Prospectus

To Establish

Keys Academy Charter School

Submitted to the New York State Education Department

Office of Innovative School Models

Monday, January 31, 2011

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission Statement

Keys Academy Charter School is an early college community dedicated to developing life skills and enlightening young scholars. Our targeted instruction will foster a high standard of education with continued exposure to character growth, financial empowerment, and technological innovation. This educational experience is geared towards encouraging lifelong learning, through positive reinforcement that will nurture a healthy evolution of students equipped to become assets to the world.

Key Design Elements and Unique Characteristics

Keys Academy Charter School will be established to offer a viable option to parents of the East New York Section of Brooklyn. Our school will focus on science, math and technology. These will be integrated in all subject areas. We will create a learning community that will be safe, nurturing and a place where boys will be challenged to explore all of their potentials. The culture of Anchor Academy will include school personnel, students, parents, and the community at large. We will create an atmosphere that will support the diverse cultural backgrounds of all students, recognizing while celebrating their uniqueness.

Every morning, students will be greeted by the School leader and their teachers. As leaders and teachers meet the students they will welcome them with a warm smile causing each student to know that they are special. This is a real possibility to exemplify and demonstrate in a smaller school setting. Students will participate in a daily morning meeting, where they participate in an active way in whatever these initial exercises beginning the day will entail.

Walking in the halls to their classes, the electric blue of the walls will be covered in a gallery. Portraits of famous past and current musicians, athletes, activists, scientists, and world leaders of diverse nationalities will begin to stimulate the children's brain before their first lesson, pointing them back to their ancestry and to their own potential successes.

Teachers and students will be encouraged to maintain an organized classroom. This mandate for organization will come from the School Leader with all members of the team leading by example and collaborating on this environmental endeavor.

The belief of Keys Academy Charter School is that every student will have an ample support system within the school. The teachers, teacher's assistants, school aides, nurse, maintenance, security, and parents are all there to meet the varied needs of the school community. Parents will be involved as an ongoing "contracted" expectation and be visible providing feedback and input to key staff personnel and being in attendance at internal and external activities with the rest of the school body.

The curriculum method that is being considered is a core knowledge sequential package which takes each subject and each grade and incrementally builds on each area of mastery. This occurs subject by subject, skill by skill, week by week, concept by concept and then on the larger scale

year by year. There is continuity of subject matter and concepts and skills are built upon in a fundamental way. It is also our desire to then connect the subjects together, with the plan to have a connected school day that will help students have a connected school experience. This will lessen fragmentation and assist in the constant repetition and reinforcement of concepts. It will also assist in providing opportunities for practical implementation of skills. This particular design is currently being used in several schools, where some of the very academically savvy and sound candidates of the implementation team have been exposed to through personal experience and through reading. Members of the planning team have visited several charter schools, district schools as well as private schools in order to be exposed to the best practices and success models.

Our creed is to: **Educate, Equip, Expose, and Empower**

Founding Group

The founding group is comprised of individuals with relevant and complimentary backgrounds. Together they have experience in management, human resources, budgeting, accounting, financial forecasting, non-profit management, public school administration, specialist in special education and community outreach as well as a host of other skills that will be beneficial to oversee and provide governance for the new school. Specifically, the group includes:

Lead candidate, Rev. Tyrone Stevenson, is the founding Pastor of Hope Christian Center, a church located in the heart of East New York. In his capacity, Rev. Stevenson supervises the entire church staff, trains all leaders and is responsible for the church's annual budget.

Nicole McNeil is an educational consultant, curriculum developer a school Principal with over twenty years experience.

Sharif E. Rucker is the successful founding Principal of a new DOE Small school.

Bruce Blaylock Brings with him over 20 years of experience at an executive and consultative level in corporate sales strategy & organization management, advanced sales closing tactics & negotiation, local and national promotion & distribution, as well as strategic marketing and consumer behavior. He has also provided exponential growth for many companies through organizational re-engineering, infrastructure expansion, and business development through strategic relationships.

Brandon Gibson, Accomplished and diligent visionary with 10 years of expertise in operations, accounting, finance and business development with proven ability of managing and executing myriad activities within a company.

Tiffany Tucker is an Entrepreneur, and consultant who brings over ten years of experience to the tem.

