

Veritas Preparatory Charter School

PROPOSED CHARTER SCHOOL FOR SPRINGFIELD, MA

*Veritas Preparatory Charter School prepares students in grades 5-8
to compete, achieve, and succeed in high school, college, and beyond.*

Prospectus Charter Application
Respectfully Submitted to the Department of
Elementary and Secondary Education
July 30, 2010

Commonwealth Charter Applicant Information Sheet

These sheets must be attached to the prospectus and final application. Please type information.

Name of Proposed Charter School: Veritas Preparatory Charter School

School Address (if known): TBD

School Location (City/Town): Springfield, MA

Primary Contact Person: Rachel Romano

Address: 44 Taylor Street

City: East Longmeadow State: Massachusetts Zip: 01028

Daytime Tel: (413) 222-3434 Fax: (617) 227-4551

E-mail: rromano@buildingexcellentschools.org

1. The proposed school will open in the fall of school year: 2011-2012 2012-2013

School Year	Grade Levels	Total Student Enrollment
First Year	5	81
Second Year	5, 6	162
Third Year	5, 6, 7	243
Fourth Year	5, 6, 7, 8	324
Fifth Year	5, 6, 7, 8	324

2. Grade span at full enrollment: 5 – 8

3. Total student enrollment when fully expanded: 324

4. Age at entry for Kindergarten, if applicable: NA

Commonwealth charter applicants only:

5. Will this school be a regional charter school? Yes No

If yes, list the towns/cities in the proposed region: N/A

If yes, list the school districts (including regional school districts) in the proposed region. Please only list districts that are included in Appendix B. (Use additional sheets if necessary): N/A

If no, please specify the population as reported in the most recent United States census data for the community the school intends to serve: 150,640. The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall not approve a Commonwealth charter in any community with a population of less than 30,000, unless it is a regional charter school. Please use data from this website:

<http://www.census.gov/>.

6. For all proposed charter schools, list the districts that are contiguous with the proposed school's district or region. Please only list districts that are included in Appendix B. (Use additional sheets if necessary.)

Chicopee

East Longmeadow

Longmeadow

West Springfield

7. Is the proposed school to be located in a district where overall student performance on the MCAS is in the lowest 10 percent, as designated in Appendix B?

Yes No

8. Will the proposed school be located in a district or districts in which the 9 percent net school spending cap is, or could be, exceeded by 2010-11 applications?

Yes No

9. Is the applicant group currently the board of trustees of an existing charter school?

Yes No

10. Is the applicant group/board of trustees intending to create a network of schools?

Yes No

11. If the applicant group/board of trustees is intending to create a network of schools, how many applications is the group submitting in the 2010-11 application cycle? NA

12. Do members of the applicant group currently operate or are they employed by a private or parochial school?

Yes No

Commonwealth Charter School Certification Statement

Proposed Charter School Name: Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Proposed School Location (City/Town): Springfield, MA

I hereby certify that the information submitted in this prospectus/application is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and that this prospectus/application has been or is being sent to the superintendent of each of the districts from which we expect to draw students and from any contiguous districts. Further, I understand that, if awarded a charter, the proposed school shall be open to all students on a space available basis, and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or academic achievement. I further understand that the information submitted in this prospectus/application serves as an initial application for start-up assistance funding under the federal Charter Schools Program grant. This is a true statement, made under the penalties of perjury.

Signature of
Authorized Person



Date 7/30/2010

(Please label the copy that has original signatures.)

Print/Type Name: Rachel Romano

Address: 44 Taylor Street, East Longmeadow, MA 01028

Daytime Phone: (413) 222-3434 Fax: (617) 227-4551

Executive Summary

Mission. Veritas Preparatory Charter School prepares students in grades 5-8 to compete, achieve, and succeed in high school, college, and beyond.

Vision. All students are entitled to a high quality public education defined by high academic and behavioral expectations, regardless of race, class, or socioeconomic circumstance. We propose to provide a highly structured middle school built upon a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, accompanied by daily academic supports students need to achieve and targeted character education that stresses hard work and the **DRIVE** to succeed. Partnering with Proven Provider Building Excellent Schools, Veritas Prep builds its school design upon the highest performing urban schools in Massachusetts and across the country. We propose to replicate what works - under trained and prepared leadership - to ensure that all Veritas Prep students, regardless of their incoming academic profile, are by the completion of eighth grade set on a course to succeed in high school and on their way to college.

With focus on student outcomes, measurement of academic achievement, and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all learners, Veritas Prep addresses the needs of all students. Frequent assessments allow us to know students well and plan our instruction and supports to meet their needs - particularly important for special education students and English language learners. While there is no single approach or individual solution to preparing students for college success, the following core principles define our educational philosophy.

- 1. High Expectations:** All students are college bound – every one. We expect our students to behave well and work hard. We expect students, families, and staff to be accountable to each other for maintaining high expectations.
- 2. Structured Learning Environment:** Before effective instruction can occur, a school must establish a structured and respectful school culture. We teach and hold our students to a fair and strict code of conduct with clearly defined actions and consequences.
- 3. Curriculum Focused on Achievement Outcomes:** The road to college and higher-level work begins with the ability to read well, write well and compute accurately. A future of academic success is built on a strong foundation of literacy and mathematics.
- 4. Data Drives Instruction:** Continuous assessment of student progress is critical to student success. With testing, and with trained staff to respond efficiently to assessment results, we gauge our student’s academic needs, and meet those needs effectively.
- 5. Focus on Literacy:** Teachers use common reading and writing strategies, and students are given explicit and continuous instruction to become active, voracious readers and reading strategies to maximize learning in all of their subjects.
- 6. Character Education:** We develop the character needed to build and sustain achievement. In daily advisory classes, weekly community meetings, and cyclical rewards, we build students’ **DRIVE** (Determination, Responsibility, Integrity, Vision, Enthusiasm) for success.
- 7. Teacher Quality and Effectiveness:** We recruit, retain, develop, and compensate highly effective teachers. We attract the best and brightest educators and offer them a professional environment in which all staff members are mission-driven team players.
- 8. Accountability:** Our instructional program and core educational principles are informed by successful practices of high performing schools serving similar populations. We establish measurable outcomes for academic success, and compare our students’ performance to the highest performing schools in the state.

Need. Veritas Prep’s mission and educational program are created in response to the compelling need in Springfield for a public middle school that prepares students to achieve in high school and college. With a high school graduation rate of 54%, Springfield students are not prepared with the skills and competencies they need to move forward. Long before high school, Springfield students begin the process of dropping out of their education – and the promise of their and our future - prior to the successful conclusion of twelfth grade. The source of this process for many of our most underachieving students has its roots in the middle school years.

Springfield’s middle schools are characterized by a marked decline in math achievement and a limited gain in ELA achievement. In 2009, MCAS scores show that from fifth to eighth grade, students proficient in math dropped from 23% to 9%, and those proficient in ELA increased from 33% to 45%. The academic gap between students in Springfield and those across the state averaged 15% and widened by eighth grade between the number of students proficient in ELA at the state level compared with that at the district level. There are seven middle schools in Springfield, serving students in grades six through eight. None demonstrate overall proficiency rates for English above 50%, and none have overall proficiency rates for math above 30% as measured by the 2009 MCAS.

Capacity. Strong leadership – visionary, uncompromising, and trained to execute on a clear mission - is a critical component of a high-performing school. This includes strong day-to-day management by the Executive Director and oversight by a highly competent Board of Trustees. The founding group of Veritas Prep is an extraordinary team of individuals capable of governing and managing the school, and able to execute on the mission and vision, as well as to establish policies that protect the school’s organizational and academic success over time and ensure its success into the future. The founding group is honored by the many business and community leaders who have offered their strong support and stand ready to assist Veritas Prep in the planning, development, and sustaining of a no excuses charter school in Springfield.

Public Statement

Veritas Preparatory Charter School prepares students in grades 5-8 to compete, achieve, and succeed in high school, college, and beyond. Veritas Preparatory Charter School (“Veritas Prep”) will be located in Springfield, MA, will open with grade five and grow one grade per year, and at maximum capacity will serve 324 students in grades five through eight. Founded on the belief that all students, regardless of race, class, or socioeconomic circumstance, are entitled to a high quality education defined by high expectations, we provide a structured learning environment, rigorous college preparatory curriculum, and character education.

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I. School Mission, Vision, and Description of the Community to be Served

A. Mission Statement. Veritas Preparatory Charter School prepares students in grades 5-8 to compete, achieve, and succeed in high school, college, and beyond.

B. Vision Statement. All students are entitled to a high quality public education defined by high academic and behavioral expectations, regardless of race, class, or socioeconomic circumstance. We propose a highly structured middle school built upon a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, accompanied by daily academic supports and character education that stresses hard work and the **DRIVE** to succeed. Working with Proven Provider Building Excellent Schools, Veritas Prep is designed upon the highest performing urban schools in Massachusetts and across the country. We propose to replicate what works - under trained and prepared leadership - to ensure that all students, regardless of their incoming academic profile, are by the completion of eighth grade set on a course to succeed in high school and on their way to college

Veritas Prep provides a structured, positive and safe middle school where student achievement comes first. Limiting all distractions and keeping a laser focus on achievement allows staff and students to build and celebrate student success. Daily advisory provides the structure to teach students the values needed to thrive as scholars and people. Weekly community meetings celebrate achievement and recognize students' **DRIVE** to compete, achieve, and succeed. A school where excellent teachers can do extraordinary work, Veritas Prep is prepared to hire and retain the brightest and best educators who wish to work in a culture of academic achievement.

We aggressively remediate students' academic weaknesses and gaps, and accelerate students to mastery of content in the core academic areas. Every student matriculates into ninth grade with the transcript, test scores, skills, content knowledge, and determination to excel in high school and gain admittance to the college or university of their choice. We provide a rigorous, college preparatory curriculum in the core subjects of Math, English, Science and Social Studies, and emphasize the development of literacy skills in all content areas. All students, regardless of incoming academic ability, learn to read with fluency, comprehension and insight, and develop powerful reading skills across content areas. Frequent assessments measure progress towards clear standards and we use data to inform instruction and supports. With an extended school day and year, and mandatory daily tutoring, students spend more time on learning and teachers have the time, schedule, training, and priority to ensure that no student slips through the cracks.

Veritas Prep establishes a higher academic bar for Springfield students. We provide: opportunity for teachers to work in a small, mission driven middle school designed to close the achievement gap; access to families where no such access currently exists; and hope to students as they build their bright futures in the critical middle school years. After eighth grade, students remain part of our community and have dedicated staff and an alumni program to provide tutoring and personalized supports. We lead students in the high school selection process and monitor their high school progress. We offer SAT Preparation, support the college application, selection and enrollment process, and make the path to college as clear and unobstructed as possible.

C. Description of the Community To Be Served. The poverty in Springfield is pervasive and entrenched. With a population of 150,640, median household income of \$33,171, and 26% of residents below the poverty line, 81% of students attending Springfield Public Schools (SPS) come from low-income homes; this percentage is higher than comparable urban districts, including Boston, Worcester, Lynn, and Holyoke. SPS serves 25,141 students within a diverse community that is: 22% African American, 57% Hispanic, 15% white, 2% Asian, and 4% of other ethnicity; 13% are Limited English Proficient and 24% receive special education services.

The South End is ranked among the 15% lowest income communities in America; 7% of adults living here have a college degree.¹ With the Connecticut River to the west, downtown business to the north, and one of the wealthiest neighborhoods, Forest Park, to the south, it is here where the poverty rate is highest. With 13,138 residents and a median income of \$18,856, 60% of children live in poverty. In 2008, Zanetti, a K-8 school and the only school located in this area, relocated to another part of town. As a result, every student in the South End is bused to another part of the city to attend school, first to Brunton Elementary school until they reach middle school and then to three different middle schools: Kiley, Chestnut, and Forest Park.

Middle school students are guaranteed a seat in an underperforming school and most attend the most chronically underperforming schools in the state. SPS students have not made Adequate Yearly Progress in Math or ELA since 2002.² There is need for a strong college preparatory middle school, especially for those residing in the South End of Springfield. Springfield's middle schools are characterized by a marked decline in math achievement and a limited gain in ELA achievement. In 2009, MCAS scores show that from fifth to eighth grade, students proficient in math dropped from 23% to 9%, and those proficient in ELA increased from 33% to 45%.³ The academic gap between students in Springfield and those across the state averaged 15% and widened by eighth grade between the number of students proficient in ELA at the state level compared with that of the district. There are seven middle schools in Springfield, serving students in grades six through eight; none had overall proficiency rates for English above 50%, and none had overall proficiency rates for math above 30% on the 2009 MCAS. Research indicates that academic outcomes in the middle grades—along with attendance, in-school behavior, and course performance—are powerful indicators of a child's probability of graduating from high school prepared for college.⁴

Addressing the Need. We propose to raise the bar on student achievement by using replicable structures and practices that are generating success in high-performing urban charter schools.⁵ A Commonwealth Charter School, offered under the training, support and guidance of Building Excellent Schools (BES) as a Proven Provider, is necessary to bring this option to families in Springfield. Being free from restraints of the Springfield Education Association, local teachers union, and district policies that limit individual school autonomy, allows us to deliver on our mission for some of the state's most chronically underperforming students. Lead Founder and proposed Executive Director Rachel Romano brings a strong background in local educational leadership, and powerful training with BES, and access to the highest performing schools (local and national) and their leadership. Understanding the academic needs of this student population, and surrounded by a capable founding team with a commitment to accountability and results, Ms. Romano will lead Veritas Prep in implementing the structures and practices used by model urban schools to produce extraordinary results for students in Springfield.

Small School Size. Springfield Public Schools (SPS) are large and overcrowded, and teachers are challenged to know students well and address their academic needs effectively. Most SPS middle schools serve 500+ students in grades 6-8: Forest Park serves 770 students, Kylie 840, and Chestnut 1,000+ students. Large schools produce a sense of anonymity, which leads to disengagement from academics and irresponsible behavior. Small size is conducive to safety and high achievement.¹ At full capacity, Veritas Prep will serve 324 students. Every student is well known and challenged, and all students have high school and college preparatory supports.

Community Demand. Parents in Springfield have few options for the middle school years. Waiting lists for existing charter schools evidence that parents are vying for options outside of the SPS district. New

¹ According to data from US Census Bureau.

² http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/performance_level.aspx?linkid=32&orgcode=02810000&orgtypecode=5&

³ While not a comparison of the same cohort over time, data demonstrates dramatic decline in math competency across the grades.

⁴ Balfanz, R. (2009). *Putting Middle Grades on the Graduation Path*. Everyone Graduates Center and Middle Grades Program.

⁵ BES Schools Excel Academy Charter School and Boston Preparatory Public Charter School inform our school design. Both were founded through and have been continuously supported by BES; our founding team has continued and direct access to both schools.

Leadership and SABIS are the only charter schools enrolling middle school students, with 3,000+ students on the waiting list for SABIS and hundreds for New Leadership. Veritas Prep expands the educational opportunities available to parents in Springfield by offering innovative practices modeled after highly effective urban schools that are not currently available. No schools are offering an extended school day and year with mandatory daily tutoring to ensure all students are learning, and no schools are offering the expanded focus on literacy and mathematics in the critical middle school years. Early community outreach demonstrates that the proposed school model is a priority for families and a choice they would make in large numbers. Parents have consistently shared that they want a school that provides more structure and pushes students to behave well and achieve. Recent meetings between community organizers, parents and members of the founding team confirm what the Lead Founder knows from her work with parents in Springfield: parents want and need schools that challenge their children and provide the structures to help them succeed.

II. How will the school demonstrate academic success?

A. Educational Philosophy. We propose to bring the benefits of rigorous scholarship to Springfield's most underserved neighborhood. We offer a middle school designed to close academic gaps by eighth grade so students are ready to succeed in college preparatory high schools on their way to college. Our mission requires that we prepare all students with the foundational skills, content knowledge, and personal characteristics necessary for future academic achievement. We accomplish this through a highly structured, disciplined environment in which rigorous, standards-based instruction drives every classroom and frequent, standards-based assessment informs every teacher. We accept that many students will be subject to challenging circumstances. However, all students must know and will be taught that their futures are in their hands and that becoming smart is a direct result of working hard. Every student can succeed in school and go to college, and it is up to us to do everything we can to support them in pursuit of that goal. Our philosophy and approach to accomplishing our mission address the needs of all students - with attention to student outcomes, measurement of academic achievement, and a focus on differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all learners. Frequent assessments allow us to know students well and plan instruction and supports to meet their needs, particularly important for special education students and English language learners. The following core principles define our educational philosophy.

1. High Expectations: *“No Excuses. That is the message that superb schools deliver to their students. And that is the message that schools (and school board members) need to hear. Sure, some kids are easier to teach than others. But dysfunctional families and poverty are no excuse for widespread, chronic educational failure.”*⁶ All students are college bound – every one. We expect our students to behave well and work hard. We expect students, families, and staff to be accountable to each other for maintaining high expectations. While many students enter two to three grade levels behind, it is our duty to provide high expectations and the structures and supports that allow them to efficiently and effectively strengthen academic weaknesses and advance forward. Expectations are not limited to academics; they include demonstrating the behaviors necessary to succeed. All students are expected in school every day, on time, on task, determined to learn. We expect families to attend annual orientations and participate in parent conferences throughout the year. We communicate frequently with families about students' academic progress and expect that they, too, hold their child and our school to high expectations.

