framework will provide ongoing feedback to teachers on their performance, and inform decisions on teachers' yearly renewals of contracts. The Marshall Rubric will be used as the basis for teachers' self-assessments and yearly improvement goals. Teachers will receive ongoing feedback across all six domains and will be held accountable for their performance in Domains A and C (Domain A: Planning and Preparation for Learning and Domain C: Delivery

of Instruction). The Principal will meet with each teacher before school opens to review the rubric and to set goals around three components within Domains A and C. During the school year, the Principal will conduct ongoing mini-observations, lasting 10-15 minutes. The Principal will aim to complete at least 3 mini-observations a day. All mini-observations are unannounced and are followed by immediate (within 24 hours) verbal feedback and brief notes to the teachers.

At the midyear check in and the end of year conference, both the principal and teacher complete ratings on the Marshall Rubric. The teacher and principal compare ratings and only discuss where ratings are not aligned. This sets up the conversation for the amendment of goals and end of year ratings. Prime teachers also conduct their own peer observations. At least twice a year, teachers from all Teaching Practices have the opportunity to formally observe one another, provide feedback against the Marshall Rubric, and, most importantly, engage in professional feedback conversations. Teachers will also maintain a portfolio of unit and lesson plans, conduct one-on-one reflections, and showcase knowledge of key teaching concepts. Prime expects all teachers to participate in ongoing Instructional Rounds, Collaborative Inquiry, and Kid Talk (see *Professional Development*) in order to ensure that Prime is an ever-growing, self-reflective learning community.

Personal Development: Personal development is assessed through twice-yearly 360 reviews from students, peers, and families, as well as through a personal reflection process detailing the ways in which teachers demonstrate personal growth. The 360 review process¹⁶ helps all teachers hold themselves accountable for Prime's goals and to Prime's culture of personalized learning¹⁷. The 360 process also helps enhance teacher's commitment taking a learning stance, self-reflection, and the cycle of continuous improvement.

Evaluation of the Board: Prime's Board will be assessed on its ability to meet its annual and multi-year goals. Each August, the Board will establish its annual goals, revise its multi-year goals, and determine its mid-year benchmarks. The goals will be informed by the Board's responsibility to oversee the school's financial, academic, and regulatory performance. During its December and June meetings (and more frequently if necessary), the Board will formally self-assess its progress toward achieving these goals. Board members will also partake in an individual self-assessment process. Board members set goals in August and will review their progress in December and June and will meet with the chairperson of the Board to discuss their progress. Should a situation arise where a Board member is not meeting his or her individual goals, the Chairperson will provide feedback and ensure that the appropriate steps for corrective action are taken.

Evaluation of Leadership: Based on feedback from NYSED, the Principal's performance at Prime will be evaluated annually by the Executive Director, in consultation with the Board of Trustees. This evaluation will be based on: Prime's performance in meeting academic goals; Prime's performance in meeting non-academic goals; Prime's overall student growth percentile score on State ELA and math exams; and the Principal's own performance in meeting his or her individual goals. The Executive Director will approve the Principal's individual goals and all individual goals

¹⁶ See Drago-Severson, E. (2009). *Leading adult learning: Supporting adult development in our schools*. Corwin Press.

¹⁷ See Farris-Berg, K., & Dirks-wager, E. J. (2012). *Trusting teachers with school success: What happens when teachers call the shots*. R&L Education.

will be based on prior evaluation, self-assessment data, and school review data. Likewise, the Board will annually evaluate the performance of the Executive Director on the following factors: Prime's academic performance and growth aligned with our achievement goals from Section IIa above; school climate as measured by surveys and attendance; financial health; and the Executive Director's performance on individuals goals.

Evaluation of School Programs and Initiatives: The school and its staff, under the guidance of the Principal, will assess each program and initiative in terms of how it will impact Prime's school-wide goal. Evaluative methods will take a number of forms ranging from qualitative evaluations such as pre- and post-program focus groups, interviews, and questionnaires to program evaluations involving quantitative methods that estimate the impact of various school programs on academic and non-academic measures such as attendance, retention, student learning outcomes, and student and family satisfaction survey results.

