PROSPECTUS—GLOBAL COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What if all that is needed to support families is designed, developed, obtained, coordinated? What then? What if the curriculum is complex, engaging, offering lots of ways to connect practice and become competent? What if the classrooms are beautifully designed, painted, space carved, furniture crafted? What if teachers are deliberately recruited who are adventurous, independent, politically aware citizens of the world, conversant in many languages, guided to interact with a structure that is complex but interconnected, recursive and forward-thinking, rich and relevant? What if parents could learn how to support their children's academic curiosities? What if families developed trust in families that are different than they are? What would a school look like that really developed children to be caring and capable citizens of the world? What if we aimed high, not low?

MISSION STATEMENT

Global Community Charter School serves the Upper Upper West Side and West Harlem communities by providing students in grades K through 5 with an education that is rigorous, inquiry-based, and that teaches students and their families to work successfully together across differences in language, culture, economic background, age, and nationality. Our school prepares students for admission to a competitive high school.

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS OF THE GCCS

Multiple forms of evidence: Performance assessments including projects, portfolios, multimedia presentations, state mandated tests, and written tasks inform instruction and measure progress toward learning goals. Once baseline data is gathered in the beginning of the year, an Individualized Student Learning Plan is designed and teachers meet regularly throughout the school year to discuss data and subsequent adjustments to the curriculum targeted toward each student. In addition to standardized tests aligned to both the NYSED Common Core and the **International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme** (PYP) curriculum used for measuring student achievement, students are given opportunities to demonstrate and share their knowledge and growth in multiple formats based on benchmarks and goals established by teachers.

Two teachers in each classroom: Collaborative team-teaching is our model for inclusion classrooms with two adults in every classroom. Team teaching will enhance opportunities for professionals to share observations, knowledge, and experiences. At least one teacher will have specialized knowledge of teaching in an inclusion setting and meeting the needs of children who require Special Education services and/or are English Language Learners (ELL). The flexibility built into this model means that teachers can work together to design tasks, group work, individual conferences with students, and to differentiate ways in which students participate in class activities.

Visual and performing arts integration: The arts are important areas of learning in the PYP. Students will learn the disciplines of visual arts, music and drama, as well as learning about the arts (the skills and processes involved) and through the arts (artists, perspectives, themes and ideas using the arts)[1]. This approach helps to integrate the arts into the curriculum studied and places the arts inside the everyday life of the students and is not seen as an "add-on." GCCS plans to partner with local museums, arts organizations, and teaching artists to provide students with multiple opportunities to explore their own artistic abilities and to appreciate those of others.

Integrated Program Development: Based on the Primary Years Programme (PYP) of the International Baccalaureate (IB) schools in that the curriculum is transdisciplinary theme-based and focused learning

[1] Primary Years Programme, Curriculum Documents, page 8.1 International Baccalaureate Organization, 2004.

experiences where students with diverse backgrounds and languages become inquiring, knowledgeable, and supportive of each other. Since our population of learners will be focused on language and skill development, additional resources and programs need to be integrated with PYP to meet the needs of urban students.

- *First Steps,* a careful system of student expectations will be integrated as a way to keep track of what students should know, understand and apply and what is actually observed.
- *The Incredible Years* is a program that focuses on early childhood's pro-social and behavioral expectations by training teachers, parents and students on ways to self-regulate students' impulses, improve decision-making, and engage in learning through teacher professional development, parenting classes and student activities.

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

Embedded Professional Development Practices: Professional development for staff is grounded in collaborative learning, an apprenticeship model of learning, and intensive coaching so that teachers develop the ability to reflect critically on problems and dilemma with others. Under the guidance of coaches, using common planning time, GCCS teachers will take responsibility for student results, school climate, and e development and learning for all teaching staff.

Transdisciplinary Studies: Transdisciplinary studies are related to interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and integrative studies. They are built around the concept of studying a problem through many lenses. Inquiries are explored through mathematical, language, historical, artistic, and scientific perspectives. In PYP, engaging themes that stretch beyond the boundaries of traditional subject areas frame the learning throughout the primary years, four in Kindergarten and six per year in grades 1-5.

Community development: Since GCCS will draw deliberately from a range of neighborhoods of differing ethnicities, languages, religions, and cultures, community involvement needs as strong a foundation as possible. GCCS has already started building these relationships with key neighborhood representatives who expressed interested in helping to support our school. Each designated neighborhood will have at least one liaison between the neighborhood and the school. Before the school is opened, the school's Family and Community Coordinator will train them in their responsibilities and meet with them regularly.

CAPACITY OF THE FOUNDING GROUP/ FOUNDING BOARD OF GCCS

Educational Expertise: **Phyllis Siwiec**, Lead Applicant and former charter school leader, **Alexandra Miletta** Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education, **Lydia Gutierrez** experienced Teacher Educator and Specialist in English Language Learners and Special Education and **Carlos Aponte,** charter school Headmaster and CEO form the core of those who have the breadth and depth of educational leadership to develop the program based on needs of the underserved and to inspire families to join us.

Financial and Operational Expertise: **Carlos Aponte,** new business developer, entrepreneur and financial manager along with **Greg Freelon** Founder and President of Windy Crest Communications have significant experience with the design budgets, manage operations, and maintain fiscal oversight. **Peter Prosol,** IBM senior business consultant develops systems of accountability in areas of fiscal management, Informational Technology, and use of data to inform decision-making. **Rachael Beard** Executive Director and Co-Founder of LinkEducation and Content Manager in organization to help fleeing refugees

Legal Expertise: **Sheronda Rochelle**, Vice President and Assistant General Counsel at JPMorganChase & Co; experienced in general contracts, dispute resolution/ pre-litigation Community Development Expertise: **Greg Freelon**, Community activist, lives in Morningside Heights and designs programs for urban youth in the arts with community involvement. **Tanya Espy-Disparti**, a resident of Harlem, is a not-for-profit manager who develops advocacy groups for parents of charter schools. **Tasha Young**, Not-for-profit manager; has the ability to work with parents and community members to organize and support their participation.

Leadership Continuation: Members of the Founding Group who will be working in at GCCS include: **Phyllis Siwiec**, Head of School; **Lydia Gutierrez** and **Andra Miletta**, Professional Developers and Coaches, Lydia will also become the Coordinator of Student Services; remaining members will move to the Founding Board or additional positions at the GCCS.

II. STUDENT POPULATION

A. Student Enrollment

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Kindergarten	75	75	75	80	80
1st	75	75	75	80	80
2nd		75	75	75	75
3rd			75	75	75
4th				75	75
5th					75
TOTAL	**150**	**225**	**300**	**385**	**460**

Anticipated Enrollment Table

GCCS will increase Kindergarten and Grade 1 enrollment by 5 students each in Year Four with the expectation that our program will develop, our teachers and other staff more experienced and more students will want to attend. With that in mind, GCCS will plan for an annual lottery to replace those who leave and the maintenance of a current Wait List for each grade. Since there will be active recruiting of English Language Learners who will be able to develop their English language skills while strengthening their native language, expectations of a very limited attrition rate is planned.