2. Structured Learning Environment: *“When a school clearly teaches by example that self-control, self-reliance, and self-esteem anchored in achievement are the means to success, that school's own success inspires confidence, order, and discipline in its students.”*⁷ Before effective instruction can occur, a school must establish a stable, safe, supportive environment for students and teachers. We hold students to a fair and strict code of conduct with clearly defined actions and consequences. Expectations are taught at student

⁶ Thernstrom, Abigail, and Stephan Thernstrom. *No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap In Learning*. NY: Simon & Schuster, 2003.

⁷ Carter, Samuel Casey. (2000). *No Excuses: Lessons from 21 High Performing, High Poverty Schools*. Heritage Foundation.. 10.

orientation, before classes begin. Students learn that they are part of a community and are taught the positive and negative consequences associated with their actions. Teachers develop and deliver lessons that bring our code to life, and teachers are trained on how to implement the code in a fair and consistent manner.

3. A Curriculum Focused on Achievement Outcomes: *“The ability to learn something new depends on an ability to accommodate the new thing to the already known.”*⁸ The road to college and higher-level work begins with the ability to read well, write well, and compute accurately. A future of academic success that includes college must be built on a strong foundation, which is built upon well-developed skills in literacy and mathematics. To do advanced work, students must have skills and content “already known,”⁹ and to achieve mastery students must have rigorous instruction and mandatory supports to develop that skill and knowledge base. We build this foundation through the implementation of our core principles, all of which are informed by the practices of high performing urban charter schools that inspire our school design. Teachers develop assessments and year-long curricula aligned with the MCF. Using grade level standards, we create an annual curriculum calendar, indicating which standards are taught during which weeks. Teachers work with school leaders to plan rigorous and relevant curriculum units and teachers are supported to carefully plan and deliver effective instruction. All teachers and leaders engage in backwards planning, using Understanding by Design.¹⁰

4. Data Drives Instruction: *“The proper use of data-centered methods in education isn’t an empty platitude and isn’t a matter of mindlessly teaching to the test – it’s a clearly defined and incredibly effective pathway to academic excellence.”*¹¹ Continuous assessment is critical to student success – without testing, we cannot gauge our student’s academic needs, or meet those needs effectively. Before the school year, we assess all incoming students using research-proven, age-appropriate standardized assessments such as the Stanford 10 to diagnose individual and cohort academic needs. This diagnostic informs curricular development, while simultaneously identifying students that may need additional, highly focused academic interventions from the beginning of the year. Frequent and thorough use of additional assessments¹² provide time-sensitive, predictive, and highly targeted data on mastery of year-long curricula expectations, thus informing real-time instruction and tutoring plans for cohorts, small groups and individuals.

5. Focus on Literacy: *“Youngsters who can barely read by the fourth grade face a steep uphill climb the rest of the way through school and later in life. They will struggle with the reading assignments in English class, and the word problems in algebra . . . Higher education will be off limits.”*¹³ Teachers use common reading and writing strategies, and students are given explicit and continuous instruction to become active, voracious readers and reading strategies to maximize learning in all subjects. Vocabulary instruction is critical to make up for the substantial vocabulary exposure gap with which many students enter school.¹⁴ Students read about rich topics that build background knowledge. Drawing from the analysis of 90/90/90 schools (90%+ eligible for free and reduced lunch, 90%+ members of ethnic minority groups, 90%+ meet the district or state academic standards in reading or another area)¹⁵, teachers emphasize non-fiction writing, and “all teachers, regardless of content area, . . . make use of a common writing rubric applied to student writing. Whether the student is writing a book report, lab report, social studies report, analysis of a sporting event, description of a piece of music, or a comparison of artists, the message is the same: this is

⁸ Hirsch, E.D. *The Schools We Need and Why We Don’t Have Them*. NY: Anchor, 2003.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Wiggins, Grant, and Jay McTigh. (2005). *Understanding by Design* (2nd ed) Alexandria, VA: ASCD. 2005.

¹¹ Bambrick-Santoyo, Paul. *Driven By Data*. San Francisco, CA; Jossey-Bass, 2010.

¹² We are exploring the use of internally developed comprehensive assessments such as those developed at Roxbury Prep versus the use of externally developed frequent assessments such as those used by Excel Academy. Our final decision will be based upon the efficacy of each approach, the value of an external provider, and the priorities of our own internal staff training.

¹³ Price, Hugh B. *Achievement Matters*. NY: Kensinton, 2002.

¹⁴ For detail on the vocabulary gap, see “The Early Catastrophe” by Betty Hard and Todd Risely in *The American Educator* (Sp 2003).

¹⁵ The term “90/90/90” was coined by Douglas Reeves in 1995 based on observations in Milwaukee, WI, where schools had been identified with: 90%+ eligible for free and reduced lunch, 90%+ ethnic minorities, 90%+ met the district/state academic standards.

the standard for good writing, and there are no compromises on these expectations for quality.”¹⁶ Writing Workshops focus on the traits of effective writing and conventions of various genres, especially those needed to be competitive in high school and college such as analytical and persuasive essays. Students have instruction and opportunities to practice writing skills and develop accountable reading skills on a daily basis.

6. Character Education: *“A student who feels true ownership in a life of reflection and self-discipline will more enthusiastically engage in the hard work necessary for academic success.”*¹⁷ We teach the important role that character plays in achievement. Through daily advisory classes, weekly school meetings, and cyclical rewards (trips and privileges), we teach students that it takes **DRIVE** to be successful and we provide instruction in our core values of Determination, Responsibility, Integrity, Vision, and Enthusiasm. Each student is taught the importance of each value, presented with real examples of how each looks in our school community and in the world beyond school, and provided with reflection activities as they incorporate these values into their own character and actions. **Determination:** Students work hard to meet the high academic and character standards that we set for them. Teachers are equally determined to see every student succeed and demonstrate sustained effort to ensure their success. **Responsibility:** Students take responsibility for their learning and their actions. They are accountable for their decisions and expected to demonstrate responsibility to themselves and their community. **Integrity:** Students are honest and ethical in their words and actions. Teachers hold an unwavering belief that every child can achieve academic excellence that radiates through their words and actions. **Vision:** Students are exposed to life’s possibilities and create a vision for their future as a first step on their path to college. **Enthusiasm:** Students are taught to be excited about the future as they aspire to achieve excellence. Working hard and meeting expectations warrants celebration – we celebrate our achievements often.

7. Teacher Quality and Effectiveness: *“Research on teacher quality is stacking up and one study found: students of teachers ranking in the top quartile in effectiveness make academic growth quadrupling that of the students of teachers in the bottom quartile.”*¹⁸ We recruit, retain, develop, and compensate highly effective teachers. We attract the best and brightest educators and offer them a professional working environment in which all staff members are mission-driven team players. All teachers have dedicated time every day to collaborate, analyze student achievement data and plan highly effective lessons. We recruit teachers who are goal-oriented, seek improvement, and are willing to do whatever it takes to ensure that students succeed. Student learning is the most important outcome, and all staff members are evaluated according to their measurable impact on that learning. We expect teachers to challenge and engage students with rigorous, standards-based lessons, use data to inform their planning, create classroom cultures that demand high behavioral expectations and **DRIVE** while creating a joy factor for learning, and ensure that lessons are differentiated to meet the needs of all students.

8. Accountability: *“Schools get wiser, more quickly, under increased accountability pressure.”*¹⁹ In education, the word innovation is often used in reference to unproven educational ideas and concepts. We prize true innovation - the implementation of strategies proven most effective in increasing student achievement currently unavailable within the local community. Our instructional program and educational principles are informed by successful practices of high performing schools serving similar populations. Many successful schools charged with educating students from traditionally underserved backgrounds are charter schools, and it is to them that we have turned in our search for best practices. Charter schools offer autonomy in exchange for greater accountability, and this allows the flexibility to: (a) allocate resources to levers that propel student achievement; (b) design an academic program suited to

¹⁶ Douglas Reeves, “High Performance in High Poverty Schools: 90/90/90 and Beyond,” Center for Performance Assessment 2003.

¹⁷ Founder and 2002 BES Fellow Scott McCue. Charter Application for Boston Preparatory Public Charter School. (6.)

¹⁸ William L. Saunders and June C. Rivers, *Cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers n Future Student Academic Achievement*, University of Tennessee Value-Added Research and Assessment Center, 1996, p. 6.

¹⁹ Doug Lemov, Managing Director – Uncommon Schools, *Rockefeller Institute Forum* – June 10, 2009.

our students' needs; and (c) hire, train, develop, and retain teachers that deliver results. Our success is measured by academic results and organizational health and metrics include: (a) the percentage of students demonstrating mastery of content as measured by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS²⁰); (b) the performance of students relative to that of other students in the district, state, and country as measured by the MCAS²¹ and nationally-normed assessments; (c) our students' rate of progress relative to their own mastery and grade level, measured by the growth percentile; (d) attendance rates that exceed those of district averages for middle school; and (e) maintenance of financial stability and positive cash-flow, with all school resources placed as close to the classroom, in full support of our mission, as possible. By placing internal pressure on ourselves through these metrics, we will further motivate our efforts towards the goal of preparing all students for academic and life success.

B. Curriculum and Instruction. Veritas Prep's curriculum is aligned with the MA Curriculum Frameworks (MCF)²² and all instruction is college preparatory. Rigorous and explicit standards are the basis for curricular development and revision. The Executive Director²³ oversees the development of school-based curriculum and assessments for each grade level and subject area during the planning year in 2011-2012, and the school uses a frequent assessment system to monitor results. The Executive Director will evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum based on data from interim assessments, MCAS²⁴, and end of year Comprehensive Assessments and report to the Board of Trustees' Achievement Committee each year, as well as to the larger community through Family Newsletters and our Annual Report.

Curriculum. To develop curriculum aligned with MA standards and targeted to students' needs, teachers meet and plan for three weeks in August. Staff analyzes data, develops curriculum, and identifies teaching strategies. MA guidelines, MCAS²⁵, the SSAT and ISEE are used to establish specific, rigorous, measurable school standards. Using a similar practice to Roxbury Prep's Curriculum Alignment Template (CAT) teachers address every MA and Veritas Prep standard within lessons. Teachers distribute academic standards and weekly syllabi to students and families; syllabi include daily objectives, activities, and homework. Anticipating that students will have gaps in learning when they enroll, diagnostics determine students' academic strengths and weaknesses. As necessary, teachers supplement the curriculum to meet student needs. Targeted, standards-based instruction that supports the most at-risk students, an extended day and year, double periods of daily instruction in literacy and math, and multiple academic supports each afternoon allow every student to meet high expectations for achievement. A general curriculum outline is presented below with a more detailed narrative thereafter.

²⁰ We recognize the current adoption of national core standards, and the possible impact this may have on the state's assessment system. Should there be any change in the MCAS, including a replacement assessment, we will adjust all accountability measures accordingly.

²¹ Ibid.

²² The MA Board of Education has recently officially voted to adopt national core standards; we will adjust all curricular alignment to ensure full adherence to such newly adopted standards as they are implemented within Massachusetts.

²³ Rachel Romano is the proposed Executive Director; for more detail please see the Organizational Viability section.

²⁴ We recognize the current adoption of national core standards, and the possible impact this may have on the state's assessment system. Should there be any change in the MCAS, including a replacement assessment, we will adjust all accountability measures accordingly.

²⁵ Ibid.

SUBJECT	Grade			
	5	6	7	8
Mathematics	Dual focus on procedures (computation) and problem solving (application). Algebra and Geometry integrated.		Pre-Algebra.	Algebra I.
Reading	Guided reading, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension strategies and genre characteristics, focus on phonics and phonemic awareness as needed.		Reading and textual analysis of literature in a number of genres, Spelling, grammar, punctuation, analytical and persuasive essays, research paper, editing/revising.	Reading and textual analysis of literature in various genres, Spelling, grammar, punctuation, analytical and persuasive essays, research paper, editing/revising.
Writing	Spelling, grammar, punctuation, paragraph writing, editing/revising. Composing multiple-paragraph writing of narrative and expository texts.			
Social Studies	United States History, Geography, Economics, and Government: Early Exploration to Westward Movement	Systematically study the world outside of the United States and North America, learn geography around the world continent by continent,	Ancient and Classical Civilizations in the Mediterranean to the Fall of The Roman Empire: Ideas that Shaped History	U.S. History: Colonialism – 1914 US Government.
Science	Integrated study of life, physical and earth sciences, technology and engineering and a study of scientific methods and inquiry.	Integrated study with focus on earth and space science, life and physical science concepts, Scientific inquiry, experimentation and design.	Integrated study with focus on biology, earth and physical science concepts, Scientific inquiry, experimentation and design.	Integrated study with focus on general chemistry and physics, earth and space, technology and engineering. Scientific inquiry, experimentation and design.

5 th Grade	
Mathematics	Understand place value to billions & thousandths; compute w/large/small numbers, positive integers, decimals, fractions; understand relationship between decimals/fractions/percents; perform calculations & solve problems involving addition, subtraction, simple multiplication/division of fractions/decimals; add/subtract integers; use variables in simple expressions; compute value of expression for specific values of variable; understand & compute volumes/areas of simple objects; identify, describe, classify properties of, relationships between, plane/solid geometric figures; display, analyze, compare, interpret data sets; problem solve; think critically
Reading	Develop vocabulary via spelling, decoding, understanding of imagery, Greek/Latin roots/affixes, context clues, dictionary skills; fluently read aloud narrative/expository texts; identify/analyze characteristics of poetry, drama, other types of fiction/nonfiction; practice utilizing phonemic awareness and phonics skills as needed; identify/analyze plot conflict; contrast character traits; understand/recognize theme; evaluate archetypes used in mythical/traditional literature; summarize main ideas/supporting details of nonfiction texts; use textual evidence to determine author's POV; understand how text features make information accessible/usable; analyze chronologically organized texts; draw inferences, conclusions, generalizations supported by textual evidence; distinguish facts, supported inferences, opinions in texts
Writing	Identify/utilize 7 parts of speech (adding conjunction; preposition; pronoun to previous list);

	recognize verb phrases/tense; use correct punctuation, capitalization, spelling; write multiple-paragraph stories/essays (w/ introduction, body, conclusion); gather research from various sources; revise writing; analyze media techniques.
Social Studies: US History and Geography	Analyze Pre-Columbian Civilizations of the New World and European Exploration, Describe and explain the Political, Intellectual, and Economic Growth of the Colonies; Explain key events leading to the Revolution and the Formation of a Federal Government under the Constitution, Describe the Principles and Institutions of American Constitutional Government and explain the events that led to growth; describe events occurring during 19 th century presidencies; describe factors that fostered growth of imperialism; analyze US expanding role in world during late 19 th and early 20 th centuries; identify connections between current and historical events and issues; understand immigration/demographic changes; determine chronology/cause & effect; maps/globes/charts/graphs, works of art, primary/secondary sources; understand conflict/cooperation
Science	Explain how air temperature, moisture, wind speed and direction, and precipitation make up the weather in a particular place and time; Identify rocks and their properties; Recognize different properties of soil and explain how it is formed; Distinguish among various forms of precipitation; differentiate between weather/climate; describe water cycle; recognize that plants and animals go through predictable life cycles; recognize that energy is ability to cause motion or create change; explain how electromagnets can be made, give examples of how they can be used; recognize that sound is produced by vibrating objects and requires a medium through which to travel; explain the difference between simple and complex machines; compare natural systems with mechanical systems that are designed to serve similar purposes, ask questions/make predictions that can be tested; select /use appropriate tools/technology to extend observations.
6th Grade	
Mathematics	Compare/order positive/negative fractions/decimals/mixed numbers; solve problems involving fractions, ratios, proportions, percentages; utilize algebraic expressions/equations; apply order of operations; solve, graph, interpret simple linear equations; analyze/use tables, graphs, rules to solve problems; investigate geometric patterns; convert units of measurement, identify properties of angles and two and three-dimensional shapes; determine pi, area and circumference; analyze data sampling; theoretical and experimental probabilities; problem solve; think critically; compute the perimeter, area, and volume of common geometric objects.
Reading	Determine unfamiliar word meanings through use of Greek/Latin roots/affixes; determine meaning of figurative language; read aloud with pacing, intonation, expression; use textual evidence to identify author's purpose; practice utilizing phonemic awareness and phonics skills as needed; utilize print/electronic dictionaries/thesauri; identify textual organizational structures; determine figurative language meanings; analyze how tone/meaning is conveyed in poetry; identify/analyze characteristics of nonfiction texts; identify characteristics of different forms of prose; identify/use structural features of popular media; analyze compare-and-contrast texts.
Writing	Identify/ utilize parts of speech (adding interjection to previous list); use common phrases, clauses, simple, compound, and compound-complex sentences; use correct punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and subject-verb agreement; write expository compositions, research reports, speeches, responses to literature, and narratives employing specific details, voice, and effective word choice; revise writing to improve level of detail; employ various textual organizational structures; create outlines and logical notes; utilize books and the Internet to complete research projects; apply research steps for completing projects; create multimedia presentations; deliver formal presentations.
Social Studies: World Geography and Cultures	Identify purposes/uses of maps, globes, aerial photographs, atlases to analyze people, places, environments; construct maps using symbols to represent features; locate continents, bodies of water, mountain ranges, countries, cities on a map; determine impact of geography on different peoples; describe impact of extreme natural events on human and physical environments; discuss geographic knowledge and skills related to current events; use geographic concepts and skills to find solutions to local, state, national problems; compare/contrast how social institutions influence individual behavior in different societies; describe how social status help(ed) to determine individual roles in various societies; examine impact of cultural change brought about by technological inventions/innovations; use sources to identify examples of present conflicts between cultural groups; analyze historical and geographical background.
Science	Understand how topography is reshaped by weathering of rock/soil and by transportation/deposition

