

Prospectus

OPTION Academy Charter School

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

OPTION Academy Charter School was recently established out of the need to provide an alternative high quality educational curriculum that focuses on the whole child with a smaller teacher to student ration (1:10). OPTION Academy Charter School anticipates that by utilizing a more one on one ratio, and extending the school year with a summer program, that the overall averages of children in the Central Islip Union Free School District and surrounding communities will increase on all academic levels by a minimum of 10% over the first full school year per grade and more as the years progress.

OPTION Academy Charter School has a mission to provide a student a centered, interactive, learning environment designed to meet and exceed the learning needs of each student. The Academy proposes to offer a comprehensive educational program that includes focused academic instruction in the core subjects, character building, social skills development, and the Arts. OPTION Academy Charter School will include expanded learning opportunities for students at-risk of academic failure.

The OPTION Academy Charter School, located in Central Islip, Suffolk County, Long Island and its surrounding communities, envisions a school that reflects the diverse local communities and individual families. The school supports a strong sense of self discipline, self-motivation and future aspiration for all students. As central to the community and crucial to the future success of the students, OPTION functions as the foundation for community cohesiveness.

The OPTION Academy Charter School will be the corner stone to demonstrate a safe, nurturing learning environment where every child is valued and appreciated. Self-esteem, self-respect, community service and altruism are central concepts to the school's approach to instruction. A primary core of the school's philosophy is that every parent of a student is an integral part of the school program and their participation in school's multiple dynamics are vital.

In order for any educational program to provide what a student needs to flourish is centered on the idea that a strong educational system is the heart of a functioning society. A high standard in instruction, administration, health and safety, and student assessment will be afforded side by side with a high quality education for all students attending the proposed OPTION Academy Charter School.

OPTION Academy Charter School, under the IRS guidelines to file for 501 © 3 status, will, within eighteen months of operation, apply for their non-profit status. Prior to that, if approved for application, OPTION will also file for their Articles of Incorporation in the State of New York as part of the process of applying for their 501 © 3 status and due diligence needed to operate as a Charter School in the State of New York. Currently OPTION Academy Charter School is a proposed Charter School. OPTION Academy Charter School has opted to incorporate in its school key design elements a Whole Child Curriculum and the standard Charter School Academics meeting the eligibility requirements in Education Law section 2852(9) (a).

The uniqueness of the Whole Child Curriculum is the concept that the curriculum recognizes how much children grow from year to year. The lesson plans place pivotal importance on the mental, emotional and physical changes at each grade level, melting in with OPTION's vision.

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This model provides for greater interaction between child and teacher. which lends itself to the 1:10 ratio that OPTION Academy Charter School will be utilizing.

The Whole Child Curriculum teaches children in protective environment using methods that fill each child with delight, wonder and enthusiasm. To facilitate this ease of learning, classroom teachers stay with the children for three-year cycles, incorporating all aspects of the arts into daily lessons. The curriculum ensures that the material and its presentation are developmentally attuned to the appropriate age at every grade level. Teachers will be trained in all aspects of this model and will have all the credentials as required by New York State Department of Education.

OPTION Academy Charter School also recognizes that all children over the summer, need to continue their mental, emotional challenges and that physical, emotional and mental growth does not cease once the typical school year ends. To that end, OPTION intends, as part of their curriculum, to expand past the current 180 standard calendar year, adding a summer mandatory addition to the year so as the lag between the end of the current school year and the beginning of the next school year does not cease learning.

Option's current plan is to expand grades 4 and 5 the first year to eventually, over the course of the next five years encompass up to grade 9 providing a seamless transition and continuity for the child, an important aspect in emotional, physical, mental and social development.

