PATHWAYS
IN EDUCATION

Prospectus

Pathways in Education Charter School
Manhattan – Community School District # 2

I. Executive Summary

Pathways in Education Charter School (the Charter School) is dedicated to fulfilling its vision of empowering underserved students to graduate from high school and achieve their dreams. To actualize this vision, the founding board has adopted the following mission statement:

> *The Charter School will provide programs and services that motivate and support students to obtain a high school diploma and prepare them for post-secondary education and career success.*

Key Design Elements

A. Educational Philosophy

The Charter School will provide education opportunities and support services to students in the borough of Manhattan, Community School District (CSD) 2, who are most at risk of not completing high school, by offering them a unique opportunity to recover academically and get back on track to receive a high school diploma. Because the Charter School founding group believes that an educated person in the 21st century should be a lifelong learner possessing the characteristics, skills, and knowledge necessary to meaningfully contribute to society at large, the school will:

- Provide a high quality, standards-based education program that develops critical thinking skills.
- Encourage initiative and self direction.
- Promote flexibility and adaptability.
- Cultivate leadership and responsibility.
- Require productivity and accountability.

The Charter School has established four overarching goals to achieve its mission:

1. Identify and recruit students at risk of dropping out of school or who have already dropped out of school.
2. Provide a comprehensive learning experience to enrolled students, including supplemental and support services.
3. Provide a learning environment that models and supports self-motivated, competent, life-long learners.
4. Achieve 100% graduation rate for all students, either through completion of all credits at the Charter School or through returning to the comprehensive high school, as determined through academic counseling.

B. Education Model

The Charter School will provide an individualized, guided independent study program that moves students from a rule-based to a performance-based education environment and provides options for completing academic work and credit through a variety of means.

All students will receive ongoing personalized support from highly qualified teachers in the Charter School curriculum, which will provide a strong foundation of learning through core courses that emphasize basic academic skills. In order to match the individual student's level of knowledge and motivation, course materials will be available in several levels of difficulty, ranging from remedial to advanced, and will be presented in a language and format that facilitates student comprehension.

Remedial level courses will be designed to provide structured learning where appropriate, and more advanced coursework will include college preparatory courses and electives for students interested in attending a college or university after high school graduation.

All students who enroll in the Charter School will be placed in courses and subject levels determined through assessment at enrollment and course credit need. Students must have at least basic decoding skills in reading to be able to access the program successfully. Those students without reading skills at the minimal level will be assisted in finding a program that can address their reading skills first, then enrolled in the program once minimum reading levels are reached. Each student's education plan will be tailored to develop specific skills and provide experiences that will result in the maximum academic advancement in a time frame that accommodates students' individual circumstances. This focused approach to learning will permit students to focus on the acquisition of higher order learning skills, such as analysis, evaluation and synthesis.

The Charter School will involve students in the planning and implementation of their own educational program, designing a schedule and work plan that works for their individual circumstances. Using a unique model of "unit packets," students will complete standards based assignments at the completion of each unit of the course, and receive immediate feedback and continual encouragement that builds success and leads to greater self-confidence, and will be able to identify their progress toward credit completion in a very tangible way. In addition, the academic and behavioral standards required of all students will build habits of self-discipline and productivity.

Although the Charter School program is flexible and individualized, graduation requirements will be aligned with the New York City Department of Education (District) and the State of New York, and students will be required to meet all necessary standards to receive a high school diploma. Students will have the option of remaining at the Charter School through completion of all high school graduation requirements or returning to the comprehensive high school upon completion of all credit recovery.

C. Founding Group and Partners

The founding group of Pathways in Education Charter School includes community members with deep roots in New York City and extensive experience in working with the population that the Charter School will target. Their expertise includes executive and managerial level responsibilities in education, children's services, mental health and employment training agencies, as well as experience in communications and non-profit management. All have a long history of commitment to underserved populations and students at risk. Consultants to the founding group include charter school operators with substantial experience in implementing the education model the Charter School will replicate. The depth and breadth of experience of the founding group will guide the selection of the initial governing board and sustain their ability to provide effective stewardship of the new school. In combination, the characteristics of these individuals provide a comprehensive base of knowledge for effective school governance.