	of sediment; explain meaning of radiation, convection, conduction; recognize/describe that currents in air and ocean distribute heat energy; investigate/describe how pollutants can affect weather/atmosphere; discuss how plate tectonics explain important features of the Earth's surface and major geologic events; recognize how organisms in ecosystems exchange energy/nutrients among themselves and with environment; formulate testable hypothesis; design/conduct an experiment specifying variables to be changed, controlled, measured; draw conclusions based on data/evidence presented in tables/graphs; make inferences on patterns/trends.
7th Grade	
Mathematics (Pre-Algebra)	Read, write, compare rational numbers in scientific notation; convert fractions to decimals/percents; differentiate between rational/irrational numbers; apply exponents, powers, roots/use exponents in working with fractions; understand pre-algebra concepts; use algebraic terminology, expressions, equations, inequalities, graphs; interpret/evaluate expressions involving integer powers/simple roots; graph/interpret linear/nonlinear functions; apply Pythagorean theorem; use mathematical reasoning; problem solve.
English Language Arts	Use knowledge of affixes/roots to determine meaning of content area words; use textual evidence to support facts/opinions; build upon previously developed skills analyzing various nonfiction texts; employ character analysis; identify, analyze, provide textual evidence of themes; identify various genres of fiction; analyze character/plot development; write summaries, persuasive essays, autobiographical narratives, poems; apply research steps for completing projects; effectively utilize English language conventions; support all statements/ claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts, statistics, specific examples; use note taking, outlines, summaries to impose structure on drafts; revise writing to improve organization/word choice; critique works in oral presentations; deliver well-organized formal presentations demonstrating standard American English.
Social Studies: World History	Understand origins of modern humans from Paleolithic Age to agricultural revolution; determine impact of agricultural development; identify peoples, cultural advancements, scientific contributions, government, religious traditions of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Kush, Indus Valley Civilization, Northern China, Olmecs, to 1000 B.C.E., Ancient Hebrews, Ancient Greece, Rome, Indian Subcontinent to 700 C.E.; describe development of sub-Saharan civilizations in Africa; explain importance of early trade routes; identify roles/contributions of individuals; compare historical origins, central beliefs, spread of major religions; trace steps in development of written language; describe transition from Roman Empire to Byzantine Empire; analyze various historical interpretations; understand Earth's grid system; create maps of past.
Science	Classify organisms into kingdoms; Recognize that all living organisms are composed of cells; describe that a typical cell of any organism contains genetic instructions that specify its traits; recognize that biological evolution accounts for the diversity of species developed through gradual processes over many generations; study the structure and function in living systems; understand that evidence from rocks allows us to understand the evolution of life on earth; recognize that organisms in ecosystems exchange energy and nutrients among themselves and with the physical environment; communicate the steps and results from an investigation in written reports and verbal presentations; discuss types of technology that are developed and in use.
8th Grade	
Mathematics (Algebra I)	Identify/use arithmetic properties of subsets of integers/rational, irrational, real numbers; solve equations/ inequalities involving absolute values; solve multistep problems, including word problems, involving linear equations/linear inequalities in one variable; understand concepts of parallel/perpendicular lines and how slopes are related; add, subtract, multiply, divide monomials/polynomials; solve quadratic equation by factoring/ completing square; apply algebraic techniques to solve rate problems, work problems, percent mixture problems; problem solve; think critically.
English Language Arts	Know meanings of common foreign words used in English language; understand shades of meaning in words; identify speaker's purpose/POV; compare/contrast texts covering same topic; build upon previously developed skills analyzing various nonfiction texts; evaluate structural elements of plot; analyze how setting relates to problem and resolution; identify significant literary devices that define writer's style; write multi-paragraph essays with thesis statements, logical organization, detail, rhetorical devices, transitions, varying sentence structure; write short stories or narratives; support conclusions with analogies, paraphrases, quotations, opinions from authorities, comparisons, similar

	devices; write stories/scripts with dialogue; analyze electronic journalism; revise writing for word choice, appropriate organization, consistent point of view, transitions; deliver formal presentations that convey ideas clearly, relate to the background/interests of audience.
Social Studies: US History	Analyze migration of Europeans to Americas from colonial times to World War I; recognize impact of European migration on indigenous peoples and later on US citizens; understand integration of enslaved Africans into European migration; describe development of American constitutional democracy; identify U.S. Constitution, powers of federal government; analyze foundation of American political system; identify rights, responsibilities, roles of citizenship; understand politics, geography, culture, economy of new nation; describe early U.S. foreign policy, state developments in early 1800s, and issues of slavery; analyze factors leading to Civil War; determine significance of individuals or groups in the Civil War; describe impact of events and movements that influenced Reconstruction; discuss American economic response to Industrial Revolution; understand progressive reforms resulting from Industrial Revolution; create and utilize time lines; analyze various historical interpretations; understand Earth’s grid system; create maps of past; analyze current events.
Science	Recognize that elements have distinct macroscopic properties/atomic structures; describe chemical reactions; discuss density/buoyancy; explain relationship amongst motion, velocity, force; Differentiate between forms of energy and heat energy; Recognize earth in the solar system, the role of gravity and compare /contrast properties and conditions of other objects; Explain the relationship between the tilt of the earth and the seasons; Describe and relate lunar and solar eclipses, moon phases, and tides to the earth’s position. Describe and apply engineering design process; communicate ideas through engineering drawings, written reports, and pictures; Describe the manufacturing process and explain production process; Describe construction of bridges and structures, Apply universal systems model to solve a transportation problem. Use/analyze organization of Periodic Table; test hypotheses; write clear step-by-step instructions for conducting investigations. Use/analyze organization of Periodic Table; test hypotheses; write clear step-by-step instructions for conducting investigations.

English Language Arts. Graduating eighth graders, prepared to read and write as high school students, and able to succeed within a college preparatory program, require intensive middle school ELA study and training, and are dependent on a strong ELA curriculum that builds reading fluency and comprehension of fiction and non-fiction texts. Students have two hours of daily ELA instruction, with focus on Reading and Writing and grounded in the five components of strong reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.²⁶

Struggling adolescent readers need (a) to be engaged in meaningful content and (b) to ramp up foundational phonics skills. Reading class focuses on fluency and comprehension of fiction and non-fiction, with an emphasis on non-fiction. Students practice fluency through guided reading, and instruction includes explicit phonics instruction.²⁷ All students matriculate from “learning to read” to “reading to learn,”²⁸ and students’ reading progress is closely monitored through use of a grade-appropriate assessment such as the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark or Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). Regular teacher/student conferences allow teachers to assess each student’s reading progress; use of frequent standards-based assessments allow us to calibrate such progress against MA reading standards, grade level expectations, and comparative schools.

Our writing program is vertically aligned across grade levels and includes explicit instruction in grammar, the writing process, writing essays in a variety of genres, and the research process. “By far, the most common characteristic of the ‘90/90/90 Schools’ [is] their emphasis on requiring written responses in

²⁶ Armbruster, B., Lehr, F., and Osborn, J. *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*. Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA). 2001.

²⁷ We differentiate phonics instruction as needed, and modify the degree and depth of phonics instruction accordingly.

²⁸ Chall, J.S. (1983). *Stages of Reading Development*. New York: McGraw-Hill..

performance assessments.”²⁹ Frequent writing is required in all content areas, and teachers create rubrics to assess the quality of student writing against pre-determined, qualitative and quantitative benchmarks.³⁰ Strategies and expectations are implemented in all classes; all teachers have training to support this expectation.

Led by the Executive Director³¹, teachers and literacy specialists develop a rigorous four-year plan for introducing increasingly difficult texts to our students. Using the suggested reading lists of the Common Core Standards for ELA, students read complex, high quality texts by a range of authors such as Twain, Shakespeare, Yip, Frost, Hughes and Morrison. We use texts from awards lists such as the Coretta Scott King Medalists, Newbery Medalist and ALA Notable Books. Some texts are chosen to coordinate with content students are learning in history and science, and provide opportunities for students to make deep connections across the disciplines. Students also have daily Accountable Independent Reading time. Based on the ethos of Silent Sustained Reading and Drop Everything and Read, time is dedicated to students reading fictional texts; and, as developed upon the success of the reading program at Excel Academy, it includes accountability for reading through a focused, prioritized journal that holds students accountable for reading with comprehension 25-30 texts per school year.

Mathematics. Students have access to a rigorous and challenging math curriculum beginning in the fifth grade that first addresses previously unlearned skills and concepts and efficiently establishes the foundational numeracy skills on which more advanced math is based. In fifth and sixth grades, students take Numeracy, in seventh Pre-Algebra, and in eighth Algebra. Graduating eighth graders demonstrate mastery of algebra in their last year at Veritas Prep. Students engage in two daily math classes, Procedures and Problem Solving, allowing teachers to focus on computational accuracy and increasingly sophisticated geometric and algebraic application.³² This approach is common practice in many of the Center for Education Reform’s 2007 National Charter Schools of the Year, including Roxbury Preparatory and Excel Academy.³³

Science. Students are curious about the world around them and how it works, which is the best entry point in designing a science, technology and engineering curriculum that builds on the fundamental concepts of: Earth and Space Science; Life Science (Biology); Physical Sciences (Chemistry and Physics); and Technology/Engineering.³⁴ The MA Board of Higher Education’s *Admissions Standards for the Massachusetts State Colleges and University*³⁵ states that three science courses, including two courses with laboratory work, must be completed in order to fulfill the minimum science requirement for admission to the Commonwealth’s four-year public institutions. We prepare middle school students with the skills and knowledge of safe laboratory practices necessary to fully participate in college preparatory high school courses, and with the foundational science vocabulary and knowledge ready to access the content of those courses. With teacher guidance, students conduct investigations and prepare reports with questions, procedures, and conclusions. Curriculum builds upon and develops students’ literacy skills and knowledge; students develop core vocabulary and conceptual knowledge, and strengthen their skills of reading non-fiction texts. Using literacy standards outlined in the Common Core Standards³⁶, science literacy objectives are incorporated into the curriculum.

²⁹Reeves,Douglas. The 90/90/90 Schools.” *Accountablity in Action*. Englewood, CA: Advanced Learning, 2000.

³⁰ Rubrics will be used for short and long responses, and heavily modeled upon those used as part of the MCAS assessment system.

³¹ For more detail on the professional background of the proposed Executive Director, please see Section III Organizational Viability.

³² The effectiveness of this approach has been cited by Roxbury Preparatory and Excel Academy Charter Schools.

³³ As Fellow with Building Excellent Schools, Lead Founder Rachel Romano is studying such models closely, and is being trained by Dana Lehman, former Co-Director of Roxbury Prep and newly identified Managing Director of the Roxbury Prep network of schools.

³⁴ MA Science and technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework, October 2006. See www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html.

³⁵ <http://www.mass.edu/forstudents/admissions/admissionsstandards.asp>.

³⁶ <http://www.corestandards.org>.

Social Studies. Using the MA Curriculum Frameworks for Social Studies³⁷, we provide a curriculum that builds a solid foundation of factual knowledge while providing opportunities for students to understand how history has shaped our lives today and will continue to shape the future. Aligning with standards at each grade level, curriculum is designed around compelling themes or ideas that engage middle school students. Students are trained to become critical consumers of non-fiction, primary source documents - developing thoughts and opinions and learning to express them articulately. Students acquire historical facts and knowledge as they learn to think deeply about significant events and people and express their thoughts in writing. The Common Core Standards³⁸ for ELA outline literacy objectives for Social Studies and these are incorporated into our Social Studies curriculum and further develop our students' literacy skills.

Specials. Students participate in one specials class daily. In Y1, we offer Physical Education and in Y2-5 we anticipate adding classes like art, music, and technology as the school grows. Art and technology will be available all years of operation as part of our daily enrichment opportunities.

Enrichment and Wellness. Our primary focus as a college preparatory middle school is to prepare students with strong academic skills and character. We recognize the importance of providing daily enrichment opportunities and do so as part of our extended daily schedule. Enrichment classes include technology and art, and emphasize physical fitness. As part of our overall wellness program, we create multiple opportunities for students to exercise daily. We structure recess for students to engage in games that require them to move and interact with each other.³⁹ Teachers have the option of leading enrichment classes and we use volunteers from local colleges and community organizations to expose students to added enrichments.⁴⁰

Advisory. Advisory curriculum focuses on character education, habits of work and learning, and exposure to college and community. Students are taught the importance of having **DRIVE**.⁴¹ We create standards for each core value and vertically align them across grade levels. For example, fifth graders recognize **DRIVE** in themselves and those around them, making connections between academic success and our values. They learn to set goals that require **DRIVE** and describe what **DRIVE** looks like as they work to accomplish those goals.

5 th Grade	6 th Grade
<p>By the end of 5th grade, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate sense of purpose, arriving to school and classes on time, in uniform, ready to learn. • Demonstrate willingness and ability to work hard and be able to explain what it means to work hard. • Organize their materials and space. • Clean up after themselves without being asked. • Ask for help appropriately. • Greet people with firm hand and make eye contact. • Express agreement or disagreement respectfully. • Take responsibility for their work. • Submit work always showing academic integrity. • Relate current actions to future success. • Recognize how their actions affect the community. 	<p>By the end of 6th grade, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work cooperatively as a group. • Act for benefit of team/advisory/class/community. • Greet school visitors and help direct them. • Be responsible for actions and admit mistakes. • Explain importance/necessity of community. • Find/implement solutions to community problems. • Refuse to hide poor behavior of their classmates. • Remain focused on their work despite challenges in academics or in their personal lives. • Reflect of strengths and weaknesses, setting goals for personal improvement.

³⁷ The MA Board of Education has recently officially voted to adopt national core standards; we will adjust all curricular alignment to ensure full adherence to such newly adopted standards as they are implemented within Massachusetts.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Structured recess is designed upon the practices at KIPP Academy Lynn, under the leadership of Josh Zoia.

⁴⁰ We have met with a group from Smith College to discuss the Project Coach program as well as with the YMCA and South End Community Center to explore enrichment opportunities. We will continue building these and other relationships.

⁴¹ Veritas Prep's character values of Determination, Responsibility, Integrity, Vision, and Enthusiasm.

7 th Grade	8 th Grade
<p>By the end of 7th grade, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take an active role in directing their own learning. • Correct poor behavior demonstrated by peers. • Articulate justification for their actions. • Understand how leadership affects community. • Be instruments of positive change. • Take responsibility for cleaning the community in and out of school. • Facilitate discussions/reflections on our values in advisory, in classes, and at Community Meetings. • Address all adults and students in the building with a civil and respectful tone at all times. • Take responsibility for individual/group behavior. 	<p>By the end of 8th grade, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embrace the responsibility for maintaining a welcoming and safe school environment. • Take leadership roles in organizing event days celebrating the school’s values and mission. • Take active roles in directing their own learning. • Serve as ambassadors to school visitors. • Monitor and encourage their peers to use respectful language at all times. • Embrace the importance of a safe and welcoming community and understand their roles in supporting such an environment. • Present vision statement to school community.

Instruction. Instruction is organized with objectives and agendas for each class. Each class begins with a Do Now, followed by agenda and objective review, the lesson’s activities, and exit ticket. Clear expectations around learning outcomes, with interim assessments to measure student progress, allow teachers the flexibility and autonomy to match instruction with desired outcomes. While teachers draw from many instructional methods, we consistently use the following strategies, aligned with our educational philosophy, to build skills and content knowledge critical to our students’ success and shown effective in the strongest schools:

- **Gradual Release.** The “I Do, You Do, We Do” model of instruction begins with the teacher giving direct instruction on the objective - “I do.” S/he then facilitates the “We do,” guiding students to practice as a class, talking it through as they apply the material, concept, or skill. In the “You do,” the teacher releases students to independent practice - the largest part of the class and extending to homework. Students become more independent and responsible for their learning⁴² as “the cognitive load . . . shift[s] slowly and purposefully from teacher-as-model, to joint responsibility, to independent practice and application by the learner.”⁴³
- **Flexible Ability Grouping to Differentiate Instruction.** Pacing is critical when efficiently remediating academic gaps and accelerating learning for all students, as is grouping students by ability to target instruction and dramatically impact all learners. “When ability grouping is utilized in a flexible manner, with appropriate curricular adjustment, and with consistent expectations and assessments across groupings, significant achievement gains can be realized.”⁴⁴ Students are placed into flexible ability groups based on baseline data generated from testing during student orientation. All groups are accountable for the same concept and skills and are required to take the same internal and external assessments.
- **Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum.**⁴⁵ Literacy serves as the crux of our academic program. As a result, a focus on literacy permeates the curriculum. Emphasizing reading across content areas accomplishes two things: (1) It provides additional time to develop reading comprehension skills and produce avid readers; and (2) It develops readers able to access content regardless of subject matter. Students are familiar with a variety of texts (fiction, non-fiction, technical, newspaper/journal articles) and the way ideas are expressed in different genres. To excel in high school and college, students must write with clarity and fluidity – best accomplished by giving students numerous opportunities to write for a variety of purposes. We train all teachers on

⁴² Pearson, P.D., and M. Gallaher. (1983) “The Instruction of Reading Comprehension,” *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, p.8.