B. Target Populations—General statistics and descriptions

After spending time working in Harlem at a charter school organization that educated students in a focused and intentional way; great things happened. In wanting to strike out and revisit the progressive education that was so thrilling to participate in, several members of the founding team decided to investigate where to focus a charter school that would combine the best of constructivist/ Vygotsky/ Apprenticeship learning with the close attention to requiring skills and mastery. It is not the usual pattern in urban charter schools. Harlem was a natural area upon which to focus. But curiosity prevailed and research into how schools were performing in surrounding neighborhoods became a driving interest. As a result of research done to help understand how several schools were succeeding in the area known as the Upper Upper Westside or Morningside Heights or West Harlem were included in the research. Schools that straddled Community School District lines became another focus area. The schools that bordered each other on CSD 3 and CSD5 revealed several interesting results. Those schools selected from CSD3 had a wider distribution of diversity than those schools in CSD 5. But upon closer examination, the achievement gap seemed to be very evident in those schools in CSD 3. And upon further exploration, the founding team learned that the Black/African American students and Latino/ Hispanic were achieving at a difference of, in some cases 30-40 percentage points. Our population was chosen. We would develop a school for those students whose neighborhood schools could not help them succeed at what we knew they could do. We were inspired!

The proposed area of recruitment for Global Community Charter School's students is the area including West Harlem in Upper Manhattan bordered by Frederick Douglass Avenue and Central Park West on the East, Hudson River on the West, and between W 90th Street as its Southern border and Hamilton Heights as its Northern border. This area has been chosen since these neighborhoods are a combination of a wide range of ethnic neighborhoods, home languages, economic disparity and very few charter schools. This area is located within the boundaries of Congressional District #15, primarily Community Boards #7 and #9 and includes sections of Community School Districts #3 and #5.

Congressional District 15: In 2009, of the 132,000 children under the age of 18 living in Congressional District 15, 58% were living with a single parent or guardian, and 36% of the total were living in poverty. Of those living in poverty, 38% were age birth through 5. In addition, of the total number of children, 51% speak another language at home other than English.[2]

Community District 9: The Global Community Charter School will be located in CSD 3 or CSD 5 in an area that borders both the Upper Upper Westside and West Harlem in Manhattan. In Community District #9 all of which is located in our recruitment area, there is a population of 124,500 of which 33.8% are foreign–born, 45.4% have a female head- of- household with related children under 18 and are at the poverty level. Furthermore, 31.9% of the population under 18 is Black or African American. In addition to African Americans, this group includes three different language groups of African origin: French, English and Arabic.[3] 42.7% of CD9 is Hispanic/Latino, which includes 11.9% of all immigrants who are Dominican. The other large Hispanic group is Mexican. Of the entire population that is not proficient in English (26.9%), 87.1% speak Spanish or Spanish Creole. A small population of Asians at 5.9% is also a vibrant community in CD9. They include Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Asian Indian. Whites compose 17.8%. Given its relatively small area CD9 is diverse with many languages, cultures, ethnicities, and socioeconomic range.[4]

Community School District #5: CSD #5 has been classified by the NYSED as "In Need of Improvement" for three years in a row in English Language Arts. Elementary schools of the NYCDOE located in CSD 5 but border CSD 3 are few in number. Four of them have been researched and display a shared high level of poverty expressed in Free and Reduced Lunch rates of 85%-96%. Numbers of English Language Learners range from 11% to 37%. (*See Table 1 for further comparisons*)

Community District #7: I CD 7 includes the targeted area of recruitment: north of West 90th, Central Park West as the eastern border, Hudson River as western border, and all the way northward to West 110th where it abuts Community District 9 where our recruitment area continues. This is a discussion focused on this upper half of CD 7. The total population of this section is 80,229 with 16% Black/African American; 5% Asian; 26% Hispanic/Latino and 53% White. The socioeconomic range is very diverse from public housing to expensive apartments with park views that cost millions of dollars. Of the nine census tracts that form the area of CD7 under discussion, they range in families living below the poverty line from 6% to 31% with an average of 15%. Included in this population is also a range of foreign-born individuals from 18% to 32%. Those who speak another language besides English range from 28% to 50% with an average of 43% of this group rating themselves as "not speaking English very well."

As for the schools that border CSD 5 that are located in CSD 3/ CD7, they are crowded and according to the Community District #7 document *District Needs Statement for Fiscal Year 2010,* "Overcrowding in public schools has reached a crisis point" caused by a boom in construction of "family-friendly residential units… As a result, at least one additional elementary school and one middle school are urgently needed…"[5]

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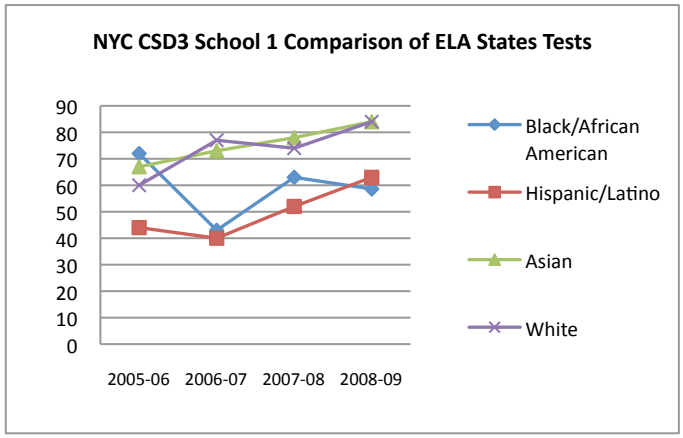
[2] Congressional District 15 Website: http://govtrack.us
[3] *http://www.donaramericas.org/cd9.htm*
[4] *http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/census/puma_demo_06to08_acs.pdf#mn9*
[5] Manhattan Community Board 7: District Needs for Fiscal Year 2010: http://nyc.gov

Table 1. Comparison of Demographics of NYCDOE Elementary Schools located near each other

Schools / Race/Ethnicity	CSD3 #1	CSD3 #2	CSD3 #3	CSD3 #4	CSD3 #5	CSD5 #1	CSD5 #2	CSD5 #3	CSD5 #4
Black/African American	19.6	29.2	25.6	26.4	28	70	14	63	51
Hispanic/Latino	69.3	50.7	46.3	61.1	56	26	82	33	48
Asian	3.1	6.5	2.3	4.4	3	2	1	2	1
White	6.6	13.2	23.9	5.7	12	2	2	1	0
Free/Reduced	81	67	56	86.5	71.8	96	95	96	85
Spec. Ed.	19.3	15.1	15.4	21.1	12.5	23.2	17.2	20.9	16.9
ELL	23	16.4	9	22	10	14	37	14	9.8
Total Population	654	758	633	485	458	413	797	393	523
Grade Configuration	Prek-6	K-5	Prek-5	Prek-5	Prek-5	Prek-5	Prek-6	K-6	Prek-6

In five of the nine schools located in the area as presented, each has a wide diversity of students by race and ethnicity and because of their location in socio-economically diverse neighborhoods this diversity is more than one of race and ethnicity (see Table 1). Most have the reputation of doing well, but upon closer investigation, a pattern of underperformance for students of Black/ African American and Hispanic/ Latino classification emerges (see Table 2).



