THE PHOENIX ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

Prospectus: Phoenix Academy Charter School

1. Executive Summary

Mission Statement: The mission of the Phoenix Academy Charter School is to increase the achievement of students at risk of academic failure, particularly those with Limited English Proficiency. Phoenix Academy will accomplish its mission through an innovative instructional model emphasizing language immersion while ensuring students' awareness of their background and cultural histories.

Key design elements and characteristics: The Phoenix Academy Charter School is a proposed K-12 school in Community School District 30. The school will offer a preference in its lottery for students who are English Language Learners and whose first language is Spanish. Given the size of the Hispanic population in the community, it is important to prioritize and focus on students from this language background in Queens. The Phoenix Academy Charter School will have an instructional model that is appropriate for all students but is designed to be particularly effective for students with Limited English Proficiency. Some of the elements that will be critical to our success with English Language Learners include a focus on the language learning continuum and an English-only sheltered instructional model with ESL supports.

Key elements of the Phoenix Academy Charter School:

- Language development as a foundation for learning
    - It has been shown that minority and lower-income students enter school with a significant language development deficit, regardless of native language. Phoenix Academy's research-based program of intensive language development will put all students on the path to early literacy success.
- Collaborative team teaching in a bilingual setting
    - Every classroom will be staffed with three teachers – a general education teacher, a special education certified teacher and a trained speech pathologist – with at least one staff member fluent in Spanish. This innovative staffing model will allow for maximum differentiation, dynamic student groupings and a high degree of language development, ESL and special education supports to be provided in an inclusionary context.
- Data-driven approach to academic intervention
    - Using the highly-regarded Response to Intervention model (RTI), the school's staff will use assessment data to create an escalating series of academic supports for struggling scholars. We will provide every student with the help they need while maintaining inclusion in the general education setting for as much of the day as possible.
- The Educational Alliance as a Laboratory Model
    - The Phoenix Academy Charter School will provide training seminars for administrators and teachers in other Charter Schools to develop best practices for students with Limited English Proficiency with and without developmental disabilities. Seminars will be based on some of the research being conducted at PACS focusing on curriculum development, teacher training, RTI Methodology and student assessment.
- More Instructional Time

- The Phoenix Academy Charter School students will have an extended school day and school year which is critical to their academic success. Students will attend school for 210 days, compared to the traditional 180 days in New York City schools. All students will receive an average seven hours of core instructional time.

The key organizational factor distinguishing the Phoenix Academy Charter School will be its close educational partnership with the School for Language and Communication Development, an educational program with a 25-year history in New York of improving outcomes for students with language and autism spectrum disorders. By partnering with SLCD, Phoenix Academy will be able to leverage the experience and expertise of its staff for instructional supervision and coaching, staff development and training, curriculum development and program monitoring. SLCD will also provide operational supports for Phoenix Academy such as professional development.

Founders' Capacity: The members of the founding group of Phoenix Academy have a depth of experience and expertise as educators, school administrators, researchers, philanthropists, nonprofit trustees, business people, school board members and accountants. The lead applicant, Dr. Ellenmorris Tiegerman successfully founded the School for Language and Communication Development over 25 years ago, which has grown to serve 450 students in 3 locations. Her experience, and that of the diverse group of founders and founding trustees, is detailed below:

Ellenmorris Tiegerman, Ph.D.

Dr. Tiegerman has several educational degrees in speech language pathology, special education and social work. She is the Founder and Executive Director of the School for Language and Communication Development which was established in 1985 and presently serves 450 students with severe developmental disabilities. Dr. Tiegerman served as a Professor at Adelphi University in the Departments of Psychology and Communication Disorders. She has co-authored five text books which are used in universities throughout the United States. Dr. Tiegerman was appointed to serve on the New York State Early Intervention Coordinating Counsel and the New York State 21st Century School's Commission by the New York Legislature. She is one of the lead applicants for the Phoenix Academy Charter School.