E: Professional Development

Professional Development at Prime is aligned to our mission of college- and career-readiness, healthy habits of mind and body, and expertise in creative or career passions. Before the school year begins, as part of a Summer Institute, teachers participate in a week-long Curriculum Retreat with multiple professional development sessions, provided by Expeditionary Learning, Eureka Math, JASON, Facing History, The National Equity Project (or similar) and Hochman Writing. In a second week, teachers will participate in differentiated professional development sessions around RtI strategies; best practices around special education inclusion and the ICT model; advisory through PowerTools for Progress; and Big Picture Learning for support in creating real-world Studio experiences. Teaching Practices will then spend two weeks working within and across Practices adapting the anchor curricula (see p. 16-22) to address English, math, social studies, and science standards, under the guidance and supervision of the Principal. Teachers will adapt unit and lesson plans, plan trips, modify/create assessments, and revise Common Core-aligned learning outcomes for all subjects. Studio specialists will work to design units in their specific domains.

Once the school year begins, Prime Core teachers will engage in a **daily team planning time**, where they can meet to assess student learning, reflect on lessons, and plan for future instruction. Our Principal will design a yearlong **Wednesday PD program** (See *Attachment 3b*) that will cover key topics around reinforcing Prime program elements, differentiation, services for special needs students, ongoing use of data, as well as a range of other standard topics. The principal will collect feedback on the efficacy of existing PD, as well as surveys to assess teacher-identified PD needs, which will be integrated into the overall program. In addition to the professional development opportunities listed above, Prime staff will participate in the following ongoing professional development structures:

Instructional Rounds¹⁸: Prime staff will use the practice of Instructional Rounds at least three times per year to uncover a school-wide problem of practice, develop a theory of action, and strategies to address the problem of practice. Through the use of classroom visits, students

¹⁸ See City, E. A., Elmore, R. F., Fiarman, S. E., & Teitel, L. (2009). *Instructional rounds in education: A network approach to improving teaching and learning*. Harvard Education Press. 8 Story Street First Floor, Cambridge, MA 02138.

shadowing techniques, and the use of protocols, staff begins to create systems of improvement to address the Prime’s instructional core.

Collaborative Inquiry: Teaching Practices analyze student work products and data results¹⁹ biweekly and on four dedicated “data days” to measure the impact of instruction on student learning. Teachers will improve instruction by following the inquiry process of analyzing data²⁰, researching expertise, and trying new strategies in a constant cycle of improvement.

Kid Talk: This weekly protocol, developed by the Urban Assembly, allows teachers to discuss specific students and their academic needs, develop action plans, and design outreach so that struggling students receive even more targeted, personalized support.

Prime’s professional development structure will be evaluated based on teacher feedback, including surveys, and classroom observations; the Principal will look for specific connections to work products developed during curriculum development time, or for teaching moves to reflect the data findings as discussed during various professional development structures.

F. Facilities

Securing an appropriate facility is a key priority for Prime and is the responsibility of the Executive Director. The facilities landscape entails a high degree of uncertainty, so we are using two strategies in parallel to secure a facility. In anticipation of the difficulty of acquiring a facility, we have recruited to our founding group multiple members with experience relevant both to co-locations and private facilities. Our proposed Board Chair, Tony Siddall, was the liaison to the NYCDOE for co-location approval during his time as Senior Director of Growth Strategy at Achievement First. Jonathan Skolnick, the proposed Executive Director, worked with the School Construction Authority and the Division of School Facilities as Director of Field Operations for School of One, a pilot program in the Office of Innovation at the NYCDOE. He led the location selection process and space redesign process for three NYC middle schools that required the redesign of 2,500 - 4,000 square feet of space at each location. Sara Sorbello, a proposed Trustee, is the Director of Educational Facilities Financing Center at LISC, a national leader in charter school facilities financing and development. We will apply to the NYCDOE for public space, but we will evaluate any potential co-located space to ensure that it meets our unique needs and that our presence has a net-positive impact on student learning and culture for all students in the building.

We have also already begun the process of evaluating private space for lease in CSD 13. In the event that our request for a public space is denied or is otherwise deemed inadvisable, the Prime Founding Team has identified several potential facilities that could be ready for occupancy in summer of 2016. We may have to move spaces in one or more years until we reach capacity in order to make the space work within our budget. With the guidance of charter school facilities experts on the Board and outside of the founding group, we will continue evaluating each of these potential facilities to determine the suitability of each. We anticipate spending around 15% of

¹⁹ See Bambrick-Santoyo, P. (2010). *Driven by data: A practical guide to improve instruction*. John Wiley & Sons.