II. STUDENT POPULATION

The Charter School intends to work with the district in identifying the locations for each of its five proposed schools. A separate prospectus for each school has been submitted but a brief description of the need in each targeted borough is in each prospectus to assist reviewers in understanding the proposed scope of the founding group's proposed charter schools. As stated throughout this prospectus, it is the intention of the Charter School to complement and support the other high schools in the area of location by providing an education program that brings struggling students up to grade level and dropped out students back into the system.

Although the design of its education program allows the Charter School to serve students from a wider geographic area than one high school attendance area, the founding group has identified CSD 2 as a geographic location in which to locate to best serve the targeted population of struggling high school students of Manhattan.

Norman Thomas High School is proposed for closure because it is a persistently low performing school. Graduation rates hover at 50%. On the 2009-10 Progress Report, the school received an overall mark of f, an F in Student Performance, an F in Student Progress, and an F for School Environment. It is in the lowest 1% of all schools in New York City. If the proposal to close it is approved, current students will continue at JFK through graduation. Entering 9th graders, commencing with the 2011-12 school year will be diverted to other schools. Regardless of the closure decision, it is clear that current students will benefit from the option to enroll in the Charter School because it is likely that more than half are credit deficient. Currently the district proposes to replace Norman Thomas High School. However, it is likely that any new school will enroll many students that bring the same learning challenges that students in Norman Thomas had, and it is these students as well that the Charter School will target.

Below, are brief descriptions of the conditions in the other three boroughs where the founding group proposes to locate charter schools.

Queens: The founding group has proposed one charter school to serve two identified community school CSDs in Queens that contain the targeted student population. Six high schools in these two districts have overall Progress Reports of C or lower.

Beach Channel High School (CSD 27) and Jamaica High School (CSD 28) have been proposed for closure because they are persistently low performing schools. At both schools, graduation rates hover at around 50%. On the 2009-10 Progress Report, Beach Channel High School received an overall mark of F, an F in Student Performance, and F in Student Progress, and a D for School Environment. During the same year, Jamaica High School received an overall mark of D, an F in Student Performance, a C in Student Progress, and a C for School Environment.

Brooklyn: The founding group has identified CSD 15 and 17 as geographic locations in which to locate two charter schools to best serve the targeted population of struggling high school students of Brooklyn. In addition to 15 high schools receiving an overall Progress Report of C or lower in these two CSDs, Metropolitan Corporate Academy High School (CSD 15) and Paul Robeson High School are proposed for closure because of their persistent low performance. On the 2009-10 Progress Report, Metropolitan received an overall mark of C, an F in Student Performance, and D in Student Progress, and a C for School Environment and has a graduation rate of 47%. It is currently co-located with a District 75 school, serving students with a wide range of disabilities. Paul Robeson received overall mark of C, a C in

Student Performance, a B in Student Progress, and a D for School Environment, and has a graduation rate of 50%. The district has proposed that two new high schools be located on the campus during the phase out of the school.

The Bronx: The founding group has identified CSD 10 as an appropriate location for a Charter School. John F. Kennedy High School is proposed for closure because it is a persistently low performing school. Graduation rates are well below 50%. On the 2009-10 Progress Report, the school received an overall mark of D, an F in Student Performance, a D in Student Progress, and a C for School Environment. Currently the school is co-located with five other schools.

A. Student Enrollment

The table below highlights the enrollment projections for the Manhattan-located Charter School, by year, for the first five years of operation.