II. STUDENT POPULATION

Student Enrollment

Grades	Projected Enrollment Table				
	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2017-2018
K	75	50	50	50	50
1st	75	75	50	50	50
2nd		75	75	50	50
3rd			75	75	50
4th				75	75
5th					75
6th					
7th					
8th					
9th					
10th					
11th					
12th					
Ungraded					
Totals	150	200	250	300	350

Target Populations

Keys Academy Charter School will target children in community school district 19 primarily. We plan to enroll kindergarten through 5th grade during the first five years of the charter and continue to 8th grade during the first three years of its charter renewal. Keys Academy Charter School will begin with three classes of kindergarten and three classes of 1st grade for a total of 150 students. In years 2 to 5 we will add two classes of kindergarten, totaling approximately 50 new students per year. We have projected an average class size of 25 students.

This enrollment pattern will allow us to open our school with a small number of kindergarten and first grade students, enabling us to build a cohesive culture among students, faculty, and parents in the first year. In the second year and each year after, once our culture and climate have been established, we will expand our school size by adding additional classes of kindergarten students. Adding the additional classes at the kindergarten level ensures that our teachers will have the maximum amount of time possible to build a love of learning in their students and begin preparation of the whole child for high stakes testing in later years.

According to several of the annual school reports for the schools in this region, the school community consists primarily of Blacks and Hispanics who make up over 98% of the school population. The Black population itself ranges at close to 70% of the students who make up district #19 schools. This population is primarily African-American approximately 25 to 30% recent immigrant students.

According to the reports of the current schools, 75 to 90% of the students in this area are eligible for school lunch meaning that this population comes from families which fall below the poverty level or could be considered working poor.

We anticipate 15% of the students will be Special education students. This is based on the school our lead applicant recently opened. We plan to work diligently to meet their different learning styles, strengths and needs within the established school design as we plan to positively impact their overall success and functioning as they progress through our school. We anticipate 5% ELL students will also enroll. Currently the numbers in this region is quite low ranging between 0.2 to 2% of the entire school population, subsequently we believe that as we establish a safe and immigrant friendly school environment, more students and their families will more openly identify this as a true necessity. We endeavor to lessen their isolation yet at the same time increase their proficiency.

There are several reasons why this school is necessary at this time and in this community. The schools in the neighborhood are mostly overcrowded, don't have the latest in technology and doesn't seem to challenge the students. closest to this community in the past year had a performance rate of only 55 to 65% of the students meeting and exceeding the city and state standards. It is our mission to have a much higher performance than this.

The overall graduation rate for African Americans in NYC continues to be extremely low, some 20 to 22 points below their white counterparts.

We will make a significant effort to ensure that we attract and retain at a minimum 15% special education students, which is higher than the NYC District schools. Per the school's nondiscrimination policy, every student will be enrolled who submits a timely application space-permitting. In the event that the number of applications exceeds the school's capacity, the applicants will be selected in an equitable open lottery process.

Aligned with the charter law, Keys Academy Charter School is committed to making good faith efforts to attract and retain a comparable or greater enrollment of students with disabilities and ELL when compared to the enrollment figures of the NYC School District. Any child eligible for admission to a traditional public school is eligible for admission to a public charter school including students with IEPs (Special Education Students). Keys Academy Charter School will ensure that such students are welcomed and served in a supportive and effective manner. The planning team and staff of Keys Academy Charter School will recruit families of students who have special education needs. Some of the strategies our recruitment team will employ to attract students with disabilities include:

Student Recruitment

Keys Academy Charter School recruitment process will include: distribution of flyers and brochures, posted flyers and notices Brooklyn-based newspaper adds, communities of faith, community centers, and apartment complexes; presentations at day care centers, after-school

programs and youth centers. Furthermore, all materials will be presented in English and Spanish to ensure that all families in the district are properly informed.

Additionally, in order to attract special education students, we will; design marketing materials that highlight the number of special education teachers. We will design marketing materials that contain a description of the special education and related services that the charter school will provide directly (inclusion model, etc.). Hence, we will be provide the models that is offered by the student's district of residence or other provider, designate one individual to oversee the provision of special education programs and services.