²⁰ See National School Reform Faculty Harmony Education Center and Boudett, K. P., City, E., & Murnane, R. (2005). *Data Wise: A Step-by-Step Guide to Using Assessment Results to Improve Teaching and Learning*. Harvard Education Press

revenue on space in order to allocate maximum funding to instruction. Our space needs are summarized in the table below:

2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-Beyond
3 classrooms @ 800 sq ft	6 classrooms @ 800 sq ft	10 classrooms @ 800 sq ft
1 flex classroom @ 500 sq ft	2 flex classroom @ 500 sq ft	3 flex classrooms @ 500 sq ft
1 studio room for art, music, etc. @ 1000 sq ft	3 studio rooms for art, music, etc. @ 1000 sq ft	4 studio rooms for art, music, etc. @ 1000 sq ft
1 science lab @ 750 sq ft	2 science labs @ 750 sq ft	2 science lab @ 1000 sq ft
1 500 sq foot administrative office	1 700 sq foot administrative office	1 800 sq foot administrative office
1 Teaching Practice Room @ 500 sq ft	2 Teaching Practice spaces @ 500 sq ft	3 Teacher Practice spaces @ 500 sq ft
1 1,500 sq ft assembly/gym space	1 3000 sq ft assembly/gym space	1 4000 sq ft assembly/gym space
1,000 sq ft for bathrooms, storage, and miscellaneous	2000 sq ft for bathrooms, storage, and miscellaneous	2500 sq ft for bathrooms, storage, and miscellaneous
Total Square Feet: 6,650 SF/student: ~ 62	Total Square Feet: 17,000 SF/student: ~ 78	Total Square Feet: 24,300 sq ft SF/student: 75

The following table shows five potential options for locations we have identified:

Neighborhood	Lot Sq Ft	Building Sq Ft	Zoning	Available Sq Ft	Asking Price
Clinton Hill	9,900	34,490	C24/R74	whole building	\$40 PSF
Vinegar Hill	37,492	64,200	R6/M1-3		~\$35 PSF
Prospect Heights	62,000	62,000	R6B		~\$35 PSF
Prospect Heights	11,000	35,338	R6B		~\$35 PSF
Bedford-Stuyvesant	21,000	77,520	C24/R6B	17,000 SF	\$35 PSF
Bedford-Stuyvesant	5,300	14,760	R6A		~\$35 PSF

The proposed Prime Board of Trustees will work with our Facilities Chair to create a Facilities plan that addresses the following needs pursuant to our particular model: Large flexible classroom spaces to ensure that students can learn in a variety of environments within a single Teacher Practice; A dedicated science lab that has required space for hands-on labs and lab tables; Studio spaces large enough to accommodate art projects (sculpture, design, 3D printers, etc.) as well as flexible performance space; spaces for each of the Teaching Practices to meet together as teams to ensure that the school fosters collaboration rather than isolation among the staff. In order to ensure that our space has the above functionality, we will work with the landlord or the NYCDOE Department of Facilities and/or Construction Authority to build out the space appropriately. We

have budgeted \$100,000 towards this purpose. We have been working with CPEX, a real estate firm that can connect us with landlords who will either pay for the build-out themselves or help us to create a reasonable budget for whatever build-out is necessary. The above prices per square foot are the list price, but based on prior experience, interested landlords will rent them for ~\$5 less per square foot. In addition, we will ensure that whatever space we obtain is fully compliant with all regulations concerning handicapped accessibility, safety regarding fire code, occupancy rules, and other issues related to the health and well-being of our students and staff.

Changing Facilities: We are working with CPEX to determine a plan for the best possible leasing arrangements given that we will triple in size over the first three years of operation. While our preference is to find a building that we can grow into over time, leasing a greater percentage of the site in each year or subletting excess space during the first two years in ways that do not negatively impact our financial condition, it is possible that we will need to move facilities in either Year 2 or Year 3 to ensure that we are not over-paying for underutilized space in a facility that is too large for our needs. At the same time, there are costs, both financial and otherwise, inherent in any move, and in order to minimize disruption to our families we do not want any family to have to change locations more than once during their time at Prime.

Purchasing a Facility: Over time, it may be in our interest to purchase a facility in order to reduce costs beyond Year 5. At capacity, we will be spending approximately \$850,500 in rental costs each year, and so we intend, if possible, to set aside significant funds (approximately \$500,000 each year, starting in Year 3) to build up equity to support the purchase of a private facility that meets our specifications. The proposed Prime Public Board of Trustees has extensive knowledge of the range of options available for charter schools to finance their facilities (non-profit Community Development Financial Institutions, non-profit charter school real estate developers, federal programs such as the New Markets Tax Credit, the tax-exempt bond market, etc.) and will provide oversight to ensure a sustainable facilities burden should Prime Public decide to purchase a facility.