OPTION Academy Charter School is, at present, in its infancy. The initial Founding Group is composed of local community leaders from with the Central Islip, Suffolk County, Long Island, New York Area. The general make-up of the Founding Group are Ministers from local churches, leaders in other non-profit organizations, business people, retired teachers and strives for cultural diversity. The principal driving figure of OPTION Academy Charter School is the Founder Mel Jackson. Mr. Jackson's credentials and high regard in the community speak to why OPTION will effectively be able to launch the Charter School ensuring its capability of a community-based not-for-profit human services organization with considerable professional skills in Engineering, Education, Management and Leadership which he utilizes in the service of Long Island minority communities. Mr. Jackson is a pioneer in the Juvenile Justice System designing prototypical individualized programs that address the academic and social needs of children and youth in community, detention and congregate care. He was formerly Program Manager with Fairchild Camera and Instrument Corporation planned, coordinated and taught educational programs on the secondary and college level, directly participated in many efforts involving urban/suburban schools with emphasis on science and technology. He has written several papers and articles with his affiliations including: Member-Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Member-New York State Detention Administrators Association, Hempstead School district to mention only a few. Additional other Founding Members have similar qualifications to lead the school forward are as follows: State University of New York at Stony Brook, Member of the Council appointed by Governor Hugh Carey, New York State Board of Council Members and College Trustees, Board Member , Member of the New York State Martin Luther King Commission on Non Violence, appointed by Governor Mario Cuomo , Central Islip Civic Council Board Member, Assistant Director, International Child Creative Center, Assistant Principal, East End Christian Academy, LaGuardia College (CUNY) Instructor and an individual from the College at Old Westbury (SUNY) Instructor.

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OPTION Academy Charter School will continue to add to the distinguished Founding Members from within the community and the surrounding communities.

II. STUDENT POPULATION:

Anticipated Enrollment Table

Grade	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
4	95	95	95	95	95
5	95	95	95	95	95
6		90	90	90	90
7			90	90	90
8				90	90
9					90
10					
11					
Ungraded	10	10	10	10	10
Total	200	290	380	470	560

In analyzing the reports, the average children that qualify for free lunches is over the 48% mark, reduced lunch program, averages 16% from and those with Language Proficiency, except for two schools are in the 13%-20% mark according to the New York State Report Card for 2009. OPTION has tailored its Outreach and educational programs in regards to these statistics. Further OPTION Academy Charter School recognizes the Federal prevailing national education policy for most children in the nation including ELL students is No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The national policy requires states to identify English learners, measure their English proficiency, and include them in state testing programs that assess academic skills and establish statewide English proficiency standards and assess each ELL with a statewide English proficiency assessment that reflects these standards. In addition to the annual assessment of English proficiency, ELL students are expected to participate in regular state assessments in academic content with all other students' grades 3-8 and once in high school. States are expected to include the assessments of ELL students in determining Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).¹ Each state must set Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) for ELLs in the areas of English-language proficiency and performance on academic content. Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives must include:

Although English Learners reside throughout the United States, they are heavily concentrated in the six states of Arizona, California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois, with these six states containing 61percent of the nation's ELL population.

New York State defines English Language Learners (ELLs) as "pupils who, by reason of foreign birth or ancestry, speak a language other than English, and either understand or speak little or no English; or score below a designated level of proficiency on the Language Assessment Battery-Revised (LAB-R)" (Tuite). Nationally, ELLs are the fastest growing segment of the student population comprising about 11% of public school students in the U.S. (a 6% increase since 1990).

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During the 2003-2004 school years, ELL services were provided to over 3.7 million students in the U.S. (National Council of Teachers of English). The U.S. Census Bureau data collected in New York State detailing the English speaking ability for the Latino/Hispanic population over 5 years of age and ethnicity and projected by 2008 estimates, of Spanish Speakers 40.1% will speak English less than very well.

Between 1991 and 2007, the number of ELLs in Suffolk County, enrollment tripled to more than 15,000 students, according to data compiled by Nassau and Suffolk Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Centers — BETACs.

About 80 percent of ELLs on Long Island speak Spanish; the other 20 percent speak a variety of other languages including Haitian Creole, Chinese and Urdu.

OPTION Academy Charter School recognizes the challenge of being faced with larger numbers of ELL students and their families and that a key component is to find ways to strengthen communication and forge partnerships with parents from diverse backgrounds. With an ever increasing diverse student population, OPTION is committed to working with racial, linguistic, and cultural minority parents to familiarize them with school procedures and policies.