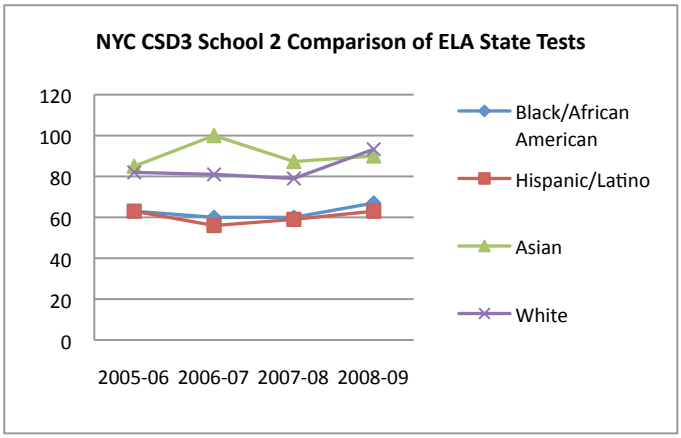


Table 2, Table 3

In both Table 2 and Table 3, results for two separate schools both located in CSD 3 that have a diverse population of elementary students. The graphs show four years of results in NYSED State Tests in English Language Arts from SY 2005-SY 2008.What is clear is the "gap" between student performances of four of the racial groups represented as aggregate scores in Grades 3, 4 and 5 over the time period.

COMPARISONS BETWEEN CSD3 AND CSD5

Percentage of Grades 3, 4 & 5 That Scored at Levels 3 & 4 on NYSED Tests 2008-09[6]

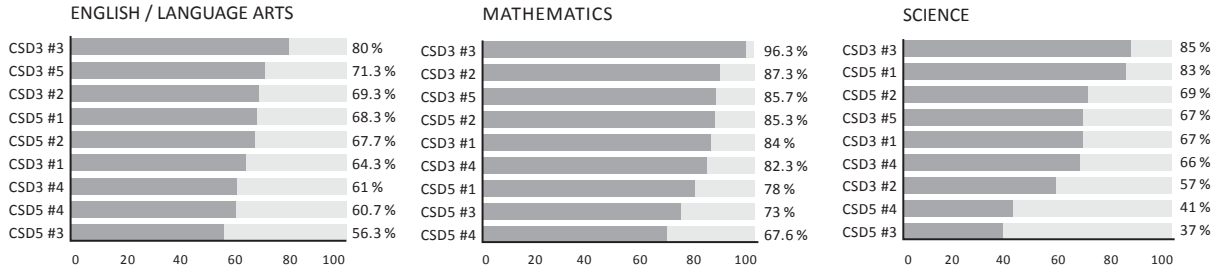


Table 4

If the ELA, Math and Science scores are compared from the nine schools that are closest in location to each other and within our recruitment area, (see Table 4) the range is closest is ELA with the difference between the aggregate score from the best performing school (CSD3 #3) and the least successful school (CSD5 #3) a 23.7 percentage point difference. Math has a 28.7 percentage point difference, while science has a 48 percentage point difference. But what is interesting to note is that the schools in CSD 5 and CSD 3 are mixed with each other in ranked order, highest to lowest aggregate scores.

Target Populations

Because of the research into the underperformance of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students in the CSD 3 schools that were analyzed and the lackluster results of the students in the CSD 5 schools, our target population includes those students who reside in CSD 3 or CSD 5 and are members of an underserved racial or ethnic group and/or speak another language besides English or are English Language Learners.

Student Recruitment

The Community Development Team of Founding Team members will continue to develop relationships with designated neighborhoods that have been selected because they are the home bases for distinct ethnic groups. In addition a recruitment policy has been developed to address those potential students who live throughout our designated recruitment zone. By contacting local day care centers, Head Start Programs, church-affiliated day care centers and furthering our networking through our area, GCCS will make both formal and informal presentations upon request. In addition, working with local church groups, libraries, child health care clinics, adult English-learning classes and other civic organizations helps to share information and reach out to families that would be candidates for our school. Since several of our members are multi-lingual presentations are easy to accommodate.

Recruitment of Students with Special Needs

Recruitment will be focused on those day cares that are already providing intervention services and the early intervention specialists who can help us locate and contact families with students who need or may need additional support. In addition Harlem Children's Zone has established programs such as Baby College and the Three Year Old Journey that are focused on families at risk and is a link to those families already receiving services that live in our recruitment area.

Identification of Students with Special Needs

Since GCCS will open with 75 Kindergarteners and 75 First Grade students, there is a strong likelihood that not all students with special needs will be identified by the time school opens. As already

[6] All school information retrieved from NYSED School Report Cards 08-09

mentioned, family visits will take place after a family has accepted a place for their child. At the time of the family visit, a conversation will take place about any special programs that the child has participated in. In addition, once a student is enrolled with an OSIS number, a designated staff person, the Special Education Coordinator, will access the records of any child who may have an IEP already in place and follow-up on having a copy sent to the school. Students who have an I.E.P. and a setting that is supported by Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) will have the benefit of our Team taught classes. For others who require SETTS, a plan to ensure that their instruction time meets the SETTS regulation is imperative. For those students who require a different setting, a meeting with the family, language facilitator if necessary and Special Education Coordinator will take place early in the year. Follow-up will be needed and options explored if necessary to accommodate all aspects of the I.E.P.

All incoming Kindergarten and Grade 1 students will be screened by the BRIGANCE assessment and any one who falls below the designated point of entrance to Kindergarten or Grade 1 will be brought to the attention of the Special Education Coordinator and teacher. Baseline assessments will be taken in September and skills will be recorded on Learning Profiles in Reading, Writing and Math. A composite picture of each student made up of many forms of evidence is assembled and the Child Study Team will meet to discuss what was observed, recorded and learned about each student for whom there are concerns. This is the Step One in the Right to Intervention (RTI) model. Six weeks of intervention are planned with the focus on selecting strategies that might make the largest impact. Interventions are put in place in the classroom setting and data is kept to see what happens. Teachers observe and discuss what the impact is of each intervention. After six weeks, the Child Study Team reconvenes to assess effect of interventions. If there has been no or little improvement, a more focused small group setting will then be the method of delivering the intervention. This is Step Two in the RTI process. This process can remain at Step Two for several cycles, but progress must be seen through the processing that the student exhibits and the products as student work that are produced as evidence of improvement. If the student does not make clear improvements after Step Two, then a one-on-one setting will be necessary with very targeted interventions. All of the interventions and steps in the RTI process are documented and kept on file. These students are the primary of the Child Study Team who will remain vigilant about supporting all learners in a thoughtful and thorough approach.

Recruitment of English Language Learners: One of our Founding Board members works for the International Rescue Committee in New York City and will help direct resources to working with refugee and new immigrant families that live in our recruitment area. We will also contact other agencies that work with refugees and immigrant populations to gain access to and support for families that are new comers to our community. Recruitment materials will be translated in all of the languages necessary so that we can reach families not fluent in English. In addition, translators and our own staff and our neighborhood liaisons that are multi-lingual will publicly present information at Open House events located in housing projects, churches, community centers and day cares who know families who speak another language not English. These events will be advertised in neighborhood businesses such as grocery stores, beauty parlors, libraries, churches, and other small businesses.

