CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION SUMMARY

This application summary will be used by the CSDE for a quick analysis and administrative processing of the applications received. This information provided must be an accurate representation of the application and must correspond to the information provided in the body of the application.

South Norwalk Collegiate Academy

Proposed Charter School Name

Norwalk

School Location (city/town)

Charter Applicant Representative:

Contact Person: ____ **Reverend Lindsay Curtis**
Organization: **Grace Baptist Church**_____
Street: **17 West Ave.**_____
City: **Norwalk** _____ State: **Conn.** _____ Zip: **06854** _____
Telephone: **203-856-1649**_____ Fax: _____ E-mail: **lecurtis.gbc@gmail.com** _

TYPE OF SCHOOL	
Local charter school	
State charter school	**X**

Indicate number of Persons **involved in each** category

FOUNDERS (Planning Team/ Board	
Parents	**1 /0**
Teaching staff/**Ed. Administrators**	**9 / 3**
Business community	**0/ 2**
Community organization	**4 /1**
Higher education institution	
Others	

**

FACILITY	YES	NO
Do you presently have access to a facility suitable for a school?	X	
When will you be able to take occupancy?	Jan. 2014	

PROJECTED STUDENT ENROLLMENT

	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	**Total**
Year 1															
Year 2															
Year 3															
Year 4															
Year 5															
Total									_						

Executive Summary: Please provide a one- to two-page descriptive summary that highlights the primary characteristics of the proposed charter school including pertinent information included in the application.

_____ _____
Signature (Charter Applicant) Date

South Norwalk Collegiate Academy
Charter School Application, April, 2013

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South Norwalk Collegiate Academy
Charter School Application
Executive Summary

The Achievement Gap in Norwalk

The "achievement gap" in the elementary and middle schools in Norwalk mirrors the devastating chasm in Connecticut between minority and low income children and their white and income counterparts. On average, 42% of Black students in grades 3-8 scored "at/or above goal" on the Connecticut Mastery Tests in 2011, as compared to 76% of white students—a gap of 34%. Similarly, the gap between low income students and other students in the district was 29% and for Hispanic students was 21%. Because this score represents a standard necessary for readiness to succeed in a college preparatory program in high school, as many as 50-60% of minority and low income students are unlikely to have access to the opportunity to participate fully in the 21st century economy and society through college and career success.

Many of the minority and low income children who are the victims of this achievement gap live in South Norwalk and are bused from that community to schools in other parts of the city. The South Norwalk Collegiate Academy will for the first time provide these children with a school focused exclusively on enabling them to achieve academically and develop personally and socially at a level that equals or exceeds that of other children in the public schools in Norwalk. The school is scheduled to open in 2012-13 with 40 students each in kindergarten and first grade. It will add an additional grade level in each of the next seven years, resulting in a total K-8 enrollment of 330 students.

The School Mission

The mission of the South Norwalk Collegiate Academy is to cultivate a community in which all members—students, staff, and parents—are committed to do their best. Students will engage in a rigorous program to develop their critical thinking skills, character, and social and cultural awareness so that they can be prepared for college and fully meet the challenges of the 21st century.

In pursuit of this mission, SNCA is designed to achieve three overriding goals for its students:

(1) to meet rigorous standards in independent and critical thinking and the foundational skills of reading, writing and mathematics;
(2) to develop the belief in their capacity of all children to meet these standards—given the right learning strategies and sufficient time—and the skills to be a responsible community member; and
(3) to develop the social and cultural awareness needed to participate fully in a global society.

We intend to pursue these ambitious goals with the same commitment found in the affluent, high achieving suburban schools in the state.

21st Century Educational Program

RIGOROUS AND COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULA:

The South Norwalk Collegiate Academy will offer its students curricula which will provide them with a sound foundation in the academic knowledge and skills prescribed by the Common Core and Connecticut State Standards. In addition to an intensive three hour block of instruction in English language literacy in the primary grades, students will receive daily instruction in mathematics, social studies, science, and world languages. Our curricula will also focus on the development of understanding of major concepts in the academic disciplines and of critical thinking skills and problem-solving.

SNCA will offer several unique and innovative curricula which are state-of-the-art:

- America's Choice Literacy Program—employs the Reader's Workshop and Writer's Workshop models to develop reading, writing, and thinking skills and to integrate them into the content areas

- Singapore Mathematics Program—adapted from the national curriculum in the country with the highest mathematics achievement levels in the world
- Rosetta Stone Language Learning Program—computer-based intensive immersion process which will provide elementary school children with the language learning program used by the U.S. military, State Department, and corporations
- Full Options Science System (FOSS)—science program which develops understanding of science concepts and processes through hands-on "investigations"
- Martial arts in physical education—to develop mental focus and self-discipline in young children

ENGAGING PEDAGOGY:

Teachers at SNCA will provide a dual focus of teaching the basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics and the skills needed to think critically and independently, beginning in kindergarten and throughout the elementary grades, as well as in middle school. This approach is in marked contrast to most urban schools, which operate on the assumption that minority and low income children must master the basic skills before they are permitted to engage in high order thinking. SNCA pedagogy will also include the best practices of both "data driven" instruction and constructivist teaching. To ensure that students are taught by professionals who have a deep command of the academic disciplines, SNCA will utilize teachers who are specialists in literacy/social studies or mathematics/science in grades 3-5.

ADAPTIVE ASSESSMENT:

The progress of SNCA students in reading, mathematics, and science will be assessed three times per year by Measuring Academic Progress, a computerized adaptive assessment system published by the Norwest Evaluation Association. As students progress through the test, the degree of difficulty of the test items is adapted to their level of achievement. This practice ensures that every question the student attempts to answer is at his/her "instructional level," thus providing a more detailed and precise determination of his/her instructional needs than on conventional tests.

MORE TIME ON TASK:

SNCA recognizes that many of our students will enter school without the English language development which is a prerequisite for success in a rigorous academic program. To enable them to accelerate their academic development and to provide them with a comprehensive program which includes world languages, the arts, and physical education, SNCA will operate a under a weekly schedule 38 hours in length—about eight hours longer than the other public schools in Norwalk—and a school calendar with a total of 194 student days—13 more days longer than the other public schools.

A POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE:

The SNCA classroom and school culture will emphasize building the belief in all students that their "effective effort"—working hard, with clear goals, and with successful strategies derived from feedback—will determine their success. In daily morning meetings, children will learn the concepts and tools of effective effort, as provided by the Efficacy Institute. They will also learn the social skills that will equip them to be responsible members of the school community.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL AWARENESS:

Through our curricula in literature, world languages, history, and the arts, SNCA students will become aware of the backgrounds and legacies of the groups represented in our student body, especially African-American and Latin American students. Affirmation of their own cultural backgrounds and respect for others is essential to the development of an inclusive school community.

PARENT AS PARTERS:

Parental belief in their children and support of their efforts in school are essential to realizing the mission of SNCA. The parent(s) of each entering student and his/her teacher will sign a school/family contract, which explains each party's responsibilities to the children. Parental responsibilities will include attending parent education workshops and parent/teacher conferences, as well as responding to frequent

communications from the school. The school's Family Center will provide or coordinate the delivery of health, counseling, and social services needed by families to support their children.

A Community Planned School

For the two past two years, a community planned team of 14 persons has been engaged in a "labor of love" in creating the school design for SNCA. Team members have included teachers, administrators, curriculum specialists, parents, and community leaders. The team's leader is Reverend Lindsay Curtis, a community leader, whose vision and passion to create a new school for children in South Norwalk, has been instrumental to the completion of this task. Working with a facilitator, Dr. John Strand, a retired school principal and superintendent, with extensive experience in helping planning teams create new charter schools and other small public schools, this team first created a school concept paper. Through community forums and meetings with potential supporters of the school, the team received feedback on their vision and important features of the proposed school. After visits to Amistad Academy, Jumoke Academy, and KIPP Academy in the Bronx and with technical assistance from Achievement First, Jumoke Academy, and ConnCAN, members of the team developed sections of this application which detailed the practices in the proposed South Norwalk Collegiate Academy.

Planning Team Members have included:

Reverend Lindsay Curtis, Chair of the Planning Team-- Senior Pastor, Grace Baptist Church and Chair, Norwalk Children's Foundation

Anthony Allison--Program Officer, Norwalk Children's Foundation

Dr. Linda Clark—teacher, administrator, and consultant on professional development in "struggling schools"

Kimberly Eaton—Director of Youth, First Congregational Church on the Green, Norwalk

Eric Fleischman—special education teacher and administrator, school psychologist

Verna Foy—literacy coach

Monisha Gibson—elementary and ESL teacher, Director of Programs and Curriculum of L.E.A.D. in New Haven

Helen Giles—elementary principal

Sherelle Harris—parent, Norwalk Early Childhood Center, Treasurer, Norwalk PTA Council

Roz McCarthy—Director of Center for Global Studies Magnet School, former Norwalk BOE member

Judy Meikle—former Director of Admissions, Connecticut Friends School, consultant on conflict resolution

Mary Peniston—former Executive Assistant to Superintendent of Norwalk PS for Planning and Development

Eileen Swerdlick—retired Assistant Superintendent and Principal, Stamford PS

Lynn Winslow—retired teacher, Associate Director, Connecticut Writing Project

Nedgine Paul—Achievement First School Support Team

Dr. John Strand--consultant on planning new small schools, retired Principal and Superintendent

I. SCHOOL VISION & DESIGN

I. Mission and Vision Statements

a. *Describe the basic mission* of *your charter school. Describe the core purpose and key values of the school, including the school model and students to be served. The mission should be consistent with high academic standards, be succinct and meaningful, and be reflected throughout all sections of the application.*
b. *The vision should align with the mission and provide an image of the school once it is operating. It should articulate what the school will achieve for the community it serves, students, parents, teachers, and beyond.*

South Norwalk Collegiate Academy Mission:

The mission of the South Norwalk Collegiate Academy is to cultivate a community in which all members—students, staff, and families—are committed to do their best. Students will engage in a rigorous program to develop their critical thinking skills, character, and social and cultural awareness so that they can be prepared for college and fully meet the challenges of the 21st century.

South Norwalk Collegiate Academy: A Community Dedicated to Academic Excellence, Character Development, and Social and Cultural Awareness

SNCA will be a school community distinguished by a common belief among all its members--students, staff, families, and administration-- in the capacity of all its children to meet rigorous academic standards, given the right learning strategies and sufficient time. The adults in the community will maintain a persistent focus on the progress of every student and on finding the right strategies to enable him/her to achieve success. Special attention will be given to incorporating data on student performance and feedback from all members of the community in adapting the practices in the school design to the strengths and needs of the students. Especially important will be the engagement of the parents or guardians of our students in learning how to support the development of their children through building their confidence and maintaining their effort.

Our ultimate academic mission will be to graduate students from the eighth grade who are fully prepared for success in a rigorous college preparatory program at the high school level. Beginning in kindergarten, the school will utilize proven best practices in curricula and instruction to build a strong foundation in the basic skills (reading, writing, and mathematics). We believe that the ability of children to think critically and express a point of view can and should be developed concurrently with achievement in basic skills. Our graduates will be treated as and will think of themselves as “scholars” who are “world citizens.”

The second component of the mission of SNCA is to foster positive character development through a community wide culture dedicated to building Efficacy beliefs in our students that their “effective effort”—working hard, with clear goals and successful strategies—will determine their success. This and other curricular concepts and teaching practices developed by Dr. Jeffery Howard at the Efficacy Institute are critical to motivating low income and minority students to achieve at the highest academic levels. Without this intervention, these children are likely to give up too easily when faced with challenging tasks, due to the doubts about their intellectual capacity which they have internalized from the prevailing stereotypes in society. Character development at SNCA will also focus on learning to become a responsible member of a classroom or school community through effective interpersonal communication, collaborative problem-solving, and peaceful conflict resolution.

The third component of the mission of SNCA is the development of social and cultural awareness. Through our curricula in world languages, literature, history, and the arts, students will become aware of the backgrounds and legacies of the major cultural groups represented in our student population, especially African-American and Latin American students. Affirmation of the value of their own cultural backgrounds and respect for others is essential to the development of an inclusive school community. The above curricula will also develop the concept of “world citizenship” in our students—an increasingly deeper awareness of how global trends in areas such as technology, economics, and the environment affect them, their community, and nation—and an understanding of their responsibilities as a person whose actions

affect these trends.

2.**Educational Philosophy**

An educational philosophy defines the school's beliefs and values about education. The educational philosophy should address the diverse needs of the student population and should be founded on an understanding of effective research-based educational practices and high standards for student learning. The educational philosophy should serve as the basis for the school's pedagogical approach, curriculum, assessment, culture and other elements that create a comprehensive educational program.

a. Describe the founding group's belief and values about education.

