

Prospectus

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brooklyn Arrow Charter School (BACS) will address the challenges at-risk students face by building a school that is intentional about shaping students' development in multiple ways. By adopting a holistic approach to instruction our school will prepare students to navigate the challenges they face both inside and outside the school environment. Our desire to effectively address the needs of students starts with this broad foundation and will be reinforced in concrete ways by: maintaining a demanding, content-rich curriculum and a unique approach to character development and community service; providing a full time instructional mentorship program; working with parents and families, community members and organizations to bridge some of the barriers that impede learning; and providing excellent school staff and board leadership models.

BACS will close the achievement gap, prepare students with a comprehensive education and ensure every child has meaningful formal years of rigorous preparation.

BACS is committed to a mastery learning philosophical approach bridging the digital divide, ensuring that the best learning practices are demonstrated in the classroom, and increasing educational opportunities for at-risk students. BACS is based upon the philosophy of educating next door to the student's home, individualized instructional support, flexible core time, and master team-teaching support that will allow academically and economically disadvantaged students, at-risk to succeed, a chance to excel within the New York City public school system.

The mastery learning model BACS selected has been successfully implemented in other schools. The model designed by highly recognized educators and district leaders is designed to support the advancement of student performance, founded on mastery learning through Benjamin Bloom's research, and supported by Thomas Guskey's research in this field. This framework is selected because of the results it produces, as well as the need to recognize that at-risk kids are not at the expected performance levels when they enroll in a school. Most students will choose to spend very minimal time working outside the classroom on homework or lesson expectations. Therefore, BACS has collaborated with education leaders that have designed and established an expectation that learning will use time as a variable at all times in the learning process.

Mastery of a rigorous standards-based curriculum and success at performance-based assessment requires that students be engaged in active learning and higher-order thinking skills as a routine part of their school experience. For all age groups, our teachers choose instructional methods that infuse growth in thinking and construction of meaning as part of the academic experience. Teaching methods and student tasks used to develop thinking competencies focus on three arching frameworks developed by Ron Richhart's Project Zero from Harvard Graduate School of Education.

The frameworks of instruction are:

Disposition – "a tendency to act in a certain way"

Skill – "experiences and training to be able to do something well"

Understanding – a "belief or opinion" and "ability to explain"

To affect our charter school's mission and education philosophy, our teachers, through the use of a blended delivery system, will be able to reach out effectively to students of varying core competency levels, readiness, interests, and experiences in the world. In our classrooms, teachers will begin where students are based upon individualized learning pathways. Teachers will deliver lesson instruction, establish relevancy, use one-to-one technology for independent instruction in the lessons and ensure academic frustration levels are minimized in the learning process. They will accept and build upon the premise that learners differ in important ways.

One of the core principles of our educational philosophy is to enable the students to take ownership of their own education, engage in choices related to their own learning, and become lifelong learners. Therefore, every student, in addition to routine school selected objectives, will have personal learning goals and seminar opportunities. Such goals, selected by the student in consultation with teacher and parent, will focus on choices students see as valuable or interesting to learn for future use after graduation.

Technology is seen as an environment in our classrooms as we prepare students for the Information Age. We see the technology as the third motivator in a classroom along with the teacher and parent. It is a critical component for us to have as part of the active learning routine in each classroom for motivation and differentiated support. Our classrooms will have networked student computer workstations at a one-to-one ratio with Internet and worldwide web access, on-line access to the media center electronic card catalog, on-line access to the school's CD-ROM collection of reference resources, student e-mail on an in-house network, and access to the school's instructional software collection. The protection of students from inappropriate information will be filtered and spammed as a prerequisite.

We believe that the teachers, technology and community partners in our charter school can work to achieve our school's mission and goals by providing quality instruction for the students. We are confident that these instructional methodologies we have chosen will work to have students become successful learners and prepared for post-secondary rigor and application.

Students will have access to web-based learning support 24-hours per day for pacing support in independent learning portions of the lessons. Our teachers will engage in instructional methodologies as part of their methods to align instruction with the learning needs of students. Students, working in small flexible learning teams, will rotate based on teacher and student developed schedules. For example, a small group may be working with a teacher in a directed learning activity while other groups work on personal learning projects cooperatively agreed upon by student, teacher, and parent, while others work on technology supported instruction. If necessary, groups of students who are significantly behind grade level will receive accelerated learning to bring them to grade level.

Our charter school will operate under the oversight of a board of trustees, which initially will include a five member founding group. The founding group members bring expertise to the board in these key areas: K-12 education, parent involvement/community organizations, public relations, workforce development, business, strategic planning, financial management, public policy and fundraising. Subsequently, as the terms of office of the founding group members expire, the board will select new members carefully considering a balance in the areas of expertise needed on the board, through a nomination process as defined in the bylaws.

II. STUDENT POPULATION

A. Student Enrollment

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Kindergarten	60	60	75	75	75
1 st	60	60	75	75	75
2 nd	60	60	75	75	75
3 rd		60	75	75	75
4 th			75	75	75
5 th			75	75	75
6 th			75	75	75
7 th				75	75
8 th					75

B. Target Populations

The goals for the proposed Brooklyn Arrow Charter School are rigorous and include all of those that are mandatory for charter schools as per the New York City charter school requirements and they meet the federal No Child Left Behind Annual Yearly Progress benchmarks. Additional goals have been established which include alternative/internal assessment indicators and school-specific non-academic indicators for areas such as attendance (95%), primary literacy proficiency (75%), parent satisfaction (80%), and financial viability and compliance.