⁴³ Fisher, Douglas & Frey, Nancy (1998). “*Better Learning Through Structured Teacher: A Framework for the Gradual Release of Responsibility*”, p.2, quoting Pearson & Gallagher.

⁴⁴ Tieso, Carol L. (2003). “Ability Grouping is not Just Tracking Anymore.” *Roeper Review* Vol. 26.

⁴⁵ Based upon practices at Roxbury Prep and other high performing charter schools such as BES schools West Denver Preparatory in Denver, CO, Achievement Preparatory Academy in Washington, DC, and Columbus Collegiate Academy in Columbus, OH.

implementing writing across the curriculum during Summer Institute, with reinforced PD on early dismissal Wednesdays.

- **Format Matters.** Students are trained and then required to ask and answer questions and address teachers in complete sentences, using proper grammar, with strong, articulate voices. Students are respectfully corrected on format if an answer or question is given using incomplete sentences and/or improper grammar.⁴⁶
- **Without Apology.** Knowledge and learning are not boring, or only useful for testing purposes, so teachers do not apologize for teaching demanding material. Teachers do not assume that material is boring because of student demographics or subject content, and do not “dumb down” material to make it more fun. If material is taught with skill and enthusiasm, lessons are engaging and students learn the skills and content they need.
- **Focus.** Daily tutoring, or Focus, is part of the daily schedule, allowing staff to work individually or in small groups to re-teach skills and concepts with which students are struggling. Teachers create tutoring plans and we support and monitor teachers on results.

Results of Instructional Methods. As a direct result of the instructional content and methodology we have chosen, Veritas Prep students have:

- More time on task – Students need to learn more; they need more time to learn it.
- Demanding curriculum – Students are going to college; they need college prep classes.
- Social competency – Students need to develop socially; they need skills that open doors.
- Competitive test scores – Students want opportunity; they have to show what they know.
- Exposure to cultural experiences – Students are entering the world; we lead the way.

Comprehensively, our instructional methods allow students opportunity to thrive academically, access to individualized attention, and preparation for high school and college.

Teacher Supervision and Evaluation System. Our evaluation system is inspired by Kim Marshall, *Rethinking Teacher Supervision and Evaluation*⁴⁷ and the teacher evaluation protocol used at Excel Academy Charter School. We use teacher evaluation rubrics with clear expectations for teacher performance and conduct frequent mini-observations, providing feedback on the established criteria for effective teaching. Each teacher sets ambitious goals for student achievement, and both are used as performance measures. We recruit, support, and compensate highly effective teachers with highly competitive salaries. We create a culture of achievement through school structures and practices that support a truly data-driven culture. An annual Professional Development (PD) calendar and PD days are detailed on the school’s calendar. We provide teachers with high quality, targeted PD and secure time for data analysis, collaboration and planning. We are fully committed to providing rich, engaging professional development experiences for all teachers – with very clear foci: dramatically increasing student achievement and fulfilling our mission.

C. Assessment System. Instruction, PD, and student academic progress rely on successful implementation and use of data generated from standards-based, ongoing assessments. Student achievement data is used by all stakeholders; it drives every instructional decision of leaders and teachers; informs parents and students about academic strengths and areas for focused effort; and sets the priorities for the Board of Trustees. Paul Bambrick-Santoyo, Co-founder of North Star Academy in Newark, NJ explains the most effective use of an assessment system: “[I]nstead of standards defining the sort of assessments used, the assessments used define the standard that will be reached . . . [W]e should not first teach and then write an assessment to match; instead, we should create a rigorous and demanding test and then teach to meet its standards.”⁴⁸ Using the wisdom of schools like North Star Academy, we first

⁴⁶ Lemov, Doug. *Teach Like A Champion*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010.

⁴⁷ Marshall, Kim. *Rethinking Teacher Supervision and Evaluation: How to Work Smart, Build Collaboration, and Close the Achievement Gap*. CA: San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 2009.

⁴⁸ Bambrick-Santoyo, Paul. *Driven by Data: A Practical Guide to Improve Instruction*. CA: San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 2010.

develop interim assessments and then develop the plan to get our students there. According to Bambrick-Santoyo, “[I]nterim assessments should be created before teaching ever begins. In data-driven instruction, the rigor of . . . assessment items determines the rigor of the material taught in class.” We assess students through: Daily Exit Tickets; Weekly Classroom Quizzes; Common Interim Assessments; and End-of-Year Comprehensive Summative Assessments.

- **Daily Exit Tickets.** Teachers use exit tickets at the end of class as formative assessments to measure which students mastered the objective and which need additional support. Exit tickets inform adjustments to lesson plans, student groupings, and tutoring needs.
- **Weekly Classroom Quizzes.** Teachers develop weekly quizzes based on the week’s lessons to measure student mastery of taught material. Quizzes are formative assessments and align with MA State Standards⁴⁹ and the school’s internal learning standards. All quizzes specify the standards assessed per individual question. Quizzes provide efficient, real-time measures of each week’s lessons’ effectiveness and individual student progress.
- **Common Interim Assessments.**⁵⁰ We use common, standards-based assessments and administer these every six-to-eight weeks to measure instructional effectiveness and student growth. Each question and writing prompt indicate the standard(s) being assessed. Data informs staff on standards students have mastered, standards needing to be re-taught, and students needing additional support. Administering interim assessments on a pre-determined, cyclical basis, staff has a continuous stream of data from which to make strategic decisions to propel student growth. Monitoring the system, leadership and staff prevent middle school students from slipping through the cracks.
- **Comprehensive Summative Assessment.** During the planning year, the Executive Director and Director of Achievement collaborate to develop Comprehensive Assessments (Comps) for each grade in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies. Comps are based on the MA State Learning Standards⁵¹ and our internal learning standards (developed through backwards planning from the MA State Learning Standards⁵²), and designed to encompass everything to be taught during the academic year. Assessments require students to demonstrate mastery through more elaborate writing and problem solving than allowed on standards-based assessments, such as MCAS⁵³ and our Interim Assessments. Administered at year’s end as a summative assessment, we compare student performance on Comps with their performance on state tests and use data to inform revisions to curriculum and instruction.

D. School Characteristics. Student and teacher schedules reflect in length, organization, and content our dedication to our mission. The school calendar and daily schedule reflect our dedication to increased instructional time with an extended school day and year. We operate on a trimester schedule and provide 187 total days of instruction, an additional five (5) student orientation days, 10 days of Saturday Academy for students needing additional support during the year, and 10 days of Summer Academy for students struggling to meet academic requirements during the year. Daily operation is from 7:55AM – 4:20 PM⁵⁴ on M/T/Th/F and from 7:30AM – 1:50PM on Wednesday⁵⁵ to allow ongoing, targeted Professional Development. We offer 15 additional Professional Development days throughout the year. The school opens with 81 fifth graders in 2012 and adds 81 fifth graders each of the next three years until the school serves a maximum capacity of 324 students in grades 5-8.

2012 – 2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
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⁴⁹ As noted earlier, we will adjust and align all curriculum to core national standards as required.

⁵⁰ This process is modeled after several schools which Rachel Romano is studying through the BES Fellowship, including North Star Academy, Amistad Academy, Democracy Preparatory, and Roxbury Preparatory.

⁵¹ As noted earlier, we will adjust and align all curriculum to core national standards as required.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ As noted earlier, we will adjust all measures should there be any change in the use of the MCAS.

⁵⁴ Doors open at 7:30 for breakfast as families choose; the day extends to 5:00for afterschool activities/behavioral consequences.

Grade 5 – 81	Grade 5 – 81	Grade 5 – 81	Grade 5 – 81
	Grade 6 – 81	Grade 6 – 81	Grade 6 – 81
		Grade 7 – 81	Grade 7 – 81
			Grade 8 – 81
Total students = 81	Total students = 162	Total students = 243	Total students = 324

Each grade is divided into three sections of 27 students. Students are grouped by reading level in fifth and sixth grades to allow for targeted instruction with relevant and appropriate reading interventions and strategies. Starting in seventh grade, we expect students to be placed in heterogeneous groups with reading instruction at or above grade level.

Sample Student Schedule (Fifth Grade, Section 1)	
Time	Teacher
7:30 AM – 7:55 AM	Breakfast
7:55 AM – 8:20 AM	Advisory/Accountable Independent Reading
8:20 AM – 9:15 AM	Math Procedures
9:15 AM – 10:10 AM	Reading
10:10 AM– 11:05 AM	Physical Education/Tutoring (rotating days as needed)
11:05 AM – 12:00 PM	Social Studies
12:00 PM – 12:40 PM	Lunch/Recess/HW Center
12:40 PM– 1:35 PM	Writing
1:35 PM– 2:30 PM	Math Problem Solving
2:30 PM – 3:25 PM	Science
3:25 PM – 4:20 PM	Focus/Enrichment (rotating days as needed)
4:20 PM	Dismissal
4:20 PM – 5PM	After School Activities/Detention

Sample Teacher Schedule (Fifth Grade Math)	
Time	Teacher
7:30 AM – 7:55 AM	Breakfast
7:55 AM – 8:20 AM	Advisory/Accountable Independent Reading
8:20 AM – 9:15 AM	Section 1 – Math Procedures
9:15 AM – 10:10 AM	Targeted Tutoring
10:10 AM– 11:05 AM	Planning
11:05 AM – 12:00 PM	Section 2- Math Procedures
12:00 PM – 12:40 PM	Lunch/Recess/HW Center
12:40 PM– 1:35 PM	Section 3 – Math Procedures
1:35 PM– 2:30 PM	Planning
2:30 PM – 3:25 PM	Curriculum Development
3:25 PM – 4:20 PM	Focus
4:20 PM	Dismissal
4:20 PM – 5PM	After School Activities (TH)

⁵⁵ All core classes meet on Wednesdays, and all class periods are shortened by 10 minutes to allow for weekly staff PD.

Culture of Achievement. We provide a positive, safe, vibrant middle school where student achievement comes first. By implementing systems and structures to limit distractions, and as drawn from BES schools such as Excel Academy⁵⁶, Achievement Preparatory Academy⁵⁷, and Columbus Collegiate⁵⁸, we keep a laser-like focus on achievement. Advisory classes provide the daily structure in which we teach students the character values necessary to excel as scholars and individuals. Weekly community meetings celebrate our success as a community and recognize each other for having the **DRIVE** to compete, achieve, and succeed. Students are taught that it takes **DRIVE** to be successful and receive explicit instruction in our values: Determination, Responsibility, Integrity, Vision, and Enthusiasm.

During the planning year, the Executive Director conducts recruitment events in the South End of Springfield⁵⁹, explaining the school’s mission to parents and students and emphasizing the importance of every child obtaining a quality, college-preparatory education. At these events and throughout our marketing material, we communicate how Veritas Prep will accomplish its mission with high expectations, highly structured environment, focus on academic achievement, extended school day and year, and the importance of character development.

Defining and Communicating Expectations. A warm and demanding school culture for every stakeholder begins before the school’s first day of operation with family orientation meetings, with multiple scheduled sessions at times convenient for families. We review all components of the Student and Family Handbook that explicitly name expectations of students and parents and staff. The Handbook outlines the structures that support students during and outside of the school day. It details the school’s expectations and consequences for not meeting those expectations. Topics include attendance, uniforms, school work, homework, and discipline. The Handbook details whom families and students should contact for needs that can occur during the year, and all families receive the Handbook during Family Orientation.⁶⁰

The Staff Handbook details expectations, policies and procedures for all staff. The Handbook details the expectations for ensuring that we maintain a safe, orderly, academically focused school. We provide the Handbook to staff during Summer Institute and review its contents.

Paycheck Token Economy System. We reward and grow student behaviors that we want to see. Modeled after KIPP and as implemented by BES schools such as Excel Academy (Prep Points) and Achievement Prep (DREAM Dollars), we use a “paycheck system” and reward students with weekly paychecks of **DRIVE** Dollars for upholding expectations and modeling **DRIVE** values. Students earn **DRIVE** Dollars individually and may lose **DRIVE** Dollars for exhibiting behaviors that do not uphold the **DRIVE** values (i.e. unprepared for class, not paying attention, not doing HW, disrespect). **DRIVE** Dollars are used to purchase mission-appropriate materials (college notebooks, pens, and t-shirts) and school supplies. Students can accumulate **DRIVE** Dollars for rewards such as field trips and events. Paychecks are tallied weekly and sent home for parental review and signature, and are returned to school each Monday. Students receive new weekly paychecks (starting at \$100) every Monday. Paychecks tell families how students have done in the previous week in regards to attendance, behavior, and homework.

⁵⁶ Excel Academy is a BES School founded in 2002 and opened its doors in 2003 in East Boston, MA; it uses clear systems for checking uniforms and HW completion each morning. Excel Academy has worked closely with BES since its inception.

⁵⁷ Achievement Preparatory Academy is a BES School founded in 2007 and opened its doors in 2008 in Washington, DC; after one year of operation it boasts the highest gains in student achievement in the district, and has developed an exemplary character education program for students in grades 4-8. Achievement Prep works closely with BES as part of its Follow-On Support.

⁵⁸ Columbus Collegiate is a BES School founded in 2007 and opened its doors in 2008 in Columbus, OH; it is the highest performing middle school in Columbus, and in 2010 was awarded the Silver EPIC Award by New Leaders for New Schools. Columbus Collegiate works closely with BES as part of its Follow-On Support.

⁵⁹ While the school will target the needs of students in the South End, in full compliance with MA Charter Law the school will publicize its enrollment process widely throughout Springfield and will be available to all families on a space available basis.

⁶⁰ Students and families who enroll after the start of the year have an individualized Orientation and are provided the Handbook.

Disciplinary Offenses. We define a disciplinary offense as a violation of our code of conduct that occurs while the student is: at school and/or on school grounds; participating in a school-sponsored activity; walking to or from school or a school-sponsored event; walking to or from, waiting for, or riding on school-provided transportation; or walking to or from, waiting for, or riding on public transportation to and from school or a school-sponsored activity. Consequences for disciplinary offenses are subject to the discretion of the Executive Director and the Dean of Culture and Community and may include school service/cleaning, loss of school privileges, detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and/or expulsion. The list of punishable offenses is set forth in the Student and Family Handbook.

Homework Center. Homework (HW) is assigned nightly and is a mechanism for student success. It is not a means of introducing new material – that is the purpose of classroom instruction. Instead, HW is used to review materials and subject content taught in class that day or in a previous lesson, and serves as a consistent barometer for student performance. Since HW is review of subject content already taught, it allows teachers to know how each student is performing on each lesson and to identify any interventions students may need. Nightly HW also helps students become accustomed to the self-motivation and time-management skills needed to advance their education. HW check is part of the morning Advisory routine; students who do not complete any HW are required to attend HW Center instead of social lunch and recess that day. The names of those students not completing HW or completing HW unsatisfactorily, e.g., crumpled paper, illegible handwriting, are reported to the office and the Office Manager promptly informs the parents. HW Center provides a quiet, structured environment where students can complete HW and receive assistance.

Focus. All students have access to additional tutoring, as part of the schedule before dismissal each day. Students are identified for support and are also encouraged to request Focus time in a particular subject by asking his/her teacher. Tutorials are provided in small group settings or through one-on-one support. Tutoring is mandatory for any student scoring below 70% in a subject area. Students attend tutoring over a six-week period or until the student demonstrates that he/she is successfully mastering class material. As part of their daily schedule, teachers provide targeted tutoring during the day for individual students who require additional support.

Saturday Academy.⁶¹ Saturday Academy provides supplemental support in reading and math. Starting the second full month of school, Saturday Academy is offered once per month. This supplemental program provides struggling students with additional academic support in small groups tailored to their specific academic needs. Students enrolled in Saturday Academy are also required to attend Focus during the week.

Summer Academy. At the end of the year, students scoring below 70% in one or two core academic class(es) are required to attend a two-week Summer Academy.⁶² Students work through targeted instruction and practice in subject area(s) of struggle. At the end of Summer Academy, students are re-tested on the comprehensive assessment(s) in the appropriate subject area(s). If a student scores 70% or above, s/he is promoted to the next grade; if below 70%, s/he is retained. Families who believe that their student(s) requires summer support, regardless of promotion status, may select to attend Summer Academy, with prior approval of the Director of Achievement. If approved, a self-selected student is held to the same academic and behavioral standards as students required to attend, except that s/he does not receive a formal grade or is not required to take the comprehensive assessment. Summer Academy is offered starting the summer after the first year of operation.⁶³

Parent and Family Partnerships. Families that are active in their child's school and their education are crucial to each student's academic success. Research supports this notion: when families are constructive

⁶¹ Saturday Academy, on 10 Saturdays, is based on practices used by Roxbury Prep, Excel Academy, and Achievement Prep.