Identification of English Language Learners: Once a student has enrolled in GCCS, a family interview with a representative of the school will meet with each family to make the first connection. A translator/facilitator will be present if needed. At that point the forms that need to be filled out will be either started and left to complete or completed including the Home Language Questionnaire form. This process also will facilitate the Special Education Individualized Education Plan notification if that is applicable.

In addition, at the beginning of school, each student will be assessed using the BRIGANCE Early Childhood Screening Assessment that will give us information on a range of developmental, academic, and physical skills. During the first month of school, baseline assessments will be given in the areas of

reading, writing and math. Individual Student Profiles from *First Steps* will be started by each teacher in reading, writing and math for each student.

Following the NYSED guidelines for identification, teachers may use their own knowledge and observation skills to assess informally a student's language capability. Once a student's home language information has been screened and for those students whose Home Language is not English and for whom the teachers observes that there may be a language concern, the *Language Assessment Battery-Revised* (LAB-R) is administered in the areas of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. A student can score in one of four levels: Beginning, Intermediate, Proficient or Advanced in English language skills. This is the Initial Assessment.

This assessment determines who is eligible for English as Second Language (ESL) services. Those who score at a Proficient Level do not need to receive ESL services. Because each level of language acquisition needs a different focus for instruction, not all services will be the same. The time frame though is the same: 180 minutes per week for Kindergartners and Grade 1 students. Therefore, plans will be individualized so that each student's entry point is appropriate, supportive and leads to increased capability in language development. The NYSESLAT is administered at the end of every year to determine a student's English performance and to determine ongoing continued support in ESL.

For those students whose LAB-R results show no need for ESL support, another type of support will be provided. They will be able to continue developing their native language skills in our multi-lingual environment. Native language facilitation will be provided by teachers, support instructional aides or community facilitators who speak specific native languages.

Following the recommendation of the Working Group for ELL Policy, GCCS will maintain both ELL identified students and those who have tested out of services on a list of identified students in order to continually support and recheck language skills and progress. In this way, these students will not be exited and forgotten; their needs may change over time and GCCS will be responsive to them.

Program for ELL Students

Teaching the English Language Learners at GCCS: According to the guidelines of the New York State Education Department, students who are English Language Learners are required to receive two units of freestanding ESL. Each unit consists of 180 minutes per week or 72 minutes per day.

At GCCS, Kindergarten program will address English Language Learners in the following manner. In order to comply with time requirements ELL students will be served by the inclusive and/or small group instruction. GCCS desires to maximize the time ELL students[7] spend with their mono-lingual English Peers since modeling between peer groups have shown to be advantageous.

Small group ESL will consist of 36 min per day using the Total Physical Response (TPR) model by James Asher. The Total Physical Response method is ideal for early childhood English Language Learners since it is founded on the concept of movement, show and tell, and demonstration. The small group component will serve only the students who are classified as English Language Learners. The in-class model will permit for the peer modeling. The Sky Oaks Company in California provides all the lesson plans and materials necessary to assist the ESL instructor. The TPR model is research-based.

In-class ESL will consist of 36+ minutes concentrating on the Natural Approach by Stephen Krashen. The teacher is the source of the learners' input and the creator of interesting and stimulating variety of classroom activities, commands, games, skits and small-group work. Since GCCS will have two teachers in each classroom, one teacher will focus on the interaction and oral participation of the ELL students. The initial task of the teacher is to provide comprehensible input by spoken language that is understandable to the learner. Careful structure will move the ELL student through the preproduction, early production and extending production with the assistance and modeling of their peers.

[7] Source: L. Gutierrez in conversation.

Both these models provide instruction in the four modalities of second language acquisition; listening, speaking, reading and writing. The Learner Profiles that are kept for all students can reinforce the level of skill and expectations for success. The use of native language is also important to help facilitate the English Language Learners progress forward. All activities are integrated into the time when Language is the focus of instruction for all. Annual assessment of the NYSESLAT will take place as well as informal assessment based on age-appropriate, language development checklist.

Recruitment of Students with Free/ Reduced-price lunch*:* Since a careful analysis of both Community District 7&9's census tract maps that designate high poverty, race and ethnicity as areas of need was already completed by the founding team, specific census tracts have been selected as those where the poverty rates are highest. Flyers and brochures will be posted, churches located, and these neighborhoods will be targeted to include and connect as many families as possible. Our neighborhood liaisons will also be instrumental in making sure all families who may not have been easily contacted, are informed of our school and its mission. The liaisons can also help in the completion of the lottery application and reminding families of the deadlines as they approach.

GCCS INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

Our inclusive practices come from a study of the research on inclusion and from many years of teaching in inclusive classrooms that were experienced by several of the founding team members. At GCCS there are two teachers in each classroom: at least one certified in either/ or ELL or Special Education in addition to both being certified in elementary education, full inclusion is the design model for all special student support. This arrangement will support small group instruction, direct instruction, modeling and scaffolding[8]. Guidelines of the IB state that all student services should be delivered in an inclusive setting and the curricular structures and designs in the PYP support that belief.

In addition, each student has an Individualized Student Learning Plan (ISLP) that has multiple forms of evidence including the Learner Profile from IB, the Individual Student Profiles in Reading, Writing and Math, with indicators of present performance and skills exhibited while including both short and long term goals. Teachers will refer to these documents in addition to their daily observations, questions to learners, and shared discussions about their learners with their teaching partners. The ability to group and regroup based on daily decision-making about who understands and who does not yet, is a powerful structure for individualizing, differentiating and extending learning for all in the classroom.

Small group work is focused on who needs what practice and since instruction is in the classroom, students who need more or different instruction do not need to necessarily leave the classroom for all services. However additional services for speech, occupational therapy and counseling will connect with the classroom setting, but in actuality some of these services are individual and private. Space will be provided that is respectful and conducive to these sessions. The concept that there are lots of places for learning and that there are many ways in which to learn will become part of the climate for learning that will permeate GCCS.

Monitoring of Progress for English Language Learners and Students with Special Needs

Regular ongoing assessment will be recorded in each student's ISLP. Goals that were set are monitored for completion. For students with specific interventions, time periods are to be respected to measure effect and rethought if no positive effect or insufficient progress is noted. Formative assessments, teacher observations and additional teacher-made or school developed assessments will form a collection of information. In addition, student work will be studied, discussed and collected. Progress

[8] Between Worlds: Access to Second Language Acquisition. Freeman, David E. and Freeman, Yvonne S. 2001.

reports will be completed by teachers and sent home regularly for both Special Needs students and English Language Learners. Both regular education students, ELL and special needs students will have their progress reports sent home halfway through each trimester.

Professional Development for Teaching Students with Special Needs and ELLs[9]

The summer before the GCCS opens, several professional development opportunities will commence. Instruction in working with ELLs, Special Needs students, and ELLs who may need Special Education will be provided by one of the Founding Team that has an expertise in this area and regularly teaches education courses in this field of study. The expert will then coach the teachers and be the Coordinator of Special Services.