The SNCA educational philosophy is based on three core beliefs about the elements of a school which will educate low income minority children to become scholars who are world citizen: (1) a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum; (2) the way students are taught and learn; (3) the beliefs and attitudes which they develop during their nine years in the school.

Rigorous and Comprehensive Curriculum: Beginning with an extensive (a daily three hour instructional block) and intensive curriculum in English language literacy in the primary grades (K-2), SNCA will provide our students with a strong foundation in the basic skills (reading, writing and mathematics) and the conceptual understanding in each academic discipline that will enable our graduates to succeed in a rigorous college preparatory program in high school. While every group in the school community, especially the students, will assume responsibility for high levels of achievement on the Smarter Balanced Assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards; our school goal is for 100% of our grade 6 students to achieve the equivalent of "proficiency" and for at least 80% of them to achieve the equivalent of "at/or above goal." Our focus is on the development of our students' "higher order thinking skills" such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation and establishing and defending a point of view. Based on research on effective instructional programs in American schools and those of other countries with outstanding records of student achievement, as well as in technology-based learning, we have selected state-of-the-art programs, including the *America's Choice* literacy program, the *Singapore Mathematics* Program, and the *Rosetta Stone* language program. The same kind of research has applied to our development of programs in the arts (performing and visual arts) and physical education and health education. A global perspective will be evident throughout the curricula, including the study of a second language, beginning in kindergarten, in enrichments in curricula in literature and history in African-American and Latin American studies, and enrichments in curricula in history and science that build understanding of global trends in economics, politics, and the environment.

Pedagogy: For our students to develop academically and intellectually they will need to be *actively engaged* in their studies frequently and in all subject areas. Engagement results from learning in a variety of learning modalities—e.g. auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and social. SNCA teachers will have a tool kit of methods that build on student strengths and the nature of their subject—e.g. visual models in mathematics, listening skills in language development, and group projects in science. Their classroom routines will combine direct teaching and modeling by teachers and experiential learning in which students "construct" their understanding of concepts. Engagement also results from students working on learning tasks at their "instructional level." SNCA teachers will frequently regroup their students, based on assessments of learning and structured observations of students, to ensure that each student is engaged in tasks that are challenging and realistic. The presence of both a teacher and an Educational Assistant, a paraprofessional who works with individuals and small groups of students under the supervision of a teacher, in a classroom of 20 students will ensure a high level of personal attention to student learning levels.

Student Beliefs and Attitudes: The other major determinant of a student's engagement is his belief that he is capable of mastering challenging learning tasks, if he "works hard and works smart." The SNCA school culture will focus on building that belief even among students who enter the school with great doubts about their intellectual capacity. Beginning with "morning meeting" or "advisory period," and continuing through daily classroom routines, teachers will teach and reinforce the Efficacy mantra of "think you can, work hard, get smart." For example, a teacher will address the reluctance of a student to tackle a challenging task with a reminder that "you can do it, if you find the right strategy." With such a student, the teacher will praise small increments of progress, with the reminder that hard work and the right strategy have paid off. In Efficacy classrooms, students learn how to independently analyze results of assessments of their learning to find the feedback that identifies their successful strategies and to focus on learning tasks they "still need to work on."

(Please attachment # 1: "Efficacy Principles")

In addition to the Efficacy curriculum, the school culture curriculum at SNCA will develop students' sense of responsibility as part of a school and classroom community. Students will learn skills of communication affirmation of others' points of view, collaborative problem-solving, and conflict resolution and practice them as a matter of routine. Through the enrichments in literature, history, and science curricula, the concept of community will expand to that of "world community."

b. Describe how this educational philosophy aligns with the school's mission.

The overarching goal of SNCA is to provide our students with the academic knowledge and skills, the beliefs and habits, and social and cultural awareness to succeed in a rigorous college preparatory program in high school and to be responsible members of the, communities, nation, and world in which they will live in the 21st century. We expect that our student body will include large numbers of low income African-American and Latino students who reside in South Norwalk. Their path to these goals will include living in the culture established by the adults in the school community, as well as the curricula and pedagogy of the school.

Their achievement of these goals will demonstrate that the wide "achievement gap" in the Norwalk Public Schools is in large part a result too few effective practices in their schools, not in a limitation in their capacity to learn. By our school's example, we hope to spread our practices to other public schools in the city.

c. *Demonstrate that the philosophy will serve the diverse needs of individual students.*

Each of the core elements of our educational philosophy addresses the diverse needs of our individual students. The curriculum offers opportunities for each student to pursue his own interests in the choice of topics for inquiry and projects, as well as to learn about the culture and history of the ethnic group/nationality of his background. The pedagogy and assessment practices enable each student to study and develop skills in his "learning zone," where work is both challenging and realistic. The development of core beliefs and attitudes are essential to the development of each student's identify and values.

d. Provide research, including explicit citations, on this educational philosophy and its associated practices that demonstrate it may improve the academic performance of the anticipated student population to be served.

Two studies of the impact of an Efficacy School Initiative to change the school culture and teacher and student belief systems have reported impressive results in increasing student achievement in urban schools. In the Peres Elementary School in Richmond, California students in grades 2-6 posted an median gain of 22% in ELA between 2004-2008 and a median gain of 25% of students scoring at the proficiency level or above on state mandated tests in math. In the Vance Middle School in Memphis, Tennessee, students in grades 6-8 posted median gains of 14% in ELA and 25% in math between 2006-2008. (*See efficacy.org)*
A comprehensive review of studies on the effectiveness of school reform models on student achievement by independent researchers reported that America's Choice showed "moderate evidence " of increasing achievement—a score of 3 on a 4 point scale. *(American Institute of Research, 2006)* Singapore was the country which achieved the highest student scores in the world in mathematics in 2007 on the Trends in International Math and Science assessment. (*Wikipedia, 2013)* According to Hoven and Garelick, "sixth graders in Singapore Math can solve complex, multi-step problems that most U.S. students would find challenging in algebra classes.. *(Educational Leadership 65:3, pp.38-21)*

3.Curriculum:
Charter schools have the freedom to choose and/or the curriculum models that best reflect the mission and educational philosophy of the school, and best serve the needs of the anticipated student population. Regardless of whether the curriculum is purchased or internally developed, it is important that it aligns with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics and the Connecticut State Frameworks for all other areas of study.

a. *Explain the process used to identify or develop the curriculum that will be used in the school and provide the criteria for selecting the curriculum.*

The instructional programs (curricula and teaching methods) at SNCA have been selected according to four criteria: (1) the academic rigor necessary to prepare our students to achieve at a high level in the foundational skills of the Common Core State Standards—represented by performing "at or above goal" on the CMT's or the Smarter Balanced Assessments; (2) alignment with the Connecticut State Frameworks; (3) the high level of engagement necessary for students to develop "higher order thinking" skills and the intellectual habits of independent and critical thinking; (4) research on programs proven to be effective in realizing the above goals with students in American schools and in other countries.

The curricula for SNCA were selected by the Planning Team, which included educators with the following backgrounds: elementary principals (3), middle school principal, central office curriculum supervision (2), elementary teachers (4), literacy coaches (2), social studies teachers (2), science teacher, special education teachers (2), and ESL teacher. Subcommittee of the Team researched several curricula in each subject area, applying the criteria above. Mindful of the work load of teachers implementing a new school design, we decided at the outset to select primarily published programs, whose curricula met the criteria, rather that to ask teachers to develop a new curriculum for the school. The research included examining alignment with the CCSS or Connecticut Frameworks, the degree of rigor in developing the desired intellectual habits and thinking skills, effectiveness in accelerating the skill development of low income children, and instructional resources for teachers. In most subjects, we called teachers and administrators who were using the programs in their classrooms and schools.

Literacy Curriculum

The South Norwalk Collegiate Academy (SNCA) will use the **America's Choice literacy (AC) program** and supplementary materials that reflect our philosophy of the development of English language literacy and thinking skills in young children. Students in grades K-2 will receive an integrated reading, writing, and content area literacy block of three hours, which includes reading and writing instruction and application of those skills in content areas. In the primary grades (K-2), daily instruction will consist of a balanced literacy approach with focus on building foundational skills through phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary, using the Open Court Phonics Kit, which support strong reading comprehension and fluency. The America's choice model provides a template for teachers and training for the literacy coach in leading teachers through a process of developing a curriculum sequence for each grade aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Daily classroom routines in the Reader's Workshop will include mini-lessons, reading to children, shared or choral reading, teacher led reading in small and large groups, as well as partner reading, and independent reading with guidance and feedback. The "25 Book Campaign" will motivate students to practice frequent independent reading.

Daily routines in the Writer's Workshop will be based on Lucy Caulkin's The Art of Teaching Writing. Through her writing process model, students will learn to elaborate on their use of language to expressive themselves with increasingly greater creativity and detail. Mini-lessons in grammar and punctuation will be embedded in units to teach correct usage in the context of effective self-expression. Students will learn in the primary grades to write narrative texts and simple poetry.

SNCA believes that children for whom Standard English is not the first language have a critical need to develop their oral language skills to scaffold them for school success during their early reading development. Good teaching recognizes the insight of Sylvia Ashton-Warner that children are motivated to understand and read and write words that give them power over their own environment, such as common activities in their home, school, and neighborhood. They also need enriched vocabulary as tools for thinking, which children from more advantaged and educated backgrounds acquire through consistent exposure to elaborated conversation, to books through activities such as being read to by parents, and through educational trips. SNCA will provide the opportunity for progressive vocabulary development and application and in daily instruction, using the "Test Ready" program, the FOSS science curriculum and the "Core Knowledge" history curriculum.

Building solid vocabulary and content based knowledge in the early grades will set the foundation for study in the upper elementary grades (3-5), where the focus will shift from "learning to read" to "reading to

learn"--toward conceptual understanding and critical thinking in the content areas and in literature. As their understanding deepens, they will learn to step back and evaluate the personal significance of what they know, to apply it to new situations, and to synthesize it with other concepts. In the AC literature curriculum, these skills will be developed through "author studies" and "genre studies." Children will also be taught to be aware of the questions to ask in their analysis of text in content areas such as science and history. This metacognition—thinking about thinking—is a key to high levels of achievement in the academic disciplines. As more of the reading instruction occurs in the content areas, the "literacy" block, including reading and writing skills, will be reduced to two hours per day, with additional time devoted to reading in social studies, and science. In the Writer's Workshop, the variety of student work will expand to analysis of literature and simple persuasive essays.

In the middle school grades (6-8), students' reading comprehension in both literary and non-fiction texts will become more sophisticated through the adoption of "Textual Analysis," a curriculum developed by Achievement First, which builds skills such as summarizing, identifying the main idea, finding cause and effect, and analyzing the author's purpose and craft. In the Writer's Workshop, students' analytic skills will be practiced through classroom debates and expository essays. Nancy Atwell's In the Middle will provide strategies for teachers to use in Reader's Workshop and Writer's Workshop.

In both elementary and middle school reading programs, at least 30 minutes will be set aside each day for independent student engagement with texts geared to student interests and independent instructional levels. Children's literature by Latino and African-American authors will enable students to build on their understanding of the cultural backgrounds of groups represented in the school's study body.

The instructional resources that are described above were selected to cover segments of the CCSS that are not addressed adequately in the America's Choice curriculum, which is based on the "New Standards Performance Standards." The decisions about supplementary resources resulted from discussions with ELA curriculum specialists at Achievement First and at The Stamford Public Schools, which is implementing the America's Choice literacy program, and from length deliberations by two members of the SNCA Planning Team with extensive experience in elementary literacy

Mathematics Curriculum

The Elementary mathematics curriculum (K-8) for SNCA will be the **Singapore Mathematics Method,** which is adapted from the national curriculum of Singapore. This program teaches fewer concepts than most published American curricula, but to a much greater depth of understanding. We have chosen it, because it provides the strongest conceptual foundation for success in algebra, geometry, and higher levels of mathematics taught at the secondary school level, especially in sets, equations and word problems. A matrix comparing grade by grade objectives in the program with the CCSS in math revealed a high level of alignment.

SM also emphasizes metacognition in mathematical thinking-- thinking about thinking, including monitoring one's own thinking—an approach and skill set that SNCA uses in other subject areas as well.

This curriculum uses a "spiral" approach that builds upon preceding levels. When the same topic (such as place value) is revisited in the next year, it is discussed at a higher level. This approach eliminates the need to review material from the previous year during the first few weeks of a grade level, allowing the new material to be absorbed more slowly and at a greater depth.

The principle of teaching mathematical concepts in SM proceeds from concrete to pictorial to abstract. For example, the introduction of abstract decimal fractions in grade 4 is preceded by work on addition and subtraction of decimals in the concrete form of dollars and cents in grades 2 and 3. The use of "bar models" in teaching problem-solving consists of representing (mentally or graphically) arithmetical quantities by line segments. In SM books, such line segments are regularly used to show and teach the thinking process in solving arithmetic problems. SM is largely absent of repetitive memorization of "rules." Instead, the focus is on understanding the whys of operations.