Paul Rosen

Mr. Rosen is the President and Co-Owner of David G. Rosen, Inc. which is one of the top producers of contract sales in the United States within the furniture industry. Mr. Rosen has served as a Board member at SLCD since 1990 and assumed responsibility as Chairman of the Board of Directors in 2008. Mr. Rosen's daughter attended SLCD for many years and is now a creative artist living in California. Mr. Rosen has been involved in all aspects of fund raising and development and has been a critical decision maker in the expansion of SLCD over the past several years.

Bryan Tseng

Mr. Tseng presently works as a management consultant at Diamond Management and Technology Consultants. He has served on the Board of Directors of SLCD for the past 2 years as a member of various standing committees. He has been involved in fundraising and development projects and has worked closely to facilitate the development of the vocational training program in SLCD's high school program.

Scott Liewehr

Mr. Liewehr is the Developer and Owner of Onesta which is an information technology firm. Mr. Liewehr has extensive experience in developing professional services through software programs and markets. He has served on SLCD's Board of Directors for the past two years on various standing committees and now serves as the chairperson of the Development Committee.

Sher Sparano

Ms. Sparano is the President of Benefits Advisory Service Corporation which develops health insurance programs for businesses. She has been involved as an Executive for Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield in all of its component services: customer service, underwriting, claims, manage care and marketing. Ms. Sparano has been involved for the past seven years as a member as SLCD's Board of Directors and now serves as its Vice Chairman.

Ana L. Bishop

Ms. Bishop has extensive management experience at the corporate level in both public and private sectors, having been business manager in corporate management, communications and marketing at IBM. As a consultant, she was also involved in long range planning for the integration of technology into Title VII funded programs, including the deployment of professional development projects within schools and especially among ESL, bilingual education and special education teachers. She held administrative and management positions in the New York City Department of Education from December 2003-2005, including the supervision of district Academic Intervention Services, School Leadership Teams and citywide Instructional Technology. Ms. Bishop is also a former ELL and served on the Board of Directors of a NYC literacy organization.

Nancy Eng, Ph.D.

Dr. Eng is an Associate Professor at Hunter College in the Department of Communications Sciences and Disorders. Dr. Eng has an extensive research background in bilingual development and assessment. Her research has been published in the most distinguished journals in the field of speech language pathology. Dr. Eng speaks several languages and has a private practice in New York City serving Asian families whose children present with speech and language disorders.

Dr. Concetta Russo

Dr. Russo has extensive experience in special education with a specialty in learning disabilities and reading. She served for over 20 years as the Chairperson for the Committee on Special Education for the Massapequa School District. In 2007 she was a consultant for the Jersey City Public School District on the development of RTI Models in elementary and secondary education. Most recently she has served as a professor in the Department of Special Education at Seton Hall and has just accepted an academic position at St. Johns University. Dr. Russo has lectured extensively as a consultant for Scientific Learning Corporation. She has been involved with the development of SLCD's high school program since 2005. Dr. Russo developed and published a specialized reading program entitled Recipe for Reading and co-authored a text book on Response To Intervention (RTI) with Dr. Tiegerman and Dr. Radziewicz which is now being used by school districts.

Dr. Christine Radziewicz

Dr. Radziewicz is the Director of the School for Language and Communication Development. She has extensive experience and training in speech language pathology, special education and deaf education. She served as a clinical Professor and Director of the Speech and Hearing Center at Adelphi University. She has co-authored several text books on developmental disabilities and disorders which are presently being used at universities throughout the United States.

Susanne Lonigro

Ms. Lonigro is a certified public accountant who has worked extensively in the area of business management. She is presently the Finance Director at the School for Language and Communication Development and is responsible for all financial projects, annual reports and budgets.

Helena LaForgia

Mrs. LaForgia has extensive experience as a Business Manager and is presently the Business Manager at the School for Language and Communication Development. She is responsible for all business operations and facilities at SLCD.