A large percentage of these children are from the neighborhoods adjacent to Brooklyn Tabernacle and the Downtown Learning Center (DLC), from poor and working poor families, where parents speak limited or no English and who themselves have little or no education. The population served in surrounding schools has a wide range of poverty and diversity. The poverty range is 28-92 percent and the minority population is 40-97 percent. Schools also have a wide range of performance results within District 15 that range from highly successful "A" rated schools scoring in the 96 percent range to schools that are restructuring due to poor performance. The low scores in ELA in the district are 21.7 in 3rd grade and 28.4 in 6th grade. The math performance has low scores of 42.8 in 3rd grade and 16.7 in 6th grade. The student ELL population is 15.63% and compounded with a free lunch rate of 71.3%. To establish an educational program that meets the needs of these students, we propose to build a unique philosophical model and work with teachers, students, families and community partners supporting the philosophy and instructional model endorsed by the planning team of Brooklyn Arrow.

The DLC has served over 4000 families in creating environments where adults can become educated. These programs range from GED programs and diplomas to working with adults who have basic literacy needs and learning to read is the most important part of their life at this time. Evenings are used within the DLC to support the community as an outreach center focused on education and family services serving the poor.

It is the policy of the BACS to locate and identify any child whose parents or guardians contact or enroll the child in the Charter School and who may have a disability and be in need of special education and related services, regardless of the severity of the disability, in accordance

with the Charter School's procedures as reflected in the Charter School's Policy and Procedure Handbook.

BACS is responsible for providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE), by direct and indirect services to all students with disabilities within the age group described in the charter application, who fall within our jurisdiction and are therefore served by the school, with the assistance of the New York State Department of Education - Special Programs, the New York City Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Center (RSE-TASC), the Early Intervention Program, and other public and private agencies in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens. Regardless of the severity of the disability, BACS will make every effort to locate, identify and evaluate those individuals, as well as refer to the appropriate agency any child or young person, age 3-21, outside the age group served by the BACS who may have a disability.

A. Community Awareness – Methods of dissemination of information to the public (including homeless, highly mobile, residential, home-schooled and private school students) concerning services offered to all birth-through-twenty-one individuals with disabilities include:

1. Participating in dissemination of information through a public network which includes local public agencies, school districts, and other community and state agencies and facilities that provide services to the handicapped;
2. Providing information through the media, including radio, newspapers and television, regarding availability of services;
3. Determining which individuals are currently receiving special education and related services and which individuals are not currently receiving special education and related services;
4. Identifying individuals with disabilities who may or may not be in school and who may need special education and referring the family to the appropriate educational facility or agency;
5. Referring individuals ages 0-3 to a local early intervention program for possible evaluation;
6. Referring school-age adults, (18 through 21 years of age) with suspected disabilities, when located, to an appropriate agency serving that specific age group and need;
7. Reviewing this process on a yearly basis, updating staff as to on-going "child find" activities implemented in the community;
8. Maintaining confidentiality of all personally identifiable information used and collected in this system in the same manner that other records associated with special education are maintained.

B. Responsible staff - The school administrator or designee is responsible for implementation and direction of the Child Find program, as well as annually identifying any other staff members who will participate in the organization and implementation of the Child Find program.

C. Collaboration with Early Intervention Programs - The school will develop a relationship with the local public and private agencies in support of Early Intervention Programs.

- D. Collaboration with adult services agencies** - The school will develop and maintain a relationship with local public and private agencies for referral purposes for individuals aged 18--21 who may be eligible for services but are not within the age limits of the charter.
- E. Referral** - Any students of an age addressed by the school program who are screened and found to be eligible for evaluation by an appropriately certified examiner under the Individuals with Disabilities Act are referred for that evaluation, using referral procedures adopted by the school.
- F. Transfer students** - Students transferring to the Charter School who have been served by special education services in a previous school district will be identified during the enrollment process through enrollment questionnaires and an interview with the parents. The special education coordinator will contact the sending school to verify special education eligibility and to request copies of the special education records. The special education coordinator may also ask for a schedule of classes in which the student was enrolled at the sending school to be faxed. This schedule can be used, prior to the arrival of the special education records, for appropriate educational placement. The special education director will be responsible for scheduling the transfer ARD meeting within 30 days, as required by state law.

At the transfer ARD meeting, the committee will discuss the current IEP and make any needed changes to benefit the student's education, being sure to inform the parents of rights they have as parents of a student with a disability.

When a student transfers from the BACS and enrolls in another school, BACS will forward copies of the student's current ARD document, Full and Individual Evaluation, additional test reports and Eligibility Reports within 30 days of the request from the receiving school. No parent consent is required for the transfer of this information when the school requesting this information is a public school and the information is being requested for the purpose of development of the student's educational program. The receiving school must make this request on an official school form.

The processes to be followed by the proposed charter school that will comply with the data reporting requirements of the IDEA [34 CFR 300.642]

BACS will protect all personally identifiable student data. Data that must be publicly reported will be reported in a manner that does not result in disclosure of data identifiable to individual children. A parent or guardian who believes that information found in the education records collected, maintained, or used by the Charter School is inaccurate or misleading or violates the privacy or other rights or the child may require the Charter School to amend the information in the records it maintains.

The processes to be followed by the proposed charter school that will ensure compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and IDEA regarding confidential student records (e.g. notice to parents of rights, record access log, training of personnel, maintenance of student records, and official records)

The standard learning model, used in many schools our projected population have attended, may be characterized by: students working from their school or home, predetermined class size, one teacher per group of students, non-flexible lengths of periods or instructional segments, common assignments for all, predispositions about students from teachers, minimal variation in instruction based on academic understanding, and the lack of use of time as a variable in learning. This model proves to be impractical on many levels, for many at-risk students.

Class size will be manageable, maintained at 12 students for each teacher. Teacher teams will organize classroom instruction to provide each student with a strong foundation in standards-based core subject areas, and instruction in character education. In the mastery model every student will be expected to master the standards-based curriculum and grade level expectations for each subject.

To prepare all students to meet state graduation requirements, teachers and students will engage in strategies that will enable them to successfully approach new learning situations and to complete school successfully. The BACS strategies will be used to enhance learning and comprehension of skills or text; to integrate new information with previous knowledge; and to recall information or skills for application in both familiar and new situations.