ELL Recruitment

The process begins with the Home Language Questionnaire, which will be provided in both English and Spanish when appropriate, to screen all new entrants to New York State schools for potential limited English proficiency. The school is also prepared to translate the home language questionnaire into any language, as necessary. If English is the only language spoken in the home as indicated on the Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ), then the screening process need not continue. However, if the home language is other than English or the questionnaire and/or teacher observation indicate the student's native language is other than English, then appropriate school staff will informally interview the student and the parent/guardian in English, or when necessary in their native language followed by administration of the Language Assessment Battery-Revised (LAB-R). In addition, classroom teachers and administrators will receive in-service training sessions on communicating with students designated as English Language Learners and in techniques for detecting whether a student has English language deficiencies. Please note that minutes of all meetings regarding ELL students will be kept on site for external review.

Retention

Keys Academy Charter School will also provide specific training and professional development for all staff regarding ELL and special education. With regard to ELL, staff will be trained on identification and assistance, instructional programs, evaluation standards and assessments, program as well as, exit criteria, and parent notification. In an effort to provide general information about special education, the special education/coordinator will provide pre-service and on-going training to all teaching staff covering the referral process to the CSE, implementation of a student's IEP, evaluation of a student's progress toward meeting IEP goals and objectives, reporting requirements to parents and the CSE, the importance of confidentiality of student records and discipline of students with disabilities. Please note that there will be no specific mention of any child's IEP.

We fully expect to create an atmosphere where special needs students are comfortable and ELL students are free to express their differences. Our sensitive staff will respond to their individual needs making Anchor Academy a safe haven. This climate will be conducive to their education, thus decreasing the chances they will drop out of school.

III. SCHOOL DESIGN

As already been stated, African American children in NYC are not doing well educationally. Approximately 9% of African American males in the eight grade are reading at grade level and only 25% graduate from high school. The rates for girls are slightly higher, but still below those of white females. Keys Academy Charter School is being created and is committed to help close this achievement gap. At Keys Academy, we will design a school that is conducive to the learning styles and needs of boys.

We believe parental involvement is extremely important to the success of our school, therefore we will do the following:

Our board, principal, and staff will work diligently to create an environment that is "parent friendly", making it easier for parents to participate in the education of their children. We will have an active PO with the president of the PO serving as a member of the Board of Trustees of the school. This will allow parents to have direct input in the policies and direction of the school. We will also use a Parent Coordinator to communicate the needs of parents directly to the school's leadership team. We also expect that the parent coordinator will assist in identifying the social and emotional needs of the families. We will serve and work with the school and community-based organizations to meet these needs when possible.

Curriculum

Balanced Literacy (English Language Arts)

In order to produce students who meet or exceed the State ELA standards, AACS will use a balanced literacy approach and will focus on teaching the fundamentals of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The ELA curriculum will utilize scientifically research-proven educational programs that are aligned with State learning standards. It is comprised of five primary elements: 1) 120 minutes of instruction for all students; 2) Scott Foresman Reading program; 3) Great Source Writing Program and writer's workshop, as modeled by the National Writing Project; 4) grade-level trade books and classroom libraries with authentic literature; and 5) unit and end of year assessments. Balanced literacy incorporates many components proven for developing strong readers, such as independent and shared reading and writing experiences, reading aloud, and explicit instruction of phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling and word study approach.

Scott Foresman Reading

The main reading component of the ELA curriculum will be Scott Foresman Reading. This scientifically research-proven program is linked to the U.S. Department of Education Reading First initiative and aligned with New York State learning standards. The program provides explicit instruction and ample practice and consists of the five essential components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. We will emphasize phonics and phonemic awareness in the early grades (K-1) in an effort to build a strong foundation for developing reading comprehension, literature appreciation, and writing

throughout all grades. To inform instruction, the school will administer the program's research-based assessment, which will help teachers focus instruction on children's needs. In addition, teachers will receive training in each of the five components to support classroom instruction.

Grade-level Trade Books & Classroom Libraries

An important outcome of the ELA curriculum and AACS's mission is to teach students to become critical, creative, and scientific thinkers. To achieve this, we have included as part of this curriculum grade-level trade books and classroom libraries. Students will be exposed to great works of literature and will become engaged in discussing, analyzing, and debating these works. This type of learning experience will help students gain important knowledge and instill a passion for authentic literature, which will become the basis for life-long learning.