Focus on English Language Learners will include:

- Tools used in identification of English Language Learners as required by New York State Department of Education and New York City
- Language ability based on LAB-R outcomes as beginners, intermediate and advance levels of English
- Theories of First and Second Language Acquisition
- Cognitive Learning Theory and content delivery for diverse learners
- Natural language acquisition of the first language and influences on the development of the second language
- The Philosophy of the Language-Focused Curriculum for the early childhood classroom as a support for English Language Learners: Scaffolding Language
- Teaching content area in multilingual early childhood classrooms
- Strategies for the English Language Learners with Special Education needs
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Focus on Students with I.E.Ps will include:

- Interpretation of individual IEPs
- Materials and Methods for the required Related services based on the IEP classification
- Meeting the yearly IEP objectives requirements
- Understanding the three step requirements of Response to Intervention for the general education teacher
- Learning to differentiate instruction for the prevention of inappropriate referrals
- Tools used in identification of English Language

Program Evaluation

A Coordinator of Special Services manages both programs for English Language Learners and Students with Special Needs. The Head of School is the Supervisor of the Coordinator and both administrators observe teachers and settings where these students are learning. Regular feedback and instructional support is provided. All files and records are kept in secure locations, accessible to those who need them. Goals are set for both students and teachers and reviewed monthly. Evidence of learning is collected and reviewed monthly. The Coordinator conducts a mid-year review with support from the Head of School. At the end of the year data is collected from the NYSESLAT. Students will participate in all assessments administered throughout the year and a very rich collection of each student's Learning Profiles will depict successes and challenges for the year. All data will help determine next steps.

[9] L. Gutierrez, Course Design.

III. SCHOOL DESIGN

Selection of School Design

In searching for a school model that could be successful for a wide range of learners who have diverse backgrounds, cultures, languages, socioeconomic, learning differences and their families, the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP) appears to hold great promise. Originally created to support international students who relocated frequently, the rigor of the program at the High School has already been established, with colleges around the world giving college credit to students who successfully complete the Diploma Programme requirements.

Research into where PYP has made a difference for urban students, especially those living in poverty, speaking other languages besides English, and needing special education services was a challenge. Through the International Baccalaureate Programme of North America, the founding team located several schools within a commuting distance that serve urban elementary students. Two of them are in Yonkers. Data was selected to represent a 'like-with-like' comparison between what was discovered in disaggregating data from CSD 3 and CSD 5 and the IB PYP schools. Comparing their demographics was essential as some IB PYP schools are private or located in rural or suburban communities. The founding team wanted to ensure that the students who attended the urban IB PYP schools would appear most like our own potential students from New York City, especially from the very diverse neighborhoods that were most appealing. Fortunately the two schools from Yonkers have a widely diverse population (*see Table 5 below*)

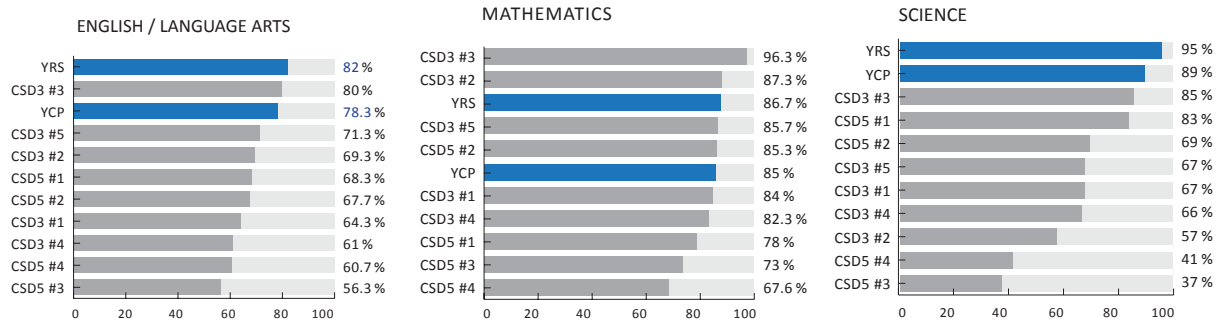
SCHOOLS	NYC CSD 3					NYC CSD 5				YONKERS	
Race/Ethnicity	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	RS	CP
Black/African American	19.6	29.2	25.6	26.4	28	70	14	63	51	17	22
Hispanic/Latino	69.3	50.7	46.3	61.1	56	26	82	33	48	61	37
Asian	3.1	6.5	2.3	4.4	3	2	1	2	1	4	9
White	6.6	13.2	23.9	5.7	12	2	2	1	0	18	32
F/R	81	67	56	86.5	71.8	96	95	96	85	63	62
Spec. Ed.	19.3	15.1	15.4	21.1	12.5	23.2	17.2	20.9	16.9	14	11.4
ELL	23	16.4	9	22	10	14	37	14	9.8	27	5
TOTAL POPULATION	654	758	633	485	458	413	797	393	523	387	479
Grade Configuration	Prek-6	K-5	Prek-5	Prek-5	Prek-5	Prek-5	Prek-6	K-6	Prek-6	Prek-5	Prek-8

Rosemarie Ann Siragusa School (RS) located in Yonkers and has been an IB PYP school since June 2005. The Casimir Pulaski (CP) School, in Yonkers Public Schools, has been an IB PYP school since December 2007. Their scores are impressive, but the NYSED Fourth Grade Science has the most striking results. The

PYP curriculum is focused on hands-on exploration, literacy across all areas and an infusion of critical thinking and complex problem-solving. The results of the CSD3 and CSD 5 schools are disheartening at the mid- and lower range. This data has served to remind the founding team that a strong curriculum is worth all that it takes to make it accessible to those students who are denied that access because of their street address.

COMPARISONS BETWEEN CSD3, CSD5 AND YONKERS IB SCHOOLS

Percentage of Grades 3, 4 & 5 That Scored at Levels 3 & 4 on NYSED Tests 2008-09



The proposed school design and founding group are likely to accomplish eligibility criteria

The design of the school is based on two successful models:

1. ***The GCCS design model****—a hybrid model of International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (PYP) with close attention to the individualized skill development of First Steps (FS) has been developed to support increased student performance in reading/language arts and mathematics and to decrease achievement gaps between subgroups of students.*
2. ***The IB PYP design model*** *was the "… result of the vision and effort, sustained for over 10 years until 1995, of the former International Schools Curriculum Project (ISCP). In 1997 the responsibility for ownership and ongoing development of the programme was handed over to IB."*[10] *The program developed as a grass-roots movement of heads of schools and teachers in international schools. They were concerned about many of their students who were members of a transient population because of parent relocation due to career changes, government positions, and business development*[11] *Similarly, as an urban school district will attempt to standardize curriculum in large school districts to support those students who move within the district throughout the year, the ISCP saw a need for a common approach to curriculum and assessment that could be implemented in multiple settings around the world. In addition, since students came from all over the world, the intentional focus on acceptance, tolerance and compassion became necessary to ensure that young children would continue to grow and learn in caring schools sensitive to their displacement.*[12]

PYP Origins

The PYP design is based on the work of Ernest L. Boyer, former President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. He wrote and published The Basic School: A Community for Learning in 1995. Boyer describes a 'Basic School' with 10 areas of foci including: *The School as Community; The*

[10] Making the PYP Happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education
[11] ibid.
[12] ibid.