As individuals and as a group, the founders are exceptionally well-qualified to launch, oversee and govern a school. The below table summarizes the relevant experience of each founder:

Business Expertise	Educational Expertise	Administrative Expertise	Business Management	School Management	Board Experience	Finance	Educational Research	Academic Teaching
Dr. E. Tiegerman	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Paul Rosen			X	X	X	X		
Bryan Tseng			X	X	X	X		
Scott Liewehr			X	X	X	X		
Sher Sparano		X	X	X	X	X		X

Ana Bishop	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Nancy Eng	X		X				X	X
Dr. C. Russo	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Dr. C. Radziewicz	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Susanne Lonigro		X	X	X		X		
Helena LaForgia		X	X	X		X		

2. Student Population

A. Student Enrollment:

Grades	Projected Enrollment Table					
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
K	72	72	72	72	72	72
1st	48	72	72	72	72	72
2nd	48	48	72	72	72	72
3rd		48	48	72	72	72
4th			48	48	72	72
5th				48	48	72
6th					48	48
7th						48
8th						
9th						
10th						
11th						
12th						
Ungraded						
Total	168	240	312	384	456	528

B. Target Populations

Target population: The Phoenix Academy Charter School will be located in Community School District 30 in Queens. Queens is one of the most diverse localities in the world with many immigrant families from all over the world.

According to the New York State Report Card for 2009, 23% of the public school students in CSD 30 were designated Limited English Proficient, making the district an ideal match for Phoenix Academy's program. There is an underrepresentation of ELL students in CSD 30 as well as in other New York City charter schools. Whereas other schools enroll only a small percentage of ELL students (i.e., 10-20%), PACS will target this population. Further, the need for quality public school options for English Language Learners is clear: In 2010, just 15% of ELL-designated students in CSD 30 public schools scored on grade level on the New York State ELA exam compared with 56% of English Proficient students. The achievement gap for ELL students in CSD 30 holds in Math as well (a 36-point proficiency disadvantage), further underlining the need for a program that addresses students basic skills needs at the same time as developing their English.

Demographic information concerning CSD 30 is as follows:

- CSD 30 New York City is located in the northwest section of Queens bounded by Flushing Bay to its north and the East River to its west. CSD 30 includes the neighborhoods of Astoria, Ditmars, East Elmhurst, Hunters Point, Jackson Heights, Long Island City, Sunnyside and Woodside.
- Population: Black or African American (9%), Hispanic or Latino (54%), Asian (22%) and White (15%).
- CSD 30's total K-12 population is 36,381.
- 8,830 Students with limited English proficiency (24%).
- The graduation rate for students with limited English proficiency within CSD 30 for the 2008/2009 school year is 52% which is 3% less than the State standard.
- Only 54% of the Hispanic or Latino population graduated from high school.
- 89% of the students with limited English proficiency scored at level 3-4 with 12% at level 4 for grade 3 Mathematics.
- Charters in CSD 30: Voice Charter School, Growing Up Green Charter School, Renaissance Charter School, Our World Neighborhood Charter School.

ELL Students: The Phoenix Academy Charter School will act in full compliance regarding identification and education for English language learners. All families will be administered a Home Language Questionnaire and those students who indicate a Home Language Other Than English will be administered the LAB-R test to determine their English proficiency.

Students who are determined to have Limited English Proficiency will be provided with the appropriate supports to develop their English Proficiency and will annually participate in the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test until they are fully English proficient.

Students with Disabilities: In accordance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and in compliance with Child Find requirements, the Phoenix

Academy Charter School will have procedures to identify, locate and evaluate students with disabilities, even if the disabilities need to be assessed in the native language.

Upon enrollment and with the support of families and local school districts, the Phoenix Academy Charter School will:

- secure all records of incoming students, including all Individual Education Programs (IEPs);
- work with the relevant Committees on Special Education as students on pre-existing IEPs transition to the Phoenix Academy Charter School;
- work as needed with the relevant CSEs to suggest modifications to any pre-existing IEPs;
- cooperate with the relevant CSEs to ensure that all services identified on the IEP are provided;
- use the Phoenix Academy Charter School special education staff to provide specialized instruction but may contract out other services (i.e., occupational therapy, physical therapy) to the local sending district or a well-qualified third party.