A major reason for the limited use of *Singapore Math* in public elementary schools in the U.S. is the lack of sufficient understanding of the mathematical concepts by classroom teachers. The SM method requires direct instruction, including concrete examples and manipulatives and visual aids, by teachers before guided and independent practice by their students. SNCA will address this problem with the use

of mathematics specialists in grades 3-5 and in the middle school grades (6-8), who will teach the daily mathematics lessons to all students on a grade level. In grades K-2, these specialists will support classroom teachers in three ways: (1) through a week-long professional development program in SM each summer for new classroom teachers; (2) through demonstration teaching of concepts in "regular" classrooms during one period per week; and (3) through work with students who are "struggling" with the concepts during one period per week. As primary teachers become more proficient in SM, they will assume the role of supporting teachers new to SM.

Science Curriculum

SNCA has chosen the **Full Option Science System (FOSS)** for grades kindergarten through eight. FOSS is a kit-based, hands-on active learning program which is aligned to the Connecticut State Frameworks. Each year's curriculum consists of units in each of four content areas: life science, earth and space science, physical science and technology, and scientific reasoning and technology. Each unit includes a series of "investigations"— a guided inquiry into key concepts by students working in collaborative small groups, supplemented by student books with important science vocabulary and concepts and skills not adequately covered in the investigations. As students progress through the grade levels, their inquiry follows scientific thinking processes organized into a development sequence (observing, communicating, comparing, organizing, relating, inferring, and applying). This form of experiential learning is an effective way to gain in-depth conceptual understanding. It also fosters the development of several academic qualities which SNCA seeks to develop in our students: independent learning, critical thinking, problem-solving and working effectively in groups, and reinforces key mathematics skills such as estimation, measurement, and graphing.

Teachers of FOSS need a solid background in the concepts and related facts themselves. For this reason, SNCA will employ teachers who are science specialists, beginning in grade three. These specialists will also coach primary grade classroom teachers in implementing FOSS.

Social Studies Curriculum

The social studies curriculum has four goals: (1) comprehensive content knowledge in geography, world and American history and cultures; (2) gradually deepening understanding of key concepts common to all areas and periods; (3) development of the skills necessary for research and analysis; and (4) understanding of the history and cultures of the major groups of students in the school community, especially African-American and Latin American students.

The elementary (K-5) curriculum will follow the content sequence of **Core Knowledge in History and Geography**, based on the concept of "cultural literacy" developed by E.D. Hirsch. This curriculum provides a true "world history" sequence, placing non-western civilizations such as the Incas and Mayas, ancient China and India, and early and medieval African kingdoms in the appropriate chronological context with the development of American and western European civilizations. It also places special emphases on the relationship of geography to the development of a civilization, and examples of art and music as evidence of the uniqueness of a culture. As students progress through the grade levels, they develop a deepening understanding of key concepts such as culture, forms of government, and economic systems. Beginning in grade 4, they learn to identify and analyze primary sources and to develop their own critical point of view, substantiated by factual evidence. At each grade level, the Core Knowledge curriculum will be supplemented with additional readings, art, and music from the history and cultures of Africans, African- Americans, and Latin Americans. This focus will broaden students' understanding of their own backgrounds and enhance their respect for the backgrounds of other students in the school.

The middle school (6-8) social studies curriculum will span the history of western civilization from ancient Greece to 19th century Europe in grade six and a two year sequence in American history in grades seven and eight. Students will participate in debates and simulations, such as those of Thomas Ladenburg in American history—e.g. reenacting the Constitutional Convention and the decision to use the atomic bomb to end World War II, which enhance their capacity to organize and present an oral argument

World languages Curriculum

The South Norwalk Collegiate Academy (SNCA) believes that children benefit greatly from learning a second, or even a third language, beginning at an early age. It enhances the development of their

literacy in English and enables them to better understand differences between their own culture and other cultures—a valuable part of becoming a "global citizen."

All children at SNCA will begin the study of a second language in kindergarten. Children for whom English is their first language will learn Spanish. Children who are bilingual in both Spanish and English will learn French. Children who are not proficient in English will receive instruction in English in their world language period as a complement to their program in English as a Second Language.

The overreaching goal of the world language program is basic literacy, defined as the capacity to carry on an everyday conversation and to read a popular newspaper or magazine and write a one page essay in the language. There are six components of that literacy: (1) speaking with proper pronunciation; (2) listening and understanding oral language; (3) reading; (4) vocabulary; (5) writing; and (6) understanding the cultural background of the language.

Instruction in each of the languages will include a unique combination of **Rosetta Stone**, the computer assisted language learning program, and classroom instruction with a "foreign language" teacher. Rosetta Stone uses a "dynamic immersion" approach, in which all instruction occurs in the language being learned. Each lesson includes activities in speaking and listening, grammar, vocabulary, and writing. Students must use proper pronunciation and give correct responses to print, visual and oral prompts in order to advance to the next part of each lesson. The difficulty of content is slowly increased, without explicit instruction. For example, matching definite and indefinite articles with feminine and masculine and plural nouns leads to matching pronouns with nouns without any explicit teaching of grammar usage. In order to ensure the high level of student mastery needed to achieve the goal of basic literacy, SNCA will raise the Rosetta Stone standard of 75 % correct responses to 90% correct responses before a student will be permitted to move to the next lesson in each unit of instruction.

An effective language learning program, however, needs to include a classroom component for three instructional activities: (1) social interaction between students in practicing oral language skills; (2) exposure to the cultural background of the Latin American Spanish students are learning; and (3) writing tasks which tap students' personal interests and desire to communicate their own thoughts and feelings. Language instruction will, therefore, occur two days per week in a classroom and the equivalent of three days per week on the Rosetta Stone online program. We estimate that students will complete one of the five "levels" of the Rosetta Stone program in each academic year. This combination of teacher led and computer assisted instruction may well be unique to our school--an innovation in the field of language instruction.

Arts Curriculum

Both the music and arts curricula will be developed by the SNCA teachers, focusing on the goals below as integrated into the Connecticut Frameworks.

SNCA believes that education in both visual arts and music is essential to the personal development of young children. These arts provide unique opportunities for students to express their ideas and emotions—a process that can build confidence and self-esteem, which carries over to academic studies. They also provide opportunities for public performance and exhibition and the recognition and reward that come with that.

The elementary (K-5) curriculum in the visual arts will focus on understanding basic elements such as line, perspective, light, color, and composition, recognizing them in works of art, and applying them in creating art. Students will work in drawing, painting, collage, sculpture, and digital photography. Periodically they will exhibit their work in the classrooms and public places in the school, answer questions about it, and view the work of their classmates. Visiting artists will serve as role models as person who have made art a part of a balanced life—as an avocation, as a viewer, or as a profession. In the middle school, students will choose one medium in which to develop their skills to an advanced level in an art studio class, which will offer materials and work space for each medium. The middle school curriculum will also develop students' capacity to appreciate and analyze works of art and understand their place in cultures they are studying in history and world languages.

The elementary (K-5) music curriculum will focus on understanding basic elements such as pitch, rhythm,

volume, and harmony in vocal music. They will learn to read music at the basic level and to perform it from a written text. They will recognize mathematical concepts in music, such as whole numbers and fractions. Periodically they will perform in ensembles before their school mates, parents, and community members.

In the middle school (6-8), students will learn to play a band instrument, provided by the school, play in small group ensembles, and in grades 7-8 play in the school band. They will also be exposed to a wide ranges of musical genres and develop an understanding of their relationship to in cultures they are studying in history and world languages.

Physical Education and Health Education Curriculum

In keeping with the "Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework" of the Connecticut State Department of Education, the physical education and health education curriculum at SNCA will focus on five goals for the development of children: (1) to understand the elements of a healthy life style; (2) to practice living healthily; (3) to develop fitness routines that can be practiced outside of school; (4) to enjoy games and competition; and (5) to practice a balanced diet with good nutritional habits.

A central element of the physical education program for all children is training in a martial art, either Taekwando or karate, depending on the availability of a teacher. Martial arts have several benefits, especially for inner-city children, according to Becky Kok, the Director of the EdVantages charter schools in Ohio. Children learn to respect and care for their bodies. They learn singular focus and discipline in completing a challenging task. The unique ladder of "belts" in the hierarchy of a martial art enables them understand how to break a challenging and complicated learning goal into small achievable steps. Children learn to be assertive without being aggressive. The unique relationship between teacher and student enables the teacher to effectively support classroom teachers in their disciplining of students.

In addition to weekly classes in martial arts, physical education teachers will teach motor skills and movement skills identified in the Connecticut standards skills needed to participate in "lifetime sports." Beginning in grade 6, students will be able to participate in competitive team sports on a voluntary basis.

The health education program at SNCA will be comprised of units of the Great Body Shop curriculum that focus on nutrition, functions of the body, HIV/AIDS and illness prevention, substance abuse, self-worth and emotional and mental health, and physical health. In this curriculum, these topics spiral through each grade level, K-8, with increasing depth.

Technology Curriculum

An essential element of preparing SNCA students "to fully meet the challenges of the 21st century" is equipping our students with technological literacy, especially in computers, visual media, and communications. Students will learn to use essential tools through their application in a variety of curriculum areas, as illustrated below:

- Word-processing and Keyboarding—in English language writing skills
- Excel—in mathematics
- Spread sheets and data analysis—in science
- Internet research—in social studies
- Instructional software—*Rosetta Stone* in world languages
- Power Point—presentations to multiple audiences in social studies
- Visual literacy—e.g. MS. Paint, MS. Movie Maker, digital photography—in visual arts
- Social networks—in social studies

To ensure a comprehensive technology curriculum, the responsibility for instruction in these tools will reside with the teachers in the subject areas. As they certify that students are proficient in each tool, their colleagues in other subjects will be able to ask their students to use them in their classrooms.

b. *Explain how the curriculum will be consistent with the mission and educational philosophy ot the school.*

The overriding academic goal of SNCA is to prepare students to succeed in a rigorous, college preparatory high school curriculum. The college focus will be all-encompassing and symbolized in our school culture with the concept of students as "scholars."

Our students should complete eighth grade at SNCA ready to take on the rigorous work and added independence of a demanding academic program in high school, including Advanced Placement courses and a third language. We expect all students to apply to and be accepted by public and private colleges within four years of graduation from SNCA, and we will monitor their high school performance for feedback on the effectiveness of our K-8 educational program.

In order to be ready for a demanding high school program, our students will perform "at or above goal" or higher on the Connecticut Mastery Tests or the equivalent on the new Smarter Balanced Assessments. In our first five years of school operation, when we will administer the exam to third to fifth graders, the school goal will be that at least 80% of students will perform at that level or higher in each subject area. By 8th grade graduation, our students will complete Algebra I, be able to write in-depth research papers and compelling persuasive essays, and know how to analyze fiction and nonfiction texts deeply and critically. In addition, we will expect that each student has a strong foundation in science and history and has reached the standard of "basic literacy" in the Rosetta Stone program in a second or third language.

c. *Provide research on the curriculum, including citations, that demonstrates that is may result in high academic achievement for the students served.*

(For research on ELA and mathematics curricula, see Section I-2-d.)

The FOSS science program has been accepted into the STEMworks data base maintained by the non-profit organization, Change the Equation. Founded by corporate leaders in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics who are interested in improving education in those fields, this organization has established rigorous design standards which an educational program must meet to gain this acceptance.

A national study of the use of Core Knowledge curricula in 22 elementary and middle schools in 13 states by educational researchers John Wedman and Alex Waigandt of the University of Missouri examined the performance of students on nationally standardized tests in six subject areas, including social studies, over a six year period. These students performed far above national norms on percentile rankings, and the results were consistent across schools with high numbers of African-American Hispanic, and low income students. The average percentile ranking of all students in the 22 schools in social studies increased from the 58th percentile to the 77th percentile over six years of using the Core Knowledge History Curriculum. *(Core Knowledge Foundation, 2004)*

Two schools which have used Rosetta Stone as a language program for elementary school students, beginning as early as kindergarten (Foxborough Regional Charter School in Massachusetts and Onteora Central School District in Boiceville, New York) have reported that students remained highly engaged in the program for an hour or more per day and typically make more than a year's progress in a conventional language curriculum. An added advantage is that students have access to this online program during non-school hours. Teachers also have access at any time to information about the performance by students on the assessments that are built into the program, as well as data on the frequency and length of time students are using the program, enabling them to conference with students about their engagement and progress.

d. *Explain how you will ensure that the curriculum will be appropriate for the students the school intends to serve, as well as students with disabilities, English language learners, students below or above grade level and students at risk.*

The readers' and writers" workshops in the America"s Choice literacy program provide "leveled" readers collections of children's literature in each grade/classroom, which enable children at all skill levels,

including students above grade level, to improve their skills by working in their "challenge" zone, where the work is challenging and realistic. The Singapore Math Program's extensive use of visual representations of math concepts is especially helpful for students who are not strong auditory learners. The software which is the organizing vehicle for the Rosetta Stone language curriculum enables individual students to progress at their own levels through audio and visual prompts.