Grades	Projected Enrollment Table				
	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2017-2018
K	0	0	0	0	0
1st	0	0	0	0	0
2nd	0	0	0	0	0
3rd	0	0	0	0	**0**
4th	0	0	0	0	**0**
5th	0	0	0	0	0
6th	0	0	0	0	0
7th	5	5	10	10	10
8th	5	5	10	10	10
9th	60	60	100	100	100
10th	60	60	100	100	100
11th	60	60	100	100	100
12th	50	50	80	80	80
Ungraded	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Totals	**240**	**240**	**400**	**400**	**400**

B. Target Populations

It is the intent of the Charter School to serve students in grades 9-12. However, a similar need for the same education model has been identified among students in grades 7 and 8, and, pending the availability of facilities and the level of community interest, the Charter School is prepared to serve these grades.

The targeted student population includes:

- expectant mothers
- single parents
- homeless students
- lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, and questioning students
- students with high levels of unexcused absence
- students with behavioral problems
- students who are expelled
- students who are a semester, or more, behind in credits
- individuals in the juvenile justice system
- students with special education individual education plans identifying independent study as a suitable modality for learning.

It is anticipated that, because of the targeted student population and the design of the program, the percentage of enrolled students eligible for free and reduced lunch programs will exceed the district's percentage.

C. Outreach and Recruitment

The Charter School's leadership team will cultivate referral sources to help with recruitment of students not thriving in the traditional education system. Its primary referral source will be traditional schools of the district that identify students who could be better served through the Charter School's education program either temporarily for credit recovery or as a permanent transfer. Founding members, staff, and the board will build partnerships with district, court, social services, and community agency officials to explain the program benefits for struggling students or students who have already dropped out. Self referrals and referrals from informal networks of students, parents and community members satisfied with the anticipated success of students are expected as well. For the purpose of recruiting students who have already dropped out of school, the Charter School will advertise in print media composed in Spanish and English, conduct community informational meetings, establish a school website, solicit the assistance of respected formal and informal community leaders, and develop parent leaders to create trust for the school's vision and mission and its staff.

The Charter School's outreach and recruitment plan focus on partnerships and referrals with the district, including its family advocacy program, and social service/community agencies that serve the target population should result in enrollment of low-income students at rates comparable or higher to the local schools. As it is in existing schools using this model, student retention will be maintained through the program's flexibility and individualized attention on students and their academic and career goals, and strengthened by the support, encouragement, and high expectations from teachers and staff. The education model is designed to attract and serve the targeted population by providing structures and support for success that are complementary to those provided in the traditional comprehensive high school. It is not necessarily the goal of the Charter School to retain students, but rather to provide them

with the focused attention they need to get back on track, and support return to the traditional district school if a student chooses to do so upon completion of a credit recovery program.

D. Serving Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners

The Charter School recognizes the importance of providing education opportunities to all students regardless of the physical challenges or special needs they face, including difficulties with the English language. By establishing strong partnerships with the local district, courts, social services, and community officials, along with the social and community outreach as detailed above, the Charter School will provide information to parents of students with special needs about the educational opportunity the Charter School will provide. Regardless of whether a student enrolls with an existing Individual Education Plan (IEP), all students will be assessed to identify special needs using federal and state assessments designed for this purpose, as well as placement tests that determine the appropriate level for each student. IEPs will be developed as indicated.

For the purposes of special education, the Charter School will take steps to ensure that all students with disabilities enrolled in the Charter School receive special education and designated instruction and services in conformity with their individualized education programs ("IEPs") and in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") (20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*) and all applicable state and federal law (see New York Education Code Art. 84). The determination regarding the appropriateness of independent study for a particular student shall be made by the student's IEP Team.

Consistent with *Lau v Nichols* and *Casteneda v. Pickard*, English Language Learners in the Charter School will be provided access to the core curriculum. Identification and instructional support for English Language Learners will begin upon enrollment, including required remediation. The New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) will be administered annually to identified English Language Learners as specified in state law and regulation (Commissioner's Regulations Part 154), to determine the level of English Language Proficiency (ELP). The assessment will be utilized to track the progress of limited English proficient students in acquiring the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English. Instructional material may be utilized that more directly supports the student's current learning level, but is consistent with New York academic content standards. The Charter School will employ faculty conversant in each student's primary language, and/or translators, as necessary, to ensure comprehensive communication with students and families takes place on an ongoing basis.

