

S.T.A.R



CHARTER SCHOOL

“REACH FOR THE STAR”

Science, Technology, Arts, and Research Charter School

The school name as indicated “Science, Technology, and Arts” on our letter of intent has been revised to “Science, Technology, Arts and Research Charter School”. In addition, please note that the lead applicant has been changed to Nicole Bailey.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MISSION STATEMENT

STAR in partnership with parents and the community will provide academically challenging and socially supportive educational environments to meet the needs of all of our students. These nurturing surroundings will engage and thus enable students to succeed so that they may reach their goals. The school community is dedicated to providing focused academic climates that accentuate success, raise standards, provide creative experiences and develop positive citizenship qualities.

VISION

STAR Charter School will be designed to give a fresh start in a small environment to the target population which will consist of students that live primarily in D29 in grades K through 12. We will separate each level according to departments, K-5 Elementary, 6-8 Middle School, and 9-12 High School. We will start with grades kindergarten through 8th for the first year, and add one grade per year consecutively until grade 12. STAR Charter School emphasizes high expectations and engagement with a core curriculum aligned with New

York City and New York State performance and assessment standards combined with guidance and personal support. Students are provided with a variety of social and educational opportunities including required academics, and elective areas. STAR Charter School will have an interdisciplinary approach using Science, Technology, Arts and Research as the focus. Students will be engaged at every level with innovative and challenging learning criteria using technology. Through Performing Arts, students will learn to develop and accept their creativity while producing a variety of individual ideas and emerging personal style. Science will include an experimental, project, and research based curriculum.

Our collaborative goal is to address the specific needs of a targeted population by providing academic, social and guidance services for all students. Our school will offer credited coursework, academic interventions, regents and test preparation, a small class environment, individually-tailored student projects, guidance intervention services, job skills and services, a parent component, and college and career preparation.

A primary goal of the STAR Charter School is to prepare the students to become productive members of society, able to contribute to the growth and development of their communities.

As educators, our primary role is to help ALL students learn. STAR will offer our students the opportunity to acquire the social, personal and academic skills needed to graduate from high school through creative, supportive and varied teaching modalities.

The Applicant Team will create and implement a plan for the students of STAR to achieve academic success by surpassing promotional standards. The staff will focus on student outcomes, data, and accountability; and in order to do so, diagnostic data must be gathered to track the progress of each student, and focus on student competency, observe patterns, and implement intervention plans. Goals will be set for each student. There will be ongoing assessments to track progress and indicators of success. Clear objectives will be set for academic and behavioral progress. The curriculum will align to NYC and NYS standards to achieve academic outcomes.

The STAR Charter School would include as a major component an entrepreneurial curriculum that will teach business development, as well as management and ownership skills.

Students will know how to produce as well as consume, and create jobs as well as qualify for jobs. The classroom must be relevant to the real

world and prepare students to be self-sufficient and competitive in this 21st century.

Performing Arts, students will learn to develop and accept their creativity while producing a variety of individual ideas and emerging personal style.

The Applicant Team has identified potential founding board members. The founding board will be responsible for hiring and managing STAR administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, coaches, guidance counselors and other school-based support staff. Founding board members consists of educators, parents, business professionals. (i.e., lawyers, corporate heads, bankers, CPA's, architects, etc.)

The Applicant Team fosters a vision and mission that advocates, supports, facilitates, and sustains a standards-based, research driven culture focused on improved student achievement.

Values and Beliefs

The team believes in, values and is fully committed to:

- Identifying student learning as the fundamental mission of the school
- Ensuring the right of every student to a free education of the highest quality in the least restrictive environment
- Articulating the school community's vision of all students meeting high standards as a result of expert teaching
- Adopting standards-based educational program in which all students can learn and succeed
- Recognizing that all students need specific knowledge, skills, and values to become successful and productive adult members of society
- Recognizing that students learn in a variety of ways
- Establishing habits of lifelong learning for self and others

The team has knowledge and understanding of:

- New York City and New York State performance and assessment standards
- Current theories of student growth and development
- Applied learning theories
- Applied motivational theories
- Curriculum design, implementation, evaluation, and refinement
- The principles of effective instruction
- The role of technology in promoting student learning
- The philosophy and history of education
- The information sources, data collection, and data analysis