The director, master teachers, and instructors will analyze the results of pre and post assessments as well as the previous year's statewide assessments. Data will be gathered at the beginning of each school year on every student. The data will be disaggregated to look at the various NCLB student categories and their performance. Along with the NCLB analysis, a cluster and item analysis will be carried out to look at the performance of students on various clusters and objectives for all the tested areas. This kind of data drilling will help teachers to focus on the skills that are lacking in students and to identify the best instructional strategies to address such deficiencies.

Once the data is analyzed, the director will create a roster with all the students and their performance on the clusters/skills. This will not only enable the teacher to group students based on their weaknesses/strengths but also to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the students as a unit. This will in turn help in the selection of appropriate instructional strategies to address the needs of students. Along with the aforementioned analysis, the standards-based assessment unit tests in reading, mathematics, science and social studies, will assess student performance during the school year on a frequent and continuous basis as measured against this baseline data.

The director, assisted by the master teachers, will place issues related to the results of these assessments on the agendas of the bi-weekly staff development sessions and RtI teams for discussions about how to improve instruction in the school. In this manner, our assessment program will provide valid, reliable, and timely information for teachers to modify instruction, select appropriate modes of classroom activities, monitor student progress, and use assessment results effectively.

BACS will adhere to the New York City requirements for promotion, which are listed for Grades 3-8. For Kindergarten – Grade 2, we will use similar requirements.

For Kindergarten – Grade 1 we will only retain students in grade level who have multiple criteria including: (1) lack of achievement in designated promotion standards as evidenced by student work, teacher observation, grades and performance on school-administered standardized tests; and (2) have an attendance rate below 90%.

For Grades 3-8 we will only retain students in a grade level who have multiple criteria including: (1) lack of achievement in designated promotion standards as evidenced by student work, teacher observation and grades; (2) lack of achievement at or above Proficiency Level 2 on New York City and New York State standardized assessments in Language Arts and/or Mathematics; or for English Language Learners exempt from testing in English, lack of achievement of the grade-specific established English LAB-R or LAB-R Reading Comprehension Subtest raw score; and (3) attendance below 90%.

The strategies can help disabled and second language students complete tasks successfully by utilizing the strengths they bring to the learning process. Recent research suggests that instruction in how to independently complete assignments can help students with disabilities do better in school. Schema-based instruction emphasizes conceptual understanding of the structure of problems, rather than relying on procedural approaches. Research findings suggest schema-based instruction provides students with disabilities access to helpful learning strategies.

Examples of strategies to be used in BACS are:

Project-Based Learning

Projects are a central part of our charter school’s approach to learning. Teachers will plan projects that support grade level and character education themes. Projects allow students to investigate, construct knowledge, problem solve, and use multiple forms of creative expression. Projects help students build conceptual understanding and provide opportunities to engage students in meaningful, creative activities. Projects also can be designed to help students see a connection between what students are learning in school and real world problem solving. To the greatest extent possible technology will be used as an integral part of student project presentations and displays. Students will work individually or in groups to prepare presentations, produce products, or extend knowledge.

Differentiated Learning

To affect our charter school’s mission and education philosophy, our teachers, through the use of a blended delivery system, will be able to reach out effectively to students of varying core competency levels, readiness, interests, and experiences in the world. In our classrooms, teachers will begin where students are based upon individualized learning pathways. They will accept and build upon the premise that learners differ in important ways. Therefore, they will be ready to engage students through different learning modalities and by using varied instructional approaches matched to student instructional needs and learning styles. In our classrooms, teachers will motivate students to grow, nurturing strengths and addressing specific weaknesses as necessary.

Personal Learning Goals

One of the core principles of our educational philosophy is to enable the students to take ownership of their own education, engage in choices related to their own learning, and become lifelong learners. Therefore, every student, in addition to routine school selected objectives, will

have personal learning goals and seminar opportunities. Such goals, selected by the student in consultation with teacher and parent, will focus on choices students see as valuable or interesting to learn for future use after graduation.

Flexible Uses of Time and Variable Grouping Strategies

Students will have access to web-based learning support 24-hours per day for pacing support in learning. Our teachers will engage in instructional methodologies as part of their methods to align instruction with the learning needs of students. Students, working in small flexible learning teams, will rotate based on teacher and student developed schedules. For example, a small group may be working with a teacher in a directed learning activity while other groups work on personal learning projects cooperatively agreed upon by student, teacher, and parent, while others work on technology supported instruction. If necessary, groups of students who are significantly behind grade level will receive accelerated learning to bring them to grade level.

The Educational Service providers from Arrow Academy, The Flippen Group and Compass Learning Odyssey take cues from a variety of experts and researchers in the field of cognitive and instructional theory. The following theories are incorporated into the design, content, and delivery methods of the blended model of teacher instructional delivery, technology and use of Compass Learning Odyssey software.

Richard Mayer’s Principle of Personalization

Richard Mayer’s Principle of Personalization shows that students performed up to 40% better when content was delivered in a first-person, conversational style rather than with a formal tone (Mayer 2000).

In a study published in the *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Mayer and research partner Roxana Moreno conclude, “The reported results have strong implications for teaching. The most direct practical implication of the present study is that multimedia science programs can result in broader learning if the communication model is centered around shared environments in which the student is addressed as a participant rather than as an observer.”

Delivering content using an interactive conversational interface, or ICI, allows our classrooms and products to: stimulate the brain; connect response to prerecorded characters; create suspension of disbelief and give the computer human-like qualities; and create feelings of personal connection.

The Role of Positive Emotions in Learning

Students retain what they learn when the learning is associated with a strong, positive emotion (Dulay and Burt, 1977; Krashen, 1982). Age-appropriate humor and positive feedback are incorporated throughout Compass Learning Odyssey activities to engage the student and create positive feelings about the learning activities. Studies have shown that when classroom activities are pleasurable, the brain releases dopamine, a neurotransmitter that stimulates the memory centers and promotes acetylcholine, which increases focused attention (Willis 2007).