Read-aloud

Science and technology will be an integral part of AACS' comprehensive approach to balanced literacy. As part of the read-aloud component of the literacy block, teachers will be required to read expository texts related to science topics in the *McGraw Hill Science* series. We believe that developing content literacy is vital to future academic success. Therefore, students will learn how to apply the same comprehension skills and strategies that they utilize during the shared reading component of the literacy block (Scott Foresman) during the read aloud.

Guided Reading

During the guided reading portion of the literacy block, students will read leveled trade books on various science topics. Teachers will choose a minimum of one book per month for each guided reading group in his/her class to provide an in-depth study of a science topic. By reading the same book for an entire week, students will develop fluency. Consequently, students will develop content specific vocabulary and improved reading comprehension as they learn to evaluate and analyze expository texts. When small groups of students meet with a teacher, independent workers will use computers to acquire further knowledge about science topics through research project or webquests.

Shared Reading

The Scott Foresman reading series includes units on science topics. For example, unit two in kindergarten is entitled, "Animals Live Here." In this unit, kindergarten students learn about different habitats. In subsequent units and grades, other science topics are explored. Teachers will enhance science units by integrating additional trade books into each unit of study and hands-on science experiments. Additionally, teachers will utilize videos and other technology, such as Smartboards to reinforce science concepts visually.

Independent Reading

Independent reading is also an integral part of AACS' reading block. Students will read independently for up to twenty minutes daily depending on their grade level. Classroom libraries will include science trade books on various science topics. Students will be required to keep a reading log and/or journal to document their reading. A minimum of two science trade books will be required monthly. Students will be encouraged to post book reviews online to recommend those read to their peers.

Write Source

The main writing component of the ELA curriculum will be the Great Source's Write Source series. Students will receive specific instruction on writing during the literacy block and will be exposed to writing opportunities across the curriculum. Students will learn about the process of writing: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and publishing. In addition, the six traits of effective writing will be covered, as well as grammar, spelling, and vocabulary building. Students will also learn how to write expository, persuasive, descriptive, and narrative paragraphs and essays. Moreover, the program will provide strategies for developing effective reading, speaking, listening, and learning skills. Students will respond to literature in a variety of formats including expository texts, (descriptive, sequence, comparison and cause and effect), narratives and poetry. Additionally, students will write stories and create reports for social studies and science topics. Students will also keep observation logs and journals for ongoing science experiments. Students will use computer software to create graphics, charts and books to accompany their writing. Students will use a word processing application to write, edit, print, and save assignments

Mathematics

In an effort to create a challenging learning environment with high expectations for all children, we have selected Everyday Mathematics. This program, continuously researched and developed for over 20 years by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project, raises expectations with respect to the amount and range of mathematics that children can learn. Everyday Math follows the NTCM national standards and is aligned with State learning standards. The program develops basic skills in order to build a foundation for higher-order thinking, and it emphasizes a hands-on approach that engages students with everyday problem solving. Students will receive 90 minutes of instruction every day and there will be extensive use of manipulatives, mathematical tools, and games. Furthermore, students will work individually and in cooperative groups, as deemed appropriate. The program's content strands include: 1) numeration; 2) operations and computation; 3) patterns, functions, and algebra; 4) geometry; 5) measurement and reference frames; and 6) data and chance. As with the ELA curriculum, the school will administer research-based assessments to help teachers focus instruction on children's needs. In addition, teachers will receive training in all content strands.

Science and technology will be an integral part of the school's math curriculum. Science and technology will be integrated into the math curriculum when students create spreadsheets and/or

databases to solve problems, collect and examine data, and report on their findings. Students will use graphing tools as a bridge between the concrete and abstract by comparing information such as the weather data they have collected. Also, students will use multi-media programs such as Hyper Studio, as funds allow, to explain math concepts and create quizzes. Students will research the application of specific math skills in real life as well.

Science

In science, AACS will emphasize understanding and applying scientific concepts, principles and theories pertaining to the physical setting and living environment, and recognizing the historical development of ideas in science. The main component of the science curriculum will be McGraw Hill's Science series, which is based on concepts and content recommended by the National Science Education Standards, the AAAS Benchmarks for Scientific Literacy, and the National Geographic Society. This scientifically research-based program, which is aligned with the State standards, utilizes the "5E's" approach: engage, explore, explain, extend, and evaluate. The program is based on the premise that the best way to learn science is by doing science. This hands-on approach will provide students with ample learning experiences involving experiments and investigations. Students will learn to observe, generate ideas, make hypotheses, test their ideas logically and empirically, and apply their meaning into their daily lives. In addition, the McGraw Hill Science series will be supplemented with grade level trade books.