⁶² Students failing more than two courses are automatically retained.

⁶³ Saturday Academy and Summer Academy are taught by Veritas Prep teachers who are paid a stipend for this added work.

participants in their child's academic life, student learning outcomes improve.⁶⁴ We build and continue to develop a positive and mutually beneficial relationship through regular communication between school and the caring adults in our students' lives. We work with families to become part of our school's effort to promote their children's academic success, and the possible academic success of all students. Strategies include:

- **Annual information sessions** during application process and following the lottery
- **Daily voicemail system** with summary of all HW for each subject each night
- **Weekly newsletters** that outline major events and updates about the school
- **Weekly reports** that provide updates on academics, homework, and behavior
- **Three family-teacher conferences** each year allowing for discussion of student progress.
- **Three Progress Reports and Report Cards** that include quantitative/qualitative evaluations
- **Regular events** in which families are invited into school to celebrate student success
- **Family Achievement Committee** that meets monthly to support the school's growth

Survey Input. We gauge parental and familial satisfaction through annual written surveys. These allow the school to identify strategic areas of improvement, and gather parental input on important issues of school administration and governance. Results are reviewed by the Executive Director and other school-level administrators, who in turn report results to the Board, thus informing future Board agendas and school improvement efforts.

E. Special Student Populations and Student Services. We educate all students regardless of ability and comply with all state and federal statutes, including Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. We educate students with disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and with their non-disabled peers, to the extent appropriate and allowed by each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). We do not discriminate in admission and enrollment practices against students having or suspected of having disabilities.

Special Education Services. All students regardless of their challenges and ability can achieve academically. The Executive Director oversees the planning and implementation of school-wide structures and systems to ensure compliance with all state laws and regulations.⁶⁵ We provide students with a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), and to ensure that all students' needs are well met, we hire highly qualified and appropriately licensed special educators including a Special Education Director who works closely with all teachers and students to provide accommodations and modifications as needed. The Special Education Director (and/or the Director of Achievement in Y1) maintain records and adhere to the following processes to ensure that Veritas Prep meets every student's needs.

- **Service Delivery for Existing Individual Education Plans.** After lottery selection and upon enrollment, families complete questionnaires to identify if their child has received special education services or has been diagnosed with a learning disability. Upon enrollment, the Special Education Director communicates with families of students already receiving Special Education services to discuss their child's IEP, answer questions, and schedule a transfer meeting. Teachers and staff implement the child's existing IEP, providing appropriate education within the Least Restrictive Environment, and record observations and data to inform the transfer meeting with parents and any potential changes to service delivery decided by the team at that meeting. For all students, academic progress is monitored regularly and students not showing academic progress receive additional supports (i.e. tutoring during/after school, after school HW help, summer support). If a child is not making academic progress with structured supports, staff begins the pre-referral process.
- **Intervention and Pre-referral to Special Education.** The Special Education Director (SED)

⁶⁴ One study finds that students from families with above-median parental involvement showed success rates 30% higher than those with below-median parental involvement, as measured by GPAs, math, science, reading, and social studies test scores, and retention rates. See Xitao Fan & Michael Chen, *Parental Involvement and Student's Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analysis*, National Science Foundation (1999).

⁶⁵ <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/sped/default.html>.

facilitates a tiered intervention process prior to referring students for Special Education services. The SED works with teachers to identify strategies (from the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan) to provide additional support to students within and outside of the classroom. Teachers and staff implement strategies consistently for two to three weeks and monitor progress made with consistent implementation of chosen strategies. The group meets to share observations and data. If strategies are effective, teachers and staff continue implementing and monitoring the student's progress, and the SED maintains documentation of this process. If strategies are not effective and the student is not making progress, the school recommends an evaluation, and with parental consent, conducts an evaluation with an appropriately licensed professional.

- **Individualized Education Plans.** When an evaluation indicates evidence of a disability and that special education services are appropriate, an IEP team including parents, the SED, a regular education teacher, and the student (if age appropriate) develop an IEP for the student and agreed upon services are delivered. All IEPs are evaluated annually and revised as needed by the IEP team. All students receiving special education services go through an annual review to monitor and ensure progress towards goals. Students are re-evaluated once every three years. To the greatest extent possible, we serve all students within an inclusion program. When the needs of the student and IEP require a different program, we meet those needs with appropriately licensed staff or contractors.
- **Evaluation of Special Education Program and Services.** The Special Education Program and services are evaluated annually by surveying parents. We provide electronic and hard copies of surveys to solicit the maximum number of responses and encourage candid feedback. The Executive Director, Special Education Director, and Director of Achievement survey results to improve the program. A Parent Group works closely with the Director of Special Education, planning meetings and workshops to keep parents informed and educated about Special Education laws, regulations, and ways to support their child.

English Language Learners. We comply with all applicable federal laws related to the education of language minority students as stated under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Education Opportunities Act of 1974. We follow the applicable provisions of the No Child Left behind Act of 2001, including sections 301 and 1112(g)) and federal case law. English Language Learner (ELL) students are provided with equal access to and full participation in school activities. ELL students study the same content and are held to the same rigorous standards as other students. While all classes are taught in English, the level of English used for instruction, both verbal and written, is modified as needed to facilitate ELL students' acquisition of English. For students identified as ELL, we use Structured English Immersion to accelerate academic progress. We eliminate or limit the separation of ELLs from the mainstream classroom.⁶⁶ If a student's English language proficiency is severely limited as to render the student incapable of accessing a regular classroom, we provide instruction in English to speakers of other languages (ESL) for the required period of time every day. Because the objective is for students to transition to fully English classes, ELL students participate in part of the regular classroom schedule, where all students have the opportunity to hear and use English.

Doing What Works, established by the federal Department of Education⁶⁷, lists five strategies proven highly effective in supporting ELL students. We incorporate these in all classes.

1. **Screen and Monitor Progress.** An effective ELL program includes well-developed assessments for identifying student needs. This corresponds with our principle of data-driven instruction. We assess students' progress frequently and use results to drive instruction and to identify students in need of intervention. The Executive Director and/or Director of Achievement oversees this process while working closely with teaching staff.

⁶⁶ Arizona Department of Education, July 2004, "The effects of Bilingual Education Programs and Structured English Immersion Programs on Student Achievement: A Large-Scale Comparison" located at http://www.public.asu.edu/~macswan/ade/ade_document.pdf.

⁶⁷ http://dww.ed.gov/topic/topic_landing.cfm?PA_ID=6&T_ID=13&Tab=2.

2. **Provide Reading Interventions.** Recognizing that ELLs are often at risk for reading problems, the strongest programs respond quickly to the results of formative assessments by offering small group reading interventions for struggling readers that augment the core reading program. A key element of our educational program is daily small-group tutoring during the Focus period for students struggling in reading. The DOE recommends that intervention “utilize fast-paced, engaging instruction.”⁶⁸ This aligns with our instructional strategies.
3. **Teach Vocabulary.** One important component in language acquisition is vocabulary development. To read and understand grade-appropriate material, students need to learn 3,000-4,000 new vocabulary words each year (roughly 70 new words per week).⁶⁹ In effective schools, students are taught vocabulary through formal instruction and through use in language rich settings in and out of the classroom. We provide formal vocabulary instruction using essential word lists and words in context. A structured vocabulary program features student-friendly definitions and cumulative assessments.
4. **Develop Academic English.** For ELLs to have academic success, they must develop cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), and not simply the basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) of social language. CALP includes content area vocabulary specific to academic subjects and the sophisticated use of language necessary to carry out higher-order academic tasks such as comparing, synthesizing, and inferring. Vocabulary development is part of all subjects and includes explicit scaffolding of higher-order academic tasks. Although language acquisition experts predict that it could take ELLs five years or more to become truly proficient in CALP⁷⁰, we expect that our extended school day and year will accelerate this process through increased daily exposure to academic English.
5. **Schedule Peer Learning.** Students improve mastery of language through use. The DOE’s recommendation is that a minimum of 90 minutes a week be dedicated to activities that allow students to work together to provide practice and extension of language skills. We implement strategies such as “turn and chat” in which the class is given a question or prompt and instructed to discuss the topic with a shoulder partner. Although these interactions are brief, lasting from 30 seconds to three minutes, when used frequently throughout the day, there is a significant cumulative increase in authentic language practice.

Identification of English Language Learners. Families of enrolled students complete a *Home Language Questionnaire*, which enables us to identify students who may have limited English proficiency. If a returned questionnaire indicates that the student is of foreign birth or comes from a home where a language other than English is spoken, we arrange for an informal interview with the student, conducted both in English and the student’s native language, with a member of our staff or qualified contractor. If the interviewer determines that the student speaks no English, the student is classified as an ELL. If the interview indicates potentially limited proficiency in English, we use a language assessment to determine the student’s level of proficiency. This structured screening process ensures that Veritas Prep does not inappropriately place ELL students in special education or remedial classes.

Assessment of English Language Learners. Students who have been identified as ELL are assessed annually to determine improvement in English proficiency. Students who score above the established cut-off point are deemed no longer ELL. We evaluate regularly the progress of our ELL students, with such evaluations informed by student performance on the MA ELL proficiency exams, the MEPA and MELA-O, as well as ongoing teacher observations with the consultation of the Director of Achievement and Executive Director. Performance is assessed in the following ways: (1) ELL students are making strong academic progress as measured by teacher-developed assessments; (2) ELL students are proficient in English in three years or less; (3) ELL students are proficient in English/Language Arts as evidenced

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Honig, Bill. *Teaching Our Children to Read*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2001.

⁷⁰ Cummins, J. (1981a) “Age on arrival and immigrant second language learning in Canada. A reassessment.” *Applied Linguistics*, 2, 132-149.

by proficiency on state and standardized exams; and (4) ELL students are advancing from grade level to grade level, evidencing mastery of core subjects on par with native speaking students.

All ELL students learn with all other students in the classroom for instructional time. ELL students have tutoring time in small like-skilled groups, HW tutors, and adequate HW time. ELL students who require supplemental instruction in English to build core English language skills receive sheltered instruction and tutoring as appropriate. If students are not making sufficient academic progress, we modify our ELL program as needed. At no point will an ELL student be excluded from any curricular or extra-curricular activities due to their level of facility with the English Language; all students have equal access to all aspects of Veritas Prep.

We work to ensure that the student population at Veritas Prep, at a minimum, reflects the student population in local schools with regards to ELL students. We recognize that special outreach efforts are needed to reach families of these populations. We translate all letters, flyers, advertisements, and notices into Spanish and any other language spoken by several local families. To make sure that we are reaching this population, we reach out to local leaders with frequent and direct access to ELL families. In all outreach, documents, and presentations, we emphasize that the school is a free, public, open-enrollment school open to ELL students.

Evaluation of ELL Program. We collect data on student performance to monitor the efficacy and success of our ELL program. We look to assessments of our ELL students, including improvements in performance on the MEPA and MELA-O, MCAS, nationally-normed exams and internal assessments to determine whether our program is effective in: 1) improving ELL students' English proficiency levels and 2) ensuring that they are meeting or exceeding content and skill standards across the curriculum. We disaggregate assessment results by ELL and non-ELL students and use data to continuously improve our instructional strategies and PD sessions.

Nutrition and Wellness. Students are provided with healthy food choices and opportunities for physical activity throughout the school day. According to the 2009 MA Youth Health Survey, 67% of MA middle school students did not meet the required levels of weekly physical activity and 86% ate fewer than five (5) servings of fruits and vegetables per day. With obesity and related health issues on the rise, it is important to embed nutrition and physical activity into our school culture and expectations. We provide physical education as part of our core program, and have a Wellness Policy that sets goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and provision of nutritious foods. A healthy breakfast and lunch are served at school and we work with local produce vendors, including AP Produce in the South End, to serve fresh produce to students daily. With many families receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, we provide suggestions for healthy options using benefit cards at local markets.

III. How will the school demonstrate organizational viability?

- A. **Capacity.** Each founding group member shares core beliefs about education. First, the group believes that there is a serious need for a fifth through eighth grade alternative in Springfield. Second, all members believe in the educational philosophy of the school – setting high expectations with the structures and supports for every student to meet them, and building the foundational knowledge and skills for students to engage in a rigorous college preparatory curriculum. Third, all members believe in teaching and developing the character values that each student needs to compete, achieve, and succeed in high school, college, and beyond. This shared vision has brought us together and is guiding our efforts. A Statement of Commitment and resumé for each founding group member is attached.

The founding group will establish standing monthly meetings in Springfield starting September 2010. We have used previous meetings to review progress on the application and will continue this focus through submission of the final application. We also intend to use future meetings to proceed with the broader school start-up process and to ensure that each individual is focused on high-impact activities

most central to start-up and governance of the school. During the 2011-2012 planning year, we anticipate a need to increase the frequency of our meetings to twice per month as the school prepares for opening. Each founding member brings extensive expertise to the effort, and areas of focus are assigned based on each individual's particular area of expertise. Ashley Martin who has education and charter school experience is involved in the development of curriculum. Victor Woolridge brings a wealth of board experience and deep ties to the local community; his expertise in real estate development will be an asset during the real estate selection and development process. Aaron Mendelson focuses on development work and building relationships with local business leaders and his business and management experience will inform our thinking about organizational structure. Chris Seeley possesses startup experience as well as financial expertise that he will contribute to our pre-operational planning. Carl Weistreich, with a business, management and law background, will advise on business and legal matters in our pre-operational year and as the school grows. Rachel Romano, who brings experience as teacher and administrator in Springfield and leading a charter school, is leading the charter application process and is the proposed Executive Director.

We have met with local leaders to gather input for our school plan and develop community support. Such support is clearly denoted by the enthusiastic reception that our school proposal has received from community leaders and community-based organizations. Supporters include:

- George Arwady , Publisher and CEO, The Republican Newspaper
- Ann Awad, Executive Director, Caring Health Centers
- Peter Blaine, Director of Educational Partnerships, Baystate Health Systems
- Vin Cardillo, CEO, Wellphoria.com
- Tom Creed, Senior Vice President, Berkshire Bank in the South End
- John Davis, Trustee, The Davis Foundation
- George DiTomassi, former CEO, Milton Bradley
- Nick Fyntrilakis, Vice President of Community Affairs, MassMutual
- Sylvia Galvan, Director of ESL, Springfield Public Schools
- Sam Intrator, Professor, Urban Education at Smith College
- Joan Kagan, Executive Director, Square One Early Education Center in the South End
- Marty McDonough, Vice President of Public Relations, Massmutual
- James Morton, Executive Director, The YMCA of Greater Springfield
- Edward Nunez, Business Development Officer, Freedom Credit Union
- Melinda Phelps, Attorney, Bulkley, Richardson and Gelinas, LLC
- Michael Sweet, Attorney, Doherty, Wallace, Pillsbury and Murphy P.C.
- Henry Thomas, President, The Urban League in Springfield
- Mary Walachy, Executive Director, The Davis Foundation

Each of these individuals, on behalf of their organizations, has indicated that they stand ready to assist us in key areas including securing a site, recruiting students, identifying teachers and tutors, and attracting resources to the school. We will continue to cultivate relationships with other local community-based organizations, with the understanding that our students' academic success must be accompanied by non-academic support as well. The founding board will continue to solicit community involvement and support and prospect for people who will add capacity to our founding team or provide consultation in all aspects of pre-operational planning.

B. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE. The Board of Trustees holds the charter and is legally, morally and ethically responsible for the school. Comprehensively, the board is responsible for all governance issues. Specifically, they oversee: (a) Mission, policy and strategic planning - Articulate and ensure alignment with the school's mission, vision and charter, create and update policy related to the mission and governance, set the strategic direction and review progress against articulated goals over time; (b) Financial oversight - Ensure the school's financial health, review and approve the annual budget and ensure adherence to it, participate in fundraising and

help secure external funding sources as needed; (c) Legal and regulatory compliance - Ensure compliance with all laws and regulations and review compliance on a regular basis, ensure filing of all legal and regulatory documents; (d) Executive Director (ED) oversight - Select, manage, support, and evaluate the ED who will be responsible for the school's day-to-day management, evaluate ED regularly based on agreed-upon, clearly outlined performance criteria, set ED compensation annually, offer guidance and support; and (e) Promotion and accountability to the public - Promote the school to the public, expand the school's networks and relationships, respond to community and stakeholder concerns, participate actively in the Springfield with focus on the South End neighborhood. To ensure oversight of each of these specific areas, the Board elects a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, and establishes standing committees including, but not limited to, Achievement, Finance, Development, and Governance. The Board is responsible for governance issues; school leadership is responsible for daily management of the school.

The Board of Trustees uses the following criteria to identify potential board candidates:

- Expertise aligned with needs: strategic planning, senior management, accounting/finance, fundraising, law, marketing/PR, governance, facilities/RE, education, community.
- Belief in charter schools and in Veritas Prep's philosophy and approach.
- Passion for and commitment to youth and education in Springfield.
- Availability and time to participate fully in the board role.
- Familiarity with or interest in the community with particular focus on the South End.
- Access to personal networks capable of assisting Veritas Prep's development.
- Ability to work well in groups and to put group goals before personal agenda.
- Addition of diversity to board as defined by age, race, socioeconomic background, gender.