Student Population

GRADES	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
K	40	40	40	40	40
1	40	40	40	40	40
2	40	40	40	40	40
3	40	40	40	40	40
4	40	40	40	40	40
5	40	40	40	40	40
6	40	40	40	40	40
7	40	40	40	40	40
8	40	40	40	40	40
9		40	40	40	40
10			40	40	40
11				40	40
12					40
Ungraded					
Totals	360	400	440	480	520

- The information sources, data collection, and date analysis

A. STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Student’s population will consist of students that live in District 29Q in grades K-12 through the lottery system. If the projected enrollment is not satisfied through lottery, then we will begin to accept students from other districts. STAR Charter School will create a waiting list from the lottery pool to be used for any additional seats from grades K-12.

B.TARGET POPULATION

Demographic Data Table

District 29 Queens (K-12)

Student Category	Enrollment	Percentage	
Grades K-12	26,651		
ELL	Not Available		
LEP	1,885		
ELL/LEP		7.11%	
Free & Reduced Price Lunch Qualified	20,254	76%	
White		2%	
Asian		13%	
Hispanic		13%	
Black		72%	

Star Charter School will be in compliance with the NYS Charter School Act, the Board of Regents, and SUNY Trustees by having a recruitment plan in place that will attract, enroll, serve, and retain students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students who are eligible for free and reduced price lunch, and the multi-cultural populations as indicated in the preceding chart.

STAR will develop relationships with Community Based Organizations (afterschool programs, daycare centers, shelters, churches etc.) and local officials; conduct open houses and/or informational sessions, post and distribute flyers throughout the community in places such as libraries, post offices, and grocery stores, as well as reach out to media resources.

All students will be accepted through the lottery system regardless of language, disability, financial or academic status, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation.

STAR will accommodate students with IEP's (no more than 10% of the population). These students will be part of an inclusion class on each grade level, and will be provided with push in and pull out services. Based on the IEP instruction, a special ED teacher will be put in place if needed. Special ED and English Language Learners will be identified through the application process and Home Language Survey. ELL students will be provided with push in/pull out service. Based on

the LAB R results, an ELL teacher will be hired. Every family will be required to complete a federal free and reduced lunch form to be kept on file.

III. SCHOOL DESIGN

Marva Collins, one of the greatest educators of our time is noted as saying "The only children who are going to make something of themselves are those who come from strong parents, or, those who have had a strong teacher; one or the other; or both". STAR will provide students with strong educators who will work with them and their family. As a body of students, they will be prepared for their next educational endeavor, which is the next grade (elementary through college and beyond). As President Obama stated in his recent state of the union address; "when a child walks into a classroom there should be high expectation and high performance". Raising expectations for every child will increase college graduate levels, as well as business development. This begins at the lower grade level (kindergarten) and continues to advance through high school. Small class size and rigorous and diverse programs of academic excellence make a difference in preparing students from grade to grade and higher learning success.

STAR Charter School is dedicated to increasing student achievement as well as decreasing student achievement gaps in reading, language arts and mathematics, by implementing an inter-curricular core subject, team teaching approach, specifically at the primary level and middle school levels. STAR Charter School intends to increase student empowerment with one-on-one teacher student teams, parent-teacher coordinated services, and extra-curricular activities which will be inclusive of the core subjects being reintroduced, using multiple learning modalities. We will invite other schools to share our best practices.

The team believes the formula for cultivating brilliant minds from kindergarten through fifth grade that will impact upon high school graduation rates, is cooperative relationships among students, teachers and parents. Classes are small (no more than 20 per class), and will enable teachers to obtain an intimate knowledge of and respond to each student's strengths and weaknesses. In every classroom the atmosphere is enthusiastic and active. The students in the elementary component will focus on developing basic skills including reading writing, social science, math, and study a minimum of two foreign languages simultaneously and enjoy up to date resources for every activity in which they are engaged.