Eric Jensen’s Work on the Difference between the Child and Adult Brain

Students’ minds work differently from adult minds. In Eric Jensen’s study in 2000, researchers took a digital electronic scan of an adult’s brain doing a specific mental process and compared it to children’s brains doing the same process. Results showed that the children use significantly

different neural pathways to take in, process, and store the same information as adults — especially in the visual cortex in the back of the brain. Arrow Academy and Compass Learning use a variety of interactive visual techniques to bring concepts to life. In the lower grades, characters often play a role in conveying information, whereas the secondary school courses feature 2–3 minute instructor-led video segments.

Bertelsman Foundation Study about the Impact of Media and Technology

A Bertelsman Foundation study examined the impact that media elements and technology can have on learning and retention levels. In the study, students were split into two groups to learn about the Civil War. Group A used traditional methods and Group B used media tools and computer instruction. Both scored the same on a teacher-built traditional test administered immediately after instruction. One year later, the students in Group A could recall very few facts they had learned, while the students in Group B displayed recollection of elaborate concepts and ideas that they had extended into other areas of history. Group A defined history as the record of the facts of the past while Group B defined history as a process of interpreting the past from different perspectives.

Madeline Hunter’s Method of Direct Instruction

Hunter emphasizes in her method of direct instruction that each activity should begin by setting the stage for the lesson with clear objectives, and then provide an understanding of the standards or what is expected from the student during the lesson. Next, Hunter stresses the importance of the “anticipatory set” or grabbing the student’s attention before moving into teaching through input of information, modeling, and checking for understanding. Many techniques from Hunter’s method of direction instruction are incorporated into the staff development and instructional model. In Odyssey, there are multiple opportunities for guided practice and monitoring. Lessons end with closure and opportunities for independent practice.

The board of BACS agrees with the philosophy and processes of Response to Intervention (RtI) and the three tier system of addressing student needs. An inclusion model, which will have classrooms of no more than four special education students paired with 17 general education students, will be organized at our school. We believe that it is very important for children to have the opportunity to learn and grow within communities that represent the kind of world in which they will live when they finish school. All children are included in the learning process, and we must, to the greatest extent possible, meet their needs within an inclusive setting. This integration will work, especially when the special education teacher works side by side with the regular teacher.

A resource model will also be included for students, at 10 per classroom, who need an environment that can address their different styles of learning. We realize that trying to force everybody into the inclusion mold promises to be just as coercive as trying to force everybody into the mold of a special class or institution. There are wide differences in children’s needs and parent choices and the school is prepared to provide options to students and parents. A strong curriculum, supported by technology, character education, and study skills strategies is designed to accommodate special needs children in either the inclusion or the resource model. Both models provide an environment of encouragement for all students.

Beyond our charter school plans to create public awareness of special education opportunities we will advise parents/guardians of the rights of children with disabilities. Written procedures

will be provided to parents/guardians to assure that information regarding the rights of children with disabilities is made available to them. This information will be made available in language and phraseology which will be understandable to parents, regardless of their ethnic, linguistic, or cultural background. We will document our annual efforts to create public awareness of special education and to inform parents/guardians of the rights of children with disabilities. When appropriate, the charter school will initiate procedures to obtain a surrogate parent if there is no parent or guardian able to act as parent.

The planning team understands that special education programs and services must be provided in accordance with the IEP that has been developed by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) of the child's district of residence, which is by law in New York State the LEA for students with disabilities. The CSE will have the authority to write each student's IEP and our charter school will provide services in accordance with it.

In our school, a Child Study Team (CST) will be established to address student learning and/or behavioral issues that may place students at risk of failure. The team will have special and general education teachers, the school social worker, the school parent/liaison and clerical staff as members. When a child is referred to this team, the social worker will make a visit to the classroom of the child and construct an in-depth observation of behavior and academic aptitude and report back to the team. The child's teachers will be asked to fill out forms disseminated by the CST indicating the teacher's experience with said child in their classroom.

In the event that reasonable classroom interventions of sufficient duration have been attempted without success and that the issue's underlying cause is suspected to be a disability that cannot be resolved without special education services, the CST will refer students to the CSE for evaluation according to procedures. Once the referral is made to CSE, the request date will be stamped and entered in their log. The request will be sent out to the parent for testing and evaluation by the CSE and with parental permission, the child will be evaluated.

Once completed, the total package will be assembled and a meeting will be set up with the parent to disseminate the results. At least one special and regular education teacher from our charter school will participate in the CSE meetings. After the meeting, the parent will be asked to sign the paperwork as a participant in this meeting and will hopefully agree with the findings and potential placement recommendation for the student. If all parties are in agreement, the child will be placed in the proper setting and with the needed related services to assure that his/her academic, social, and emotional needs are met.

Children who require special education, as well as those students who already have an IEP, will be provided an appropriate program with services consistent with the mandates in their plans. If the services mandated in the IEP cannot be provided by our charter school (in either our inclusion or resource models) we will, after following the school district CSE process, find the least restrictive environment in which these services can be provided in an alternative education setting and establish an appropriate contract with that special education service provider.

In the event that a parent/guardian of a student should issue a complaint with respect to any matter relating to the identification, evaluation, re-evaluation, or educational placement of the student that results in a hearing and appeal, our charter school's legal counsel will represent the school during the proceedings.

BACS will disseminate information to our staff for identifying students eligible for special education, including guidelines for each of the services and processes provided by BACS which include: Initial Evaluation, Reevaluation, Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), Procedural Safeguards Notice, Least Restrictive Environment, Certified Special Education Teachers, Related Services Personnel, Treatment of Student Records, Referral, Release of Information.

BACS is committed to attracting and retaining a comparable or greater enrollment of students with disabilities as compared to the enrollment figures for students in the proposed district of location. In Community School District 15 this enrollment is approximately 15 percent. By serving primarily at-risk students we will be able to advertise the charter school as one that lends to serving higher levels of special education students. We will identify incoming students needing Special Education in two ways.