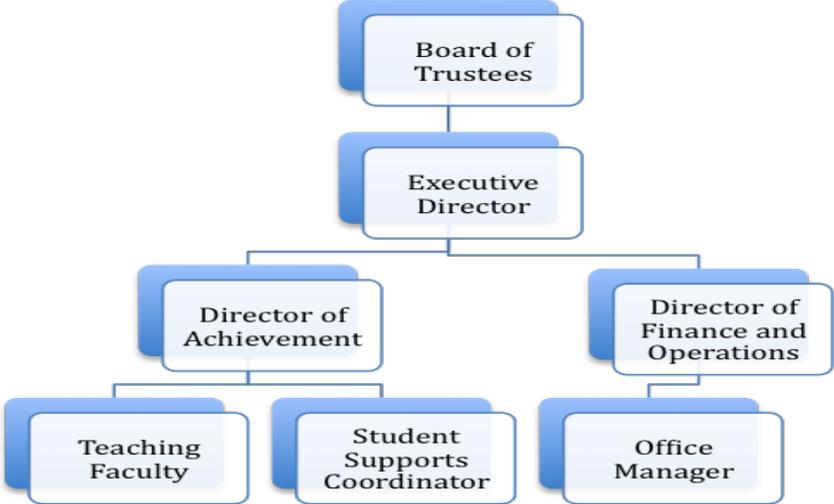
Once a candidate is identified, a current member makes contact with to set up a first interview. If the first interview goes well, they are invited back for a second and to sit in on a Board meeting. The candidate is provided with relevant documents to review prior to recommendation for membership to the Board for a vote. Once approved, new members receive a welcome packet and complete required documents, i.e. Conflict of Interest and Financial Disclosure Forms.

Below are brief narratives of job descriptions required during the first five years of the charter, followed by an organizational chart that outlines the reporting structure of the organization.

- **Executive Director (Y1).** ED oversees school performance and management and ensures viability. The ED leads external issues - working with Board, reporting to/interfacing with authorizer, fundraising, public relations, overseeing finance/operations. The ED manages the admin team. The ED is hired by, reports to, and is evaluated by the Board.
- **Director of Achievement (Y1).** DA supports teaching and learning - developing curriculum, managing assessment and data, observing teachers, and planning and implementing PD. The DA is responsible for direct oversight of the Student Supports Coordinator and the instructional teachers. The DA reports to and is evaluated by the ED.
- **Director of Finance and Operations (Y1).** DFO directs daily operations and provides financial/programmatic oversight. S/he ensures financial records are accurate and up-to-date and programmatic guidelines for reporting and implementation are followed. The DFO reports to and is evaluated by the ED.
- **Student Supports Coordinator (Y1).** SSC maintains special needs records, oversees the IEP process, and ensures that special needs students receive accommodations and/or modifications within the classroom, and will be MA certified in special education. The SSC is hired by the ED, reports to the DA and is evaluated by the ED.
- **Office Manager (Y1).** OM oversees office operations. S/he develops office procedures/policies, files and maintains records, and trains staff members in procedures, systems, and equipment. The OM is hired by, reports to, and is evaluated by the ED.

- **Teachers (Y1).** Teachers develop and implement curriculum and support all students in reaching clear academic goals. All teachers are Highly Qualified as defined by No Child Left Behind. Teachers are hired by the ED with the input of the DA, report to the DA, and are evaluated by the ED, with the input of the DA.
- **Dean of Culture and Community (Y2).** DCC oversees non-academic, behavioral concerns. S/he ensures consistent and timely communication with families. The DCC manages student discipline, coordinates parent orientation and events outside of the regular academic program. The DCC reports to and is evaluated by the ED.
- **Director of Development (Y3).** DD maintains and expands funding from private foundations and develop new sources of income from individuals, events, and governmental grants. The DD is hired by, reports to, and is evaluated by the ED.
- **Tutoring and Enrichment Coordinator(Y3).** TEC coordinates tutoring schedules, internal/external enrichment activities, and brokering of new partnerships. The TEC is hired by, reports to, and is evaluated by the ED.
- **Alumni Advisor (Y4).** AA supports students in high school course selection, continues to support students and families through the college application process, and tracks data alumni progress and data. The AA reports to and is evaluated by the ED.

Organizational Chart: Operational Year One



IV. REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Founding Group Board Members Statements of Commitment

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Name: Ashley Martin

Proposed Position: Founding Board Member

For the past eight years, I have welcomed students into middle school who read, on average, at the third and fourth grade levels. Unless it is closed, this two year gap, which can be even greater with some students, means that these students do not score proficient on the MCAS, are more likely drop out of high school altogether, and probably not go to college. The inability to read and write impacts every other academic pursuit, from understanding a science textbook to deciphering word problems in math class. Closing this literacy gap and preparing students to succeed in high school and college has been the cause of my professional career. If Veritas Prep produces students who can read at or above grade level, it cannot fail. As a founding board member, I am committed to ensuring the schools' success and focus on literacy.

I began my career in education 15 years ago teaching college students how to write analytical essays. I quickly found that my more abiding passion was preparing children of middle school and high school age to become those college students. In my first five years of public school teaching, I worked in the Fairfax County Public Schools, a suburban school system in northern Virginia where many students aimed for As and admission into Ivy League colleges. There I earned my National Board certification in Young Adult and Adolescent English Language Arts.

Eight years ago, I began working as a teacher, department head, and literacy coordinator at The SEED Public Charter School in Washington, DC, the only public boarding school in the United States. It was there that I encountered incoming middle school students who struggled to read and write. I partnered with the principals there to design a comprehensive, school-wide literacy program. For students unaccustomed to having books around their homes, we started book groups. For students needing phonics support, we created an academic intervention time each day. For children who had never known anyone to go to college, we taught them about college and what it takes to get there. At SEED, our students, almost without exception, went to college. Some from the most desperate backgrounds went to the most competitive colleges in the country.

Three years ago, I came to work for Duggan Middle School in Springfield. Duggan was a Commonwealth pilot school, given unprecedented autonomy to turn around academic performance nearly at the bottom of the state. In my first year, I was made Department Head and then Instructional Guide. By my second year, I was part of Duggan's leadership team, and I obtained my administrative certificate. In my third year, I was an Assistant Principal, and we emerged from pilot school status with a radically improved school culture and improved reading and math scores. I learned some important lessons about what it takes to create a high-performing school. Everyone, from the top administrator to the most inexperienced paraprofessional to every board member, must be results-oriented, mission-driven, and prepared to embark on a path of continuous improvement. At Veritas Prep we set high standards for our success because colleges and workplaces do. Our students' results and our effectiveness as educators should be judged by those high standards.

As part of the founding board selection process, I have maintained full transparency in disclosing to Lead Founder Rachel Romano of my upcoming professional work with the Achievement Network (to begin mid-August of this year, 2010). I will provide, and expect to be held accountable for providing, all appropriate disclosure of conflict of interest forms to the full board and to all public offices as required. I further indicated that as the charter school may consider an external provider of standards-based assessments for the school that I will fully exempt myself from such board discussion and deliberation, and from the vote on any selection of vendor. As a member of a board of a public charter school and in

safeguard of the public trust, I believe that full disclosure of any appearance of conflict of interest, or any perceived conflict of interest, is a necessary and critical part of such important public service.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Name: L. Aaron Mendelson

Proposed Position: Founding Board Member

I have lived and worked in the Springfield community for the past 43 years and have served on community organization boards and committees for at least 20 of those years. Along with my wife, I started a successful retail business that we operated for 17 years in the Springfield area and two other cities in the Northeast. At our prime, we employed 45 people. Prior to starting and running my own business, I was President and CEO of a retail division of a New York Stock Exchange listed corporation with stores in five states. My wife has been a teacher (recently retired) and now does volunteer work for the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families as a community foster care reviewer.

My father passed away when I was four, my younger brother was three, and my mother was pregnant with my youngest brother. She was an urban elementary school teacher who believed that an excellent education was the key to developing an individual's full potential and becoming a contributing member of our community. Thanks to my mother, her values, and access to strong educational options, my siblings and I are all college graduates.

I have come to see that too many families in Springfield do not have access to strong public education. With such education, they are the human capital that will provide significant leadership to this country and carry us into the future. I also believe that our public urban schools have not yet been successful at educating our youth. Look at the achievement gaps, the dropout rates, and the fact that very few are going on to college. Because of these concerns, as a citizen, community leader, and business leader, I am determined to be part of the solution. I am committed to working on the founding board of Veritas Prep. This will be a charter school with high expectations, a structured learning environment, in which students will be equipped with the academic skills and personal character to obtain the college and career of their choice. My knowledge of business, entrepreneurship and dogged determination to succeed will allow me to contribute to the success of this project and to serve as a member of the school's governing board.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Name: Rachel Romano

Proposed Position: Executive Director

I am committed to bringing a gap-closing, no excuses charter school to the families of Springfield, one that raises the bar on student achievement for some of our city's most underperforming and underserved students. I bring the leadership, entrepreneurial spirit, and deep training in the highest performing urban charter schools needed to found and lead a powerful and life-changing charter school. I have had the experience of leading a charter school as a Principal and Executive Director, with great success, but I know that more is possible.

It was almost ten years ago that I began teaching in Springfield and was fortunate enough to work in what was, at the time, one of the city's most chronically underperforming schools. From school culture to academic achievement, there was a lot to fix at Duggan Middle School and my experience in the classroom informed my thinking about much needed improvements to practices and expectations school wide. From my perch in Room 202, I could see that students would rise to the expectations set for them and, with consistent structure and support, meet them. I became involved with school improvement planning and presenting professional development to support teachers in planning standards-based lessons to increase student achievement. Due to the lack of full autonomy with which district schools struggle, change was slow, with many barriers - until the school was identified as a Commonwealth pilot school and granted some autonomy to make big changes, involving staffing, curriculum, and scheduling.

As part of the Design Team for Duggan's turn-around plan, I researched schools serving student populations similar to those in Springfield but producing much better results. What I found was that there were not only schools producing better results, there were schools raising the bar on urban education, closing gaps in learning, and pushing students to surpass their grade level peers in affluent suburban school districts. With few exceptions, they were all charter schools. Still hopeful about the promise of autonomy, I persisted with enthusiasm to replicate some of these practices at our school, where I knew students were capable of learning and achieving at high levels. Within that school year and without choice - and in large part due to my zeal for change, I was moved from my position at Duggan and placed in another district school by the district's senior leadership. Frustrated by a decision out of my control, taking me away from the important school turn around work to which I was deeply committed, I felt compelled to seek more autonomy as provided within a charter school. I was appointed Principal of Christa McAuliffe Regional Charter School in Framingham. While the charter school allowed autonomy with increased accountability around performance measures and outcomes, I realized that my commitment was to lead a charter school in Springfield.

The need for a school where all children are expected to achieve and provided with the structures and supports to meet those expectations is critical in Springfield. Veritas Prep responds to that need with its mission to prepare students to compete, achieve, and succeed in high school, college and beyond. I am fully committed to founding and leading Veritas Prep, realize this mission for every student, and do whatever it takes to make this happen. The work of being a school leader is long, hard, and good. I fully understand all that goes into founding and leading a charter school and embrace this work with enthusiasm and a sense of urgency. I am building an army of support around me to ensure that my energy and enthusiasm are sustainable as I lead Veritas Prep to realize its mission - raising the bar on student achievement in the city of Springfield and bringing an option that parents and children deserve and our city desperately needs.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Name: Christopher J. Seeley

Proposed Position: Founding Board Member

As an individual born and raised in the Springfield area, an entrepreneur whose business is based in Springfield, and current homeowner and resident of West Springfield, I have a tremendous interest in the success of our students and the next generation in general. The key to that success, I would argue, is a quality education. Springfield, Massachusetts, a community with a storied past, is in dire need of the kind of college preparatory opportunities which will be afforded by Veritas Preparatory Charter School.

The mission of Veritas Prep aligns deeply with my beliefs about education and what it takes to prepare today's youth to successfully compete in college and the work place. I was fortunate enough to attend Kimball Union Academy (College Preparatory School) in Meriden, NH prior to attending The George Washington University in Washington DC (Bachelor, Philosophy, 2001). Additionally, I was fortunate enough to be raised in a family where education was considered paramount in importance. My father is an attorney and my mother, a former high school English teacher, served on the School Committee in East Longmeadow for 15 years. The education I received and the support my family gave to me in seeking that education have made an immeasurable difference in my life. I wouldn't be where I am today if I had not had the opportunities that I had.

I've committed my personal and professional time, energy, and resources to the Founding Board of Veritas Prep because I would like nothing more than to see the same opportunities extended to children living in Springfield. All children deserve a high quality education that prepares them with the skills they need to achieve at high levels. Our city is currently failing far too many students each year and not adequately preparing them with an education that will allow them to compete in college. There is no better way to give back to the community that has given so much to my family and myself; I am fully committed to the mission and vision of Veritas Prep and will work diligently as a member of the Founding Board to realize this mission.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Name: Carl Wistreich

Proposed Position: Founding Board Member

I am committed to trying to remedy the dire situation of student underachievement in Springfield Public Schools. I believe Veritas Prep can play a role in providing an example of what can be done to reverse the negative trend in Springfield and also provide an opportunity to numerous children who are not today being provided the opportunities they deserve.

My commitment to education comes from my parents, both of who were immigrants to the United States. My father who survived the Holocaust and spent time in a labor camp in Siberia during World War II always told me, “What knowledge you have in your head will always help you any situation you confront.” He was a true testament to this belief as he came to this country with no money, but prior to the War and the age of 17 he had been provided a classical education and came from a family that stressed education. By the time he reached the United States at age 25 the knowledge he did have in his head allowed him the opportunity to attend a top college (which he worked his way through) and later go on to a career in which he could provide a comfortable middle class life to our family. He was always amazed at the opportunities that many were afforded in this country.

My belief that the tools of a solid education lead to success also comes from being exposed to a very diverse population in the town I grew up—New Rochelle, New York. The town was split between just about every socio-economic segment and many schoolmates who came from similar backgrounds to that of the children of the South End of Springfield are now successful college graduates due largely, I believe, to the fact that their schools were better than average.

Personally, I luckily was afforded the opportunity to attend good public schools where I grew up and later a solid private university and law school education. Throughout my career I have been associated with very successful institutions/individuals from a prominent United States Senator, one of the top law firms in the world (Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom), the largest food wholesaler in the country which grew on average \$2 billion per year during the time I was associated with them (C&S Wholesale Grocers, Inc.), and now my own business which has weathered the recent hard times relatively well (L&B Truck Services Inc.). I believe, like these institutions, Veritas Prep will be successful and I would like to play a role in this success. With my background in public service, business and law, I do realize that starting an institution from “scratch” is a very challenging and time consuming endeavor and would not take on this responsibility without a very firm commitment to its success.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Name: Victor Woolridge

Proposed Position: Founding Board Member

I am truly excited about the opportunity to participate in the founding of Veritas Preparatory Charter School. As someone who grew up in the City of Springfield, attended its public schools, sent my children to the Springfield public schools, and spent my professional life working and living in this city, I'm now confronted with the education decisions of my grandchildren. I have witnessed first hand the excellence and underperformance of our schools. Although the capabilities of the students are limitless, they have recently fallen victim to low expectations and demands. We have a system of education that has not been designed for success, or in the best interest of the students. I'm hoping to be a part of a new start and new vision of education for this city's youth from the ground up. I hope to bring to Veritas Prep's Board of Trustees, not only my long standing commitment to this community, but also my strong professional background in the areas of real estate finance, management and a commitment to excellence.

I have understood from a very young age the value of education, and as I progressed from high school to college and eventually to the business world, I have come to understand and appreciate more and more each day that education is the single most important differentiating force between those who achieve success by contributing to society and those who do not. Since graduating from the University of Massachusetts, I have been involved in numerous initiatives, and served on several boards that have a strong connection to the development and advancement of young people. Although I assumed my first volunteer leadership role of a non-profit agency shortly after graduating from college, it wasn't until recent experiences that I've really noticed the degrading effect of the absence of passion and commitment of professionals in the classroom. Generations of undereducated children who've become parents of underperforming students taught by teachers exhausted by a school system structure that didn't hold either the student or teacher accountable for their performance, have slowly eroded the confidence of an entire community. With today's intense global competition, powered by a digital age that thrives on the speed of thought and comprehension, is poised to statistically determine a person's future before they even get started. We want to prove the statisticians wrong by reversing the trajectory of young vital lives in our community and to restore what existed when I went to school here through the establishment of the Veritas Preparatory Charter School.

For almost 30 years I have worked in the commercial real estate industry providing the country's largest real estate developers, institutions and investors with investment products that include bridge loans, short- and medium-term acquisition financing, mezzanine debt, and other structure debt products. I have served on several community boards including Baystate Health, the largest hospital in western Massachusetts, and the Dunbar Community Center, a 95-year old social service agency, I've chaired the Springfield Chamber of Commerce, and I'm a Trustee of the University of Massachusetts. In addition to these boards I'm also an advisor to the Springfield Promise Program which bridges urban students from high school to college and I have mentored community college students, actively participating in the Business Leaders for Education among other things. I'm also involved with the Springfield Museum Association. As rewarding as these volunteer activities are, I'd still like to see the excitement in the eyes of some young people who are excited about reading or math.