STAR Charter School proposes to increase high school graduation rates by focusing on our primary and middle school students. We will support their successful completion into and through high school and beyond, using monthly assessment and guidance meetings, weekly oral presentation reviews, as well as parent input sessions and reports. Low performance students will be assigned mandatory after school tutorials including Saturday sessions for proper placement and tracking capabilities. Students will take an entrance exam for placement assessment. Additionally, language barriers will be overcome using parent coordinators and translation services. Parent support teams will assist any parent who may not have the skills to help their children. Children will set exit outcome goals for themselves and track their own progress. Dramatic teaching tools will be used to engage students in the learning process. These methods and strategies will be employed in our Primary grades(K - 5) and Middle school grades(6 - 8).

Our middle school will be designed to maximize students' academic potential and social skills in order to make a smooth transition into high school. We will strive to improve reading comprehension, writing ability, language arts skills, math, and study skills, necessary for success in middle school and beyond. Our students will also be prepared to satisfy the New York State Exams mandates in all subject areas. Transition between elementary and middle school is very smooth at the STAR Charter School. The first part of the transition program is having the student that is in the upper elementary grade participate in class with middle school students to collaborate on class projects so that 5th grade experiences multiple teachers, assignments, deadlines and teamwork when they get to the 6th grade. Goal setting takes place immediately upon entrance into middle school. In grade 6, the focus is responsibility. Students in the 6th will be responsible for setting the example of proper conduct and representation to younger students. The focus for grade 7 is striving to produce and perform at top level. Students will prepare for state exam tests, in anticipation of 8th grade. Students in the 8th grade will focus on academic achievement. Students participate in Student Government, Community Development, humanitarian projects and mentorship projects.

Our collaborative mission is to address the specific needs of a targeted population by providing academic, social and guidance services for all high school students. STAR Charter School will offer credited coursework, academic interventions, regents preparation, a small class environment, individually-tailored student projects, guidance intervention services, job skills and services, a parent

component and college and career preparation. We would like to work collaboratively with the local college and/or university in order to offer our students credited college coursework and advanced placement courses while working towards their high school diploma. Our goal is for our students to achieve a high level of mastery in skills necessary for post-secondary education, and gain strong literacy and numeracy skills, which will prepare them for college.

STAR will assign staff (Student Advancement Team) specifically to monitor the progress of primary students into middle school, expecting them to advance no less than one grade level. These staff will continue to monitor and participate in the student advancement team meetings to ensure each student is on track to advance from primary school to middle/elementary school, in a timely manner.

STAR Charter School will employ all of the learning modalities to assess student progress. Tests, projects, reports, team projects, statistical data, journals, Power Point production, Smart Board presentations, movies and skits will all be used as collective assessment tools to document and assist student progress and advancement

STAR Charter School will collaborate with local instructional improvement systems, such as the local library, local museums, the New York Hall of Science, York College, Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning, and many other institutions.

STAR Charter School will assemble experienced, qualified persons on our Development Team capable of managing, and overcoming any start-up challenges. We will solicit persons from the financial field, building and construction trades, the legal field, as well as teacher trainers to assist in the day to day operation of a new charter school.

STAR Charter School will provide access to viable education alternatives in regions where there are a lack of alternatives. District 29 presently lacks charter school choices. We intend to alleviate this problem.

Small schools have fewer incidents of violence, higher attendance, lower dropout rates, increased participation in extra-curricular activities, and a higher sense of belonging (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1997). It is easier for teachers to develop close, mentoring relationships with their students in smaller schools with low student teacher ratios (Dupper, 2006).

The culture of an organization affects the productivity of that organization (Terrence & Peterson, 1999). As educational leaders our goal is to create an environment conducive for learning. In order to create powerful learning communities the school community must attain a culture in which a moral purpose is evident which may require a change in culture. Fullan (2001) invited the school community to become better leaders. An effective leader will be able to achieve a positive change in culture that will benefit the overall function of the school environment, and develop the minds of staff members to become individual leaders for the school community.

An effective leader will be able to achieve a positive change in culture that will benefit the overall function of the school environment and develop the minds of staff members to become individual leaders for the school community. Leadership is developed by focusing on reciprocity, the mutual obligation and value of sharing knowledge among organizational members. The key to developing leadership is to develop knowledge and share it; if it is not mutually shared, it won't be adequately developed in the first place and will not be available to the organization in any case (Fullan, 2001). When leaders actively model the values and practices mentioned, the organization will show improvement in their performance.