BACS will ensure alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment as it pertains to at-risk student populations, including, but not limited to, students identified as ESL students. All students with language development needs will receive all services outlined in a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) personalized plan. BACS utilizes an inclusionary model in Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students and students will receive all services outlined by a language proficiency assessment team (LPAT). All students in BACS and on LEP plans will be served by appropriate certified teachers, according to the LEP time of instruction.

The use of technology in the native language, with individualized instruction that is differentiated and a specialized trained teacher in ELL, helps students develop thinking, writing and speaking skills in a variety of authentic situations in BACS.

The certified trained teacher will use appropriate instruction and address the core curriculum while providing ELLs with interactive means to access that curriculum. Teachers adjust the language demands of the lesson in many ways, such as modifying speech rate and tone, using context clues, relating instruction to student experience, adapting the language of texts or tasks, and using certain methods familiar to language teachers (e.g., modeling, demonstrations, graphic organizers, or cooperative work) to make academic instruction more accessible to students of different English proficiency. This is commonly referred to as “sheltering” the instruction.

To maximize opportunities for language use and content mastery, ELLs’ social and emotional needs have to be met in an environment where they feel safe and comfortable with themselves and their peers. Teachers will create an environment of predictability and acceptance. By providing structured classroom rules and activity patterns, and setting clear expectations, teachers can foster an environment of regularity and acceptance. Specific ideas to accomplish this include:

- Incorporating activities that maximize opportunities for language use to challenge students’ ability to communicate ideas, formulate questions, and use language for higher order thinking;
- Realizing that some ELLs may come from a culture with different customs or views about asking questions, challenging opinions, or volunteering to speak in class. It is important to allow each student to listen and produce language at his/her own speed;
- Incorporating multiple languages in signs around the school, and displaying pictures, flags, and maps from students’ country of origin in the classroom; and making efforts to

incorporate diversity into the classroom by inviting students to share information about their background.

The key elements of the staffing model for the school will include: (1) a detailed job description for each position in the school, listing the qualifications, responsibilities, distinguishing features, essential functions as well as the knowledge, ability and skills required for each position; (2) a thorough recruitment process through which the most highly qualified candidates will be selected to serve in our school; (3) a comprehensive system of annual employee performance review; and (4) on-site management of all human resource issues. The school will not employ an individual to provide instructional services who does not meet criminal clearances or whose certificate or licensure is suspended or revoked by the State of New York or any other state.

First and foremost, we will cast a wide net to attract as many qualified candidates to the position of school leader. It will be critically important for us to find the right person to start-up our school, a person who is not only consonant with the vision and educational philosophy and program of our school, but who also understands the particular nuances of developing a school from scratch and building the kind of culture in the staff that will be necessary for us to achieve the rigorous goals we have set in this application. To do this, we will market the availability of this position in places where people who have a passion for developing new schools gather. Resources in New York City include the New Leaders for New Schools program, the Center for Educational Innovation - Public Education Association, and New Visions for Public Schools. The network of these organizations will be invaluable to us as we search for the most highly qualified person. We will also advertise and use the extensive network of The Flippen Group to recommend highly qualified New York experienced candidates.

Announcements will also be sent to Teach for America and area universities and colleges with education programs. The connections that professionals in The Flippen Group have in different localities across the nation and in New York are extensive, as well.

Concerning teacher qualifications, our school will seek to hire 100% of staff who meet state certification requirements. If it becomes necessary to hire uncertified teachers, we will do so within the limits of the charter school statute (no more than 30 percent of the teaching staff, or five teachers, whichever is less) and follow the statutory criteria for hiring these teachers.

III. SCHOOL DESIGN

Dr. Jim Christensen is the leader of the company Arrow Academy and the education service consultant BACS will engage with in consulting in areas such as operation and academic mission success. He has been a visionary educator for the past 25 years. Dr. Christensen has served as a math teacher, middle school and high school principal and the past 12 years as superintendent. He has led three districts and shown significant improvements in academic achievement. During his tenure in Sheridan, Wyoming Dr. Christensen improved student performance from the middle of the State to the second highest performing district in the state in three years. In Adams 12 school district, a district of urban-like schools and 32,000 students, located in the Denver metropolitan area, he guided the district to the greatest improvement gains in the metro area for two consecutive years. His six years in Douglas County, a southern suburb of Denver with 58,000 students, Dr. Christensen established one of the highest performing district in the State with 94% of the 71 schools reaching high or excellent status under Colorado's accreditation report and reduced the dropout rate to less than 1%. Most recently, as

superintendent in Douglas County, Dr. Christensen was the authorizer of chartering 3,000 students, primarily in Denver Public Schools, within 50 learning centers that target the education of dropouts and at-risk students that are disenfranchised with school.

Dr. Christensen has established partnerships with The Flippen Group (TFG) and Compass Learning (CL) to triangulate human services, curriculum and instruction in creating the best team in education to support our most challenging population and serve the needs of BACS.

TFG is the leading education training organization in America and utilizes Human resource profile tools, developed by Flip Flippen, with over 10,000 professionals being used in supporting the process of hiring staff. The tool is focused on 37 behaviors and scaled in over 20 different subsets of these behaviors to determine strengths and constraints, and support decisions for the best fit when hiring staff and when working to develop individuals.

We have had success from the high risk populations in Los Angeles Unified School District to the work with disaffected Native American populations in Arizona. The authorizer of Hope Learning in Colorado, Superintendent Dr. Jim Christensen, oversaw the first K-12 blended charter school to utilize community-based Learning Centers, where Colorado's at-risk children can participate in a quality teacher led, web-based curriculum in a physical location, outside the home, that provides a safe, supportive, adult-supervised educational environment.