I am hopeful that the combination of my professional work experience and dedication to the cause of education will be the right combination of tools this charter school will need to become a success and I look forward to the challenge of making Veritas Preparatory Charter School into the premier charter school in the City of Springfield.

Attachment B: Founding Board Members Resumés

Ashley Martin
54 Westmoreland Ave., Longmeadow, MA 01106
202 669 7346 aemartin36@yahoo.com

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Three years in pilot turn-around school as teacher, instructional guide & assistant principal
National Board Certified Teacher in Adolescent/Young Adult English Language Arts
Twelve+ years ELA teaching experiences in middle school, high school, and college
Five years in Washington, DC public charter school as teacher & literacy coordinator
National Writing Project Teacher-Consultant

SUPPORTING & DEVELOPING TEACHERS

- Coached department chairs in designing data-driven department meetings using variety of data points including interim assessment data, MCAS data & tests, student work, teacher videos, lesson plans, and professional articles
- Co-led the redesign of the teacher evaluation system based on multiple unannounced mini-observations with face-to-face feedback and end-of-year conferences using Kim Marshall's rubrics.
- Planned and co-facilitated week-long backwards planning summer institutes for faculty
- Facilitated collaborative scoring sessions of student writing among teachers to develop a common understanding of quality
- Led teacher teams in lab lesson cycles to deconstruct the qualities of effective teaching and learning
- Conducted a year-long series of monthly writing workshops for faculty focused primarily around writing to learn strategies and on-demand essay writing strategies for high stakes tests
- Modeled literacy lessons in secondary content-area and ELA classes

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

- Partnered with external coaches to design unit curriculum planning & review process to ensure rigor and quality
- Partnered with school leaders to initiate the design, implementation, and revision of an interim assessment program to drive instructional planning to better address students' needs
- Developed independent reading program resulting in increased volume of student reading
- Created focused intervention program addressing various reading needs from decoding to additional support with nonfiction comprehension
- Facilitated the creation and implementation of a standards-based middle school language arts curriculum
- Created and implemented school-wide reading assessment plans to diagnose incoming students' use of assessment tools including the Scholastic Reading Inventory, the QRI, and the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System
- Supported the development and revision of school's standards-based reporting system
- Used a backwards planning process to design yearly maps and units with their accompanying assessments for AP, high school, and middle school English courses
- Engaged students in self-assessing and setting goals for themselves as readers and writers by using tools such as portfolios, rubrics, tracking sheets, and standards-based grading reports
- Led teacher team in evaluating and revising portfolio system

- Led teacher and administrative team in redesigning special education programming and assessment plans

COMMUNITY & FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

- Designed and facilitated a parent/student/staff book club to provide students with role models for reading, to promote reading for pleasure, and to increase volume of reading
- Partnered with a local library, Borders’ Bookstore, local parent advocacy group, and fellow faculty members to host a literacy night kicking off a school-wide summer reading project
- Partnered with two other area schools to have joint reading/writing workshops with our AP students so that my students could be inspired to form a stronger academic self-concept
- Teamed with Folger Shakespeare Library’s staff developers to co-plan and co-teach Shakespeare across the middle school and high school grade levels so that students would have an opportunity to both build important cultural knowledge and improve their ability to analyze and interpret hard texts across time
- Wrote and was awarded grants to support cross-curricular, literacy-based projects designed with colleagues in order to help students get more deeply engaged with real-life applications of reading, writing, speaking, and listening standards
- Partnered with Folger’s Poetry in the Schools Program to have poet-teacher model lessons in my classroom
- Planned a district-wide celebration for all 11th grade student participants in NCTE’s Annual Writing Contest
- Partnered with external coaches and key teacher leaders to redesign end-of-year Celebration of Learning event showcasing high-quality student work

EMPLOYMENT

STARTING 8/10	THE ACHIEVEMENT NETWORK Managing Director for Western MA	BOSTON, MA
8/10 -2007	DUGGAN MIDDLE SCHOOL Instructional Guide/Assistant Principal ELA Teacher/Department Chair	SPRINGFIELD, MA
2007-2002	THE SEED PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL Literacy Coordinator AP English Language & Composition Teacher English 7 & 8Teacher	WASHINGTON, DC
2002-1997	FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, VA Lake Braddock Secondary School English 9 & 11 Teacher Pimmit Hills Alternative School English 11 Teacher Walt Whitman Middle School English 7 Teacher	Burke, VA Falls Church, VA Alexandria, VA
2001-1994	ADJUNCT ENGLISH INSTRUCTOR Northern Virginia Community College Forsyth Tech Community College	Alexandria, VA Winston-Salem, NC

CERTIFICATION

CT Administrative & Teaching Licenses (Applied for May 2010)
Principal/Asst Principal for Grades 5-8, MA Initial License (2009-present)
English 5-8, English 8-12, MA Initial License (2007-present)
Adolescence & Young Adulthood/ELA, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2003-2010)
State of Virginia Postgraduate Teaching License in Secondary English (2002-2007)

EDUCATION AND HONORS

Finalist for the Waddill Excellence in Teaching Award, Wake Forest University, 2001
MA in Secondary English Education, Fellowship with Full Tuition & Stipend, Wake Forest University, 1997
MA in English, Teaching Assistantship and Full Tuition Award, The University of Alabama, 1996
BA in English, Phi Beta Kappa, Cum Laude, Birmingham-Southern College, 1993

SIGNIFICANT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES

Best Practices in Interim Assessments, New Leaders for New Schools, 2006
Item Writing for NAEP's Writing Test and Ohio's Reading Test, American Institute for Research, 2004
Data-Driven Collaborative Inquiry, Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2003
Ranking, Liking, and Evaluating Writing, Institute for Writing and Thinking, Bard College, 2002
Northern Virginia Writing Project Summer Institute, Fellow, George Mason University, 2000
Understanding by Design, Fairfax County Public Schools, 2000-2001
Reading and Writing Summer Institute, University of New Hampshire, 1999

PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Walked the West Highland Way in Scotland, 95 miles in 7 days (Summer 2005)
Walked the Virginia Beach Marathon, approx 6 hrs 15 minutes (Spring 2005)
Walked the Maine Marathon, approx 6 hrs 20 minutes (Fall 2004)

L. AARON MENDELSON
86 White Oaks Drive
Longmeadow, MA 01106
(413) 567-8091

WORK EXPERIENCE

Northwestern Mutual Financial Network **Springfield, MA**
Financial Representative *1991 – Present*
Established an insurance and investment practice working with individuals and corporations.

Crocketts Ltd. **MA, CT, NY**
Founder/operator *1975 – 1991*
Founder and operator with my wife of three women’s specialty clothing and gift stores in MA, CT and NY State.

Shoppes for Pappagallo/August Max *1970 – 1974*
President
President of Shoppes for Pappagallo and then August Max. A national chain of 13 women’s apparel stores, a division of U.S. Shoe Corp.

Casual Corner *1963-1969*
Merchandising
Worked in store management and as an apparel buyer and in merchandise management. A division of U.S. Shoe Corp.

Retail Management Training Program *1959 – 1962*
Filenes, Boston, MA. Harrods, London, England.

EDUCATION

Mercersburg Academy *1955*
Brown University, B.A. Political Science *1959*

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Town of Longmeadow, Member of Zoning Board of Appeals *1972 -1978*
Children’s Study Home, Springfield, MA. Member Board of Director’s serving on Investment, development and executive search committees. *1976- 1982*
Community Savings Bank, Springfield, MA. Board of Directors. Loan Review Committee *1982 - 1988*
Baystate Medical Center, member, Audit Committee *1995 – 1999*
Springfield Business Leaders for Education. Member *2009 – present*

RACHEL ROMANO

44 Taylor Street, East Longmeadow, MA, 01028
p: (413)222-3434 e: romano@buildingexcellentschools.org

OBJECTIVE

My objective is to found and lead a college preparatory charter school in Springfield, Massachusetts. As a 2010 Building Excellent Schools Fellow, I will learn from some of the highest performing urban schools in the nation and replicate the most effective school practices in the design of a no excuses charter school.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

BUILDING EXCELLENT SCHOOLS FELLOW 2010 - 2011

- Study the highest performing charter schools locally and nationally
- Lead the charter application and board development process for Veritas Prep
- Complete a leadership residence at a high performing urban charter school

CHRISTA MCAULIFFE REGIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL, Framingham, MA 2008-2010

Principal/Executive Director

Brought on as Principal in July 2008, took on responsibilities of Executive Director starting in July 2009; Responsible for oversight and operations of school including; academic success, faithfulness to charter, and organizational viability.

Accomplishments related to Academic Success:

- Gathered and analyze data to create a plan for improvements to school structures and practices; Engaged and coordinated all stakeholders and school groups around school improvement including the Board of Trustees, teachers, parents, and students
- Designed and implemented Professional Development focused on increasing student achievement through data-driven instruction and differentiation instruction, built capacity in teachers to analyze student achievement data and use it to inform instruction
- Increase in student achievement on the 2009 and 2010 MCAS, making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA and mathematics for the aggregate and all sub-groups, with significant gains in our special education sub-groups, improving the school's accountability status from "Needs Improvement" to "Level 1: Meets Requirements"

Accomplishments related to Organizational Viability:

- Created a strategic plan to guide the Board of trustees oversight of major goals, benchmarks of progress through 2013
- Re-negotiated lease for school facility to avoid budget cuts in FY10 to save the organization \$130,000
- Increased enrollment by 62% from 2009 to 2010, from 61 to 98 students entering the incoming 6th grade class; increasing revenue by approximately \$400,000 and allowing the school to add staffing and materials to further improve the academic program.

THE SPRINGFIELD RENAISSANCE SCHOOL, Springfield, MA 2007 – 2008

Assistant Principal

- Responsible for discipline of students in grades 6, 7, 9, and 10, implementing the Springfield Public Schools Code of Conduct
- Supervised and evaluated teachers, providing support in planning of content-based instruction based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks
- Held teachers, students, and self to high standards of performance and behavior
- Partner with parents to support the behavioral and academic needs of students

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

DUGGAN MIDDLE SCHOOL, Springfield, MA

2005 - 2007

Collaborative Professional Development Teacher

- Provided embedded professional development to teachers based on specific needs identified through classroom observations and student performance data
- Modeled instructional strategies during the facilitation of whole staff professional development to support school improvement goals
- Coordinated and facilitated model lessons and follow up discussions for groups of teachers to stimulate the necessary dialogue to improve instruction
- Worked closely with principal in all aspects of school improvement including: student recruitment, teacher recruitment, and professional development planning
- Implementation and oversight of a federal magnet grant to support expeditionary learning
- Member of the Design Team charged with creating a turn-around plan for the transformation of a traditional urban middle school into a commonwealth pilot school in collaboration with staff, families, community partners, and students

DUGGAN MIDDLE SCHOOL, Springfield, MA

2002-2006

ENGLISH TEACHER

- Planned and implemented standards based instruction consistent with the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework to sixth grade students
- Implemented effective classroom management practices for classes and promoted effort as a critical component to achievement
- Held all students to high expectations for academic achievement and behavior
- Provided ongoing tutoring after school for students reading below grade level
- Facilitated weekly critical friends groups to look at student work
- Facilitated district professional development at various schools to demonstrate for teachers how to use the tuning protocol to look at student and teacher work Member of the school improvement planning committee

SOUTH HADLEY HIGH SCHOOL, South Hadley, MA

2001-2002

Special Needs Teacher

- Planned and implemented standards based instruction consistent with the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework
- Responsible for implementing instructional accommodations as indicated in students' Individual Educational Plans

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION

University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA.

M.Ed. in School Administration, 2009

Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

BS Broadcast Journalism, 1999

Project LEAD, a Wallace Foundation program

MA Assistant Principal/Principal License, 2008

MA Teaching License ELA 5-8, 2002

CHRISTOPHER J. SEELEY

1500 Main Street, Suite 1916, Springfield, MA 01115

Phone: (413) 739 – 0101 Fax (413) 541 – 0141
E-Mail: chris@seeleyinvestments.com

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Registered Representative (series 7, series 6, series 63) MA, CT, RI, PA, DC, MD, VA, FL)
- Structured Settlement Broker (MA, CT, RI, NY, PA, DC, VA, MD, WA)
- Life and Annuity Insurance Agent (MA, CT, RI, NY, PA, DC, VA, MD, WA)
- Accident and Health Insurance Agent (MA, CT)
- Active member of The National Structured Settlement Trade Association

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Founder and CEO 2004 - present
Seeley Capital Management Inc., Springfield, MA

- Established independent company in order to provide more flexible service to individual clients and bring innovative financial products to the marketplace
- Created a national system of high yield investments (In-Force Annuities TM) matching structured settlement recipients and lottery winners with private lenders
- Developed strategic partnerships with finance experts throughout the U.S. and Canada
- Manage financial portfolios for approximately 300 clients and tens of millions of dollars

Financial Advisor 2002 - 2004
Smith Barney, Springfield, MA

- Managed financial portfolios for high net worth individuals and institutions
- Handled several high profile structured settlement annuity cases involving tens of millions of dollars
- Expanded my personal book of business and financial expertise

Financial Advisor 2001 - 2002
USB, Boston, MA

- Earned my various financial licenses and professional designations
- Managed client assets and insurance needs
- Successfully completed an eight month financial advisor training program

EDUCATION

BA George Washington University (Philosophy) 2001

CARL G. WISTREICH
47 Normandy Road
Longmeadow, MA 01106
Phone (cell): (860) 930-3098

Email: Cgwistreich@aol.com

EXPERIENCE:

Owner/President, L&B Truck Services Inc.

May 2008-Present

Oversee all aspects of a full service Freightliner truck dealership with over \$10 million in annual revenue and 55 employees. Areas of responsibility include new and used truck sales, truck parts and accessory sales, repair and service work and body shop repairs. --General oversight of all HR, legal, business, customer relations,,sales, operations, real estate, banking, financial functions.

C&S Wholesale Grocers, Inc., Keene, New Hampshire

1999 - 2008

C&S is the largest wholesale grocery company in the United States, which has grown since 1999 from approximately \$5 billion to over \$19 billion in annual sales.

Senior Vice President Customer Development and Engagement

January 2007 –Present

- Responsible for new business development for chain and independent customers and integration of new business.
- P&L and oversight responsibility for C&S's Southeast and West Coast Divisions, which divisions account for over \$3.25 billion in sales and employ over 2500 employees.
- Oversee customer service and relations for chain and independent accounts.

Senior Vice President

February 2006 – January 2007

- Chosen by Owner and CEO to oversee and implement special projects and operational improvement initiatives. Report directly to Owner and CEO.
- Lead cross-functional team in all aspects of the planning, start-up and operation of a newly constructed one million square foot distribution center. Facility is now shipping over 800,000 cases of goods (\$13 million) weekly.
- Analyze and implement new systems and procedures necessary for start-up of the facility, including, recruiting and hiring, incentive and pay systems, information systems, training, supply chain, warehouse organization, product procurement, interdepartmental communication, customer relations and transportation.

Senior Vice President, Legal and Human Resources

July 2005 - February 2006

- Oversee Human Resources department of over 100 corporate and field personnel. Responsibilities included field and corporate recruiting and hiring, benefits design and administration, HRIS, safety, workers compensation, employee relations and dining services.
- Accomplishments included:
 - Redesign of Health and Dental Benefit plans resulting in annual savings of over \$5 million.
 - Design of on-line performance development system (reviews, 360° reviews and developmental plans) for all 1600 plus salaried employees.
 - Hire and mentor new Senior Vice President and General Counsel and Senior Vice President of Human Resources.

Senior Vice President, Legal and Business Affairs

June 2004 - July 2005

Senior Vice President and Deputy General Counsel

November 2002 - June 2004

Vice President and Deputy General Counsel

April 1999 - November 2002

- Responsible for day-to-day legal matters, including in the areas of Corporate, Mergers and Acquisitions, Real Estate, Litigation, Internal Investigations and Compliance, Finance, Labor and Employment, Intellectual Property, Bankruptcy, Government Affairs and Contracts and Supply Agreements.
- Negotiate and draft, or oversee the drafting of, the primary documents underlying C&S's critical business transactions. Types of transactions included acquisitions, sales, asset swaps, tax restructurings, transition arrangements, licensing agreements, sale/leasebacks, leases, real estate financings, bank financings, construction agreements, supply agreements and employment arrangements. A few examples are:
 - Acquisition of The Grand Union Company (185 retail grocery stores) and simultaneous and/or subsequent sale of 150 acquired stores to food and non-food retailers.