G. Insurance

Prior to starting operations, the DoO will evaluate insurance coverage that tends to meet the following baselines to meet any applicable requirements, including those of authorizing agencies.

Coverage	Limit
General Liability	\$1,000,000/occurrence \$2,000,000-3,000,000 aggregate
Workers' Compensation	Statutory Limits under NYS Law
Employee Benefits Liability	\$1,000,000
Automobile/Bus Liability	\$1,000,000
Umbrella/Excess Liability	\$5,000,000 - \$10,000,000
Employment Practices Liability	\$1,000,000
Educators' Legal Liability	\$1,000,000
Directors & Officers	\$1,000,000
Sexual Misconduct Liability	\$1,000,000 occurrence / \$2,000,000 aggregate
Crime / Fidelity Coverage (Bonds)	\$500-750,000
Property/Building/Equip./Lease and Boiler Machinery	TBD based on school location and

Coverage	building
Catastrophic Student Accident Coverage \$1,000,000 - \$5,000,000	
Student Accident Coverage	\$25,000
Catastrophic Student Accident Coverage	\$1,000,000 - \$5,000,000

H. Health, Food, and Transportation Services

Health Services: Prime’s health services program will ensure that each student has a certificate of immunization that complies with §2164 of the Public Health Law at the time of registration or within the acceptable time frame after enrollment (subject to exceptions permitted under the law for medical contraindications and religious exemptions). Prior to the first day of school, Prime staff will receive training regarding school health policies and procedures, including policies on the storage and administration of students’ medications, first aid provisions, and protocols for health emergencies. All faculty and staff will have access to first aid resources with at least two staff members being certified in First Aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Prime will also maintain appropriate access to automated external defibrillators (AED) as required by §917 of the Education Law and ensure that two or more staff members are certified in their operation and use. Prior to beginning each school year, Prime will secure parental consent to identify students with health risks and provide accommodations to faculty and staff when appropriate. If Prime is housed within a NYCDOE facility, the school will seek to take part in the existing health services program by contracting the facility’s existing school nurse. In that event, the school nurse will be responsible for supervising the disbursement of medication, treating students who are sick or injured, and maintaining records and correspondence in secure facilities. If Prime is housed in a private facility, the school will seek to contract a school nurse to provide similar health services in accordance with §2853(4) (a) and §912 of the Education Law.

Food Services: Prime intends to utilize the Office of Food and Nutrition Services of the NYCDOE to provide breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks to students. All students enrolling at Prime will complete School Meals Application forms required for participation in federal free and reduced-price breakfast, lunch, and snack programs. Based on current demographic information, Prime assumes that approximately 73% of the student body will be eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The school will comply with all applicable guidelines with regard to nutritional values, meal pricing, determination of eligibility, and reporting requirements. If Prime co-locates in a NYCDOE facility, the school will seek to participate in the existing food services program. If Prime is in a private facility, the school will contract with the NYCDOE to provide hot meals if there are sufficient kitchen resources available. If not, the school will arrange for cold meals to be provided either in the classroom or other designated common areas. In that case, Prime will use a refrigerator for short-term storage of milk, cold meals, and perishables.

Transportation Services: Under the direction of the Business Manager, Prime will provide transportation services for all students in accordance with §2853(4) (b) and §3635 of the Education Law. Prime will submit a Transportation Request Form to the New York City Department of Education Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT). At present, the OPT provides the following services: (i) Grade 6 students who live less than one mile from school will be eligible for

a half-fare MetroCard; (ii) Grade 6 students who live more than one mile from school will be eligible for a full-fare MetroCard; and (iii) Grades 7-8 students who live more than one and a half miles from the school will receive full-fare MetroCards. All transportation options for special education students and students with disabilities will be provided in accordance with their IEP mandates and in accordance with all local and federal laws. Prime will also earmark funds for student transportation for field trips and other extracurricular programming and events.

I. Family and Community Involvement

Prime is a school that is grounded in the needs of families in CSD13, and thus we will operate with family and community involvement playing integral part in our students' success and our collective satisfaction. Prime strives to build a loving community for its students, and also encourages every student's family to be a part of the school. One of Prime's founders is a CSD13 parent, as is at least one of our founding board members.