All students, including those with special needs and language difficulties will have personal one-on-one contact and tutoring with their teacher, and because of such, the student's progress will continually be monitored and evaluated, resulting in highly responsive adaptation of that student's IEP or language proficiency if needed. As stated previously, the Charter School focuses on performance-based education and allows the student to have immediate feedback and tangible evidence of progress in their courses.

III. SCHOOL DESIGN

The Charter School is focused on attracting students who are struggling to be successful or who have failed in comprehensive schools – students who are far behind and in need of credit recovery, and those who have already dropped out.

The proposed school design is based on a model that has consistently led to student success with the most challenging population of students; those who have already disconnected from the education system or exhibit multiple risk factors and behaviors associated with school failure or drop-out. It is similar to the successful model used by two California charter networks, Opportunities For Learning (OFL) and Options For Youth (OFY) which operate 73 school centers located in ethnically and culturally diverse urban areas. Combined, OFL and OFY schools enrolled over 37,000 students in 2009-10.

The Charter School will operate on a 240 day calendar, with full recognition that no state aid is available for attendance during the months of July and August. Teacher contact with students helps ensure that struggling students sustain momentum and motivation for credit recovery and to pursuing their academic goals. If necessary, the Charter School will seek a waiver from the district and the state in order to serve students year round.

Students enrolling in the California schools upon which the Charter School will be modeled, are usually one or more years behind in graduation credits, and given this difficult population, results are impressive:

- 70% of OFL and OFY students successfully graduated, re-entered their home schools to continue their education, or are continuing to make progress at OFL/OFY toward high school graduation.
- High school graduation rates are, on average across all schools, about 70%. Given the population without intervention, that rate would be near 0%.
- When compared to California schools serving similar student populations on the state's Academic Performance Index (API), OFL/OFY schools are consistently ranked at the top.
- Proficiency ranking and graduation rates are rising in OFL/OFY schools.

A. Student Achievement

The Charter School founding group has a strong commitment to increasing overall student achievement and decreasing achievement gaps, particularly in the gateway skills of reading/language arts and math. The professional backgrounds and the understanding that founding members have for special needs populations and students in families at high risk for academic underperformance is what inspired them to model the Charter School after OFL/OFY schools in California.

The education model for the Charter School is specifically designed to assess each student's proficiency level in each academic discipline, design an individualized program of focused instruction, and monitor progress until students demonstrate proficiency and readiness to move to the next level.

To specifically close achievement gaps in race or socioeconomic status, the Charter School will employ a variety of professional development activities and student interventions, all within the framework of goal-setting, accountability, and high expectations. These activities will be based on the Instructional Equity Initiative of the school program model this Charter School is replicating.

Workshops for staff will focus on maintaining high expectations for all students, and providing intervention strategies with struggling students. Staff will meet in professional learning community (PLC) teams to focus on their students' graduation and academic growth goals and establish asset-based strategies that will be used in working with students to meet these goals. Student interventions employed through the Instructional Equity Initiative in the model program the Charter School will replicate include peer tutoring and peer mentoring, study groups for at-risk groups, study skills classes, teachers providing positive reinforcement for incremental student behavior improvements, transportation support, counseling, and collaborative meetings between teachers, support staff, parents, and students that culminate in student contracts.