For students enrolling without an IEP, and for whom the school suspects of having a disability, the Phoenix Academy Charter School:

- will implement classroom strategies to address academic difficulties;
- will institute a Response to Intervention (RTI) process for the student
- if Response to Intervention Tiers are insufficient, the Phoenix Academy Special Education Coordinator will: (a) notify the family in writing that the child is being referred to the sending district's CSE and provide a copy of the referral and all safeguarded notices as set forth in 34 CFR 300.504 to the family and (b) refer the student to the appropriate district's CSE which then has the responsibility of conducting an initial evaluation and determining with appropriate the Phoenix Academy Charter School representation, Special Education eligibility;
- The Phoenix Academy Charter School's Special Education Coordinator will work with the CSE to help write a new IEP for any new student identified as eligible for Special Educational services;
- will cooperate with the CSE to ensure that all services identified on the IEP are provided;
- will use the Phoenix Academy Charter School special education staff to provide specialized instruction outside of the classroom and within the mainstream classroom, but may contract out other services (i.e., occupational therapy, physical therapy) to the local sending district or a qualified third party.

In support of students receiving Special Education services and to ensure that the Phoenix Academy Charter School works closely with the CSE, the PACS will ensure that:

- the School's Special Education Coordinator will attend all CSE meetings;
- school staff, including regular and special education teachers working with a student on an IEP, will attend CSE meetings to assist in the development and amendment of the IEP;
- school staff responsible for educating students will receive copies of IEPs of all students in their classrooms and will receive training and support on their

responsibility regarding the successful implementation of all classroom modifications. In addition, training and support will include (a) the referral process and CSE; (b) development of the IEP; (c) review of academic progress towards stated IEP goals, and IEP revisions, when necessary; (d) all reporting requirements; and (e) disciplining of students with disabilities.

The CSE will evaluate and develop student IEPs, with the assistance of parents and the school. The student's teachers (special education and general education) will attend CSE meetings to help develop, review, or revise a student's IEP. The Phoenix Academy Charter School believes it is important for school personnel working with children who have disabilities to be involved with the CSE. Accordingly, the PACS will provide substitute coverage to allow teachers, as necessary, to attend CSE meetings. All professionals that teach or counsel the student will be provided with his or her IEP and the necessary support and guidance to implement all required instruction and services.

Outreach

Some parents within the community may not be aware of the educational choices that may be available given the establishment of the Phoenix Academy Charter School. Every effort will be made to reach parents through traditional and nontraditional methods. The Phoenix Academy Charter will:

- Meet with the education committee of the local Community Board and Community Educational Council 30 to discuss the needs of the community and to establish a collaborative relationship.
- Host open houses in the community to introduce the founders, share information about Phoenix Academy and its ability to educate all students.
- Create marketing materials in English and Spanish that will contain a full description of the school's design and key elements.
- Contact local day care centers and home childcare providers to share information about Phoenix Academy. Marketing materials will be sent to their families.
- Place advertisements about the school in local newspapers such as El Diario and the Caribbean Times.
- Meet with local Faith-Based Organizations and conduct open houses for their membership.
- Meet with the Committee on Special Education (CSE) for CSD 30 to inform them about the school.
- Conduct a "listening tour" of the community. We will visit after-school programs and recreational centers, supermarkets, apartment complexes and organizations providing services to immigrant families to learn about community needs, and distribute promotional and recruitment materials.

- Establish partnerships with local Community Based Organizations to facilitate outreach and identify additional locations and organizations in the community to target.

- Provide a Spanish interpreter at recruitment events and information sessions.

All information pertaining to the Phoenix Academy Charter School will be available in English and Spanish. Parents will be provided with interpreter and translation services to assist with completion of the application, answering questions or addressing concerns.