Initial Family Involvement: We have and will continue to hold family and community engagement meetings every 6-8 weeks prior to opening. We will use these meetings, as we have in the past, as an opportunity to conduct focus groups where we discover more about what parents want and need for their school. In addition, prior to opening, a Parent Steering Committee will convene and provide recommendations on our proposed model and serve as a resource for further developing and strengthening partnerships with community-based organizations, which will be utilized for Prime Studio. We will also create a Family Recruitment Committee made up of parents of 5th graders who intend to enroll their children in our founding 6th grade class. We will also ensure that at least one parent, community organization, and/or the Board of Trustees Family/Community Engagement Committee chair attends our teacher interviews whenever possible so that parents can become a part of the process for hiring staff at the school. Over this summer, we sent an online survey to families and local organizations who have expressed interest in Prime so that we can collect more quantifiable data about family needs. Prior to opening, we will engage local organizations (see examples below) as partners for our Prime Studio, the experiential expertise learning opportunities that students will engage with each day.

Post-Opening Involvement: Prime families will be engaged even prior to Day One. Prior to the first day of school, the Principal will facilitate an intake process for each family, making recommendations and engaging in dialogue with families around which Teaching Practice is best suited to their student (there will be three options per grade level). We will host an opening celebration that our families and community partners help to design and facilitate. Our Studio Specialists will survey families to serve as volunteers during Prime Studio. We will also host 4 parent-teacher conference days throughout the year (See *Attachment 3b*) and we will survey parents twice a year on academic support, school climate and culture, and parental involvement. The leadership team will use this data to improve parent engagement for the following semester.

Responsiveness: Families will receive email communication and will receive responses within 24-hours; this responsiveness will be mandatory and will be a written policy for all Prime team members. Student achievement data reports will be available via an online portal. Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled four times per year, along with two student exhibitions (Winter and Spring). We will ensure that parents establish a Parent Association, which will meet monthly to air

concerns and suggestions publicly. We see parents as critical to the ongoing improvement of our model, and we believe that the entire family, rather than just the student, enrolls in our school.

Inclusion: Families will be welcome anytime at Prime, to sit in on classes, use school space, etc. We will organize volunteer opportunities (particularly for any field trips and college visits) and fundraising events that involve all families and community partners. We anticipate that family involvement will also strengthen and expand our community partnerships for Prime Studio expert immersion opportunities. We will work to make our space available to the community after school hours. In addition, we believe that parents need support to ensure that we are seamlessly extending learning into the home. To that end, we will implement parent workshops on particular academic areas of focus during which we can give parents tools to help their children improve their critical thinking and problem-solving ability. Many of our Practices will use online learning programs that are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and we will help parents understand how to login to these programs so that they can assist their children when they are not in school. We will also share our Personal Development curriculum with families so that they can support their children's personal development with a common vocabulary outside the school day.

Partnerships: We plan to form codified partnerships with community organizations including the Bed-Stuy YMCA, the MLK Strivers After School Program, BRIC Arts | Music, the Brooklyn Museum, along with local independent professionals including physicians, attorneys, legislators, designers, musicians, journalists, etc. Prime will also seek to build strong partnerships with neighboring schools. During meetings with CSD13 Barbara Freeman, we shared our commitment to engaging local district elementary schools that do not have an in-district middle school to refer their 5th grade families to, and to forming close principal relationships with existing and new district middle schools to both share our successful practices and to learn from long-standing school communities. We will also seek to create PD partnerships so that our teachers and teachers from partner schools in the district come together to model and workshop practices and lessons.

J. Financial Management

Prime's financial management policies and procedures will be designed to ensure fiscal responsibility and appropriate management of private and public funding. Prime's Board will have ultimate responsibility for approving fiscal policies and providing academic, fiscal, and regulatory oversight of the school (see *Attachment 5b*). The Executive Director will have ultimate responsibility for the school's financial management but this will be the responsibility of the DoO under the direction of the Board. The DoO will oversee the school's financial functioning with support from Charter School Business Management or a similar financial and accounting management firm. This includes preparation of Prime's annual budget, to be conducted by a contracted financial consultant. The Board will then evaluate and vote on the proposed budget. The Executive Director, DoO, and Principal will review actual expenses regularly to ensure that spending remains consistent with the budget, and will provide updates to the Board on a monthly basis. The Board will ensure that the budget supports the school's mission and educational priorities, that the financial management plan is comprehensive, and that each Board and staff member upholds his/her fiduciary and other responsibilities. Prime will continue to consult with Charter School Business Management and/or other third parties to secure another perspective on all policies or procedures including Board support, site visits, and back-office consultation. Procedural best

practices include (i) closing books each month on a timely basis; (ii) posting transactions to a general ledger; (iii) internal spot audits; (iv) monthly budget reports with budget-to-actual reconciliations; (v) inventory of assets, including technology and equipment; and (vi) hiring an external firm to conduct audits (as discussed below).