Unlike any other school in the nation, Hope Learning Academy provides at-risk students with a neighborhood Learning Center for students to attend daily, Monday through Friday. The Learning Center facility affords students with a mentor-supported environment where they have the opportunity to access differentiated instruction through the digital pacing curriculum and receive lesson instruction face-to-face with a No Child Left Behind (NLCB) Certified Teacher. For at-risk students who often experience little structure or guidance in their everyday personal lives, the Learning Center provides them with a "safe" place, consistency and stability in schedules and expectations and an individualized, nurturing environment that encourages their academic growth and achievement and capitalizes on the strengths of technology, teachers and mentors blended into an individualized academic and social plan for learning. Hope Learning Academy has grown to one of the largest individual schools in the state of Colorado, serving over 3,000 students in 50 Learning Centers across the Denver Front Range.

Our past experience has shown that during the quick ascent, we have experienced adjustments, lessons learned and tremendous success in delivering on that promise.

Hope Learning Academy has: Achieved a 98% State test (CSAP) participation rate; Achieved an attendance rate of 85% among students who previously self-reported a 50% attendance rate; Received reports from over 90% of parents that they believe that their students' attitude toward school has significantly improved since attending Hope Learning Centers.

The focus on longitudinal results and academic rigor was accelerated in the 2007-2008 school year. The goals of keeping kids safe, engaged and appreciated was noble, but academic performance became the mantra under Superintendent Jim Christensen. In two years, as reported from the 2009 Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) measuring longitudinal growth with the most challenging students was encouraging:

- Hope Learning Academy has shown improvement in reading in seven out of eight grade levels for the 2008-09 school year. The greatest gains in proficient/advanced were noted in Grades 9 and 10 showing a 13.6 and 25.3 percentage points gain, respectively.
- The percent of students' proficient or advanced in math increased in five out of seven grade levels. Grade 4 showed the greatest improvement with a 5.4 percentage point gain in the percent of students' proficient/advanced.
- Positive gains were seen in writing in five out of seven grade levels with grade 10 showing a 9.8 percentage point gain in proficient/advanced.
- Grades 5 and 10 in science increased in the percent of students scoring proficient and advanced while grade 8 remained flat. Grade 10 showed the greatest gains with an 8.4 percentage point gain.

Grade	Reading	Writing	Math
4	+8	+2.7	+5.4
5	+5.1	-4.6	-1.5
6	+9.2	+3.8	-2.2
7	+.7	-.5	+2.1
8	+9.7	+7.7	+3.4
9	+13.6	+6.5	+.5
10	+25.3	+9.8	+.5

The digital curriculum partner in BACS is Compass Learning Odyssey. A sample of results from Compass Learning show strong validation of the digital curriculum embedded in the instructional model.

In the fall of 2008, East Stroudsburg Area School District implemented Compass Learning Odyssey in all elementary, intermediate and high schools as part of a comprehensive approach to address special education and remediation needs.

- On average, Odyssey users enrolled in special education increased their NWEA scores from fall to spring in both math and reading.
- Special education students in all grades made significant fall-to-spring NWEA gains. Gains for seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth grades, respectively, were +5.47, +3.76, +1.44, and +3.87 RIT points.
- API scores increased from 894 in 2008 to 930 in 2009, seven times greater than the improvement goal set by the state.
- Students in key minority populations, four targeted specific subgroups, all reduced the achievement gap.

The third year of BACS will begin with secondary education and is founded on flexible blocks for supporting grouping by ability, courses and age as defined within the learning teams according to student data. Depending on the student's level of work in core areas defined by performance levels 1-4, adjustments to the core schedule of contact time in each subject will be defined by the learning pathways and master teacher teams.

All courses are aligned vertically within the curriculum, and also to national and New York Content Standards. Many research-proven examples exist to validate the academic gains of students. Two examples include:

Empirical Education Inc. conducted a three-year study of the effectiveness of Odyssey Reading/Language Arts in grades 6-8 in the Poway Unified School District (CA) schools.

- On average, 7th graders who used Compass Learning Odyssey scored 1.17 points higher than expected on NWEA’s MAP Literacy (or roughly 5 percentile points).
- 8th graders who used Odyssey scored 2.38 points higher on MAP Literacy (or roughly 10 percentile points).
- This translates to about an additional 27% of a year’s growth for 7th graders, and a 60% of a year’s growth for 8th graders.

Duval County Public Schools is the nation’s 20th largest public school district. The district used Odyssey as part of a comprehensive approach to address middle and high school credit recovery, grade recovery, remediation, over-age intervention instruction, and advanced-placement curriculum needs in all 28 middle schools and in 17 high schools across the district.

- 2008 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) results in Mathematics demonstrate improvement from 2007 across all Odyssey Math user grades 6 to 10.
- From 2007 to 2008, the percentage of Odyssey Math users in grades 6 to 10 scoring at or above grade level on the FCAT in Mathematics increased, ranging from 6% to 27%.
- The increases from below grade level to at or above from 2007-2008 range from 13% for the 6th and 10th grades, 15% for the 9th grade, 29% for the 7th grade, up to 30% for the 8th grade.

As stated above, under Dr. Christensen results from Hope Learning Centers on the State exam for at risk students in one year (2009) showed substantial gains:

Grade	Reading	Writing	Math
6	+9.2	+3.8	-2.2
7	+7	-5	+2.1
8	+9.7	+7.7	+3.4
9	+13.6	+6.5	+5

Assessment is a process that as a major component of the teaching construct is for the benefit of specified stakeholders - particularly students, parents and teachers. The BACS assessment philosophy serves the dual purposes of assessment-for-learning to address the information needs of students and teachers, as well as assessment-of-learning to address the needs for information about the outcomes and efficiencies of the educational system.

The BACS board will file annually a school improvement plan known as the Strategic Plan. The objectives on the plan will be aligned with the goals in the charter application, which accommodate the state NCLB accountability indicators. Strategies addressing the academic needs of the subpopulations stipulated by the No Child Left Behind legislation will be incorporated. The implementation of the plan will be monitored by BACS staff to gauge progress

and to make informed decisions about providing technical assistance to the school. The plan will be approved by the board of trustees, who will conduct a formal mid-year check and end-of the year evaluation to determine adequate progress. An annual report will be generated documenting the progress made by the school in meeting the stated objectives.