- Acquisition of Fleming Companies, Inc., the nation's largest grocery wholesaler at the time. Retained California and Hawaii division and sold the other divisions to wholesalers throughout the nation.
- Supply Agreements with A&P, Giant of Carlisle, Bruno's/BI-LO, Stop & Shop, Shaw's, Key Foods, Kroger, and BJ's. Agreements ranged from \$200 million to over \$2 billion in annual wholesale sales.
- Review and comment on financial analyses and pro-formas prepared by C&S finance department and/or outside financial advisors. Work with business units on the integration of new customers and acquired businesses.
- Oversee C&S outside legal counsel and formulate strategy on various litigation issues in the areas of labor and employment, vendor disputes, bankruptcy, corporate veil piercing, contract disputes, criminal, personal injury, intellectual property and tax.

General Counsel of C&S Affiliates and Subsidiaries.

- General Counsel of ES3 LLC, 2002-2006
 - ES3 is a logistics provider to consumer goods manufacturers built from the ground up and financed with over \$100 million in capital.
 - Negotiate logistics and outsourcing agreements with large consumer goods manufacturers, including ConAgra, Heinz, Campbell's, and Georgia Pacific.
- General Counsel and Director of GU Markets LLC, 2001-2006. Retail affiliate with 35 to 125 stores during tenure.

Other C&S Responsibilities/Accomplishments

- Participate in C&S Advisory Board of Directors Meetings and weekly Senior Management Operation and Strategy Meetings.
- Press Spokesman - 1999-Present. Draft press releases and interact with local and national media and government officials.
- Co-founder of recruiting program for high potential graduates and recent MBA graduates.
- Director, New York Food Industry Alliance June, 2006 - Present

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, New York, New York

Mergers and Acquisitions Associate

August 1996 - April 1999

Litigation Associate

October 1995 - August 1996

- Advise various corporate clients on all aspects of a wide variety of transaction, and negotiate the terms of, and draft documents underlying, mergers, asset purchases and sales, stock purchases and sales, tender offers, spin-offs, corporate refinancings, and reorganizations, equity and debt offerings, SEC disclosure, employee stock ownership plans, and intercompany arrangements.
- Conduct due diligence on corporations valued from \$50 million to \$40 billion.
- Attend board of directors meetings and assist in board of directors presentations.
- Actively participate in all aspects of major litigations involving mortgage-backed securities, contracts, real estate, cable television stations, and mergers and acquisitions.

Honorable Herbert J. Hutton, United States District Court

For the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Law Clerk,

August 1994 - September 1995

- Research and draft judicial opinions on civil and criminal matters, including contract, bankruptcy, securities law, SEC investigations, civil rights, products liability, insurance coverage, employment discrimination, and constitutional law.
- Brief and assist judge on trials, hearings and settlement conferences.

United States Senator Howard M. Metzenbaum, Washington, DC

Staff Assistant - United States Senate Subcommittee on Labor March 1991 - August 1991

Staff Assistant - Personal Staff

May 1990 - March 1991

- Research and analyze labor, health, employee benefit and aging issues.

- Draft memoranda and correspondence for Senator and Subcommittee staff.
- Conduct and participate in meetings on pending issues with Congressional staff, lobbyists, and constituents.

EDUCATION:

New York Law School, New York, New York

Juris Doctor, *magna cum laude*, 1994

Rank: 9/264

Honors: Articles Editor, New York Law School Law Review
 American Jurisprudence Award, Constitutional Law I and Corporations
 Director, New York Law School Alumni Association Board of Directors, 1996-1999

Colgate University, Hamilton, New York

Bachelor of Arts, 1989 Concentration in Political Science and History

- Men’s Varsity Tennis Team (Division I) 1985-1989, Captain – 1989

INTERESTS: Skiing, Competitive Sports, Politics and Travel.

VICTOR WOOLRIDGE

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Cornerstone Real Estate Advisers LLC

Jan 2010 – Present

Vice President, Special Servicing

- Member of the Real Estate Finance Group
- Responsible for special servicing activities related to managing troubled assets in Real Estate Finance Group's debt portfolio.
- Handled mezzanine debt financing, structuring and the acquisition of real estate portfolios
- Organized, structured and distributed commercial mortgage investments for external clients

Babson Capital Management LLC

2000 – 2010

Managing Director, High Yield Funds

- Responsible for Real Estate Finance and Development prior to the acquisition of the Cornerstone Real Estate Advisers LLC
- Manager of high yield, structured tranches of debt and equity participations in commercial real estate ventures.
- Investment Committee Member of a series of four successive investment funds which underwrote and managed billions of dollars in commercial real estate
- Senior Executive Director of MassMutual Mortgage Finance LLC a loan conduit originator and syndicator

MassMutual Financial Group

1982 – 2000

- Responsible for investment structuring and pricing of loan opportunities with regional offices
- Responsible for various aspects of real estate analysis

EDUCATION

BS, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, 1980

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND DESIGNATIONS

- Certified Commercial Investment Member (CCIM)
- Mortgage Bankers Association (MBA)
- Served on a Bankruptcy Working Group established to formulate and implement the industry's bankruptcy relief policy during the late 1980's and early 1990's.
- National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP)

COMMUNITY AND BOARD SERVICE

- Baystate Health, Board of Trustees (Finance, Vice Chair & Governance)
- University of Massachusetts, Board of Trustees (Admin & Finance, Vice Chair, Audit,

- Vice Chair, Committee on Academic and Student Affairs)
- Dunbar Community Center, Chairman of the Board of Trustees
 - Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Former Chairman of the Board of Trustees (Executive Committee)
 - Springfield Museum Association, Trustee
 - Life Initiative Investment Committee Member
 - Business Roundtable Member
 - Business Leaders for Education Member
 - Springfield Promise Advisory Committee (Education)
 - Former Chairman of Behavioral Health Network
 - Former Springfield Technical Community College Foundation Committee Member

Attachment C: Proven Provider Information Sheet

PROVEN PROVIDER INFORMATION SHEET

REQUIRED SUBMISSION WITH PROSPECTUS

This form is required for applicants applying as proven providers in districts that have performed on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) in the lowest 10 percent statewide for two consecutive previous years and where the 9 percent net school spending cap has been or is expected to be raised. Applicants, or a provider with which the applicant group proposes to contract, must meet the definition and qualifications of proven provider as outlined in 603 CMR 1.00.

Definition Designation

Please check the category of proven provider that best reflects the applicant group:

Category 1:

Two or more persons who had primary or significant responsibility serving, for at least five years, in a leadership role in a school or similar program that has a record of academic success and organizational viability.

Category 2:

A non-profit education management organization, in operation for at least five years, that has a record of academic success and organizational viability; or

A non-profit charter management organization, in operation for at least five years, that has a record of academic success and organizational viability.

Category 3:

The board of trustees of an existing charter school that has a record of academic success and organizational viability.

Category 4:

If the applicant proposes to contract with a proven provider with a record of academic success and organizational viability, check one of the following:

An education management organization;

A charter management organization; or

A school support organization.

Name of Person(s) or Organization: Building Excellent Schools, Inc.

Primary Contact Person: Linda Brown, Founder and Executive Director

Address: 262 Washington Street, 7th Floor

City: Boston **State:** MA **Zip:** 02108

Daytime Tel: (617) 227-4545 **Fax:** (617) 277-4551

Email: lbrown@buildingexcellentschools.org

Qualifications to Achieve Proven Provider Status

A proven provider applicant must submit evidence satisfactory to the Commissioner that demonstrates that the proven provider has significant management or leadership experience with a school or similar program that is an academic success, a viable organization, and relevant to the proposed charter. For applicants with a current or previous relationship to a Massachusetts charter school, the Commissioner may consider all information related to such school's performance, including evaluations in connection with each renewal of its charter.

The criteria listed below define the basis on which proven provider status will be assessed. All applicable criteria must be addressed in alignment with at least one category chosen above.

Category 1 ONLY:

A. Describe in detail, the individuals' roles and responsibilities at the successful school(s) or program(s). Please attach resumes and any additional documents that provide evidence to support the individual's roles and responsibilities at the successful school(s) or program(s). Include evidence to link the proposed proven provider's roles and responsibilities to the success of the school or program.

Categories 2, 3, and 4:

A. Provide evidence of the qualifications of the proposed proven provider, including the proposed proven provider's roles and responsibilities in the successful school(s) or program(s) or the school support organization's role in successful schools or programs. Include evidence to link the proposed proven provider's roles and responsibilities to the success of the school or program. Information may include resumes of individuals or documentation to support organizational success.

Building Excellent Schools, which traces its origins back to the inception of charter schools in Massachusetts, has worked for nearly 20 years to support the design, development, and operation of successful urban charter schools. Currently, Building Excellent Schools offers the Building Excellent Schools Fellowship, an intensive, year-long charter school development and leadership training program which engages educational entrepreneurs to build and lead highly structured, "no excuses" urban charter schools. The lead applicant of the proposed school is an accepted Fellow in the Building Excellent Schools Fellowship and will complete her Fellowship training between June 2010 and August 2011. Beyond the Fellowship training, Building Excellent Schools offers a robust set of Follow-On Support programs which delivers close consultation, further training, and support to address all of the key functional areas of an urban charter school.

To date, Building Excellent Schools Fellows have started 40+ charter schools in the United States, including two award-winning urban charter schools in Boston - Boston Preparatory and Excel Academy.

The Founder and Executive Director of Building Excellent Schools is Linda Brown. A leading charter school supporter, Linda Brown views charter schools as the engine that drives all schools to higher standards. She works along with education entrepreneurs as they break new ground in education reform. Ms. Brown founded the organization in 1993, and her work has been critical to the initial success of charter schools not only in Massachusetts but across the country. In addition to acting as the organization's lead fund developer, Ms. Brown also works one-on-one with Fellows on issues related to governance, fund development, and mission. Before joining Building Excellent Schools, Ms. Brown was Associate Head of School at an independent school in Massachusetts.

The Director of the Building Excellent Schools Fellowship is Susan Walsh. Sue Walsh designs and leads all Fellowship training at Building Excellent Schools. Ms. Walsh is an experienced urban charter school leader and has invested ten years in Massachusetts charter

schools as a teacher, master teacher, curriculum coordinator and principal. She is dedicated to the core beliefs of rigorous performance-based academic achievement and the urgency of getting schools as good as they must be for students. Ms. Walsh was a founding member of the Lowell Middlesex Academy team, an organization that shifted from a successful program for at-risk students to a highly regarded, award winning charter school based upon dramatic student performance gains; she played a key role in readying the school for its second charter renewal. Most recently, Ms. Walsh served as Principal of Boston Collegiate Charter School (formerly South Boston Harbor Academy) where she provided outstanding instructional leadership for the school's entire educational program.

To date, Building Excellent Schools Fellows have started 44 charter schools in the United States, including two schools in Boston, Boston Preparatory Charter School and Excel Academy Charter School, which have been in operation since 2004 and 2003 respectively.

Several BES schools have won public recognition for their academic performance:

- **Excel Academy Charter Public School (East Boston, MA)** was named a 2007 National Charter School of the Year by the Center for Education Reform.
- **Boston Preparatory Charter Public School (Boston, MA)** was identified in a 2008 national study by the United States Department of Education as one of the nation's top five charter schools in the nation in terms of student growth.
- **Boston Prep** was additionally recognized in 2008 by the national Effective Practice Incentive Community (EPIC) as leading the nation in charter school academic performance, joining the "Gold Band" of five highest achieving schools.
- **Democracy Prep Charter School (Harlem, NY)** was recognized in 2009 by Harvard University for outstanding achievement during the university's commencement ceremony in 2009.
- **Achievement Preparatory Academy (Washington, DC)** was recognized in 2009 as the highest value-added public school (district and charter), with students making more year-to-year gains than any other public school in the city.
- **Columbus Collegiate Academy (Columbus, OH)** was recognized in 2010 by the national Effective Practice Incentive Community (EPIC), as leading the nation in charter school academic performance.

In 2008-2009, BES schools broadly produced strong academic achievement results:

- 70% of students in BES schools scored proficient or advanced on state English Language Arts exams versus an average of 54% in their local school districts.
- 74% of students in BES schools scored proficient or advanced on state Math exams versus an average of 49% in their local school districts.

These broadly strong results include the exceptional results of some schools:

- **Excel Academy Charter Public School (East Boston, MA)** is the top performing middle school in the state of Massachusetts, as measured by the MCAS examinations in English Language Arts and Math.
- 97% of **Excel's** students gained admission to competitive, college-preparatory high schools in and around the city of Boston.
- **Democracy Prep Charter School (Harlem, NY)** ranks in the top 1% of middle schools in New York City.
- **West Denver Preparatory Charter School (Denver, CO)** is the 2nd ranked school in

the Denver School Performance Framework.

Yutaka Tamura, 2002 BES Fellow, Founder and inaugural Executive Director, worked closely with Building Excellent Schools and Sue Walsh to drive Excel Academy towards powerful success, and received intensive support and mentorship during a three-year period (2004-2007). That work culminated in the school being recognized as a National Charter School of the Year by the Center for Education Reform and one of the highest performing charter schools in Massachusetts. Scott McCue, 2002 BES Fellow, Founder and Head of School of Boston Preparatory Charter School (“Boston Prep”), shared the following public comments with the State Board of Education on May 25, 2010 regarding BES’s role in the creation and success of Boston Prep:

“Boston Prep would not exist without Building Excellent Schools. I personally came to this work as an accomplished public school history teacher, with mission driven, highly capable board—but without much of the technical wherewithal to make our vision a reality. BES provided essential training on budgeting, fundraising, governance, facilities—skill areas vital to our school's existence. As early as 2002, Linda Brown and BES served to connect my Board and me with the leading national experts in all areas of school performance.

Since our chartering, BES has continued to play a vital role in the school's success. Sue Walsh—the head of BES training—continues to exercise a vital role in my development as a school leader and that of our school staff. She is a regular participant in our professional development efforts. Just as valuable, the BES network of schools—stretching from New York to California—serves as a vital resource as we tackle instructional, operational, and governance concerns.”

All of the BES Schools cited above have been founded by BES Fellows, and the schools continue to access and receive Follow-On Support through our mentorship, on-site support, and/or Weekend Warrior School Leadership trainings.

All Categories:

A. Include comparison data that demonstrates the success of school(s) or program(s) in student academic performance, as compared to Massachusetts statewide averages in English language arts and mathematics in comparable grades over at least a three year period for cohorts of students. The data must include, but is not limited to:

- (1) proficiency levels on the MCAS or equivalent assessments for all students and for one or more targeted subgroups as defined in M.G.L. c.71, § 89(i)(3);
- (2) student performance on other standardized tests, if available;
- (3) attendance, retention, and attrition data; and
- (4) graduation and dropout data.

Three year comparative MCAS performance results for two Boston-based BES Schools, Boston Preparatory and Excel Academy, are provided below (represented in school wide average proficient/advanced %).

2006-2007

	<u>ELA</u>	<u>Mathematics</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
Boston Prep	73%	69%	95.6
Excel Academy	84%	74%	96.9
Boston Public Schools	42%	33%	91.7
State of Massachusetts	66%	53%	94.6

2007-2008

	<u>ELA</u>	<u>Mathematics</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
Boston Prep	71%	67%	94.7
Excel Academy	89%	79%	97.6
Boston Public Schools	42%	36%	91.9
State of Massachusetts	64%	55%	94.6

2008-2009

	<u>ELA</u>	<u>Mathematics</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
Boston Prep	73%	71%	96.4
Excel Academy	95%	85%	97.5
Boston Public Schools	45%	34%	91.2
State of Massachusetts	67%	55%	94.6

B. Provide evidence that the school(s) or program(s) for which the proposed proven provider was responsible serves a student population similar to the population to be served by the proposed charter, and that the program to be offered at the proposed charter school is similar to, or represents a reasonable modification of, the successful school or program. If grade span served by the school(s) or program(s) differs from the proposed charter school, please explain the applicant group's capacity to serve the proposed grade span.

The table below compares the enrollment of Boston Preparatory Charter School to Springfield Public Schools, the district from which the proposed charter school will draw the majority of its students and thus should have a representative sample:

	<u>Boston Prep</u>	<u>Springfield Public Schools</u>	<u>Variance</u>
% Black or Latino	93.4	79	14.4
% Free/Reduced Lunch	74	82.4	-8.4
LEP	1.5	13.1	-11.6
SPED	15.8	23.9	-8.1

C. Indicate the extent to which the proposed proven provider is responsible for the organizational viability of the school(s) or program(s).

Provide evidence of the organizational viability of the school(s) or program(s) for which the proven provider was responsible. This should include, but not be limited to, effective governance, organizational management, financial management, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Building Excellent Schools is not directly responsible for the organizational viability of the schools which are started by its Fellows, but it does invest heavily in ensuring that its Fellows and the boards of the schools they found are prepared to effectively lead and govern their schools as organizations. In the Fellowship, Fellows receive intensive training in charter school finance, operations, and governance, and Boards of Trustees/Directors receive an additional on-site training from Building Excellent Schools as they prepare to take on the full responsibilities of governors of the charter school.

The 2008-2009 organizational viability results from Boston Preparatory Charter School and Excel Academy are outlined below⁷¹:

	<u>Boston Prep</u>	<u>Excel Academy</u>
Unrestricted Cash	\$1,491,659	\$1,556,519
Ending Surplus	\$306,073	\$248,691

In addition, both schools have only received unqualified audit opinions during the course of their operation.

⁷¹ As reported in each school's 2008-2009 annual report submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Education.