Annual Financial Reporting and Independent Financial Audit: The Executive Director, in coordination with Charter School Business Management or another similar financial and accounting firm is responsible for closing the fiscal year on June 30 and for ensuring that Prime prepares timely and accurate financial statements. The Board of Trustees will select and hire an independent certified public accountant to ensure that the school’s financial records adhere to Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAPs) and to conduct an annual financial audit (which shall be reviewed by the Board, including its Finance & Audit Committee). This audit will ensure that we submit all financial reports required by NYSED, including a statement of financial position, a statement of cash flows, a statement of activities, and a schedule of functional expenses. The audit will also include a report containing any significant findings or material weakness in the financial processes of the school. This audit will be conducted in accordance with applicable accounting standards and will be included in the school’s Annual Report, which will be made public on Prime’s website.

Processing Payroll: The Business Manager will first develop an Excel spreadsheet containing the school’s entire payroll. The contents of this spreadsheet must be approved by the Principal. After the Principal’s approval has been obtained, the data from the spreadsheet is input into the ADP system, creating an official Payroll Register Preview. The ADP Payroll Register Preview is again approved by the Principal. Once approved, the ADP Payroll Register Preview as well as the original Excel spreadsheet are filed in the Payroll binder. This process is repeated every pay period, with any and all changes to payroll recipients or amounts reflected in the spreadsheet. The school uses an outside service, ADP, to process its payroll. Please note, in processing payroll for any independent contractor, a W-9 form must be filled out prior to issuance of the first payment for services provided. Payroll Processing is comprised of the following:

Responsibility	Performed by
Obtaining/Processing Payroll Information	Business Manager
Computing Wages	ADP
Performing Pay Period Activities	ADP
Preparing various annual payroll tax returns	ADP
Preparing 1099’s*	Business Manager

*for independent contractors, LLPs and LLCs only

Pay periods are semi-monthly in length. Both salaried and hourly employees are paid on the same schedule. Employees will be paid on the 15th and 30th of each month. In the event that the 15th or 30th of the month falls on the weekend, the pay date will be the preceding business day. In February, pay will be distributed on the 28th, or the next business day. All employees are paid on a 12-month schedule, regardless of whether they are 12-month employees or 11-month employees. A pay schedule will be circulated during staff pre-service for the school year.

Cutting Checks: In order to maintain the highest standard of security for any expenses paid from the school, the Business Manager will maintain all blank check stock in a locked location. All checks will be pre-numbered, voucher style, containing one stub for the vendor (attached to all outgoing checks) and one to be filed by the Business Manager with all supporting disbursement documents. Checks will be run on a bi-weekly basis, and vendors are paid based on terms of the invoices, as recorded within the system. Check preparation and signatures are prepared not later than the due date, consistent with available discounts if available.

The Principal, DoO, Treasurer of the Board, and the Board Chair are signatories on the checking account. The Business Manager must obtain the Principal's signature for checks below \$2,000.00. For checks above \$2,000.00 and under \$10,000.00, the Principal and DoO both sign the check. Checks above \$10,000.00 require signature by both the Principal and the Treasurer of the Board. In the event the Principal, DoO, or Treasurer of the Board is not available for a signature, the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees will be able to sign checks in place of one of those individuals. At the time the check is signed, any required signatories should review the supporting documentation to ensure they are signing a check for the correct amount and to the correct payee. They should also initial and date each page of the supporting documentation to indicate that the item was received and appropriate payment has been disbursed. The Business Manager staples the check stub or copy of the signed check to the top of the Cash Disbursement packet and files it in the Cash Disbursements Binder in check number order, starting with the first check after July 1st and ending with the last check on June 30th. The Business Manager mails the check to the vendor awaiting payment. Electronic fund transfers may also be used, where the same authorizations as checks will be obtained using an Electronic Payment Authorization form, see below for details. In no event shall an authorized signatory approve an invoice, execute a check, or authorize a disbursement of any kind, payable to him/herself.