All of the above curricula are compatible with the Response to Intervention strategies for ELL and special education students.

e. *Describe the process that will be used to align the curriculum to the Common Core Standards (CCSS) for mathematics and ELA and the Connecticut State Frameworks for all other areas of study.*

As previously noted, the subcommittees of the Planning Team that researched and selected published programs did so by examining matrixes that compared the CCSS and Connecticut Frameworks with the content and skills taught by the programs. In the case of the literacy program, the subcommittee developed a scope and sequence for each grade that was aligned with the CCSS, previewed the instructional materials and the teaching of skills in the readers' and writers' workshops and selected additional materials needed to ensure coverage of all of the CCSS.

f. *Include the non-academic goals for students that are measurable and consistent with the school's mission and educational philosophy.*

The SNCA school culture will emphasize students developing the attitudes and behaviors of the Efficacy curriculum, such as the understanding that student achievement is a function of "effective effort," not "innate ability." Students will be expected to demonstrate behaviors consistent with that understanding such as persistence in completing challenging tasks, seeking advice and help when initial learning strategies are not working, and analyzing data from learning assessments to identify "things to work on," and setting challenging, but realistic learning goals. Developing this capacity to "self-manage" their own learning is a unique feature of the SNCA culture. Consistent with the values of our "building community," students will be expected to demonstrate authentic listening and communicating, respect and acceptance of students who are "different" from them, working effectively in team projects, and resolving conflicts with adults and other students in a non-violent manner, without physical or verbal aggression.

g. *Applicants are to provide one sample curriculum unit for ELA and math for one grade to be served in year one of operation. The following minimum curriculum components are to be included in the unit:* **Content and Skills, Standards: CCSS and State Frameworks, Learner Expectations, Big Ideas/Key Concepts, Assessments of Learning, Teaching Strategies, Learning Activities, Embedded Literacy, Numeracy, and Tech. Literacy, Instructional Resources.**

(Please see Attachment # 2. "Sample Curriculum Units.")

h. *Describe a clear plan that will facilitate the ongoing development, improvement, and refinement of the curriculum.*

(See section i below.)

i. *Describe the process that will be used to evaluate whether the curriculum is effective and successfully implemented.*

On a quarterly basis, administrators and teachers on each grade level will use data from the formative assessments to answer the following questions about the curriculum units just completed by their students:

1. On which units did a significant number of students fail to master the learning objectives?
2. What are common characteristics of these students—e.g. specific learning problems/disabilities, lack of effort, failure to grasp concepts, lack of prior knowledge?

3. Should the curriculum be revised—coverage of prior knowledge, sequence of topics? How?
4. Are changes in instructional methods needed—e.g. more visual, more experiential, use of software?
5. Moving forward, what supports do the students who did not master the content and skills need—e.g. additional learning time outside of class, special education or ESL support?

During the Summer Teachers' Institute, the principal, academic dean, and teachers will analyze the results of the year-end data from the MAP spring testing and DRA-2 in the primary grades and the data from the Smarter Balanced Assessments and MAP in science in grades 3-8 to use item analysis provided by the test publishers to identify content skills clusters which a significant number of students did not master. The teachers will then examine the big picture of the scope and sequence of the units of each curriculum map/grade to determine if the order of units or the amount of time dedicated to each unit needs to be revised. As per the questions above, they will make plans to make the necessary adjustments in instructional strategies for specific groups of students, in instructional materials, and strategies for students who "are behind" grade level expectations in the coming year.

j. *Identify which individuals will be responsible for the above processes and provide evidence that they are well qualified for the task.*

The Principal of the school is ultimately responsible for the processes of developing the curricula, evaluating their effectiveness and making improvements in them, even to the point of changing curricula when necessary. Facilitating the meetings with teachers and the literacy and math coaches to carry out these processes is the responsibility of the Academic Dean. The coaches will support individual teachers in making adaptations to their classroom curricula throughout the year.

4.Instruction*:*

a. Describe the instructional methods or techniques that will be used in the proposed school, including any specific requirements for implementing this pedagogical approach (i.e. co-teaching or aides, technology, physical space, etc.

b. Describe how these instructional methods support high standards of student achievement and are accessible and appropriate for all students at all levels, including students with diverse student learning styles, English language learners, special education students, students who are below grade level, and other at risk students, who should be targeted in order to eliminate the achievement gap.

At SNCA, we will employ the best practices of "data driven instruction" <u>and</u> "constructivist" teaching. Students, particularly those from low income backgrounds, in developing literacy need direct teaching of specific skills and learning strategies to develop a strong foundation in English language development and reading and writing skills. To meet the rigorous academic standards and develop the habits of thinking necessary to succeed in a college preparatory program in high school, however, they also need to engage in "inquiry learning" through which they can learn to think independently and critically. Unfortunately, many schools seem to believe that they must choose either data driven instruction or constructivism as their dominant pedagogy—identifying themselves as either a "researched based" or "progressive" schools. At SNCA, we see no inherent conflict in the two and embrace both.

"Data driven instruction" lessons begin with the definition of a measurable objective, which is derived from breaking down challenging learning tasks into a sequence of very specific skills, which are explicitly modeled by the teacher. The teacher engages students in activating their prior knowledge, so that they connect the new skill is to ones they already possess. This direct instruction is followed by the teacher guiding the student through practice of the skill, gradually reducing the student's dependence on the teacher until he can practice it independently, and the mastery of it is sufficiently reinforced. Independent practice is often the longest part of the lesson, especially in reading. The lesson concludes with analysis of assessment of student mastery of the skill. A key part of data driven instruction is teachers' use of assessment data: (1) to determine what skills need to be retaught to the entire class; (2) to continuously regroup students according to skill levels, so that they are working at challenging, but doable tasks; and (3) to identify individual students who need additional tutoring outside of class time. At SNCA, this kind of instruction will occur most frequently in reading—e.g. Open Court phonics, America's Choice Reader's Workshop-- Singapore Mathematics, and the computer-based Rosetta Stone program in world languages.

By contrast, “constructivist” teaching engages students in independent inquiry organized to progressively deepen their understanding of “big ideas”—concepts such as “revolution” and “evolution”—and develop their capacity to thinking critically and express a point of view about them. Inquiry activities also take advantage of students’ strengths in social learning through group projects. According to Grant Wiggins in Understanding by Design, “understanding” has six facets: explanation, interpretation, application, perspective, empathy, and self-knowledge. Teachers create units of study organized around an “essential question” and identify the kind of evidence that would indicate that students are developing a specific facet of understanding around the question. The teaching and learning activities in the unit are designed for students to formulate questions, gather evidence and develop their own understanding and connect it to prior experience and knowledge—both individually and in group projects. Teachers make frequent use of the Socratic method of questioning in group discussion. Unlike mastery of very specific basic skills, which can be assessed quantitatively and with considerable certainty, this kind of understanding is measured by “performance assessments,” which demonstrate a slow, gradual, deepening of intellectual habits, which can only be measured subjectively through modes such as writing, oral presentation, and visual or graphic creations. At SNCA, constructivist teaching will occur most frequently in the study of literature and culture, history and social studies, and science.

In determining teacher assignments, SNCA will balance the need of our students for consistent, supportive relationships with their teachers with their need to be taught by professionals who are highly knowledgeable in the concepts and skills they must learn to meet the school’s rigorous academic standards. We will achieve this balance through a unique strategy of teacher specialization in subject areas. In the grades K-2, teachers will follow the conventional practice of instructing the same group of students in all of the major academic disciplines. Literacy and Mathematics Coaches will be available on a weekly basis to support these teachers in learning effective practices in all of those subjects.

In grades 3-5, when the curricula become more rigorous, classroom teachers will specialize in either ELA literacy/social studies or in mathematics/science. In order to continue to provide consistent teacher/student relationships, the teacher specialists will remain with the same student cohort for at least two consecutive years. Classroom teachers will also have the benefit of an Educational Assistant (paraprofessional) in their classroom to work with individual students and small learning groups, under the direction of the teacher.

c.Describe how you will meet a wide range of student needs, using differentiated instruction.

The key to effective differentiated instruction at SNCA will be the data from assessments of individual student learning by classroom teachers and from the formative and summative assessments administered by the school. This data will enable teachers to target students who need support beyond the whole class instruction. These needs will be met by placing students in small groups based on skill needs, placement of students at the appropriate level in the instruction software employed in ELA, math, and world language, and tutoring in the after-school program. The small adult to student ratio of 1:10 will enable teachers to better meet the needs of students with diverse learning styles and those above and below grade level. In addition, special education and ESL teachers will provide “push in” support for their students.

d. Explain how the school will ensure that teachers are proficient in delivering the chosen instructional methods to their students.

SNCA will provide an extensive professional development program to ensure teacher knowledge of the school curricula and school culture and the teaching practices described above. PD will occur on three levels:
(1) in workshops during our annual Summer Teacher Institute and a series of monthly PD days during the school year, when school is closed to students;
(2) during weekly Friday afternoon teacher team meetings, when school is dismissed early; and
(3) during daily common planning periods, when teachers plan lessons together.

In the early years of the school, when new teachers are joining the staff each summer, the Summer Teacher Institute will engage them in an intensive four week introduction to the school’s curricula,

teaching practices, and school culture. The agenda below for the Year 1 Institute illustrates the scope of the workshops:

SCHOOL CULTURE-- Efficacy training and curriculum
Morning Meeting
Family Center and parent participation
Positive Student Behavior Management System

READING—*America's Choice*: Open Court Phonics and Work Attack Skills
Oral language and vocabulary development
Reading Skill Blocks
Reader's Workshop routines and rituals

READING ASSESSMENT—Developmental Reading Assessment-2 (DRA-2)
Running Records

DATA DRIVEN INSTRUCTION—Protocol for analyzing data from reading assessments
Student skill grouping
Lesson Plan format

WRITING—*America's Choice:* Lucy Calkin's Writing Process
Writer's Workshop Routines and Rituals
Writing Skills Rubric

MATHEMATICS—*Singapore Math. Program:* Curriculum Design and Goals
Pedagogy—Concrete to Visual to Abstract
Use of manipulatives

MATHEMATICS ASSESSMENT—Measuring Academic Progress (MAP)
Singapore Placement Exams
Protocol for analyzing data from assessments
Student skill grouping

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION-- Protocol for teacher team meetings
School communications: use of interactive technology
School Organization chart
School Rules and Procedures

In Year 2, new teachers will participate in a similar four week Summer Institute for Teachers, while returning teacher will be in a one week Institute.

During the Year 1 of the school, the professional development days will be utilized in the following manner:

- October—analyze DRA-2 and MAP data from baseline assessments of incoming students to adjust reading and mathematics curricula
- November—Reader's Workshop Practices (with *America's Choice* literacy coach)
- December—Writer's Workshop Practices (with *America's Choice* literacy coach)
- January—Singapore Mathematics Practices (with *Singapore Math.* coach)
- February (2 days)—School-wide Mid-Year Retreat: assessment of school performance, based on mid-year assessments of student achievement and other indicators
- March—Reader's Workshop Practices (with *America's Choice* literacy coach)
- May—Writer's Workshop Practices (with *America's Choice* literacy coach)

The Friday afternoon teacher team meetings will follow a monthly sequence:

Week 1—analyzing data from classroom and school reading assessments to identify "struggling" students and their needs for after-school tutoring and other support services
Week 2—unit planning by reading teachers on the same grade level and/or subject area
Week 3—analyzing data from MAP and classroom assessments to identify "struggling" students

and their needs for support services
Week 4—sharing of effective classroom practices by teachers on the same grade level and/or subject areas

Teachers may also attend a case management conference concerning one of their students on a Friday afternoon, as the need arises. These conferences will be convened each week by the staff of the school's Family Center and may also include staff from community service partners.

The process followed by teachers in the workshops, team meetings, and daily common planning meetings is as important as the content. At SNCA, we believe that establishing structured protocols for analyzing assessment data and planning curriculum units and lessons are critical to maximizing the sharing of effective practices among teachers, which is ultimately the most effective method of professional development. These protocols will include opportunities for teachers to observe colleagues in their classrooms, including the use of video recordings. Lead teachers in the *America's Choice and Singapore Mathematics Programs* will also demonstrate effective practices.