The Founding Members of the School and the Principal of the School will play an active role by being advocates for change and will articulate feelings of caring about students, parents, and the community.

The Plan:

Initial:

OPTION Academy Charter School will utilize a variety of translated surveys, informational documents, and notifications to parents of identified ELLs during the identification and placement process at the beginning of the school year enrollment and any time a child transfers into the school and throughout the school year to determine if a child is eligible for an ELL program. During the first meeting of the parents OPTION, in conjunction with the parents will (1) determine a plan and desired outcomes for parent involvement (2) identify the resources that will be needed to support the parent and the student (3) identify other community and internal resources the parent and student will need.

Various forms will be utilized enabling the School to ascertain the parents preferred language in order to enable the parents communication with the School about their child's needs and progress.

When a child is registered at the School, OPTION will administer to parents of children who have a home language other than English an Identification Survey that will assist the School in identifying the primary home language.

OPTION will make available translators if needed, and are currently in the process of developing an internal ELL program with credentialed ELL teachers to facilitate the educational needs of the children.

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Outreach:

OPTION Academy Charter School is in the process of developing an Outreach Plan for the families which will include options for those traditionally less informed about their children's educational options.

The initial part of the Outreach will be to determine a plan and who will benefit from participation in the community forums and desired outcomes for the parent involvement and then identify the specific families in the Central Islip School district and surrounding communities that will benefit.

OPTION will compare children and family stats, geographic stats and determine locations through out the community for the forums for the parents and interested community participants. This will also facilitate increased communication between diverse cultures and promote the various cultures working together for the benefit of the educational and social needs of all children.

Determining the logistics to hold these forums encompass utilizing neighborhood community centers, homes, or schools. OPTION will connect with local resources to help sponsor the programs. Contacting the local Hispanic Chamber of Commerce will provide resources for refreshments, translation, location, or monetary support for future meetings. Determining the date will also be considered as an integral part of the Outreach forum/program.

Information Provided:

OPTION will then identify what information should be presented and provide handouts in English and the predominant language(s) of a majority of the parents attending that particular forum. There will also be feedback to determine the format and topics for additional meetings.

Basic information that is printed in English and translated to the language of a majority of the ESL students will be provided including: a school calendar with an explanation of holidays and vacations, as well as, the plan for snow or other inclement weather conditions, pages from the school handbook that lists the names of essential personnel, floor plan, school discipline procedures, field trips, health procedures (medicine in school and screenings), absences and dismissals from school, any school supplies that will need to be gotten, with potential assistance, how report cards and progress reports will be sent and the dates with explanation. This will ensure parents are part of OPTION school Information System and can fully participate in their children's education.

General Marketing and Publicity:

Multiple means of communication to announce the program, including but not limited to will include: flyers, information sheets at Back to School Night, school newsletter, letters mailed to parents, phone calls home, or face to face communication during school registration especially if the family is accompanied by a bilingual relative or community member. Handouts, letters, or flyers will be translated in one or two of the predominant native languages used by a majority of the families that will be attending the forum.

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Resources

OPTION will also call on local agencies to help, such as community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, NAACP, Urban League of Long Island, the Central Islip Alliance, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Afro American Educators and 100 Black Men and 100 Black Women, other families of similar backgrounds, businesses or churches near the predominant neighborhoods of the families identified for the Outreach Forums.

In order to make the outreach meetings accessible and well attended, transportation and child care for parents will be provided. OPTION will also recruit and utilize local volunteers and community resources from within the community in which the outreach is being done.

Final Outreach Aspect:

Feedback and Future Meetings will be determined through survey of the staff and community representatives.

Additionally:

OPTION will utilize ELS programs designed to facilitate learning initiatives for the children enrolled in the Charter School. Additional programs are currently under development and research for the most appropriate curriculum to include in the Whole Child approach.

Addressing Identification and Education of Students with Disabilities:

OPTION Academy Charter School will follow the New York Commissioner of Education Regulations, PART 200 Students with Disabilities and PART 201 Procedural Safeguards for Students with Disabilities Subject to Discipline.