Managing Student Information: The DoO is tasked with the responsibility for developing and implementing systems for student information management, including enrollment, attendance and eligibility for additional services such as free lunch, special education, and ELL status. To do so, s/he will conduct an in-depth procurement process for a robust student information management systems and implement protocols for the collection, storage, data entry, and protection of student records in the school's system and also ATS, so that Prime will be consistently compliant with the regulations of the Federal Education Rights Privacy Act. S/he will conduct regularly scheduled and unannounced audits of school data. If needed, Prime will also engage consultants who can provide a selective review of the school's data systems and its accuracy in information and data collection.

K. Budget and Cash Flow

Our budget is built on conservative projections for revenue and fairly liberal projections for our expenses. This will allow us the flexibility to navigate any unanticipated financial situations that should arise.

Priorities: Our priority is to recruit and retain high-caliber teachers who can have a transformative effect on student learning. To that end, we fund six core academic, three non-core academic, and one Special Education teacher in the first year, for ~108 students. This represents an 11:1 teacher

to student ratio. In addition, in order to ensure that the Principal of the school becomes a true instructional leader who can support the Teaching Practices described above, we have a three-part leadership team that consists of an Executive Director who oversees external relations, fundraising, expansion, and research and development, as well as a Director of Operations who is responsible for all other operational and financial responsibilities. We also invest significantly into professional development specifically geared to develop the professional learning community we seek to fully achieve our mission.

Conservative Estimates of Revenue: Given that we do not yet know our student population, we have assumed that no one in our SPED population is above the 60% funding range of an additional \$19,049 per student, which lowers the funding we project to receive. We have also assumed a lower student population (108) than our projected enrollment table. Finally, we have assumed only \$25,000 in total fundraising and contributions, though we have applied for a \$100,000 NewSchools Venture Fund grant and are in discussions with several other funders.

Estimates of Expenses: We have assumed fairly high expenses in order to ensure that we have flexibility in the event of any reduced revenue. For example, our budget assumes high teacher salaries (averaging \$75,000 for all core academic teachers), a 1:1 student-to-laptop ratio, all teachers using 10 full personal days requiring substitute teachers, full nursing expenses, a low student-teacher ratio, particularly in Year One, utilities and maintenance fees associated with a triple-net lease, a tripartite leadership model, and a liberal application of funds to savings in order to address unplanned contingencies. In addition, we have assumed throughout that we may need to lease private space, and for such private space we have assumed \$35 per square foot, which is \$3-5 per square foot higher than estimates of what *negotiated* prices might be based on information from reputable real estate brokers (the prices listed in the p. 51 chart are list prices, which are often higher). We also assume \$100,000 in renovation costs for private space split between the planning year and Year 1 (See *Attachment 9*). We put aside money each year, according to regulations, in the event of dissolution, and have assumed that starting in Year 3 we can begin to put aside significant funds to ramp up our education program and potentially pay for a school building to lower our long-term expenses beyond the five-year budget window.

Meeting Potential Budget and Cash Flow Challenges: In the event that we need to adjust our budget given changes to our revenues and expenses, we will institute several steps to assure solvency. First, our leadership team and Board will receive budget forecasts at least 1 quarter in advance so that we can make modest adjustments without interrupting our education program. Second, we have built into our budget several key areas where we can quickly address any shortfalls: enroll additional students to our cap; delay the launch of our 1:1 laptop model; reduce the amount of funds transferred into reserves in Years 3 to 5; slightly lower teacher and administrative salaries, or reduce or eliminate supplemental nursing expenses given that the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is mandated by law to provide nursing services to public charter schools in New York City, as required by Education Law §912 and 8 NYCCR §136.2. These changes alone will save more than \$70,000 in our launch year, which is traditionally the financially tightest year for charter schools.