Principal and Teachers as Leaders; Parents as Partners; The Centrality of Language; The Curriculum with Coherence; Measuring for Success; A Climate for Active Learning; Resources to Enrich; Support Services for Children; and A Commitment to Character. These designated areas compliment the beliefs of the founding team about what GCCS means and how they serve as models for our implementation.

Numbers of PYP Schools The first PYP schools opened near the turn of the 21st Century.[13] Although the IB PYP school design is used in 591 schools around the world[14] most are independent schools, privately funded, charging tuition fees for attendance. However, in the USA, there are 255 IB PYP schools with only 18 private with 237 a mix of primarily public schools, including 10 magnet schools and 2 PYP charter schools.(Footnote) In New York State, there are 11 PYP schools, only 4 are private, but three of these four are located in New York City. There are no publically funded Primary Years Programmes in New York City. In other urban settings, in Texas, Colorado and California, there are public PYP schools in greater numbers.

The Need For More What is apparent to elementary urban charter school educators is the reality that when young children are taught an organized, coherent, engaging curriculum, most will succeed in large numbers. However, extra time is needed to master skills, approaches, attitudes and internalize the ability to read, write, discuss, and think mathematically, scientifically, historically for urban young children. Most can achieve grade-level mastery and respond to challenges readily. PYP design is a rigorous complex system that features teacher created collaborative unit design and lessons as one of its elements. The IB organization suggests that it takes at least three years to become authorized as an IB World school for a fully developed school.[15] Charter schools are constantly evolving entities that require a higher level of teaching experience and skill than a more traditional setting. To support the transition to a fully functioning and successful PYP school, First Steps was selected to support students and curricular designing for teachers.

First Steps Most international schools who follow the PYP also use *First Steps* (FS) resources to support the teaching of one or more of the strands of literacy (reading; writing; speaking and listening; viewing). The development of the FS literacy resources was funded by the Department of Education for Western Australia, with the aim and purpose of raising literary standards in primary schools across the state. The goal was to create a resource that helps schools, teachers and systems achieve the literacy outcomes and goals they have adopted for their students. They are designed to offer a rigorous and supportive framework that teachers can use to facilitate the delivery of their school language curriculum. In PYP the curriculum is guided by transdisciplinary themes where literacy permeates all areas of study and where teachers collaboratively work together to create.

The founding group has the skills, expertise and capacity to open and oversee a successful school.

Members of the planning team have all been successful with project managing complicated endeavors including developing successful charter schools, the founding and development of a full inclusive multi-age progressive school, early childhood development, special education law and practice, best practices with English Language Learners, not-for-profit and charter school governance and management. In addition, several are residents of West Harlem neighborhoods, and have been working in youth development in these areas. Additional relevant skills include: Business development, systems for information technology, accounting and budgeting, real estate development, parent involvement and community development, instructional technology, and web design.

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[13] Boyer, E. The Basic School.
[14] Ibo.org
[15] ibid.

EDUCATION EXPERTISE:

Phyllis Siwiec, *the Lead Applicant, extensive experiences as urban educator, including as teacher, coach, Principal, and at The Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academy Charter Schools, as Assistant Superintendent responsible for guiding leadership team development at charter schools and refocusing support for underachieving students.*

Andra Miletta, *Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education has extensive work with urban schools and mentoring successful urban teachers. Through her work with Reggio Emilia schools in Italy, she developed profound insight into the importance of learning environments that inspire for all children.*

Lydia Gutierrez, *Urban Teacher Education Instructor with expertise in the law and education of Special Education students and English Language Learners; central office administrator responsible for grant writing and management.*

Carlos Aponte, *Headmaster and CEO of a charter school where he successfully managed the renovating and refurbishing of an 110,000 sq. ft property as the new home of charter school of 900 students and 185 staff; bilingual Spanish/ Khmer-Cambodian charter school, led academic turnaround of school; Senior Program Officer of educational reform agency managing New Teacher Induction, Preparation and Support*

BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT EXPERTISE:

Greg Freelon, *Founder and President of Windy Crest Communication New York, since 1987, multimedia production company with a focus on issues that affect at-risk youth;*

Carlos Aponte, *Manager of Training and Development for Digital Equipment with focus on Human Resource Planning Model for strategic business planning; worked internationally with integration teams*

Rachael Beard, *Executive Director & Co-Founder of LinkEducation, New York, developed partnerships with key community organizations including InsidesSchools.org, AccessNYC, GreatSchools.org, New York University; fundraising success eager to help develop a fundraising plan for GCCS*

Peter Prosol, *Senior Consultant, IBM, develops systems used to better analyze data to improve decision making; Vice President of Finance, Executive Board of not-for-profit program that helps underprivileged high school students apply and succeed in college; interested in setting up data-based systems for GCCS*

Phyllis Siwiec, *Director of Teaching and Learning for not-for-profit regional educational service center; worked with 35 school districts developing professional development opportunities; budget development; as Head of school will consolidate Leadership roles for first two years and help train a Curriculum Coordinator and Operations Coordinator as apprentices*

Alexandra Miletta, *Sales and Marketing Executive for Reuters in Milan, Italy and New York*

LEGAL EXPERTISE:

Sheronda Rochelle, *Vice President and Assistant General Counsel at JPMorganChase & Co; experienced in general contracts, dispute resolution/ pre-litigation; will review potential contracts, agreements, and advise on compliance issues, safety, health and other areas of expertise*

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT:

Greg Freelon, *Community Organizer who lives in the community and has made overtures to our first potential neighborhood liaison.*

Tanya Espy-Disparti, *Parent and Family Organizer; lives in Harlem near GCCS designated recruitment area; has developed a network of support for families and children in Harlem*

Tasha Young, *Daughter graduated from IB Diploma programme and can talk with families about the benefit of program and rigor; not-for-profit manager works with foster families and has insight into their situations and can provide community support*

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

Multiple Forms of Evidence: A recursive system of data collection, analysis, action, and reflection has been developed so that all student learning data and all forms of student assessment will be gathered and analyzed for evidence of student progress or the lack of growth compared to the benchmark guidelines in the PYP and FS frameworks. Students will be assessed at the beginning of the year with **baseline data** in a number of areas using the BRIGANCE, GRADE and GMADE assessments[16] The Individualized Student Learning Plan (ISLP) will be created using this baseline data at the beginning of the school year and will focus the work of the rest of the year. The ISLP is reviewed regularly and instruction is adjusted based on evidence of student improvement and areas to be revisited. Units of thematic study will enable teachers to observe, notice and study each student's written work, level of engagement, peer interactions, questions, confidence and responses to activities and lessons. This information is gathered in a number of ways that allow it to be accessed, reflected upon and used to inform the next lessons and units of study. As part of each student's ISLP, Individual Learner Profiles will be developed for each student that document levels of development and map out short and long term goals.

Teachers are trained and coached to be close observers of students' work and behaviors of engagement, sustained interest, distraction, and accomplishment. To reach all children, teachers must have expertise in all domains of learning, including students' social and emotional growth. Regular formative assessments are planned, and will be recorded and analyzed. Multiple forms of evidence, collaborative reflection on the meaning of this evidence, and expertise on designing appropriate learning opportunities inform next steps. Because language is the primary basis for human communication, language development is a necessary and essential area of focus for the types of students GCCS is committed to serve.