5.Student Assessment:
An integrated student assessment system serves as structures for how teachers and administrators will measure what students know and are able to do through the delivery of the curriculum. It is expected that charter school applications reflect knowledge of CCSS in their curriculum proposals to prepare students for the first administration of the Smarter Balanced Assessments in the 2014-15 school year.
Multiple methods of assessments must be developed and utilized, including standardized and non-standardized measures, to establish and monitor goals for student achievement. Data gathered from assessments also help to determine strengths and areas of improvement in the curriculum design and delivery, the quality of instruction, and the school's overall performance in meeting targeted goals for student achievement.
If the proposed charter school includes any or all of Grades 6-12, a Student Success Plan (SSP) must be developed in accordance with the criteria developed by the CSDE. The SSP is an individualized student data driven plan that will be developed to address every student's needs and interests to help that student stay connected in school, and to achieve postsecondary and career goals. The SSP will begin in the 6th grade and continue through high school to provide support and assistance in setting goals for emotional, physical, and academic growth, meeting rigorous high school expectations and exploring postsecondary and career interests. The SSP and supporting structures, such as student portfolios and academic/personal records, should be electronic and portable, following the student from school to school and district to district. The proposed system assessment system should include formative and summative assessments, including how the school will link the review of curriculum and instruction to assessment by measuring the academic progress of individual students, cohorts of students over time, and whole school performance, with the goal of continued school improvement.

a. *Identify which individuals on the school's charter will be responsible for overseeing the assessment system and provide evidence that they are well qualified.*

The school's assessment system will be overseen by the Principal, Academic Dean, and Literacy and Math coaches. Knowledge of and skill at analyzing assessment tools and the data they produce will one of the required hiring criteria for these positions, as these persons will be responsible for evaluating teacher performance and leading professional development in assessment practices.

b. *Describe provisions for the participation of all students (including those students identified as requiring special education) in the appropriate statewide master examinations, and other alternative assessments for students through the PPT process/ Explain how the state test data will be used to determine, monitor, and report individual student, cohort, and school progress over time.*

All students at SNCA will take the Smarter Balanced Assessments every year in grades 3-8. Other statewide mastery tests will also be administered as required by state law. Students with special needs will be accommodated during testing, as per the dictates of their PPTs, to ensure that all SNCA students are assessed in an appropriate fashion.

The results from these summative assessments are one of the most important sources of data because

they provide the most comprehensive picture of each individual student's performance in relation of our mission to prepare him/her to succeed in college. At a parent/teacher conference at the end of the school year, the teacher will explain to parent and student what the results communicate about the student's progress toward that mission and will develop with them a plan that details what each party will do in the coming year to enable the student to accelerate that progress. The data for the progress of grade level cohorts of students since the previous year will provide feedback for the teacher evaluation process and the coming year's professional development program. School wide data will be used in the school self-accountability process.

c. *Describe the additional standardized assessment tools the school will use, including how they will be used to determine, monitor, and report individual student, cohort, and school progress over time.*

SNCA will also use the Measuring Academic Progress (MAP) assessment system developed by the Northwest Evaluation Association. Included in MAP are the "Descartes Standards," the specific grade level expectations aligned to the CCSS in reading, language usage and mathematics and to the Connecticut Frameworks in science. A fall test administration enables SNCA to establish a baseline for each new student, as well as data on the retention of specific objectives from the previous grade level by returning students. Winter and spring testing provides formative assessments for determining the instructional needs of each student and monitoring the effectiveness of instruction in reading, language usage, mathematics, and science. As an adaptive assessment system, MAP is uniquely suited to pinpoint the instructional levels of each student. In this online testing system, the test items attempted by each student are adapted to student's level of mastery to pinpoint his instructional level. No time is wasted on items that are too difficult or too easy for him.

d. *Describe the non-standardized assessment tools (benchmark assessments, curriculum-based assessments, formative assessments performance tasks, etc.) the school will use and how they will be used to determine, monitor, and report on individual student, cohort, and school progress over time.*

Incoming kindergarten, first and second grade students will be administered the Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA-2), as prescribed by the Connecticut Department of Education, and the Measuring Academic Progress (MAP) tests in mathematics. These are criterion-referenced tests which can be used to diagnose the instructional needs of individual students and to establish a baseline from which to track the student's progress over the year. In grade three and upwards, MAP tests in reading and language usage will replace the DRA-2 for the same purposes. Additional benchmark assessments include the Writer's Workshop rubric rubric applied to quarterly writing samples, the Reading Logs, and Running Records in reading, and the Singapore Math Placement Tests at the end of each semester. MAP testing in mathematics and science will be added in grade 3-8, as well as the annual Smarter Balanced Assessments.

e. *Define a purposeful and practical approach for measuring student progress toward achieving non-academic goals tied to the school's mission and educational priorities*

In analyzing the data from the MAP and Smarter Balanced Assessments, a major focus of the Principal, Academic Dean and literacy and math coaches and teachers will be on the performance of individual students and grade level cohorts against our standards of "academic rigor." On the Smarter Balanced Assessments, our grade level benchmark for that standard will a performance level similar to that of "at/above or goal" on the CMT's. On the MAP tests, it is grade level proficiency.

The standardized and formative assessments described above are tools to help teachers strategically use data to inform instructional decisions in order to ensure student mastery. Used school-wide, they will help us make sure that all students have mastered the material in the curriculum.

For example, each of the interim MAP assessments reports student mastery of standards by individual students, class sections of students, and entire grade level cohorts of students. Beginning in grade two, each student learns to analyze his results to understand what he has accomplished and "what he needs to work on" in order to improve his performance, and what strategies he will use to improve on a Student Goal Setting Worksheet, part of the MAP systems. Teachers use that data to group students for skills instruction, to seek

the support of special education and ESL teachers with individual students in both “push in” and “pull out” modes, and to refer students for after-school tutoring, when needed.

f. Describe how the school will use student assessment data to improve curriculum and instruction.

Each teacher analyzes her class report to answer the following questions:

1. What standards has the class mastered – that you can immediately incorporate into homework and other ongoing, cumulative review?
2. What standards warrant more time for whole-class instruction (reteaching) and review?
3. What standards warrant more time for small-group instruction, based on common skill needs? How might you ensure that the small groups of students who need to master these skills have the instruction and practice necessary to master the skills? What will the other students be doing?
4. What students need more instruction beyond small group work in after-school tutoring in specific skills?

SNCA also intends to collect non-academic data to track school progress toward our mission and goals, including student attendance, student effort indicators on teacher check-lists, such as homework completion, use of feedback on assessments to set goals for improvement, persistence in the face of difficulty, and participation on a student learning team. This data will be used to make improvements in the school culture. The school will also collect data regarding parent participation in the School/Parent Contract activities such as responding to teacher or calls, attending parent/teacher conferences and parent workshops.

On a quarterly basis, administrators and teachers on each grade level will use data from the formative assessments to answer the following questions about the curriculum units just completed by their students:

1. On which units did a significant number of students fail to master the learning objectives?
2. What are common characteristics of these students—e.g. specific learning problems/disabilities, lack of effort, failure to grasp concepts, lack of prior knowledge?
3. Should the curriculum be revised—coverage of prior knowledge, sequence of topics? How?
4. Are changes in instructional methods needed—e.g. more visual, more experiential, use of software?
5. Moving forward, what supports do the students who did not master the content and skills need—e.g. additional learning time outside of class, special education or ESL support?

In addition, The Principal of SNCA will conduct an annual school-wide process in which the school staff will review analysis of the spring MAP results and of the Smarter Balanced Assessments results, as well other data such as student attendance, student retention and promotion, and teacher grade distributions to identify needs for improvement or curricula, instruction, and other practices to establish goals for improvement for the next school year. **(See IV-6. “Charter School Self-evaluation and Accounatbility.”)**

g. Describe the process and timeframe to inform students’ families of their child’s performance and progress.

Parents at SNCA will receive quarterly student progress reports on their children’s progress with academic and non-academic data. Parent/teacher conferences will focus on student progress toward grade level expectations, and student effort. Every parent will be expected to attend a workshop which explains the results of standardized assessment in laymen’s terms.

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h. *Describe the process for developing SSP’s (Grades 6-12) to include the core requirements as described by the CSDE.*

Beginning in grade 6, SNCA students will develop their Student Success Plans, as required by CSDE regulations. The “morning meeting” in the daily school student schedule will evolve to an “advisory” group, with a teacher advisor for each student in the group. The process will begin with the advisor conferencing with the student to review the feedback from his 5th grade portfolio of MAP results, writing

samples, and teacher comments on his effort indicators. Student capacity for academic goal-setting will have already been developed by Student Goal Setting worksheets required by students with the annual spring MAP results. Student reflection on this feedback will lead to their identifying academic goals and the resources they will need to meet them. The second element in their SSP's will be identifying their preliminary career goals and interests in participating in elective subjects such as art, music, technology, and political and social action, and community service. A third element in their SSP's will be the development of goals for healthy life style habits in eating and exercise. Upon completion of the first, sixth grade SSP, the student will present his SSP to his parents at a conference which also includes the teacher advisor.

II. STRENGTH OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORT

Charter schools are entrusted with public funding to operate successful public schools. The applications will be measured on whether or not the appropriate conditions for success are provided. It is important that the State Board of Education understand that those involved in founding and sustaining the school possess the skills, qualifications and backgrounds to ensure that the school's efforts are successful.

1.Description of Founders:

a. Provide the resumes and a list of the founding group members that developed and designed the application for the proposed school, including background, relevant experience, and/or qualifications of each founding member.

b. Discuss the process by which the school design and application was developed, including the roles and responsibilities of the founders during the process.

The impetus for the planning of the South Norwalk Collegiate Academy arose from the vision of Reverend Lindsay Curtis of the Grace Baptist Church in South Norwalk of a new charter school to address the large "achievement gap" between the low income, African-American and Hispanic children of South Norwalk and the other children in the Norwalk Public Schools. Upon the advice of Dr. John Strand, a consultant with extensive experience in helping community planning teams create new small schools, including charter schools, Reverend Curtis assembled a broad based planning team for the school. Members of the team included nine educators with a vast array of teaching, administrative, and curriculum and professional development experience, four community leaders, a parent, and a staff member from Achievement First. (See names and backgrounds in the Executive Summary.) The team initially developed a concept paper which outlined the mission, vision, and major components of the school. Using the concept paper, the team generated support for the school from legislators, school board members, community leaders, and prospective funders. In the second phase of planning, the team developed sections of the charter application under the coordination of Dr. Strand, who served as its editor.

As the Chair of the Founding Board of Trustees, Reverend Curtis has a assembled a Board which will ensure that the school that opens in 2014-15 will be true to the vision and practices created by the planning team and will have the private financial support needed to supplement the available public funding. The founding members include:

Reverend Dr. Lindsay Curtis is the Senior Pastor of the Grace Baptist Church in South Norwalk. He is the President of the Norwalk Branch of the NAACP, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Norwalk Children's Foundation, Chaplin of the Norwalk Fire Department, and immediate past President of the Interdenominational Ministers Fellowship in Norwalk. He holds a B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Illinois and a Doctor of Divinity from Eastern Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, Virginia. He has held a number of corporate management positions in the field of human resources, including Vice President, Human Resources of the Eastern Division at Universal/NBC, and Senior Human Resources Director/Consultant at PricewaterhouseCoopers. He chaired the community planning team for SNCA and provided input into the budget and management sections of the application.

Eileen Swerdlick retired in 2009 from the position of Assistant Superintendent of the Stamford Public Schools, where she also served as the Principal of the Bank Street Magnet Program at the Toquam Magnet School. She was also the principal designer and implementer of the Middle School Readiness Academy, where she successfully bridged underperforming fifth grade students and their

parents to middle school. Ms. Swerdlick is currently an educational consultant specializing in family support system training and parent education. She is a Quality Adviser and Workshop Facilitator for the Connecticut After School Network and serves on the Board of the Fairfield County Community Foundation. Her background of interest in children's literacy development, curriculum planning and in the application of neuroscience to educational practices was a major influence in the selection of curricula and teaching methods in the charter application. She holds a B.A and M.A. (in curriculum and instruction in reading) from Brooklyn College of the City University of New York.

Dr. Linda Clark has based her educational consulting practice in professional development for teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators on her extensive experience as a teacher, administrator, researcher and consultant. A graduate of National College of Education in Evanston, Illinois (B.A., Elementary Education, M.A., Writing) she holds a masters degree and doctorate in Teaching and Learning from Harvard University. A former intermediate teacher at the Jumoke Academy in Hartford and in two public school districts, she has also served as an elementary principal in the Ithaca City School District in New York and teaching fellow at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She has served as a consultant to the Educational Development Center in Newton, Massachusetts, the Boston Plan for Excellence, and Project Zero at Harvard University, and is the author of a number of professional articles in her field. As a member of the SNCA planning team, she played a major role in the development of the plans for school leadership and organization.