This will include offering all necessary handicapped accessible facilities, technological special needs for children, i.e. ramps, transportation, TDD, special computers, Braille, handicapped accessible bathrooms, special dietary needs, medication dispersion, if necessary, specialty trained and certified teachers.

OPTION will also offer school sessions for children that may only be able, due to disability, handle half day sessions or limited full day sessions. OPTION will also provide the means for those children with disabilities that require a caregiver to be present to be able to participate in the full classroom environment.

OPTION also recognizes that there may be some children with disabilities that they are unable to provide the most appropriate educational environment. To this end, OPTION is currently developing criteria for children with disabilities of those circumstances that they would not be able to facilitate an appropriate educational environment. OPTION Academy Charter School is also currently developing resources for referral to assist those parents, in which the school as ascertained they are unable to provide the most

appropriate educational experience for the child. OPTION is committed to go the distance in order for the child to receive the best education that is possible.

Safety for the child and the other children in the classroom is of the utmost importance to OPTION.

Outreach:

OPTION will utilize the Outreach Model that is currently being developed for families and children identified as ELL and described in this section. OPTION will tailor the Outreach with specific information of the educational resources the Charter School has, qualifications of the teachers, etc. for those children with disabilities.

OPTION also recognizes that there may be an overlap of families with children that fit both categories, those identified as ELL and also have a disability. The Outreach Plan and marketing strategies will be tailored to accommodate this.

III. SCHOOL DESIGN:

OPTION addresses the following eligibility criteria accomplishing the requirements found in Education Law section 2852(9)(a)

a. Increase student achievement and decrease student achievement gaps in reading/language arts and mathematics:

OPTION maintains that by reducing class size with more individualized instruction and reduction of the student-teacher ration is crucial to increasing student achievement and at the same time decreasing the achievement gaps in reading/language, arts and mathematics. When you focus on the Whole Child, continuity is important. A child that feels recognized, special, and develops a bond with their teacher, no matter what age has a better chance of developing good study skills, social networking and over all self-worth and success.

Teachers are crucial to the success of this. Yet many of them are leaving their schools and the profession every year, particularly in poorer, lower-performing schools. Several studies have attempted to identify why teachers leave and how to stem their turnover, but few have identified the quality of teachers who are departing.

Teachers are unable to provide the one on one instruction needed in large classrooms. Dedicated teachers then feel frustrated, students do not perform as well academically as they could if classrooms are smaller in size. By reducing the ration of teacher to students in a classroom, continuity will increase the students academic achievement. The costs* associated with hiring and training new teachers and the learning curve is lessened, providing more financial venues for the School to provide additional materials that will enhance a student's academic achievements: i.e.

Utilizing new and innovative technology, "classrooms around the world", providing music, drama and visual arts curriculum, which to a large scale has dwindled in the public school system. This is part of the Whole Child Curriculum (brining out the art and humanities creativity within students).

Footnote:

*A study found that, in addition to the expenses incurred as a result of the recruitment and hiring processes, even more costs are associated with lost productivity and human capital (Milanowski and Odden 2007).

OPTION will constantly be monitoring through discussions with teachers, parents and the community their input concerning the curriculum and academic goals to make sure that what is being provided is relevant for the constantly change in environment and standards in which they live. This will enable increased student achievement and decrease the sense of failure for the student, which leads to an Increased drop out rate and non college students. In this day and age, further education is important for any student, whether it is college, or technical school training, increasing the concept of the Whole Child.

Also OPTION recognizes that in providing constant and improved education and training to their teachers, they will enhance sustainability in the teaching staff and continuity to the students. Increased Group activities will also enhance social and networking skills, a vital aspect of the Whole Chile Curriculum.

The ration of teacher to student and the increased year (200 days for the school year) will improve instruction to struggling students and provide increase access for students to their teachers i.e. increased homework help, conferences with parents, etc.

b. Increase high school graduation rates and focus on serving at-risk high school student populations (including re-enrolled drop-outs and those below grade level):

Dropout from high school is a gradual process. The signs are evident: poor attendance, lack of connection to the school environment, not motivated, academic challenges or performing poor, classes are not interesting, there are not high academic standards, school/teachers are not demanding more of their students, poor teacher performance, student(s) became parent s and not be able to complete their education, there is limited help by teachers due to high teacher to student ration within the public school system, tutoring or after school help is limited or non-existent.