Phoenix Academy will also partner with community organizations within CSD 30 in order to take advantage of existing networks when conducting outreach in the community. Examples of CBOs that Phoenix Academy will pursue partnerships with include:

Chhaya Community Development Corporation
Corona Congregational Church, Inc.
Ecuadorian Civic Committee of New York, Inc.
Ecuadorian International Center, Inc.
Elmcor Youth and Adult Activities, Inc.
First Baptist Church of Corona NY, Inc.
Flushing Meadow Soap Box Derby, Inc.
Helping Our Guys and Girls Succeed, Inc.
Jackson Heights Beautification Group
Jose Encarnacion Baseball Little League, Inc.
KCS of Metropolitan New York, Inc.
La Asociacion Benefica Cultural Father Billini, Inc.
League for Better Community Life, Inc.
Library Action Committee
M.C. Provisions for Human Services
Mount Horeb Baptist Church
New Immigrant Community Empowerment
New York Military Youth Cadets, Inc.
Queens Community House, Inc.
Queens Lesbian and Gay Community Center, Inc.
Queens Museum of Art
Queens Theatre in the Park, Inc.
Queensboro Council for Social Welfare, Inc.

Recruitment and Admission

The Phoenix Academy Charter School's admission policy is nonsectarian and does not discriminate against any student on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender and/or disability. Any child who is qualified under New York State Law for admission to a public school is qualified for admission to PACS. The school will ensure compliance with all applicable anti-discrimination laws governing public schools including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act § 2854(2) of the New York State Education Law, governing admission to charter schools.

With approval, PACS will offer a lottery preference for students who test as English Language Learners and whose native (home) primary language is Spanish.

The Phoenix Academy Charter School will execute a strategic recruitment plan that will reach all families in Community School District 30. This plan will ensure that the student body is reflective of the community school district's population. Our team will:

- Contract with Vanguard direct mailing service to distribute marketing materials in English and Spanish to families of CSD 30.
- Host informational sessions with local elected officials such as Council member Julissa Ferrera and Senate member Jose Peralta to present information about the school and distribute applications.
- Create a website and Facebook account for Phoenix Academy. Applications and marketing materials will be available for downloading and printing.
- Distribute applications at community events and education workshops.
- Set-up information tables at community based organizations, museums and other cultural institutions to make applications and marketing materials available to visitors.
- Distribute applications in pubic housing developments and local apartment complexes.
- Present information to the local Community Board and Community Education Council 30 inform the community at large about the opening of the school.

3. School Design

   a. Increase Achievement and Decrease the Achievement Gap

Students will be arriving early for one-on-one or small group support and have their breakfast with their teachers in a quiet setting. The tutorial period at the end of the day will either reinforce a relevant lesson of the previous day or connect it with a planned lesson for the day ahead. After breakfast students move into strong direct instruction in the core subjects all morning. In the afternoon, there is the completion of instruction in the core subjects, followed by explicit instruction in the school's values as well as more hands-on activities in a number of enrichment areas. The last portion of the day will be used for detention of students whose behavior warrants it, or athletics and/or Homework Help, providing a quiet environment to do homework for students who might not have such opportunities at home.

Academic achievement is not possible if students cannot read well. In order to move successfully into upper grades, a student must be able to read at a proficient or advanced grade level starting in the early grades. The Phoenix Academy Charter School will focus on students' reading through: a block of three hours of reading and writing that includes:

(a) a balanced approach to literacy instruction;
(b) one period a day of language instruction;
(c) one period a day on phonemic awareness and phonics instruction incorporating the syllabication rules and spelling generalizations.

With a primary focus on literacy, and with an extended day, Phoenix Academy Charter School scholars will have a greater opportunity to succeed in the earliest grades. We believe that extended school days and year are also critical to the academic success of Phoenix Academy's scholars. The Phoenix Academy Charter School will begin 9/6/12 and end 8/17/13. This equates to 210 school days, compared to the traditional 180 day New York City school year. The regular school day will run from 8:00 to 4:00pm, providing on average seven hours of core instructional time.

b. Increase High School Graduation Rates and Focus on At-Risk High School Students

The Phoenix Academy Charter School staff expects that with the level of support that is being offered to each student, there will be some scholars who may struggle with language and/or reading. Identification of these scholars will be made promptly at the beginning of the school year through our Universal Screening. The school day has critical supports systematically integrated into the school's design and structure to support these struggling scholars. Consequently, the Phoenix Academy Charter School will be providing mandatory tutoring during the school day within the educational program. Enrichment activities will also be offered to those scholars who can benefit from an accelerated program. This will be delivered during their mandatory tutorial session.