Monisha Gibson was a founding member of the Board and has since resigned from the Board to become the coordinator of the SNCA Literacy Library, which will serve children from South Norwalk in advance of the school opening. She is the Director of Programs and Curriculum at the Leadership, Education, and Athletics in Partnership (LEAP) in New Haven—a partnership with the New Haven Board of Education, Housing Authority and other community groups invested in the education and development of youth in New Haven. A former elementary teacher, with certification as an ESL teacher, she has served as Resident Director and Guidance Director of A Better Chance (ABC) of Wilton, Connecticut--an enrichment and support program to prepare minority children for success in independent schools. She holds a B.A. in French from the University, Virginia, a M.A. in Elementary Education from Teachers College, Columbia University, and Advanced Certification in TESOL from Long Island University. A member of the SNCA planning team, she was instrumental in the development of the sections of the school design on ELL learners, student support services, and parental involvement.

Friedrich Wilms has been a banking executive for the past 25 years, including positions at Webster Bank, Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi, ABN Amro Bank, and Chemical Bank. He is well known for his community service in Norwalk, having served as Board President of the Norwalk Senior Center, Board member of the Human Services Council, and active member of the Norwalk Chamber of Commerce and of the Business Council of Fairfield County. He has also served the public interest in Norwalk in numerous ways, including membership of the City of Norwalk Board of Estimate and Taxation, the Water Pollution Control Authority, the Council, and the Zoning Board of Appeals. At the State Level, he is currently a Commissioner on the Connecticut Transportation Strategy Board. The parent of two children who attend public schools in Norwalk, He has served as Co-President of the Columbus Magnet Elementary School PTA, and Vice President of the West Rocks Middle School PTA. Mr. Wilms received a B.A. from Northwestern University and a M.B.A. from the University of Michigan.

Bruce Ritter is Founder and Portfolio Manager at Yannix Management, LP. Prior to that current position, he was Executive Vice President at Louis Dreyfus Corporation and a Vice President at Goldman Sachs. He is Vice Chairman of the Norwalk Children's Foundation and a member of the Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now (ConnCAN) and the Norwalk Community College Foundation.

Gilbert Watkins, CPA, is a partner in the Norwalk, Connecticut office of Citrin Cooperman, providing the full spectrum of accounting, tax compliance, and counsel to businesses and individuals. He serves businesses in industries such as architecture, engineering, marketing, and other professional services. Mr. Watkins is involved in Norwalk as Treasurer and Past President pf the Rotary Club, Treasurer of the Norwalk Mentor Scholarship Fund, and Treasurer of the Seabury Academy of Music and the Arts.

Dr. John Strand was the consultant to the SNCA community planning team and supported the founding Board in the creation of its application for a charter. Subsequently, he joined the Board. For the past 10 years he has worked with planning teams to develop new small public schools, including charter schools in Staten Island, New York, St. Paul, Minnesota, and Philadelphia. During that time, he also served as the Senior Program Officer at New Visions for Public Schools, where he led a team of program officers that supported the planning teams for 38 new small public schools on seven campuses in the Bronx in the New York City Department of Education. His long career as school administrator included the founding of an alternative high school and an innovative early childhood education center, which provided a full day school program, beginning at age three. A former Superintendent of Schools in Pelham, New York, Newton, Massachusetts, and Peoria, Illinois, he holds a B.A. from Carleton College (Minnesota), an M.A.T. from Wesleyan University, and a Ed.D. from Teachers College, Columbia University.

(Please see the Attachment #3: "Resumes of the Founding Board and Consultant")

c. Identify any organizations, agencies, or consultants that are partners in designing or establishing for these partners proposed school, including a brief description of the current and planned role and resources they have contributed or plan to contribute to school development

SNCA is fortunate to have a wide range of community partners who are committed to providing services and technical assistance in the development and operation of our school and its programs:

Norwalk Community College—classroom volunteers and tutors in the After-School Program through its service learning program and programs in ESL, computers, and GED for the parents of our students

Norwalk Community Health Center—vision and hearing screening and immunizations for students, school nurse services, and student and family health services at their community clinic through referrals from the school's Family Center

Mid-Fairfield Guidance Center—counseling and other behavioral and mental health services for students and their families through referrals from the school's Family Center

Family and Children's Agency—student and family behavioral and mental health services through referral from the Family Center

Achievement First—curriculum and professional development resources, support in human resources (recruitment, screening, use of AF schools for visits and demonstration teaching by SNCA candidates), technical assistance with charter application

Jumoke Academy—technical assistance with charter application, especially budgeting

Gelber Search Associates—recruitment, screening and selection of school leader candidates

d. Identify which members intend to serve on the governing council.

Reverend Lindsay Curtis, Eileen Swerdlick, Monisha Gibson, Dr. Linda Clark, Friedrich Wilms, Bruce Ritter, Gilbert Watkins, and Dr. John Strand are members of the initial Governing Council.

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e.Describe whether/how many members of the founding group are anticipating moving into another role or relationship (employee, consultant, etc,) with the proposed school.

At this time, none of the founding group anticipate moving into another role.

2. School Management and Governance

Pursuant to the state statute, charters are organized as nonprofit entities operated independently of any local or regional board of education, in accordance with the terms of its charter. Charter school governance is among the most critical functions leading to the success of the school and the fulfillment of its overall mission. The governing council's responsibilities include but are not limited to developing and implementing policies, hiring qualified personnel to manage the school's day-to-day operations and holding them accountable for meeting established goals and establishing a long range plan and charter school accountability plan that will ensure the school's continued stability and financial viability. The council must ensure that the school is operating in accordance with its charter and complying with all of the state and federal laws that apply to the school.

a. *Indicate the structure of the council, including officers, members (indicate voting and non-voting ex-officio members) and length of terms and committees (denote the officers or members of each committee)*
b. *In accordance with Section 10-66(d) as amended, the proposed governing council should include the involvement of teachers, parents, and the chairperson of the local board of education of the town in which the school is located or the designee of such chairperson is a member of the board of education or superintendent of schools for the district.*
c. *List the officers and members of the initial governing council; include their names, relevant experience and or qualifications for serving on the council, and their relationship to the community in which the school will be located.*
d. *Describe the criteria for selecting additional officers and members of the initial governing council, including but not limited to parents, teachers, and members of the community.*
e. *Describe the plan to appoint subsequent officers and members of the governing council, including recruitment, selection (including qualifications sought) and removal procedures, meeting schedule, powers and roles of council members, members and committees and how decisions will be made and recorded.*

The Board will meet 6 times a year to review all issues/policies**.** It will include two sub-committees: the Education & Accountability sub-committee and the Finance & Management subcommittee, each of which will meet six times a year—in alternative months between the full Board meetings. The former will oversee the work and evaluate the performance of the Principal. The latter will oversee the work and evaluate the performance of the Executive Director. The full Board will make the decisions regarding contract renewals of both school leaders, based on the recommendation of the appropriate sub-committee. The Board will review the school's financial status on a quarterly basis, review the Annual Auditors' Report and will adopt an Annual Budget. It will also review the data regarding the school's effectiveness in accomplishing its mission and goal and adopt an Annual School Improvement Plan.

The initial members of the Governing Council will be Reverend Lindsay Curtis, Friedrich Wilms, Bruce Ritter, Gilbert Watkins, Monisha Gibson, Dr. Eileen Swerdlick, Dr. Linda Clark, and Dr. John Strand. (See Section II. Founders)

The Chair of the community planning team of SNCA recruited the members of the initial Governing Council. SNCA is a non-stock, non-profit corporation under Connecticut law and is the process of and is in the process of applying for status as a 501 (C) (3) entity under the federal tax code. The Council has elected Reverend Lindsay Curtis as Chair, Friedrich Wilms as Treasurer,and Gilbert Watkins as Secretary. Council members will serve three year terms, and the officers will be elected annually by the Council.

The initial Council plans to add additional voting members to the Governing Council within the first year of school operations, as the needs of the Council for leadership in specific areas of expertise dictate. It will also appoint a teacher and parent from the school, as well as a designee of the Norwalk Board of Education, as non-voting ex-officio members. The teacher and parent members will be elected by their peers for three year terms. At the conclusion of their first three year term, the initial Council members identified above will, if they so desire, stand for re-election for one, two or three year terms. The resulting staggered terms will ensure continuity of Council membership from year, so that all of them will not leave the Council at the same time.

Persons nominated to serve on the Council for the first time will be interviewed by the existing Council to assess their reasons for and commitment to serve on the Council and capacities they bring to the Council. The existing Council will have the sole authority to elect new Council members. Council

members may have their terms on the Council terminated by vote of the Council for lack of attendance and participation at Council meetings and other activities or for conduct detrimental to the welfare of the school.

The Council Secretary will post the meeting dates and agendas of Council meetings in public areas of the school and in the Parent Newsletter. Meetings will be open to the public, except for Executive Sessions to discuss personnel and legal matters, and there will be a period for public comments on the agenda. The Secretary will post written minutes of each meeting.

f. Describe how the governing council will exercise oversight and responsibility for the overall operation of the school, including but not limited to policy development, education, management, finances, personnel, and student achievement, mission, physical plant, law, and community outreach.

The Governing Council of SNCA will be solely responsible for the operation of the school and will be fully accountable for the success or failure of the school—educationally, financially, and legally. The Executive Director and Principal of the school will be accountable to the Board. It will have ultimate authority on school issues and will set all school policies. It will provide support to the school in the following areas:

Oversight

I. *Mission and Vision* – Set organizational goals and engage in strategic planning

2. *Program* – Approve operating policies that comply with the provisions of the charter, laws, and regulations

3. Management– Evaluate the school's management system and the Executive Director and Principal

4. *Finances* – Review and approve annual budgets, review quarterly budget reports, and ensure timely audits and adequate financial controls

5. *Contracts* – Approve and ensure school compliance with all major contracts

Resource Development

I. *Expertise and Personnel* – Provide expertise in areas such as law, business, finance, and educational programming

2. *Fundraising* – Raise capital and operating funds and solicit in-kind donations

Publicity and Advocacy

I. *Credibility* – Establish and maintain the school's reputation

2. Visibility – Enhance school's visibility in the community at large, the education community and the news media

3. Support – Gamer support from other organizations, individuals, and government agencies

g. Describe the authority the governing council will convey to the school's administrator. Explain the process by which the council and the administration will make decisions and provide evidence of the distinct roles and responsibilities of council members, committees, and school administration.

Both the Executive Director and the Principal (K-8) will report to the Board of Trustees. The Executive Director will serve as the school's staff person to the Board in preparation of agendas for Board meetings and provide bimonthly reports to it on the status of revenue and expenses in the school's budget and annual reports on the school's finances and on evaluation of the school's effectiveness in achieving it mission. The Executive Director will also prepare the annual School Improvement Plan for the Board's consideration and draft recommended policies for Board approval, and provide information required by it to carry out its duties. He/she will advise the Board on the status of the school's charter and on steps necessary to maintain and renew it. The Executive Director will be responsible for the school's governmental relations, fund-raising and grants, community and public relations, community partnerships, and facilities development. The Executive Director will supervise the School Manager, who will be responsible for budget and accounting, grants management, building maintenance, the scheduling of school facilities, transportation, school breakfast and lunch, purchasing, and the school's use of technology in school operations. The Executive Director will also supervise the Administrative Assistant, wh will be responsible for both internal and external communications, the maintenance of student records and personnel records, and general clerical functions as required by the school leaders.

The Principal (K-8) will also report to the Board of Trustees and will be responsible for the school's educational program, including the development and improvement of curricula, the assessment of student learning and the analysis of assessment data by the staff to identify needed improvements in curricula and teaching. The Principal will recruit outstanding candidates for teaching positions in the school and will select teachers to recommend for employment by the Board. The two deans and outstanding staff members will participate in the teacher selection process. The Principal will evaluate the performance of teachers and other educational staff on an annual basis, using student assessment data and input from the two deans, and will determine which staff will receive annual contract renewals, based on performance. He/she will also be responsible for creating and maintaining a school culture consistent with core values of the school, and for relations with parents and families of the students. The Principal will be responsible for developing an annual professional development plan for the school that will improve the effectiveness of teaching in the school, utilizing staff members as resources and bringing outside expertise to the school, as needed. The Principal will be responsible for the maximum effective use of technology in teaching and learning at the school. The Academic Dean and the Dean of Students will report to the Principal. The former will manage the curriculum development and student assessment, under supervision by the Principal, and will facilitate collaboration by teachers and staff in professional development. The Academic Dean will maintain a frequent presence in the school's classroom and assist in staff evaluation. The Dean of Students will be responsible for maintaining an orderly and productive environment in the school through direction of the student behavioral management system and will coordinate student support services, including English as a Second Language, special education, psychology and counseling, the Family Center, health services, and the after-school tutoring program.

h. Describe the criteria and process by which the governing council will hire and evaluate the school's lead administrator. Lead administrator evaluation should be in alignment with the Connecticut Guidelines of Educator Evaluation.