Statistics indicate that every school day, almost seven thousand students become dropouts. Annually, that adds up to about 1.2 million students who will not graduate from high school with their peers as scheduled. Lacking a high school diploma, these individuals will be far more likely to spend their lives periodically unemployed, on government assistance, or cycling in and out of the prison system. Most high school dropouts see the result of their decision to leave school most clearly in the slimness of their wallets. The average annual income for a high school dropout in 2005 was \$17,299, compared to \$26,933 for a high school graduate, a difference of \$9,634 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006). The impact on the country's economy is less visible, but it is nevertheless staggering.

If the nation's secondary schools improved enough that they were able to graduate all of their students, rather than the 70 percent of students that are currently graduated annually (Editorial Projects in Education, 2007), the payoff would be significant. **For instance, if the students who dropped out of the class of 2007 had graduated, the nation's economy would have benefited from an additional \$329 billion in income over their lifetimes. ***

Footnote:

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006

*Alliance for Excellent Education, Brief, 2007

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Everyone benefits from increased graduation rates. The graduates themselves, on average, will earn higher wages and enjoy more comfortable and secure lifestyles. At the same time, the nation benefits from their increased purchasing power, collects higher tax receipts, and sees higher levels of worker productivity.

OPTION believes that a viable solution is to:

- Improve school environment
- Hire qualified teachers
- Provide supplemental/intensive assistance
- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- Summer school programs
- Intensive best-practices literacy programs will be made accessible to low-performing students to ensure students learn to read at grade level and stay on the graduation track
- Home visits for each student will be a routine service
- By monthly polling of parents of the students will assist in early warning and quick solution to situations that can have a negative impact to students learning and progress in the school
- Small class size
- Educational case management

c. Focus on academic achievement of middle school student populations and preparation for transition to high school (if applicable).

Currently OPTION Academy Charter School's five year Student Enrollment plan encompasses grades 4-9. The belief of the Founding Members is intertwined with the Whole Child Curriculum, optimizing increased teacher to student ration, providing supplemental/intensive teacher/student assistance and increased mentoring, improving the school environment (accomplished by less stress on teachers when ration is less, recidivism is maintained, continuity for the student), ability to hire qualified teachers and intensive best-practices literacy programs will prepare middle students for the transition into high school.

Statistics show the measurable success of small schools. With significant consistency, compared to large schools, small schools achieve the following results among staff and among students of all ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds:

- Lower dropout rates;

- Higher grades;
- Higher graduation rates;
- Higher college attendance and college graduation rates, particularly among those students whose parents did not themselves attend college;
- Better attendance rates for students and staff;
- Greater teacher satisfaction;
- Dramatically less crime, violence and vandalism.

The Size of Small Schools

The target for small middle and high schools based on what's proven effective elsewhere is approximately 300 students (fewer when possible) managed by an administrative-teaching team of no more than 20-25 people including teachers, aides and support staff. The size of the administrative-teaching team is crucial. The team must be small enough so the whole group can be meaningfully involved in most organizational and instructional decisions, the latter based on personal experience with most, if not all, students.

OPTION Academy Charter School reduces this ratio even more, increasing the probability of better attendance rates of students and staff, higher grades, lower dropout rates and a smoother transition. Each student will be better prepared for the transition into the high school environment, with more self-confidence, less succumbing to peer pressure, lessen criminal involvement in activities, drug use and smoking.*

d. Increase implementation of local instruction improvement systems to assess and inform, instructional practice, decision-making, and effectiveness;

OPTION as it builds its infrastructure and funding becomes available, will partner with New York State to utilize the best of the instructional reporting and improvement systems now in use in New York State and incorporate them into a single flexible system that will provide both standard and custom reports to assist all their teachers, school officials, and parents. The resulting system will include important State-collected data as well as local data unique to each school. OPTION will utilize its ongoing partnerships to supplement this system with extensive ongoing professional development ensuring that the School will be able to analyze their data, identify problems, and use proven, research-based practices to improve student achievement, increasing academic achievement and teacher and student self-esteem.