Importantly, at the California schools, the first year of the Instructional Equity Initiative led to the following results:

- significant gains in graduation rate (90% more students graduated from previously underperforming learning centers) and in passage of the California High School Exit Exam(11.4% gain in ELA and 15% gain in Math passage)
- API achievement gap narrowed (16 point growth for African American subgroup, 47 point growth for Latino subgroup, and 41 point growth for socio-economically disadvantaged subgroup)

In addition to a focused initiative on closing achievement gaps, the Charter School will increase student achievement and decrease the achievement gaps identified by New York's standardized assessment system through the following instructional strategies:

- Focused learning and subject matter concentration: Upon enrollment, pre- instruction assessment through testing and review of student transcripts will be conducted. Students will be placed in required core subjects, such as reading, writing and mathematics, generally working on only one or two courses at a time. Concentrating on fewer subjects promotes greater depth of learning in each subject area. Many at-risk students have difficulty focusing on five or six courses at the same time, and become overwhelmed trying to effectively manage their time for each course. Through the proposed program model, students have greater control over their learning and receive feedback quickly, both of which feed motivation.

- Self-paced learning: The Charter School will use a guided, independent study format that permits each student to tailor his or her work pace to meet personal needs and goals. Together with supplemental support to sustain motivation and cultivate positive attitude, guided independent study has proven to be a successful formula for accelerated learning at all grade levels.

- Mastery: Actual mastery of skills will be determined through a variety of assessment strategies. Many of the assessments to be used are tailored to meet the specific learning style of the student and accurately capture their actual progress. A student must demonstrate mastery by passing each class with a grade of "C" (70%) or higher. A student who does not meet this requirement will be provided additional support through small group instruction, tutoring, and other appropriate individualized attention.

- Weekly appointments: Students will complete a required number of assignments each week and must come to the center at least twice weekly for testing and teacher assistance to ensure satisfactory progress toward credit recovery and earning a high school diploma. Doing so

provides students with a structured schedule that promotes good work habits. It also provides the teachers an opportunity to intervene in a timely manner if a student begins to struggle or is failing to progress. Students, with the advice of their teachers and parents, will choose their on-site appointment schedule within the boundaries prescribed by the intake assessment and the educational path they choose. Allowing students' input into their own educational experience promotes a positive attitude toward school, sustains motivation to participate in the learning process, and, because it is similar to the routines of post secondary education and employment, prepares them for success in these environments.

- Parent/guardian involvement: Parent/guardian involvement supports positive social interaction, improved attendance, and increased academic achievement. Teachers will maintain regular contact with parents via telephone calls and written communication and parents will be able to monitor their student's progress closely through the Parent Portal Software. In addition, parents/guardians will be encouraged to participate in back-to-school nights, open houses, the accreditation process, and parent/guardian education programs offered by the Charter School.

- Intervention: When students experience unusual economic or personal hardship, the Charter School will consult with local governmental, health, and charitable entities to facilitate student access to appropriate and available services.

- Personalized instruction: The opportunity for success is greatly increased when students are matched with a caring teacher and other supportive staff of the Charter School. In addition to academic guidance as the primary focus, teachers and support staff will determine whether logistical problems or personal issues hinder students from timely or focused completion of course work. The personalized interaction between the Charter School staff and students will make it possible for such issues to be discovered at the early stages of the relationship and appropriately addressed.

- Small group instruction courses and tutoring: Small group instruction will be provided in a manner flexible enough to take advantage of the unique, individualized structure of the curriculum, while providing additional support to students as they matriculate through their personal Learning Plan. Small group instructors are trained in current research-based teaching practices in order to effectively engage students. Small groups of 6 to 12 students allow for an increased amount of differentiation and support for struggling students. These groups facilitate strong relationships among the students so that they can support each other instructionally and motivate each other towards completion of course work.

- Preparation for post-high school success: The Charter School will assist students in their preparation for higher education and work. The program design, in which students begin to mirror the greater control and responsibility required of college and work within a monitored and supportive setting, assists students in the transition from a compulsory education environment to the greater choices and responsibilities they will soon face at work and in post-secondary education. To enhance and support a successful transition, all students will be provided with post-secondary guidance, including resume writing, preparing job applications, completing scholarship and financial aid applications, and submitting college applications.