Technology will be an integral part of AACS' science curriculum. Students will use spreadsheets and/or databases to solve problems, collect and examine data, and report on their findings. Students will create line/bar graphs to display numerical data and import the graphs into a word processing program in order to write reports about that data. Also, students will use internet resources to acquire additional information on science topics by conducting teacher-directed or independent research. Students will also view films related to scientific studies from the school's media library to enhance their understanding of scientific concepts and/or ideas. Additionally, students will learn about technological advancements in science as it relates to units of study as well as the evolution of scientific ideas, concepts and tools as it relates to scientists that are being studied.

Academic achievement:

Keys Academy Charter School will a have clear and measurable student academic goals. We will monitor our progress towards these goals throughout the year, making adjustments when necessary, to ensure that students are meeting the expectations set forth by the board, principal, and school staff.

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

Keys Academy Charter School proposes a school that provides scientifically proven and standards-based educational programs with an emphasis on literacy, higher order thinking, and multi-cultural and global awareness. We will use differentiated and innovative instructional methods that will meet the academic needs of all students. Teaching methods will be deployed

according to what is appropriate for students' learning styles and different subject matters. Traditional teaching methods will include direct instruction, cooperative learning, and individualized and small group instruction. Other instructional methods and strategies will include:

- *Science and Technology Infusion*: Science and technology will be integrated into the curriculum and school enrichment activities across all disciplines, demonstrating the importance of science and technology in every day life. We will facilitate teacher professional development and lesson planning to ensure that students receive meaningful, hands-on experiences to provide early exposure to concepts and ideas typically seen much later by those students identified as "talented and gifted".

- *Technology-Based Instruction*: Technology will become an integral part of instruction and learning for both teachers and students. Computers, internet, I pads, I pods, digital cameras and interactive whiteboards (e.g Smartboards™) will be utilized as instructional tools.

- *Data Driven Instruction*: Students will take diagnostic and interim assessments throughout the year, in addition to required city and state assessments, which will be used to assist teachers in identifying student performance levels and mastery of state standards and concepts presented in class. Each teacher will then use their student and classroom data to design instructional strategies to address the individual learning needs of each student. Furthermore, the school leader will analyze classroom and school-level data to design appropriate interventions and instructional strategies to ensure that student achievement goals are being met.

- *Project-Based Learning*: Teachers will employ innovative strategies to teach students and to engage them in the instructional process. Hands-on, project-based classroom instructional strategies will employ inquiry based activities and problem solving strategies, which promote utilization of previously learned concepts and skills. The school program is designed to enable students to meet rigorous academic standards.

- *Interdisciplinary Teaching*: In related curricular areas, teachers are expected to jointly plan, prepare, and teach courses (i.e. literature and social studies courses could be linked with arts and music to create a humanities approach). Teachers are also expected to plan within and across grade levels to ensure a continuity of topics, providing students with ongoing relevance to core content.

- *Community Partnerships and Collaborations*: Community engagement and civic responsibility will be heavily infused throughout the school culture at all grade levels. Teachers will be expected to take advantage of the rich connections with community-based organizations provided through the board, and will be encouraged to form their own relationships, to provide students of all ages with knowledge of and first-hand experiences with the means in which they can be agents of change in their communities. These experiences will be brought into the classroom through guest presentations, "hero" studies aligned to curriculum content, and class service learning activities. Students will then chronicle their thoughts, reflections and experiences through journal writing or class presentations. We believe the combination of both innovative and traditional teaching methods led by highly qualified staff, coupled with intensive

student enrichment and support, will provide the children of East Flatbush with the educational experience they so desperately need and truly deserve.

Teacher Quality

We believe one of the greatest factors of our success will be the quality of our school leader and teaching staff, therefore we have selected a highly qualified and successful school leader. We will empower him to recruit, select, and train the highest quality staff. Our principal and school staff will continue to grow in excellence through professional development opportunities. We believe strongly in the continued development of our staff that we have designed a school schedule that allows for early dismissal of students the first Wednesday of each month to provide for monthly professional development opportunities for the school team.