Within one full year in advance of the opening of the school, or upon receipt of the school charter—whichever is later—the Governing Council will undertake a rigorous selection process to recruit and hire the Executive Director. Once that process is successfully concluded, the Council will recruit and select the Principal. To ensure a pool of highly qualified candidates who are committed to the school mission, the Board will contract with Gelber Search Associates of Newton, Massachusetts to assist in the search. This firm and its founder and President, Jenny Gelber, have more than 10 years of experience in conducting searches which have resulted in the hiring of successful school leaders for charter schools along the East Coast, including founding principals for Achievement First And KIPP schools. The process will be conducted in four stages:

1. facilitation of the Council's deciding the key hiring criteria from the job descriptions for the two positions;
2. networking and screening prospective candidates to develop a pool if 8-10 persons, including persons of color and successful school leaders who are "not looking for a job;"
3. interviewing, selecting semi-finalists and reference checking—including interviews with the SNCA School Leader Selection Committee, visits to nearby charter schools by candidates, who will offer comments about instruction and school climate in those schools, simulations of conferences with teachers and parents, and analysis of school assessment data;
4. final interviews with the Board, selection of a finalist, and negotiation of an employment contract with that person.

The School Leader Selection Committee will consist of Council members, educators, parents, and community leaders from the SNCA Planning Team and others, as determined by the Council.

The Council will hold sole authority over the hiring and firing of the school's Executive Director and Principal and will be responsible for renewing their contracts on an annual basis. The Council will conduct a thorough annual evaluation of each school leader, including a review of data on how well the school is achieving its mission and goals, the management of school resources, and feedback from parents and staff of the school—as per the school leaders' employment contracts. The school leaders will work under one year contracts, renewable annually.

Day-to-Day Management of the School

Through it supervision of the school leaders, the Governing Council will be responsible for ensuring the day-to-day management of the school. The Secretary of the Council shall keep or cause to be kept the following: (a) a book of minutes of all meetings of the Council and Council Committees, noting the time and place of the meeting,

whether it was regular or special (and if special, how authorized), the notice given, the names of those present, and the proceedings; (b) a copy of a the Charter and Bylaws; and (c) copies of all written complaints to the Council by any individual or party.

Parents

In addition to the Council, others play a critical support role in the school. For example, the school will form a Parent Leadership Council (PLC). Instead of being a traditional parent group that exists primarily to hold meetings, the PLC will, in concert with the school principal, identify three to five projects to complete over the year. These projects will be based on clear, identifiable needs of the school. They could include, but are not limited to, coordinating events that bring the school community together, arranging speakers, developing parent education courses, or recruiting tutors. The PLC will also have an important role in supporting parents in upholding their part of the parent contract signed by the school, parents, and students.

Teachers

Teachers also have an important role to play. On Friday early dismissal days, teachers will have time for planning meetings. During scheduled meeting time, teachers will be able to work with the school principal to suggest and implement programmatic changes and address areas of school need. Moreover, teachers will grouped into grade level teams with common planning time. These grade level teams will be charged with discussing students who have presented academic or behavioral problems, and they will also organize grade level trips, incentives, and activities. Once a year, the school will hold a staff retreat, in which staff help to identify strengths and challenges of the school. Working from ideas generated at the retreat and analysis of student assessment data, the teachers and principal will draft a School Improvement Plan for the following school year and present it to the Board for approval.

Students

Students must feel that they have a personal investment in the school community and that the adults around them are working both for and with them. To that end, SNCA will be organized into morning meetings at the elementary level and in advisory groups at the middle school level, and each student will have an advisor charged with ensuring that his/her needs and concerns are met. Students will frequently present to the PLC and Governing Council meetings. Students will also serve as tour guides and ambassadors for school visitors. Older students will earn the privilege of tutoring younger students, and all graduating eighth grade students will complete an exit interview with a committee of teachers and administrators that highlights areas of students' personal growth and challenges, as well as school strengths and challenges.

The Governing Council will be operating SNCA as a "state charter school" and will not be under the supervision of a local or regional board of education. The Council will oversee the school leaders' work with the administration and staff of the Norwalk Public Schools to provide services to SNCA students in areas such as special education, school lunch, and transportation.

i. Include an organization chart that encompasses the governing council, council committees, employees, and employees of the school.
(Please see Attachment #4: "SNCA Organizational Chart.")

j. Include any plans to contract with a charter management organization (CMO).

The SNCA Board does not plan to contract with any charter school management organization. It will not share Board members with another charter school.

3.Evidence of Support:

a *Illustrate the* scope *of community support* for the proposed *charter school and its founders. Document through letters of support, surveys, petitions or* other *means the endorsement* of teachers, parents, students, *community members and institutional leaders.*

The community planning team for SNCA circulated its school concept paper widely within the Norwalk

community during 2008-09. More than 100 persons attended two community forums, at which parents, educators, and community members expressed support for the school. Additional educators stepped forward to join the planning team, as it developed the charter application. At its maximum size, the team included nine educators—former public school principals, present and former teachers of writing, science, literacy, social studies, and a school psychologist of a total team of 14 persons. Two private funders have made commitments to the school. Rotary International issued a literacy grant of $37,000, which was initiated by the local Rotary Club. Local philanthropists, Bruce and Diane Ritter of Ridgefield, Connecticut issued a matching grant of $250,000. The Mayor of Norwalk, Richard Moccia, contributed the proceeds of the Mayor's Ball of 2011--$22,000. An impressive array of community organizations which serve youth and families in South Norwalk have agreed to be active partners of the school—Mid-Fairfield Child Guidance Center, Children and Families Agency, Norwalk Community Health Center, Norwalk Children's Foundation, and Norwalk Community College. The school has also received expressions of support from local legislators, Board of Education members, and other community organizations

(Please see Attachment #6: Letters of Support)

III. STUDENT COMPOSITION,SERVICES & POLICIES

1. School Demographics

a. Describe the community and the student population to be served by the school and the needs of the population.

South Norwalk Collegiate Academy will be located in the City of Norwalk and will serve students residing within the Norwalk Public School District, employing a tiered lottery system that will give preference to students from the South Norwalk region before admitting students from the rest of the city. For the purposes of this application and our school, South Norwalk denotes the area circumscribed by the zip code 06584.

In comparison to the city as a whole, South Norwalk has a larger population of minority residents, families with lower median incomes, and more individuals living under the poverty line. According to Census 2010, Norwalk's population is 14% African-American and 24% Hispanic; South Norwalk, on the other hand, is 26% African-American and 33% Hispanic. Furthermore, the median income for a household in 06854 was $39,296, whereas Norwalk had a median household income of $72,508. In South Norwalk, 8% of families lived below the poverty line; in Norwalk, only 5% of families were below that level.

> The "achievement gap" in the elementary and middle schools in Norwalk mirrors the devastating chasm in Connecticut between minority and low income children and their white and income counterparts. On average, 42% of Black students in grades 3-8 scored "at/or above goal" on the Connecticut Mastery Tests in 2011, as compared to 76% of white students—a gap of 34%. Similarly, the gap between low income students and other students in the district was 29% and for Hispanic students was 21%. Because this score represents a standard necessary for readiness to succeed in a college preparatory program in high school, as many as 50-60% of minority and low income students are unlikely to have access to the opportunity to participate fully in the 21st century economy and society through college and career success.

b. Describe how the educational program provided by the charter school will address the needs of the student population.

Many of the minority and low income children who are the victims of this achievement gap live in South Norwalk and are bused from that community to schools in other parts of the city. The South Norwalk Collegiate Academy will for the first time provide these children with a school focused exclusively on enabling them to achieve academically and develop personally and socially at a level that equals or exceeds that of other children in the public schools in Norwalk. The school is scheduled to open in 2014-15 with 40 students each in kindergarten and first grade. It will add an additional grade level in each of the next seven years, resulting in a total K-8 enrollment of 330 students.

b. . Describe the grade range and ages the proposed charter school will serve, including grade

levels upon opening and the growth plan for each year covered by the charter request.

SNCA will open with 40 students in kindergarten and 40 students in first grade. The school will add one additional grade level over each of the next seven years, resulting in a K-8 school at full enrollment. We anticipate an average attrition rate of 5% per year, due to students leaving the school because they move from Norwalk or for other reasons. It will be school policy to replace these students with newly admitted students each year in grades K-3. We will not replace students who leave after third grade, because there will not be sufficient time for older new students to reach our high academic goals before leaving the school after eighth grade. As a result of that policy, a cohort of 40 students in third grade will be reduced to 38 students in fourth grade and so on until their number is 30 students in eighth grade, based on a projected student attrition rate of 5% per year.

As the table below illustrates, the total enrollment at SNCA is projected to grow to 234 students by Year Five. The full K-8 enrollment in Year Eight is projected to be 330 students.

	2014-15	**2015-16**	**2016-17**	**2017-18**	**2018-19**
Kindergarten	40	40	40	40	40
First Grade	40	40	40	40	40
Second Grade		40	40	40	40
Third Grade			40	40	40
Fourth Grade				38	38
Fifth Grade					36
Total	80	120	160	198	234

d. Provide a rationale for the enrollment plan, including your reasons for choosing serve the specified grades, enrollment size and growth strategy.

By opening the school with only kindergarten and first grade, most of the children in the school will enjoy the benefits of our enriched curriculum, longer school day and school year for 8-9 years. As noted above, we are not accepting new students after third grade for the same reason.

2. Child Day Care Services

a. Indicate if you plan to provide child day care services (i.e. preschool and/or before and after school services to children.) If yes, indicate the age range of children your charter will serve in the p
B. Indicate if your charter school will retain responsibility of the management and oversight of the program.

SNCA will provide a daily voluntary breakfast program from 7:30 to 8:00 a.m. Our school will also operate an after-school program from 4:10 to 5:00 p.m., which will be mandatory for students requiring tutoring in literacy or mathematics and will be voluntary for other students wishing a supervised homework period or enrichment activities. There will be no preschool program.

The school will operate the breakfast program and after-school program.
Both the breakfast and after-school programs will be under the supervision of the Principal or Dean of Students. The programs will be staffed by Educational Assistants under their supervision.

3.Special Education and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

All charter schools in Connecticut are public schools that enroll students through a free and open lottery process. Therefore, all charter schools must be prepared to enroll students with diverse learning needs, including students with disabilities. This section of the application should describe the school will meet the needs of special education students and those students qualified under Section 504

a. *Describe the school's plan to meet the needs of students with disabilities who requirea range of special education supports and related services, as required by IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, while at the same time remain true to the school's mission, and educational philosopy.*

SNCA will maintain high standards for all students. All students with disabilities attending SNCA will be

accorded a free, appropriate and public education (FAPE). Disability will not be used as a criterion for non-eligibility for admissions or enrollment; rather, our school welcomes the chance to educate any child, regardless of disability. SNCA will comply with all regulatory special education requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and any other civil rights enforced by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR). Likewise, we will fully comply with additional regulations and policies of the State of Connecticut.

SNCA will meet all the requirements mandated within a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Certified Special Education teachers and related services staff members will be employed to ensure that the unique needs and learning styles of all students are being met. These teachers and related services staff members will coordinate the direct instruction and inclusion of special education students

To the extent possible, special education students and students with disabilities will be included in regular education programming. Physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language services will be provided to students in classrooms to the extent possible. Other supports, including tutoring and counseling, will be provided in the environment most conducive to the student's growth and development.

b. *Clearly indicate that the school understands its responsibility to meet the requirements of the Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and Section 504 Plans, and has a detailed compliance plan that includes the provision of certified personnel, receipt of appropriate documentation, student assessments, classroom adaptations, and sufficient professional development for staff.*

Obtaining/Reviewing Student Records

Students will be admitted to SNCA through our admissions lottery without consideration or prior knowledge of whether or not they have IEP's. Immediately following lottery selection, the Norwalk Public Schools (NPS) will be provided with the names of incoming students in a letter. That letter will additionally include a timeline for: (a) identifying students who are receiving Special Ed, 504 support, ELL services, and/or who have been identified as gifted or talented; (b) a date for SNCA to receive cumulative files, confidential files, and health files; and (c) a request to invite SNCA staff to any IEP PPT or 504 planning meetings to be held in the spring prior to the student's attending SNCA. Through this process, we will ensure that the majority of our incoming students have programs and plans in place that may be effectively implemented at SNCA. In August of each school year, all IEPs will be reviewed by SNCA Special Education certified staff. In the event that an IEP needs to be rewritten, a PPT will be requested with NPS and will be held prior to the start of school to create an appropriate IEP program. Parents and teachers will attend a meeting led by a NPS special education services administrator or designee. The PPT team members will be in compliance with current state regulations and guidelines. SNCA certified Special Education teachers and related service staff members, working with NPS SPED program administrators and specialists, will be responsible for implementing IEPs and PPTs.