L. Pre-Opening Plan

Category	Task Description	Start & End Dates	Responsibility (See Key)
Governance	Ratify bylaws and code of ethics	Dec '15	BOT
Governance	Obtain insurance for Board of Trustees, file IRS Form SS-4, apply for unemployment number, create FOIL policy	Dec '15	BOT
Operations	Sign up for administrative access to NYSED TEACH system	Dec '15	P
Governance	Appoint Board officers, finalize Board calendar, conduct first meeting	Sep '15	BOT
Operations	Obtain 501c3 status and establish bank account	Dec '15	DoO
Finance	Contract with a financial consultant to establish financial systems	Dec '15	DoO
Finance	Approve fiscal policies and procedures	Jan '16	BOT
HR	Recruit, interview, and hire Business Manager	Feb '16	DoO
HR	Recruit, interview, and hire DoO	Dec '16	ED
Facilities	Negotiate and finalize facility lease (applies to private facility only)	'16	BOT
Facilities	Identify renovation needs, secure contractor, develop timeline	Mar '16	DoO
Technology	RFP for technology infrastructure	Mar '16	DoO
Recruitment	Recruit students: finalize and disseminate materials, hold informational sessions and community service events, home visits	1/15-3/16	LT
Recruitment	Secure lottery system preferences, conduct lottery, inform parents	Apr '16	LT
Finance	Approve budget for FY 2016-17	Apr '16	BOT
HR	Recruit school staff: draft job descriptions, post positions, interview candidates, check references	1/16-4/16	LT
HR	Finalize and distribute staff handbook/personnel policies	4/16-6/16	LT
Operations	Finalize and distribute school calendar		
Operations	RFP for food services: coordinate vendor evaluation of kitchen capacity, establish food service policies	Apr '16	DoO
HR	Hire school staff: salary negotiations and offer letters	2/16-6/16	LT
Academics	Research, secure, and develop curricular resources; create scope and sequences and unit plans aligned with state standards and CCLS	2/16-6/16	P
Transportation	Secure transportation: contact DOE OPT, coordinate bus routes and stops, inform parents of options	4/16-6/16	DoO
Culture	Finalize and distribute student handbook	4/16-6/16	LT

Technology	Install technology infrastructure	5/16-6/16	DoO
Operations	Secure insurance policies		DoO
Facilities	Obtain Certificate of Occupancy	6/16	DoO
Culture	Conduct open houses for admitted students	6/16	LT
Operations	Obtain student records from parents, previous schools, etc.	4/16-6/16	LT
Operations	Contract with Related Service Providers	5/16-7/16	DoO
PD	Prepare Summer Staff Development Institute materials	5/16-6/16	LT
Special Ed	Secure IEPs and student records	6/16-7/16	DoO
	Create a draft SAVE plan, submit to NYSED	6/16-7/16	DoO
Operations	Develop health/safety handbook, secure first-aid resources, train staff	6/16-7/16	DoO
Financials	Complete Initial Statement of Financial Controls	7/16	DoO
Operations	Finalize annual school goals	7/16	ED

Key: BOT = Board of Trustees LT = Leadership Team ED = Executive Director, DoO = Director of Operations, P = Principal

M. Dissolution Plan

Prime has budgeted \$75,000 in case the school is dissolved. The funds will be used to pay for related legal and audit expenses. In relation to the dissolution, the school's assets will be used to satisfy the school's debts in accordance with NYS Education Law §220. The school's remaining assets will be transferred to the NYCDOE/CSD 13. If the school closes, the Board will adopt a closure plan in accordance with law and any Closing Procedures specified by the NYS Education Department. The Board would then form a team of Trustees to oversee the closure and would work directly with the Principal and school staff to develop and implement the closure plan. The Principal would manage the day-to-day dissolution process and implement the closure plan approved by the Board (or, if the Principal is unable to carry out these responsibilities for any reason, the Board will select another full time staff member to implement the closure plan). Of course, the closure plan will ensure that parents and legal guardians of the school are informed as soon as possible about any final decisions regarding the school's closure. Such notification would be made within one week following the Board's adoption of the closure plan. In addition, the school will convene at least two public meetings for all parents and legal guardians, as well as the larger school community, in order to provide information on the closure and on the students' options for other schools in the area. The first community meeting will be held within 10 business days of the adoption of the Board's closure plan. In addition, a list of students attending the school will be sent to CSD 13. Within 30 business days of the closing plan's adoption, the school will (i) transfer student records to the district; (ii) notify the parents and legal guardians of enrolled students of the transfer of such records; and (iii) send copies of each child's records to the child's parents or legal guardians. The school will take responsible steps to protect records and information that may personally identify students. The school's staff will also work with students and their families to identify appropriate schools with programs best suited to meet individual students' needs and to assist the students in enrolling in such schools. The staff and Board will work diligently to assist students' transitions to other schools in a manner that minimizes the disruption to student learning.