Students will learn product development, marketing, advertising and promotion, and will become familiar with the day to day operation of small businesses, to manage, as well as own, large corporate entities.

As students graduate from middle school to high school, they are required to draft a business plan as part of their exit project, as well as a formal business plan prior to 12th grade graduation. A summer project may very well be to operate a mini business created by students own ingenuity.

In order for a school to succeed, it is helpful to have support and cooperation from the community. As such, local business owners, as well as major corporate CEO's, particularly those who may have come from the same communities which will be part of a Success Lectures and Mentoring Series, sharing their insights and experiences with the students. There are many successful business owners in the New York area to draw from for our Success Lectures and Mentoring Series. There are owners of radio stations, law firms, retail stores, public relations firms, newspapers, media and music production companies, and many more, all of whom are enthusiastic about the partnership role they can play with the STAR Charter School.

It is important that the students learn to see success in the reflections of themselves, as STAR Charter School recognizes the often unique attitudes and needs of the children that we serve.

The team would like to open with two classes per grade with no more than 20 students per classroom. There will be one teacher and one paraprofessional in each class from kindergarten to 2nd grade. Grades 3 through 8 will have a paraprofessional on a rotating basis, or as needed. At the beginning of the second school year, the team will expand the charter school by one grade. This will enable the team to track the students' progress through high school.

Core Subjects: English Language Arts, Writing, Math, Science, Social Studies, and a Language (2 languages for K - 5).

Career Development/Occupational Studies: Technology, Environmental Research, Marketing Research, Business, Performing Arts, and Sign Language.

Languages: Spanish, French, and Arabic

SCHOOL OPERATION

Our days of operation will align with the NYCDOE school calendar.

Hours of operation: 7:30am - 4:00pm

Extended Day: 4:00pm - 6:30pm

STAR Charter School will provide a structured afterschool program to include opportunities to accelerate students learning depending on academic levels. Intervention strategies will be identified to scaffold student learning and provide targeted support. At risk students will be able to receive tutoring and academic support after school during intersession, Saturday school and summer school if available.

Every staff member is committed to meeting the individual needs of the students to ensure that the students will be able to transition back to the sending school or transfer to another appropriate school or program. We recognize that to maintain our commitment and motivation, staff will need clear direction, guidance and support. The success of this venture relies upon the ability of all of the constituencies to work together effectively. As educators, our primary role is to help ALL students learn. It is important for us to remember that students respond and learn differently. We must be cognitive of and communicate to our students that intelligence is not fixed, but ever available and able to grow. STAR will offer our students the opportunity to acquire

the social, personal and academic skills needed to graduate from high school through creative, supportive and varied teaching modalities and continue through college. STAR will establish a collaborative team of pertinent staff and service providers to identify students who may have behavior, academic, health, and social issues. This would involve collecting and analyzing data from multiple sources. An intervention plan will be developed and implemented to bring about a student's success. If at the end of a designated time frame, the effectiveness of the intervention will be determined for possible referral for special education services.

Differentiated instruction occurs when students work on the same lesson in a variety of ways so as to address the differences in learning styles and to reinforce the lessons taught. These lessons can be differentiated in four ways - content, process, product, and learning environment. Differentiated or Multi-level instruction is based upon philosophical and psychological theories of student learning:

- The use of lecture and memorization (Rousseau and Freud)
- Practice and reinforcement (Locke, Skinner, Thorndike)
- Inquire and cooperative learning (Dewey, Bruner, Piaget)

The staff will accomplish this mission by providing an environment that is safe, stimulating, and conducive to learning where conscientious, knowledgeable, supportive staff and faculty present a relevant, challenging, evolving curriculum in meeting the present and future needs of the students for a productive society. We will provide an orderly structure and discipline learning environment. We will have a rigorous and standard based college preparatory curriculum focused on literacy, math, science, technology, art, and research.