To achieve the standards and goals set by BACS, students and teachers must have multiple assessment data points in order to continuously adjust instruction. Of course, the classroom and online assessments present teachers with immediate feedback and allow for constant monitoring of student progress. Students begin with a pretest of knowledge and skills in each of the subject areas. The results provide a diagnosis of the student’s strengths and weaknesses in the tested areas; from that diagnosis, a personalized learning path is developed for remediation, reinforcement and/or enrichment. Personalized lesson plans may be automatically generated or developed by the teacher when using other testing tools.

BACS tracks student achievement, evaluates individual progress on specific learning paths, and communicates results to teachers, parents and students through easy-to-understand reports. Educators receive reports detailing the progress of students individually and in groups; teachers receive instructional data for decision making, team planning and parent conferences; and parents have access to easy-to-understand information about student achievement and progress.

Our school will assess student performance on a frequent and continuous basis. The assessment program is designed to provide teachers with valid, reliable, and timely information for them to modify instruction, select appropriate modes of classroom activities, monitor student progress, and use assessment results effectively. Teachers will be expected to use a variety of assessments and to know how to apply and integrate assessment data to improve student performance on our standards-based curriculum requirements. Teachers will be expected to use assessment strategies to assist in attaining continuous progress. For example, teachers will assess students’ readiness to learn, modify instruction based upon assessed student performance, employ performance-based assessment approaches, assist students in maintaining work folders and portfolios of individual work, and review assessment results to improve students’ academic performance.

As essential as classroom and online formative assessments are, there is a need to have an assessment plan that provides a variety of information about our students. The New York standards assessment gives BACS another critical data-point about its student population.

In addition to participation on these required exams, students and teachers use the following assessments deployed to gather information about students.

Assessment	Grade	Vendor	Administered	Type
Plan	8	ACT	Fall	Summative/Formative
Explore	8	ACT	Fall	Summative/Formative
DIBELS	K-3	Univ. Oregon	Fall, Winter, Spring	5 Components of Early Literacy
MAP	2-8	NWEA	Up to 4 per year	Growth Over Time
Odyssey Explorer	K-8	Compass	Fall, Spring (as needed)	Student Growth and Placement

Each assessment has a specific purpose and allows BACS to consistently adjust the content of the learning to better serve the student's academic needs. Teachers in the school will be able to assess student progress throughout the program, using: chapter tests, lesson quizzes, writing prompts, open-ended response questions, benchmark tests and scored lessons. A variety of assessments give a holistic picture of the student that can then be applied to the learning pathway plan for each student. Parents will receive learning path, progress, objective-based and student writing portfolios of their child.

The assessments selected for use in BACS are directed at moving students to a level of understanding that is defined in the success indicators, and ensuring students who are falling behind are immediately targeted for support and intervention to get them back on track. The diagnostic assessment that is coupled with comparable results gives our organization the best portfolio of data to focus on the student's state of needs.

BACS desires to use this data to evaluate using the same procedures that evaluate standard schools and the same indicators and criteria, which include:

- Performance on the New York Content Standards
- Performance on School Rating Criteria
- Performance on Attendance
- Performance on the State-Developed Comparative Data

Each grade and course offers spiral curricula that will enrich or remediate students in a personalized pathway that reaches over a four year grade span. All students will also have enrichment, on level, and remediation opportunities from resources on the web, direct master teacher instruction and instructor mentoring support. The blended model allows all three delivery systems to meet each child's independent needs.

BACS's primary focus is to ensure that its students perform academically at grade level or above in traditional core subjects, which include English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. However, because students are expected to complete recommended amounts of learning time based upon level of performance, BACS will target these content-specific guidelines to ensure appropriate richness of teaching the material is invested in each child's educational experience.

Administrative supervision beyond the evaluation tools used in BACS will be based upon parameters defined within a Balanced Scorecard which serves as a tool for each supervising entity in the organization. The Scorecard includes:

Student Learning Focus

- Knowledge of content
- Annual progress of each student
- Research based instructional practices that support student learning
- Identifying and meeting individual student needs
- Quality data monitoring practices
- Creating a learning environment that supports relationships, relevance, critical thinking and responsibility
- Implementing required professional development

Leadership Focus

- Displays high levels of professional behaviors and conduct in citizenship, trust, honesty, fairness and integrity
- Aligns instructional programming to school improvement plans
- Complies with policies, procedures and laws

Staff Focus

- Supports positive learning environments
- Continuous compliance and improvement in the professional development and traction plans
- Collaborative team member

Stakeholder Focus

- Communicates expectations clearly
- Creates a learning environment that supports input and involvement from members of the student's external environment
- Provides information to customers about learning, behavior and status of students' progress and achievement.
- Consistently clear and concise in communication

Process Management

- Recognizes work related problems and participates in seeking solutions
- Optimizes factors such as time, organizational structure and completion requirements

The professional deliverables from TFG for the development of staff and parents includes research programs such as:

Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH):

Capturing Kids' Hearts is an explicit Character Education program for leaders and staff which emphasizes the process of leadership skills development. The CKH curriculum consists of a "teacher's manual" (concept of all educators are teachers; all teachers are leaders) containing instructional units that help teachers and administrators model and teach pro-social skills more effectively. *Capturing Kids' Hearts* training contains the following components: 1) explicit character education and leadership instruction, 2) social and emotional curriculum, and 3) academic curriculum integration. *Capturing Kids' Hearts* also incorporates the following pedagogical elements, which are considered effective teaching strategies (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005): 1) direct teaching, 2) interactive teaching/learning, 3) classroom/behavior management, 4) modeling and mentoring, and 5) professional development.

Design and Delivery of Engaging Lessons:

The Design and Delivery of Engaging Lessons is critical to unlocking student potential by identifying and creating engaging schoolwork for students. Staff will be led through a process utilizing the ten qualities of school work that will provide more opportunity for teachers to engage students and differentiate instruction to individual needs. This training assists teachers in aligning standards expectations to actions, which significantly improves student outcomes. Teachers will learn how to deconstruct state standards to gain a clearer concept of necessary content that improves performance on state assessments.