Teachers will be trained to identify absenteeism or failure to complete course work according to the student's learning plan, and will contact parents/guardians of minor students if they fail to complete

course work or fail to keep appointments. Teachers, staff, and administrators will make every reasonable effort to provide support structures that ameliorate issues causing absenteeism/failure to progress. In cases where the student is experiencing life challenges that can't be addressed through school resources, the Charter School will have established contacts with outside resources, and make appropriate referrals to ensure that no student simply "falls through the cracks." Where necessary to support continued enrollment, flexibility will be provided allowing students to reduce their course load. Central to the personal approach aspect of the school program will be a commitment to ensuring that each student maintains a connection to the school, built through personal relationships between staff and student.

B. Increased Graduation Rates and a Focus on At-Risk Students

As described above in Section II, the Charter School will use an instructional model designed to attract and serve students who have already dropped-out of school or who are at high risk of doing so. The model is designed to create an environment in which students with multiple challenges to completing or succeeding in school can find encouragement and assistance to overcome those challenges and experience success.

Specifically, the proposed education model includes curricula designed to take students who are below grade level and teach them the skills they have missed in previous grades, while rapidly bringing them to grade level competency in each subject area. Importantly, and unlike many traditional public schools where opportunities for students to achieve lower level skill remediation without negative social consequences is often absent, this school will be attentive to supporting students with multiple challenges in a way that encourages success and builds student confidence and perception of themselves and their schoolmates as competent learners.

The school will substantially increase high school graduation rates within this targeted population through its personalized approach with each student. This methodology decreases the likelihood that many of the life experiences that often trigger student failure and disconnection – family stress, teen pregnancy, delinquent behavior, academic failure – will remain a lifelong pattern. All education strategies will directly support increased graduation rates and school success. Particularly important to achieving these goals among a high risk population are the following components:

- Building academic skills through various instructional modalities
- Continuous feedback and scaffolding coursework
- Flexibility to reduce the number of courses studied at one time, if necessary, while still remaining connected to the school and a comprehensive program
- Active personal support and encouragement from dedicated staff
- Individual parent and student involvement with the education process
- Increased focus on assisting students and families through community resources

C. Middle School Achievement and Transition to High School

The purpose of the Charter School is to serve students who are struggling or have failed in their traditional district school. The Charter School will build partnerships with feeder middle schools and traditional high schools in the proposed geographic area, and be positioned as a resource partner to them for their struggling students.

The transition to or from either a middle or high school of the district will be designed to be smooth and seamless. Many components play into this type of transition, including:

- Cultivating a reputation that it is a badge of courage for the students to be at the Charter School, not a stigma of failure
- Alignment with district education programs so that a student who transfers back to the traditional school of the district is able to have continued success at grade level
- Partnerships with the community and district schools so that students remain a part of the community and can keep their appropriate social networks

D. Use of High Quality Assessments

The Charter School will employ a variety of high quality assessments, including all New York State assessments.

Students entering the Charter School will be given diagnostic tests in content areas of math, English-language arts, science, and social science to determine gaps in each student's current learning against grade level proficiency. These assessments will be aligned with New York State Learning Standards, including the Common Core State Standards.

In addition to the diagnostic tests in content areas, information obtained during the intake process, such as student transcripts, records, and referral letters, parent comments, student communication skills, previous school experiences, etc., shall be used to tailor placement and support needs more specifically. Particularly with high risk students and students who are former drop-outs, assessments that employ a variety of techniques to determine skills and attitudes are critical to developing a unique program to support the student's success.

Throughout the program, formative and summative assessments, informal assessments, embedded assessments, and diagnostic testing, as needed, will be used to determine student progress and needs. Students will also participate in the Regent's Examination and Competency Tests for each subject in which they are enrolled.