OPTION recognizes that there are two initiatives that need to be addressed, “No Child Left Behind” and “The Race to the Top”. By integrated best practices and technology to connect will enable better decision-making in the design and curriculum of the school and will enable them to ascertain the effectiveness of the programs offered in comparison.

Footnote:

Seattle Public Schools ,Strategy for Improving High School and Middle School Student Achievement Through Development of Small Schools, by Dick Lilly

The Founding Members (referred to in Executive Summary) bring to the table those connections and expertise to enable OPTION to fulfill this aspect of the Education Law.

e. Utilize a variety of high-quality assessments or measure understanding and critical application of concepts;

Currently, assessment criteria is under development. OPTION believes in the ability to hire high quality staff on all levels. By providing the highest educational on-going training for staff, volunteers, etc. the Charter School fulfills the understanding and critical application of concepts. Mr. Jackson brings to this aspect many years of experience enabling the school to reach this aspect of the Education Law as outlined in Section 2852(9)(a) (see under Executive Summary).

f. Partner with low-performing local Public Schools to share best practices;

Option's Founding Members and critically Mr. Jackson are esteemed leaders in the community and will work and currently are working with local Public School Systems. In conjunction with the local LED, OPTION plans on forging alliances to share their best practices in order to assist those low-performing local public schools to improve the educational experience of their students. OPTION believes everyone learns from each other.

g. Demonstrate the ability to overcome start-up challenges to open successful school through management and leadership techniques;

As shown in the Executive Summary, the main Founding Member of OPTION Academy Charter School, Mr. Mel Jackson is a leader within the State of New York and outwork and is a distinguished, highly esteemed and qualified individual to assist the School as it grows in its infancy. In compassing some of the credentials of the Founding Members, you have connections and affiliations with: (1) The State University of New York at Stony Brook, (2) a Member of the Council appointed by Governor Hugh Carey (3) New York State Board of Council Members and College Trustees, Board Member (4) Member of the New York State Martin Luther King Commission on Non Violence, appointed by Governor Mario Cuomo (5) Central Islip Civic Council Board Member (6) and Assistant director, international child creative center (7) Assistant principal, East End Christian Academy (8) LaGuardia College (CUNY) Instructor and (8) College at Old Westbury (SUNY) Instructor.

Also Mr. Jackson works with another esteemed non-profit organization that also will bring its leadership capabilities to the table to ensure that the school will overcome any start-up challenges. Additional financial support for the school will also be pursued once the School acquires its 501 © 3 status, ensuring on-going sustainability.

OPTION also believes that the smaller school size, increased training, mentoring, and ongoing support for both staff and students will decrease the start-up challenges. Most schools fail when they have not planned for sustainability, overwhelm teachers (which leads to increased cost in rehiring and training), and constant student drop-out and re-enrollment. Soft costs are always associated with this.

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The Model OPTION Academy Charter School is planning on bringing to the table, will decrease these possibilities.

h. Demonstrate the support of the School District and the intent to establish an ongoing relationship with such district;

As shown in the outline of the main Founding Member of OPTION Academy Charter School, Mr. Mel Jackson is a leader within the State of New York with other Founding Members bringing to the table educational, health, social services, professional, business and other qualifications to the table. These qualifications are outlined in the Executive Summary.

i. Provide access to viable education alternatives to students in regions where there are a lack of alternatives;

OPTION, utilizing a hybrid of the Outreach Plan described in Section 11 of this Prospectus, plans on partnering with other educational institutions and community based organizations that will provide alternatives to those students that they are unable to serve. OPTION will provide contact and assistance to the parent and student to ensure that the transition is seamless and less stressful, increasing the chances of a good educational experience for both the parent and the student. Some examples of this would be, disabilities the School is unable to provide the highest educational experience needed, behavioral issues. No child or parent will be “left out in the cold” without being provided with an alternative educational resources.