English Language Arts in PYP: The literacy strands in PYP are designated as **Oral Communication**, which includes *Listening and Speaking*, **Written Communication***,* which includes both *Reading and Writing*, and **Visual Communication**, which includes *Viewing and Presenting.* They are included in all Inquiry Studies across the disciplines in order to build strong foundations in literacy. Specialized components of literacy instruction will include Read-Alouds, Guided Reading, Shared Reading, Independent Reading, Interactive Writing, Shared Writing, Independent Writing, Book Discussions, Presentations, and Word Work.

The content in each of the four-language continuum from ages 3-12 has been organized into **five developmental phases** each one building upon and complementing the previous one. The continuums make explicit the conceptual understandings that need to be developed at each phase. The *First Steps* resources are vitally important to use with the Language strands. *Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Viewing* are the areas in which resources materials are developed. Each has a defined Map of Development spans an age range broader than the PYP strands, from 3 to 16 years old. Each Map is divided into key indicators of how texts are used, the contextual understandings, conventions, and processes and strategies used by students at that phase. In addition at each phase is listed Major Teaching Emphases to be stressed while students engage in learning at that level.

Mathematics in PYP: The PYP Mathematics units of study are transdisciplinary and when necessary separate topics of investigation. The five strands of *Data Handling, Measurement, Shape and Space,*

[16] http://pearsonpublishers.com

Pattern and Function, and Number are organized in four phases that represent overall expectations from Kindergarten through Grade 5. For each of these strands there is a strand description and a set of overall expectations. These strands are aligned with and very compatible with the new **Common Core Standards** recently adopted by the NYSED as there is a focus on investigation, problem-solving and critical thinking in both sets of descriptors.

As in the Language Continuum, the content of each math continuum from ages 3-12 has been organized into **four phases of development**. **Learning outcomes** have been written to reflect the stages learner goes through when developing conceptual understanding in mathematics—*constructing meaning, transferring meaning into symbols and applying understanding.* In the beginning, the learning outcomes identified in the **constructing meaning** stage strongly emphasize the need for students to develop understanding of mathematical concepts in order to provide them with a secure base for further learning.

The expectations for students working in the **transferring meaning into symbols** stage is that they have demonstrated understanding of the underlying concepts before being asked to transfer this meaning into symbols. In the final stage, a number of learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the kind of actions and behaviors that students might demonstrate when **applying with understanding**. Teachers are modeling when necessary and for whom it is necessary. There is careful observation; anecdotal records are kept by teachers who know how to group and regroup students for each step in a lesson or unit of study. This level of differentiation is a natural extension of using both observation and the teachers' understanding of what to look for and what to do if a student seems stuck, frustrated or speeding through.

In this way, students progress through their demonstration of their understanding with the **teacher as a guide and facilitator** of the process. Teachers are using both the math continuums and descriptors found in the PYP curriculum guides and in the Student Profiles from *First Steps* to map and keep track of each student's progression. Intervention for re-teaching or extending the learning is developed while teachers plan together at the beginning of each unit of study before it is taught.

Ways in which the founding group will be instrumental in increasing student achievement in ELA/ reading and mathematics are varied: All of our ten members are committed to expanding options for those students who have been underserved or whose siblings have been underserved in schools they are presently attending. For those members of the founding group not yet familiar with International Baccalaureate at a deeper level, school visits have been planned with a more knowledgeable group member. Discussions will follow as to what elements are necessary to replicate, which features need to be further researched, and what features will have to wait for development and why? Since the founding group has a wide variety of skill sets and backgrounds, those who are most focused on the Operational and Business side of development, will ensure that monies will be raised to reinforce two certified teachers in each classroom, systems established to track data, monitor student progress, record absences, and procure materials and services that will be in alignment with budget development based on GCCS' mission and goals. All of this will help instructional leaders and teachers to stay focused on instruction, as the back office works from a supportive and important position. Other members will continue to support the increase in student achievement by continuing their work with community development as it moves to recruit families who are interested in GCCS and how we can work together to ensure their children's success. In addition, several members of the founding group are experienced instructors of teacher education courses, including an early childhood assistant professor, an expert in the education of English Language Learners and Special Education students, and a skilled teacher of multi-age progressive education and coach of reading, writing and math at the K-8 grade levels. These members will design professional development content that they will teach to the new teachers before the school opens and coach them at least throughout the following two years in the areas of building

professional learning communities with a focus on the Apprenticeship Model of Learning, support for ELLs and Special Education students, and in curriculum and assessment planning and development in mathematics and English Language Arts. After two years, a Director of Teaching and Learning will be finished with the apprenticeship program under the guidance of the Head of School and be able to take over the coaching role.

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)*** *N/A*

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

d. ***Utilize a variety of high-quality assessments to measure understanding and critical application of concepts:*** *GCCS use of multiple forms of evidence including high quality assessments to measure progress, provide timely feedback and adjust instruction accordingly.*

Multiple forms of evidence are a key feature of GCCS' PYP school design. They include Performance assessments including projects, portfolios, multimedia presentations, state mandated tests, oral and written tasks that inform instruction and measure progress toward learning goals. Documentation of learning that accounts for the full spectrum of student learning will be a central focus for all members of the GCCS community. Each student will have an Individualized Student Learning Plan (ISLP) and will learn to lead parent-teacher conferences by showcasing work and talking about learning goals. Teachers will use multiple strategies for assessment documentation, including Descriptive Review (Hinley & Carini, 2000), and those found in Reggio Emelia to regularly monitor students' growth and to tailor new learning experiences accordingly.

ASSESSMENT	FREQUENCY / TYPE	PURPOSE	INFORMATION SHARED
Baseline Data BRIGANCE screening Both Kindergarten and Grade 1 in first year	September diagnostic	*Establish point of entrance for student Identify developmental needs by screening for skills in language, motor, self-help, social-emotional, & cognitive*	Co-teachers, Head of School, Coordinator of Student Services, Grade Level Team, Parents
Reading Assessment GRADE K-5	Sept & June diagnostic	*Establish baseline for Reading ability; measure progress at end of year*	Co-teachers, Head of School, Coordinator of Student Services, Grade Level Team, Parents
Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Alphabetic	Sept / monthly formative	*Start Individual Student Profile in Reading*	
G-MADE K-5 Math Assessment	September & June diagnostic / summative	*Establish baseline in Math ability; measure progress at end of year*	Co-teachers, Head of School, Coordinator of Student Services, Grade Level team, Parents
Writing Sample K-5 Collected and scored	Monthly / formative	*Score with First Steps to determine skills and next steps; Individual Student Profile annotated, feedback to student*	Co-teachers, Grade Level team, student
Running Record K-2	Weekly / formative	*Assess strategies used and behaviors exhibited by student while reading; analysis of miscues, inform next steps*	Co-teachers, Grade Level Team; student
Informal Reading Inventory grades 3-5	Monthly formative		
Baseline Data K-5	September,	*K/1 Developmental, Math skills and*	Co-teachers, Grade Level

Math Assessment	January, June	*understanding; start First Steps Individual Student Profile*	Team, student
End of unit performance assessment tasks	Periodically	*Students can show what has been learned, measure critical thinking, skills*	Teachers, students, parents, Administrators
Teacher made formative assessments	Daily/weekly	*Measure understanding, skill development give feedback, inform next steps*	Teacher, student

The Founding Group has the capacity to ensure our assessment plans by working to set up the data warehouse and methods for capturing not only quantifiable data but also narrative and anecdotal information. By creating support for maintaining the Operations Office efficiently and effectively, and providing quick turnarounds of data, teachers have more time to discuss what is happening and to make strategic adjustments.