The team will agree to follow federal, state and local rules and regulations regarding corporal punishment, child abuse and other employment-related mandates. Exceptions and changes to the general staffing schedule will be discussed by the team and resolved in a timely manner. Each party will notify the other of staffing changes with reasonable advanced notice, not less than 5 school days prior to the change taking place. The team will administer appropriate training and professional development to support and grow their staff capacity, and as appropriate, will extend all relevant trainings to staff of the other party. Employees will be required to undergo NYCDOE's Security Clearance Procedures and be cleared to work with students by the designated Security Clearance Office prior to commencing services

with direct contact with students or access to confidential student information.

The STAR Charter School Science Department mantra is, "Knowing our Past: Designing our Future." Research is mandatory for every level of study and each semester begins with an, "Introduction to Research" lesson to enable parents and students to successfully complete the research portion of the curriculum. Emphasis is placed on the history of science as it relates to development in the United States, and, as it relates to scientific discovery internationally. Student focus will be interest driven, as it relates to current events and world news. Multi-cultural contributions to science will be researched, studied, and documented for purposes of identifying motivating factors for technological advancement in the areas of medicine, ecology, space exploration, and more.

The Star Charter School elementary science department will work to improve inquiry skills of students by improving process skills, decision making abilities, recording of scientific data, and forming hypothesis. Students will study Life Science, comprehending their environment, recognizing impacts on environments, populations and communities, and the way they interact, by designing and constructing scientific experiments, investigating animal habitats, creating and investigating ecosystems, all while recording scientific journals manually, and with media arts. Students will also study Physical Science, understanding how matter and energy is used for our service, mastering the mathematics of science through weights and measures, while designing simple machines. Students will also study Earth Science, understanding the earth is in a constant state of change that can be observed and measured.

Star Charter School middle school students will participate in a rigorous science program focusing on scientific thinking, as it relates to our ecosystem, our carbon footprint and "Going Green". Students will learn to ask appropriate questions, use evidence and concepts learned from observations and reliable sources, to construct explanations for experiment results, work individually and in groups to collect, describe, record and share information and ideas. Our students will begin to propose and critique alternate explanations for observations and distinguish between fact and opinion. Students will rigorously employ scientific tools and technologies such as magnifiers, microscopes, scales, thermometers and computers to observe

and measure objects, organisms, and phenomena. Although these skills were introduced in the elementary level, they will be improved upon with the use of high tech, precision equipment, exposure to professional laboratories, collaboration with the local scientific community and continued experimentation and investigation.

As with every level of the STAR science program, high school begins with research. The high school research focuses on environmental preservation, energy conservation and global warming, and, our students ability to contribute to the solutions for each. Students will participate in analysis, inquiry and design, information systems, interdisciplinary problem solving, and interconnectedness and common themes.

The STAR Charter School believes our newest generation - currently in K-12 - is demonstrating for us the impact of having developed under the digital wave. These youth have been completely normalized by digital technologies—it is a fully integrated aspect of their lives. Many students in this group are using new media and technologies to create new things in new ways, learn new things in new ways, and communicate in new ways with new people—behaviors that have become hardwired in their ways of thinking and operating in the world. An excellent example of this is "Children are establishing a relationship to knowledge gathering which is alien to their parents" Not surprisingly, this transformation has serious implications for us in the space of education. Nearly all institutions- business, industry, medicine, science and government - have harnessed aspects of these technologies for decades. Games and simulations have been a key component of training doctors and military personnel, but even businesses like Price Waterhouse Coopers used a game about a mining company in outer space to teach its employees about derivatives. STAR Charter School believes along with major corporations, the Department of Defense, and the medical community that these tools are and have been highly effective. Simulations, digital gaming, and social networking technologies have all definitely suffered the same public relations problems that all new technologies do. However, there are countless examples of these technologies demonstrating their educational value to other industries, confirming the powerful learning opportunities and advantages they afford. The STAR Charter School believes that these technologies are safe and valuable tools.

Both inside and outside the classroom, some strong examples of powerfully engaging gaming models have emerged. Some have been used quite a bit in the educational setting, while others have mainly garnered popularity in pop culture.