E. Increased Implementation of Local Instructional Improvement Systems

The Charter School will utilize a robust and comprehensive system of assessment to continuously inform all aspects of the program through data. The school will use the full array of information available from individual assessments, outcome data, state performance measures, teacher evaluations, parent and student evaluations and feedback, etc. to ensure that students, staff and the whole school are meeting identified goals. All Charter School faculty will meet the requirement of 'highly qualified teacher' under the No Child Left Behind Act, and will be hired for their expertise and commitment to serving students who face a variety of challenges. The Charter School will hold the expectation that all staff participate in creating a learning environment in the school.

Staff will participate in an on-going assessment, evaluation and professional development process to continuously improve their skills and ensure students are receiving the most effective instruction and support. Part of each faculty member's evaluation will include student performance, to ensure that student outcomes are an essential focus for teachers. Charter School administrators will monitor and evaluate data generated from student progress and achievement, teacher observation, and staff evaluations to identify areas where improvement is indicated for the school as a whole and for

individual staff. Based on the data developed through this robust assessment process, the Charter School will offer opportunities for teachers to receive coaching, professional development and training, and attend professional learning communities. Administrators will also participate in appropriate professional development and evaluation, and will work with the governing board to identify opportunities tailored to improving their ability to accomplish the mission of the Charter School.

The Charter School will also engage in continuous assessment of the program's effectiveness in meeting its student service and school wide goals. Although the Charter School recognizes that its students will benefit tremendously from the experience of the successful California education model it is replicating, administrators and teaching staff will be vigilant for indicators that adjustments may need to be made. Administrators and teachers will analyze individual, classroom and school data on an on-going basis. Any areas where goals are not being met will be identified, and appropriate responses and strategies will be developed to improve student success.

The Charter School governing board will also engage in this process. On an annual basis, it will review school data and solicit parent and student input to identify any concerns, and ensure that the school is on track and meeting goals.

F. Partnership With Low-Performing Schools

The founding group has held initial discussions with the district, and is committed to continuing the dialog throughout the district's vetting process and if approved, throughout location decisions, start up, implementation, oversight, and renewal. Because of its unique education model, and its mission to serve mainly at risk students and students who have dropped out, the Charter School intends to partner with all schools that are in the geographic area to support the needs of all students of the CSD.

G. Overcoming Start-Up Challenges

The Charter School will contract with Pathways Management Group as the Charter Management Organization (CMO), to provide all back-office services. These services will include, but are not limited to financial, payroll, legal, and human resources. The leadership team of Pathways Management Group has 20 years of experience in providing these services, including charter school start-up, and currently manages charters schools with budgets exceeding $100 million in California.

H. Local District Support and Ongoing Relationship

The Charter School is committed to developing a strong relationship with the New York City Department of Education, Chancellor Black, and the staff in the geographic districts where it will locate. The founding group's primary objective is to ensure that all students in New York City have every opportunity to successfully obtain a high school diploma, whether through the Charter School or a traditional New York City (NYC) school, and are prepared to succeed in employment or higher education upon graduation.

During the initial stages of the application process, the Charter School founding group and partners have communicated with the district to explain the goals and program of the Charter School and to determine how and where it can best serve the students of NYC as a complement the traditional educational system. We are confident that a strong, ongoing partnership will be established based on our mutual commitment to assist the district to serve the most challenging district students through a seamless transition between district schools and the Charter School. Additionally, the Charter School fully intends to support those students who choose to return to a traditional comprehensive high school after recovering deficient credits and developing the skills for success that will be necessary in the less-

individualized environment. The Charter School recognizes that this can be part of the comprehensive solution for all NYC students to receive a diploma, and believes that a positive partnership with the district is essential to success.

I. Access to Viable Education Alternatives in Regions Where They Are Absent

The Charter School seeks to establish a viable educational alternative for students who often "slip through the cracks" of the traditional educational system. Our program, as outlined above, will focus on serving those students who have fallen behind or are unable to find alternatives or success in their home district, regardless of circumstance. The Charter School will work closely with the CSDs and the district to determine the most appropriate facilities where the Charter School could most effectively provide a second-chance for students who would otherwise have extremely limited options to continue their education and find success.