In addition to monthly professional development opportunities, our school schedule provides our teachers with collaborative planning time and coverage when necessary so they may meet in grade level teams, interdisciplinary teams, or in small groups to discuss instructional strategies, curriculum alignment, academic performance data, or individualized student plans.

Intensive Student Enrichments and Supports

Students will receive extensive time on task and individualized support within the structure of the school day to allow students to reach grade level proficiency. Students will receive 135 minutes of ELA and 90 minutes of mathematics with differentiated instruction and individualized learning plans ensuring that each child is working towards their individual potentials. Enrichment activities will be infused into coursework at all grade levels through teacher-created activities, inquiry-based learning, and web-based activities. In addition, students at all grade levels will receive additional push-in or pull-out services as deemed necessary to support academic growth. An additional 30 minutes per day for academic intervention or enrichment will be provided in grades 3rd through 6th to further enhance student academic achievement.

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);

Keys Academy Charter School has created its key design elements with high school graduation rates in mind. While we are Kindergarten to sixth grade school for the first charter period, we believe that a good foundation will make the difference in students having an appreciation for education that will ultimately lead to them graduating from high school. We will do the following:

Incorporate a Response to Intervention (RTI) service in all classes

Create, monitor, and support of appropriate IEP and 504 plans by qualified professionals

Provide opportunities to participate in Service Learning projects aimed at fostering student engagement and self-motivation

Involve parents and community in the school's goals for student achievement.

Utilize technology and the science lab keep students engaged

It is the goal of Keys Academy Charter School that when students leave our school, they will be performing above their grade level in all subject matters. They will be prepared to enter the top high schools in the city.

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

The mission of Keys Academy Charter School is to develop life-long learners. We want to make education fun and develop a love for learning with our students. We believe it must start at the lower grades, that's why we are proposing to start with Kindergarten to 2nd grade the first year and slowly grow our school to the 6th grade. When our charter is renewed, we proposed going to 8th grade CREMS studies (1988) have shown that while the grade 6-8 middle schools tend to be smaller and less departmentalized than the 7-9 junior highs, close to 50 percent of all seventh graders change classrooms at least four times a day. Thus, at the point in their lives when young adolescents are feeling most vulnerable, many are forced to leave their self-contained elementary school classrooms, where they spent most of their day with one teacher and a small group of peers, for large, often impersonal middle schools or junior highs, where daily they attend as many as seven different classes taught by seven different teachers and attended by seven different sets of students (Massachusetts Advocacy Center, 1988).

The planning team has spent a lot of time considering this fact and will dedicate resources and personnel to address the needs of our students during this very delicate period in their lives. Our warm, and friendly school environment will be a place where students will feel safe.

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

Keys Academy Charter School assessment process will be comprehensive and rigorous. The school will primarily rely on standardized and diagnostic tests to assess student achievement throughout the life of the charter. The school will administer three types of assessments: criterion-referenced tests (CRT), norm-referenced tests (NRT), and diagnostic unit and end of year tests. These assessments will provide the school with absolute, value-added, and comparative measures.

Absolute/Comparative Measures

The school will administer all New York State assessments, which will allow the school to assess how well the students are achieving the State learning standards in absolute terms and in comparison to similar schools in the district. We will also use any other state mandated

assessments that are phased in subsequent to the application submission. Below is a list of all New York State assessments that Anchor Academy will administer:

• Grades 3-6 New York State English-Language Arts Assessment
• Grades 3-6 New York State Mathematics Assessment
• Grade 4 New York State Science Assessment

Value-Added Measures

In addition, the school will administer the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) to students in kindergarten, first, and second grades. This assessment will provide information about how students are progressing over time. It will be administered to all new students in the fall of their enrollment to establish an academic baseline, and then it will be given in the spring of each subsequent year to measure annual achievement gains. It also provides a comparison to a national norm. The school will use diagnostic interim assessments developed by Victory Schools and Princeton Review and unit tests provided by curriculum publishers to provide intra-year assessments of student performance in reading, math, social studies, and science. The regular feedback provided by these tests will help teachers adjust and personalize student instruction throughout the year as necessary. Data from these exams will not be used to support the school's application for charter renewal. These tests will measure grade level performance (i.e. below, at, or above grade level) in specific skills and content knowledge (e.g., multiplying fractions, phonemic awareness, historical facts, etc.). Given that each subject is taught using content that is aligned with the State learning standards, the test results will be good predictors of how well students are doing against those standards. Also, these assessments allow instruction for a particular child's needs to be adjusted in real time each year, rather than waiting until end-of-year exams.