USING THE NYSED TESTS AS A POWERFUL LEARNING TOOL FOR BOTH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

NYSED TESTS	TIMEFRAME	PURPOSE	STAFF
Practice Test administration	End of First Year	*To understand what students need to know and be able to do and understand in order to be proficient*	All staff will take a practice in grade 3, 4 or 5 ELA or Math
Professional Development for staff	End of Year	*To begin to discuss skills needed and how those skills are developed at each grade level*	All staff discuss skills needed and the continuum from Kindergarten to Grade 5
Professional Development for staff	Late summer before second year begins	*To align skills and understandings with curriculum alignment; analysis of New Common Core with what is being taught*	All staff working in grade level teams begin alignment
Professional Development for staff	Mid-year of second year	*Benchmarks are revisited to see if they are in alignment with student expectations for grades K-2; begin benchmarks for grade 3*	All staff look at benchmarks that were established to see if adjustments are necessary
Professional Development for staff	Summer between 2nd & 3rd Year	*To align benchmarks with grade 3 curriculum in English Language Arts and Math*	All staff look at revised grade 3; begin work for grade 4
Practice tests for Grade 3 students	January, February, March, April	*To begin practicing strategies and approaches to NYSED test taking; analysis of errors, strategies developed for those who are struggling or inconsistent; item analysis, students tracked by skills needed to be practiced and internalized*	Grade 3 teachers with support from Head of School, coaches, Coordinator of Student Services, Curriculum Coordinator
NYSED ELA Test Grades 3-5	April	*To assess student proficiency in meeting NYSED Standards*	All students and teachers of grades 3-5
NYSED Math Test Grades 3-5	May		Additional Support Staff

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

The Assessment Plan described in III d. comprises regular ongoing methods for gathering and analyzing student understandings, skill development, confusions and accomplishments. These results are used to confirm what teachers are planning as evidence of student learning. In order to create the collaborative learning community that develops from these activities, common planning time is scheduled at least three days per week so teachers can develop routines around data discussions and next steps.

Every month, teachers create a summary sheet of their students' progress. Summaries are handed into the Curriculum Coordinator who analyzes the information to look for patterns in movement forward, plateauing or 'slippage' in student performance. These insights are presented to the Head of School in consultation about designing an action plan to address what has been presented. The plan is introduced to the staff in a number of ways including entire staff, grade level, by content focus, subgroup of students, or any other strategic method. The Board of Trustees will receive a monthly overview that articulates student performance in both condensed versions and in more overall patterns. Teachers' responses to the action plan and their input is highly valued and essential. The more routines that allow for multiple forms of evidence to be presented to the stakeholders, the more skilled teachers, administrators and Board members will become about discussing students learning.

Teacher evaluation is another area that needs definition regarding systems to improve instruction. The work of Paula Bevan[17] is used as a method to capture the many facets of teachers' responsibilities and areas to develop. A modified version that has been piloted is to use more frequently, narrowly focused on a strategic adjustment to a teacher's repertoire. A more knowledgeable 'other' observes the teacher and looks at those sections of Bevan's Framework that can only be observed in a classroom setting. The process continues as a conversation after the observation is done with the next steps negotiated between the teacher and observer. Observable improvements in teaching are a very likely outcome[18].

Walkthroughs are also informative to capture a sense of: What the climate is like? What are we all doing? What is developing in several rooms? How are students engaged? Or simply: What's working and what's not? Following walkthroughs with any number of participants including small teams of teachers, with or without school leaders, it is important that the conversation, the language of instruction becomes embedded in the culture of the school. How we discuss what we observe is an important step to building a community of learners.

The systems that need to be developed so that the focus can be on improved instruction are digital/databased, concrete in the portfolio collections, mechanical in their routines and extremely satisfying as the school develops into a learning system.

Other references have already been made to the skills and talents of the Founding Team and their contributions to the educational context and systems analysis.

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

GCCS is in the process of developing relationships with low-performing, local public schools at this time. A list of criteria are being organized with a focus on partnerships around learning opportunities, such as 'Buddy Journals' with classes exchanging journals with another school; or guest authors and invitations as 'ice-breakers'. Once GCCS knows who its neighbors are, a more directed effort can be made.

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[17] http://charlottedanielson.com/PaulaBevan.html

[18] P.Siwiec was a participant of this model last school year and major improvement was the result in all the charter school teachers the Principal and she worked with.

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

The planning team is prepared to move forward with a cautious eye as a transition plan is being developed to address the most potentially difficult aspects of opening this charter. The recruitment of families will require our ability to connect a little known type of school, the PYP, to our potential families and their children. In addition to developing neighborhood liaisons, our planning team has members who are bi-lingual and multi-lingual so many of us can begin having presentations, write news releases, create flyers and begin to contact our communities.

The recruitment of teachers will be challenging, but we are open to hiring IB teachers from other parts of the world who would enjoy a teaching experience in New York City. We are planning on having a very attractive pay differential for those teachers who are hired as Lead Teachers, especially if they are already PYP trained. In order to help support that need, the Head of School will essentially work as both the Director of Teaching and Learning and the Director of Operations while mentoring Apprentices in Assistant positions in T&L and Operations. Additionally, GCCS is poised to make overtures to colleges that offer graduate programs in the Education of ELLS and Students with Special Needs in order to find teachers who are either dual-certified in Elementary Education and either ELL certification or Special Education.

Teacher training is also a challenge as the expense of PYP training costly. To help support our steps forward, GCCS is delaying training in PYP until the summer after the first year and First Steps will be introduced the summer before the school opens as a transitional curricular support system. The cost of First Steps is more affordable and will compliment the PYP Program.

GCCS recognizes the areas of real estate and facilities and fund-raising as two targeted that we need new Board members. We are meeting with professional real estate firms' representatives regarding facilities that are affordable and available to charter schools in NYC.

In terms of fundraising, another challenge area, we are establishing a "Friends of GCCS" with a not-for-profit organization so we can start doing targeting fundraising. We are also developing the overall map of our fundraising plan. There are several not-for-profit and for-profit organizations that have an interest in 'internationalism'. We are in the early stages of investigating these opportunities.

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

The future Head of School has developed very supportive relationships with the Office of Charter Schools in the NYCDOE since 2006. Informally, contact has been made regarding GCCS, but a more formal introduction to the school, all members of the founding team and our hopes for the future will be forthcoming.

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

GCCS can offer a satisfying place for students to learn science, math explorations, languages, art-making, music, and drama. GCCS is a very desirable option, especially for those families that feel as if there is no choice. This fact is one of our strongest points in our recruitment plan. Our Community outreach team has already begun the conversations in our neighborhoods and with our families.