STAR Charter School believes students will demonstrate improvement and increased learning using various technology platforms:

- The ability to process information very quickly;
- The ability to determine what is and is not of relevance to them;
- The ability to process information in parallel, at the same time and from a range of different sources;
- Familiarity with exploring information in a non-linear fashion;
- A tendency to access information in the first instance through imagery and then use text to clarify, expand, and explore;
- Familiarity with non-geographically bounded networks of communication; and
- A relaxed approach to 'play,'—the capacity to experiment with one's surroundings as a form of problem solving (Jenkins, Purushotma, Clinton, Weigel & Robison, 2006).

The intimate learning environments at STAR will allow teachers to connect with students and fully understand how each individual learns. This helps teachers tailor their teaching approaches and actively engage students. The close knit community of caring educators at STAR will shape the academic development of students and their overall personal development.

Music can be one of the most important components in a child's educational development. Under the instrumental music program, all STAR students will learn to play an instrument. Students in grades K-2 will learn to play piano and grades 3-8 will learn to play a wind instrument (clarinet, flute, trumpet, alto-sax, tenor-sax) while also learning to read music and acquiring an appreciation for the discipline it takes to play an instrument. Learning to play an instrument will help to enhance a child's ability to focus and comprehend better in their school academics, especially reading, math and science.

Studies have shown that after a few weeks of having studied music, students scored higher on their spatial intelligence test than those that did not. Spatial intelligence is the area of our understanding that helps us to comprehend science, math and other areas of this nature. By engaging in this program, students adapt new study patterns such as improved hand-eye coordination, reading comprehension and development of better concentration abilities. Music plays an important role in educational development.

After two years of study, students have a clear understanding of how to read music as well as a firm foundation of the fundamentals of music. There will be an increased understanding and better focus in their general academics. They also understand the numerical relationship between music, math and science. Music is mathematical and scientific.

The Performing Arts program will allow a student to explore and train their talents and view the world differently through Drama, Chorus, and Dance. Through these talents, they will learn to develop and accept their creativity, while producing a variety of individual ideas and emerging personal style. This is a creative intelligence which would be manifested through specific training in developing student's artistic lens. This program would give students the chance to explore the different ideas of culture, belief, and religious values. Students would learn to appreciate those who grace our world with their talents along with those that became major historical figures in the performing arts society. In addition, students will broaden their horizons through performing concepts as well as accepting the differences in one another. In performing arts, the word potential is often used to describe the capability of an individual. As teachers, it is our job to find the potential and talents of our students and allow it to manifest throughout the classroom and in the world at large.

Star Charter School is a science, technology, arts and research model educational institution. Research is the foundation of our philosophy. Every lesson plan involves this basic component. Research, as is defined in our STAR philosophy, is as follows:

"Research can be defined as the search for knowledge, or, to establish facts, usually using a scientific method. The primary purpose for applied research is discovering, interpreting, and the development of, methods and systems for the advancement of human knowledge on a wide variety of matters

Scientific research relies on the application of the scientific methods. This research provides scientific information and theories for the explanation of the nature and the properties of the world around us. It makes practical applications possible. Scientific research can be subdivided into different classifications according to their academic and application disciplines.

Artistic research, also known as "practiced-based research", can take form when creative works are considered as both the research and the object of research itself. It offers an alternative to the scientific method.

This methodology will be used in every aspect across the curriculum and in each grade level.

Parent Community Involvement and Communication: The team will develop and mobilize resources for active parent community involvement to improve student achievement.

The team believes in, values, and is committed to:

- Establishing and maintaining close collaboration and communication between families and schools to ensure student success.
- Collaborating effectively with all members of the learning community.
- Operating the school as an integral part of the larger community.
- Involving families and other stakeholders in school decision-making processes.
- Appreciating and celebrating the benefits that a diversity of ideas, values, and cultures brings to a school community.
- Promoting a nurturing school community.
- Continuing dialogue with others whose decisions affect the learning community.

In order for this to be accomplished, the team must have knowledge and understanding of the following:

- Effective communication skills.
- Effective consensus-building and negotiation skills.
- District issues, conditions, and dynamics that impact a diverse school community.
- Effective public relations strategies.
- Use of community relations and marketing strategies.
- Role and responsibility of school boards.

Motivating staff to create a school community is an integral aspect of successful schools. Building school community will be at the forefront of our purpose because when the educators and administrators are working cohesively for the success of our students, we will all achieve success.