Special Education Assessment

All students with disabilities shall take state assessments except in cases that the IEP developed by the CSE of the student's district of residence determines that such students cannot participate in regular state assessments. In these instances, the State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) will be administered as required by law. If the CSE determines that none of the various assessments administered by the charter school are appropriate for a given student with disabilities, the charter school may create individualized assessment instruments based on goals and objectives of a child's IEP and a thorough task analysis, which then will be submitted to the CSE for approval to be included in the child's IEP.

Please find below a chart summarizing the assessments the school will administer.

Assessments	Subjects Tested	Grade Levels Tested	Type/Measure
NYS English-Language Arts Assessment	English-Language Arts	Grades 3 – 6	CRT/Absolute, Value Added & Comparative
NYS Mathematics Assessment	Mathematics	Grades 3 – 6	CRT/Absolute, Value Added & Comparative
NYS Science Grade 4	Science	Grade 4	CRT/Absolute & Comparative
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)	ELA and Math	Grades K – 2	NRT/Value Added
DIBELS Benchmark	Early Literacy	Grades K – 3	
Scott Foresman End of Year Assessment	Reading	Grades K – 6	Diagnostic
Everyday Math End of Year Assessment	Math	Grades K – 6	Diagnostic
McGraw Hill End of Year Social Studies Assessment	Social Studies	Grades 3 – 6	Diagnostic
McGraw Hill Science End of Year Assessment	Science	Grades 2 – 6	Diagnostic

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

Keys Academy Charter School is committed to the use and analysis of data to assess and inform instructional practice, decision-making, and effectiveness; it will employ data-driven decision making at the board, administrative and classroom levels. Keys Academy Charter School will establish prudent protocols and use data collection and analysis to inform decisions about teaching and student learning.

In order to produce data that can be used to drive decisions, the school must have a comprehensive assessment system that provides feedback on an on-going basis throughout the year and supports teaching and learning. To that end, we will administer a criterion referenced test (CRT), a norm-referenced test (NRT), and interim progress assessments. Data gathered through Anchor Academy' varied assessments will enable us to create a data-driven culture in which students will be aware of their individual performance and goals and as such will be able to speak their own language of accountability.

Parents will be regularly informed of their student's individual successes and areas in need of improvement and as such will be able to actively participate in the academic development of their child.

Teachers will have ready access to student performance, both individually and as a class, and as such can tailor instructional strategies and content to best serve the needs of their students. Teachers will be encouraged and trained to modify delivery and methods of delivery to re-teach concepts missed by large numbers of students, differentiate instruction for smaller groups in need of additional assistance; or individualize instruction for students in need of intensive interventions.

School leaders will have access to building level performance data, as well as cohort, class and individual student level data, and as such may use data to inform decisions on effective curriculum strategies, relevant topics of focus for staff professional development, and individual teachers in need of targeted support.

The board of trustees will have periodic snapshots of the academic health and progress of AACS students. In a variety of different formats, teachers will develop a common understanding of expectations for student work and means of assessment. In both pre-service and regular in-service training sessions, actual samples of student work will be reviewed and discussed, to begin a dialogue that creates a common frame of reference. Specific assessment rubrics will be developed and used to provide a common framework of evaluation. These rubrics will be used by teachers to assess work relative to grade content standards, and will allow teachers to determine what skills need to be re-taught and practiced.

Teachers will regularly analyze student work throughout the year using performance rubrics, individually, in grade conversations, and in conversation with the principal. Student portfolios will also be used as a meaningful form of assessment, as student work will be maintained in portfolios across grade levels. Teachers will have the opportunity to review student work at various times throughout the year and assess development and progress in a variety of areas, both academic and non-academic in nature. The principal will be responsible for ensuring consistent expectations of student work and assessment across the school. Grade and subject specific team meetings will allow for more in-depth examinations of student work and will allow teachers to share and discuss examples of student work and teaching practices, raising expectations across the board.