This *Design and Delivery of Engaging Lessons* training is divided into four modules that can be delivered in its entirety or over selected modules. The Design and Delivery Models will target

the supplemental lesson design to build relevancy and understanding beyond the computer-assisted lessons. The module titles and outcomes include:

1) Designing Engaging Lessons (Module 1) – staff will deconstruct state standards, design student-friendly learning objectives, determine academic vocabulary, develop effective target questions promoting meta-cognition, and design lessons and assessments aligned to content and rigor of the state standards.

2) Student Engagement – Raising the Bar: Advance Lesson Design – (Module 2) staff will analyze walkthrough data, utilize the ten qualities of school work when designing a lesson, and identify the five levels of student engagement and how the levels impact student retention of academic learning.

3) From Design to Delivery & Research-Based Instructional Strategies – (Module 3) Staff will use supplied tools to determine how to deliver lessons that promote student learning and identify and apply research-based instructional strategies which guide classroom practice and maximize student achievement.

4) Feedback and Effective Questioning – (Module 4) Staff will learn the difference between praise and feedback and learn how to use it effectively in instruction and how to recognize and generate high level questions that encourage students to perform at Bloom’s higher cognitive levels.

Process Skills:

Process Skills teaches participants to calibrate instruction at the higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy in every lesson, every day. Data show that few teachers routinely challenge students to think and perform at higher cognitive levels. Teachers will learn to develop high level questions and assignments that challenge and support students as they master cognitively demanding academic standards and develop a wide range of thinking and process skills in the supplemental support from each teacher. Four strategies are revealed to expand teacher understanding of skills to promote meta-cognition and higher order thinking, including: effective feedback, dynamic questioning, cognitive alignment with standardized test question formats, and independent student products. Teachers learn to code questions according to cognition level to ensure students are functioning at the highest levels of thinking. Implementation of these strategies will enable all students to be more independent and self-directed.

BACS is designated as a community school that aspires to support all student within the walls and beyond in any best practices. This is validated by the continuous commitment established by the DLC in supporting evening education opportunities for our community and providing services to over 4,000 adults and families needing our support.

The long-term goal of the board of trustees is to operate the essential elements of our charter school within the financial resources provided through the relevant city, state and federal allocations per student. The start-up funding and the first two-years related to the school as we grow toward full enrollment will be met by the revenue per pupil enrollment. The start-up budget for our charter school is scheduled to be \$175,000. These revenues will provide resources for the board of trustees to allow BACS to hire a director and financial and clerical staff to begin the process to bring the school into operation. These staff members, governed by the board of trustees and working in concert with contractual teams of service providers, will address the myriad of tasks that need to be attended to in order for the school to be ready for students in September, 2011. The planning team will utilize existing space in the DLC facilities as a home base to plan for the school development and opening process.

Dr. Christensen's team also works in collaboration with a non-profit funding arm that supports the work of serving at risk students. The scope of the dedicated of funds does include start up resources that are allocated per the Board's recommendations. Leadership Education Foundation (LEF) is a 501 (c) (3) incorporated in the State of Texas with a mission to serve the youth in America.

Chancellor Klein has been an instrumental voice in encouraging the formation of the charter school. Specifically, Arrow Academy and TFG have been encouraged to apply for the charter due to student performance data from the training provided by TFG. Several New York schools have improved student performance from "F" rated to "A" rated over a two and three year period of time. The common attributes in each school is the training and development from TFG. The relationships BACS plan to nurture and continue are focused on a team concept in all areas of our work.

Most districts recognize the value for smaller learning communities in supporting the many factors that are a part of the at risk child's life. Recent research has numerous studies that provide many recommendations that can be targeted by this charter school when the entire emphasis of the school is on this population of students. The research review from the National Dropout Prevention Center identifies 127 studies regarding risk factors associated with dropping out of school and strategies to mitigate the impact of these factors.

The summative results of the studies establish 93 risk factors, found in 24 different categories that are usually impacting the individual simultaneously. This meta-analysis study recommended 23 service/strategy program areas to target to reduce dropout rates. (2007 National Dropout Prevention Center at Clemson University) In fairness to a school district, these expectations are overwhelming at a minimum in practice and budgeting when it is coupled with the same expectations in other students' curricula and school environment needs.

The team's experience and understanding of what does and does not work in schools and in the education of children, will revitalize the educational experience of secondary students. Not only will they use what they know works, but will also modify or discontinue systems of the past that were unproductive and disenfranchising to many students. Teachers historically express concern that if they take time to offer corrective instruction, compact the curriculum or supplement with creativity and relevancy, they will sacrifice curriculum coverage. Because corrective work and creativity is initially best done during class, under the teacher's direction and within the learning environment, instructional units will typically involve an extra class period or two. This time is rarely offered in traditional school on a student needs basis. Teachers who ask students to complete corrective work independently, outside of class, generally find that those students who most need to spend time on corrective work, are the least likely to do so.

To become an integral part of the instructional process, learning cannot be a one-time event experience for students. Instead, it must be part of an ongoing effort to meet students where they are in their learning. And if teachers follow teaching and assessing with helpful corrective and enrichment instruction, then students should have multiple chances to demonstrate their new level of competence and understanding. These multiple chances help determine the effectiveness of the corrective instruction and offer students another opportunity to experience success in learning.

The philosophy of BACS is allowing for academically and economically disadvantaged students who are at-risk to succeed and excel. There are many scenarios creating at-risk students, from school expulsion to teen-age mothers and full-time workers. An appropriate and appealing education alternative for these students must be both flexible and non-threatening, enabling students to reach their full potential and succeed according to the academic standards set by the state of New York. Improving the success rate for the current at-risk population will result in increasing the number of its productive, contributing citizens and ultimately improve the quality of life in New York.

BACS will revitalize the educational experience of at-risk students by strategically blending fundamental components of education and modifying delivery systems of the past that were unproductive and disenfranchised many students.