Small student/teacher ratios will enable school leaders, teachers, and all support staff to develop caring and strong educational ties to each of our scholars. At a class size of 24, every scholar at the Phoenix Academy Charter School will have very close relationships with the three teachers within the class. One teacher will be a general education teacher, the second will be a special educator and the third teacher will be a speech language pathologist.

c. Focus on Middle School Achievement

The Phoenix Academy Charter School believes that a highly structured, disciplined environment in which expectations are clear and supports are ample will serve all scholars well. Our code of conduct will establish high expectations for scholars as they make the critical adjustments to adolescence and middle school level work.

Middle school scholars attending PACS will benefit from an extended school day and school year. With a primary focus on literacy, scholars will use the additional instruction time to focus on mastery of the core subjects. More instruction time has proven to be successful with our targeted population. Additionally, scholars will have the opportunity to participate in tutoring, homework support and enrichment activities during the day.

Further, the school's K-12 structure and its instructional policies will ensure that scholars are adequately prepared each year for the following year's requirements, ensuring students do not reach middle and high school with significant educational deficits.

d. Use of Assessment

Phoenix Academy will integrate assessment of student learning throughout its academic program. The school will make use of both formal assessments of language acquisition and English abilities as well as utilize informal assessments throughout the school day – observations, teacher rating scales, language samples and other research-based assessments.

e. Local Instructional Improvement Systems

Assessment results will be tracked and analyzed in order to identify areas of the school's program or staff for development and/or improvement. By rigorously studying the data generated through formal and informal assessment, Phoenix Academy will develop a comprehensive and ongoing picture of the school's performance to facilitate a culture of continuous improvement.

f. Partner with low-performing public schools

A key element of the Phoenix Academy's program is that the school will act as a "learning laboratory" for other charter and district schools. The school will conduct annual seminars on language development, reading methodologies and effective curriculum instruction for English Language Learners for public school personnel who wish to attend.

The school will also invite ESL teachers from across the city to visit Phoenix Academy and observe the school's techniques in action. By disseminating the research-based methods first pioneered at SLCD and integrated into a public school at Phoenix Academy, the founders hope to support a higher quality of language instruction citywide.

g. Overcome start-up challenges

The founding group has deep experience in the administration and operations of school settings. The lead applicant, Dr. Ellenmorris Tiegerman, founded the School for Language and Communication Development over 25 years ago and it has thrived under her leadership –growing to more than 450 scholars in 3 locations.

The founders possess a combination of talents that will allow them to capably address the key challenges of fundraising, staffing and facilities acquisition. Further, the school's educational partnership with SLCD will result in administrative and operational supports for the Phoenix Academy Charter School so that the charter school can focus on student learning without many of the non-instructional challenges that can distract a young school.

h. Local district support

As described above in section F, the Phoenix Academy Charter School will seek to develop productive relationships within CSD 30 and across the city by acting as a source of high-quality professional development for NYC teachers and administrators.

The founding team has already begun the process of engaging with officials from the Community School District and the New York City Department of Education regarding the need for the particular programs offered by the Phoenix Academy as well as the opportunities to develop city wide collaborations and create systemic improvements in language based classroom instruction.

i. Viable alternative

Currently, fewer than 4% of the public school students in New York City are attending a charter school, with more than 64,000 students on charter waiting lists, according to the NYC Charter School Center. In CSD 30, there are currently only 4 charter schools serving approximately 1700 students, representing less than 5% of the students in the district. With the underperformance of the district schools in the area, particularly for ELL students, the need for more quality schools of choice – and the demand among CSD 30 families – is clear. Finally the underrepresentation of Latino children in charter schools indicates that this population is underserved, performing more poorly than other minority students and that their families have fewer educational choices even within the charter schools.Phoenix Academy will be a viable alternative for those families.