Evaluation of Leadership Team

One of the major functions of the Board will be to annually evaluate the school‘s Principal. The Principal will be evaluated on all items on the school‘s accountability plan, his annual goals set during the performance appraisal process, and specific management criteria outlined in a performance appraisal form. To oversee this process, the Board will appoint a Performance Appraisal Task Force. The Principal will receive feedback of their performance from both the school staff as well as the Board of Trustees.

The school leadership team will be evaluated on an annual basis. Directors of Finance and Operations will be evaluated by the Principal. All faculty members will be formally evaluated annually; however, informal evaluations will take place on an ongoing basis throughout the year. Evaluations for faculty will include specific criteria and a narrative summary, which will be in letter form. This will be based on year-to-date observations. While the Principal will perform classroom observations on a regular basis, the academic commit of the board of trustees will conduct periodic observations throughout the year and during one week of intensive observations. Faculty also will be asked to submit a self-evaluation. The Board, through the work of its Education Committee, will review results of comprehensive assessments, New York State Tests, and standardized tests annually. This review will allow the Board to monitor the progress towards meeting agreed-upon student achievement goals. The Board will work closely with the Principal to facilitate formal reviews and stay up to date on interim and other assessments as results become available. Progress towards achievement goals will be reviewed at all Board meetings through a ―dashboard‖ presented by the Principal and other staff as requested, and will include results from state standardized tests, interim student achievement assessments, student performance, attendance, teacher performance data, professional development, financials and other key operating indicators. The Board will use this data to help guide strategic decisions on professional development, curriculum realignment and allocation of resources. The Board will ensure that the Principal is using data to make necessary adjustments to the school‘s program and curriculum.

f. Partner with low-performing, local public schools to share best practices;

Several members of the planning team have relationships with district schools. We plan on building on these relationships. The ultimate goal is that all students in district 19 will achieve success. Those at Keys Academy Charter School as well as those in the district schools. We will collaborate with these two schools, share information and we hope to do joint professional development.

We are excited to collaborate so that all children receive the highest possible quality of education.

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

Our school design and program will be implemented through collaborations among Keys Academy Charter School’s principal, staff and board. As previously mentioned,

The founding Board of Trustees has the capacity to establish and operate a successful charter school. The board consists of educators, business and legal professionals, financial experts, and community leaders. We will continue to recruit committed individuals from the education, nonprofit, business, and legal communities. All new trustees will receive training and orientation on how to be an effective member, including in-depth knowledge of the school's mission and goals. In an effort to keep ideas fresh and the process engaging, members will have term limits as per the bylaws. In general, board members should be individuals of high moral character, demonstrate an interest in the welfare of children and be committed to improving education in New York City. All board members must be willing to dedicate the necessary time and energy to ensure the effective and smooth operation of the school. Our board members have the breadth and depth of experience necessary to effectively and competently implement the elements of our school design and program and govern Anchor Academy. As our school community matures and evolves, the members of our strategic planning sub-committee will be specifically tasked with assessing our board capacity and making recommendations on where our board needs to add additional board members. The sub-committee will tap into the extensive network of our current board to recruit new board members as needed. Qualities that will be sought in new board members could include a commitment to providing a high quality education to all children, expertise in building an organization from the ground up, financial or business acumen, a proven track record in urban education, effective community or parent engagement, the ability to fundraise and develop strategic partnerships, ability to communicate effectively with multiple constituencies, or legal expertise.

Proven Track Record in Urban Education

Several of our planning team members are educators and taught in the inner city.

Ability to Build an Organization from the Ground Up

Our lead applicant Rev. Stevenson, has a wealth of experience starting non-profit organizations, additionally, Sherif Rucker has the experience of building a school from the ground up. As already been stated we have several entrepreneurs with man years of experience on the team. We are confident that the commitment to operate a high performing charter school and the combine expertise of the planning team will make for a successful school.

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

Several of our planning team members have relationships with schools in the district. It is our plan to build on these relationships in order to provide the best possible education to the students I our schools as well as every school in district 19.

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

Keys Academy Charter School, will be a viable option for education for students in District 19. We will provide a positive educational experience and commit to each child's academic success. Our plan use of technology is not being offered in any district schools. Many of the schools in the district are over-crowded, leaving parents with few options. Anchor Academy will offer parents an alternative. We will also be the only all boys school in the district.