Interventions

SNCA will utilize the three-tiered Response to Intervention (RTI) model in addressing learning problems of our students:

Tier 1: In cases where student assessment data indicates that a large number of students have not mastered the school's learning objectives in reading, writing, and mathematics, the classroom teacher(s) will reteach these objectives through a changes in curriculum and/or instructional methods.

Tier 2: In cases where the Tier 1 intervention did not result in mastery of the objectives, the students will receive supplemental instruction beyond the classroom periods through computer software overseen by the educational assistant or through additional small group instruction by other staff.

Tier 3: In cases where the Tier 2 intervention did yield the expected results, the students will receive individual and small group tutoring in the after-school program.

Student progress in Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions will be monitored on a regular basis by a team of school staff familiar with the students' needs, which may include classroom teachers, educational

assistants, special education and ESL teachers, staff of the Family Center, and the Dean of Students. In Tier 3 interventions, the parents of the student will join the team. (RTI Team) This team may also review the behavioral problems of the student and recommend interventions to address them.

If the above RTI process fails to overcome all behavioral or academic challenges, the student may be referred for special education. During this meeting, parents and regular academic teachers will discuss adjustments that have been made thus far in the classroom. If the alternative strategies have not worked sufficiently, a PPT referral will be made for assessment by NPS. NPS will then proceed with assessments to determine whether special education services will be appropriate. Once these assessments have been conducted, NPS will convene a PPT meeting to review the assessments. This referral process is delineated in further detail below.

Referral Process for Special Education

I. Request for special education evaluation may come from:
   a. A parent or guardian; OR
   b. The RTI team at the school.

2. The Special Ed Coordinator will help the teachers fill out forms and document interventions and progress made through the RTI process; all teachers, the Dean of Students, and the Principal will get copies of these materials, and the Special Ed Coordinator will place one in the student's file.
3. Upon completion of the RTI process, if the decision is made to refer the student to a PPT, a designated case manager will complete the "Referral to PPT" form.
4. RTI documentation will be attached and must include the completed state mandated math and reading worksheets.
5. The referral will be signed and dated by the referring person, principal, and Special Ed Coordinator. A copy will be sent to NPS immediately via post, so that NPS may initiate the PPT in an expeditious manner.
6. Upon receipt of a referral, NPS will schedule a Referral PPT meeting to discuss the referral. At this meeting, decisions will be made as to what interventions to implement and to determine whether any testing is appropriate. At this meeting it must be clearly determined who will be responsible for each aspect of the assessment process (NPS or SNCA).
7. NPS will send a copy of the referral and a Referral PPT invitation to the parent via post no later than five (5) school days following the date of referral. **The date of referral is the date the referral form is filled out. SNCA will make every effort to notify NPS the same day that the official referral is signed.** SNCA will notify NPS that the student is experiencing significant difficulty prior to the referral when possible.
8. Testing and observation will be carried out by NPS specialists or by SNCA team, when agreed upon and deemed appropriate by both parties.

Observation

I. The classroom teacher most closely related to the area of concern and the Special Ed Coordinator will make an observation of the student's learning. These observations may take place as part of the RIT, but will be completed after the referral PPT and prior to the identification PPT. Another observation will take place prior to the triennial review in the case of a child identified as SLD or ED.
2. The observations will be documented and shared at the identification PPT. The same procedure will take place at the triennial review.

Evaluations

I. Written parental permission will be obtained prior to any initial evaluation. Permission for a formal re-evaluation when preparing for an Annual Review or Triennial will also require parental permission.
2. All evaluations conducted on a student referred to the PPT will include formal reports concerning the child's educational progress, structured observations, as well as psychological, medical, developmental and social evaluations that may be appropriate in determining the child's exceptionality.
3. Evaluations will be forwarded to NPS. The original signed copy will be filed at the school building and the evaluator will retain a copy. All evaluations will be provided to the parent at or before the PPT or mailed home..
4. If it appears that an evaluation or service is needed that cannot be provided with the existing staff at SNCA, or will incur a cost for NPS (i.e. paraprofessional support, 0.T., Speech,

neuropsychological, P.T.), the request for service must be discussed with NPS, as they must authorize the expenditure or provide the staff.

Yearly PPTs

I. After each child's yearly PPT, the Special Ed Coordinator will contact — via phone or post marked CONFIDENTIAL — all the child's teachers, parents, the administrative team, the school social worker, and other student support services staff with the results of the PPT, including what the specific goals, objectives, and modifications are made in the PPT.

2. In the case of a student being exited from special education, the Special Ed Coordinator will contact — by phone or by post marked CONFIDENTIAL — all teachers with this information. If the , exiting involves the student switching classes, the Special Ed Coordinator will meet with all teachers involved.

Professional Development

The SNCA Special Education Coordinator will ensure that classroom teachers adapt instructional methods to meet the needs of each special education student, as per his/her IEP and that appropriate “push in” or “pull out” support for the student is provided by a certified special education teacher. The Coordinator will also coach classroom teachers in learning new teaching strategies that will benefit special education students in their classrooms through demonstration of those strategies, by giving the teachers feedback on how well they are utilizing the strategies and by providing additional visual, print, and software materials for their use. Where necessary, the Coordinator will also provide whole school training for classroom teachers in the required processes for referral for evaluation of special education students, record-keeping, PPT’s, etc.

c.Describe the system by which the charter school will work with the special education student’s school district of residence to receive reimbursement of the amount equal to the difference between the reasonable cost of educating each student and the sum of the amount received by the state charter school from all sources. Describe how special education services set forward in the student’s IEP or Section 504 Plans will be paid.

We have a commitment from the Director of Pupil Personnel Services, in the Norwalk Public Schools to assign a district school psychologist to conduct evaluations of SNCA students referred to her.
The PPT’s for these students will also include a district special education administrator assigned by the Director. The administrator will confer with the SNCA Special Ed Coordinator regarding services needed by the students beyond the scope of the school’s staff and will assign district special education staff to the school, as needed. The Director will determine the cost of the services provided by SNCA for each student and reimburse the school for the cost, including applicable federal aid, to provide staff to provide the services.

d.Describe the policies and procedures to ensure that students who may be eligible to receive special education services and related services under IDEA or Section 504 are referred to the school district of residence or to the charter school staff for evaluation.

(See Section b. above.)

f. Provide a plan to engage parents of students with disabilities.

In addition to the regular communications between the school and teachers with parents regarding the progress and needs of their children, SNCA The RTI team will ask the parents at Tier 3 of the RTI process to attend conferences reagarding addressing the support the child needs to achieve at grade level or higher. Should Tier 3 interventions not be successful; the parent will be notified that he/she may request that the child be evaluated to identify any disabilities the child may have. Following such evaluation, ,the parent will be asked to attend all PPT meetings regarding the child to provide input into The child’s IEP and to sign it. The social worker and outreach worker of the Family Center will assist in engaging parents in these activities.

4.Teaching English Language Learners

All charter schools in Connecticut are public schools that enroll students through a free and open lottery process. Therefore, all charter schools must be prepared to enroll students with diverse learning needs, including ELL's, all of whom must be provided with full and meaningful access to the general education curriculum.

The general education classroom needs to be an environment that is responsive to the educational needs of al children and accommodates their needs to the maximum extent appropriate. A continuum of services must be available through the school so that all students can participate fully in the educational goals and mission of the school as described in its charter.

a. *Describe a plan that a supports a responsive general education classroom that will provide ELL students with access to the general education program. General education teachers will use the ELL Framework and Scientific Research-based Interventions (SRBI) for all students: A Handbook to accompany Connecticut's Framework for Responsive to Intervention (RTI) as resources that will support ELL students.*

All students that are English Language Learners will be expected to reach the proficiency level of "advanced" in English at an accelerated pace, and our ESL and classroom teachers will be expected to maintain a sense of urgency in finding the instructional strategies and support services to accomplish that.

SNCA believes that a Sheltered English Instruction program in the regular classroom, coordinated and supported by an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, will be most helpful to ELL students in improving their abilities to master the language. This method is consistent with the SDE's ELL Framework for ELL Students. Students of limited English proficiency will receive the same academic content as those students who are native English speakers. All instruction will be in English. However, the level of English used for instruction—both oral and written—will be modified appropriately for each ELL student, as part of the Tier 1 response to intervention(RTI). In Tier 2, ELL students will receive individual and small group instruction with the certified ESL teacher in a "push in" program. In Tier 3, the students will additional instruction in individually and in small groups in "pull out" program in addition to the support in the regular classroom.

b. *Present a plan that addresses the proposed school's methods and strategies for identifying and serving ELL students, administering the mandated annual Language Assessment Scale (LAS) Links assessment and how they will exit the program. In addition, present how data will be used to inform instruction and how the school will monitor the continued progress of exited ELL students.*

Procedure for Identifying English Language Learners

SNCA will serve any and all students with limited English proficiency (English Language Learners or "ELL") using structured English language immersion so that they achieve proficiency in the English language expeditiously. SNCA shall comply with all applicable laws including Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as amended) and the federal Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974.

Students at SNCA with limited proficiency in English will achieve proficiency in the English language through the use of SNCA's services and teaching methods. SNCA will ensure that ELL students will not be excluded from curricular and extracurricular activities based on an inability to speak and understand the language of instruction, and also that ELL students will not be assigned to special education because of their lack of English proficiency. To the extent possible, parents whose English proficiency is limited will receive notices and information from SNCA in their native language to encourage participation in the school by all members of the school community. Parental outreach may also be conducted through home visit by an SNCA official and an interpreter.

All incoming SNCA students will be tested to determine their level of proficiency in the English language. However, we will begin to identify English Language Learners (ELL) prior to their matriculation. A parent survey of all incoming students will include several questions about language skills. For example:

- Is there anyone in the home who speaks a language other than English?
- If so, what language(s)?
- Do you communicate with your children most of the time in this other language?

- Do your children speak English?
- Are your children fluent in a language other than English?

If the home language is one other than English, or if the student's first language is one other than English, the SNCA ESL teacher/coordinator or a translator shall conduct an oral interview in the student's native language and English. If the student speaks a language other than English and the student speaks little or no English, SNCA will administer the LAS Links and a student scoring at the “beginning” or “intermediate” level of proficiency will be eligible for services.

SNCA teachers will be responsible for observing each student throughout the class day with an eye toward detecting limited English proficiency. All teachers will receive professional development training on techniques for detecting whether a student has English language deficiencies and on communicating with students designated as ELL students. Any student suspected of having limited English proficiency will be tested to determine if and what level of services, if any, are necessary

Exit Criteria
The proficiency level of an identified ELL student in the English language will be measured at least annually with LAS Links to determine whether continued special services are warranted. SNCA will evaluate each student's performance in academic content areas to measure the student's progress in core subjects. If an ELL student fails to show appropriate progress in these academic areas, modifications to the instructional program may be made. Any student classified and receiving educational services as an ELL student who subsequently tests high enough to exit the program will be deemed to be no longer in need of ELL services. No student will be exited from the ESL program in grades K-2 unless he can read, write, speak, and comprehend English at the “advanced” level on LAS Links and read at the grade level proficiency on the DRA-2. In grade three and upward, the academic standard for exiting will be a score of “proficient” on the CMT or the equivalent on the Smarter Balanced Assessments in reading, mathematics, and writing. Student progress in the regular educational program after exiting the ESL program will be monitored by the ESL teacher.

c. *Describe the manner in which the school will ensure that provides parents and guardians of ELL students with report cards, and progress reports with the same frequency as general education reporting. Include a description of the manner in which the school will ensure that the reports are, to the maximum possible, written in language understandable to the parent/guardian.*

Parents of students who are identified as ELL students will be notified in writing of the services their children will receive and will notified quarterly of the child’s progress, wherever possible in the parents’ first language. Parents will also be notified in the same way when their children exit the program. Wherever possible, the school will provide a translator for Spanish speaking parents at parent/teacher conferences, and written communications between the school and parent will be translated.

(Please see the Attachment #5: “ELL Parent Notification Letter.”

d. *Clearly indicate that the school understands its responsibility to meet the state bilingual education requirements and the federal requirements of ELL students and has a detail compliance plan that includes the provision of certified personnel, receipt and retention of appropriate documentation assessments, classroom adaptions and sufficient professional development.*

All teachers will receive professional development from America’s Choice on communicating with students designated as ELL and in techniques for observing and determining if a student has English language deficiencies, as well as instructional methods such visual aids, the Rosetta Stone English language software, and kinesthetic activities which will accelerate development of ELL students in regular academic content. These teachers will be supported in learning these practices by the ESL teacher. Within the extended America’s Choice literacy blocks in SNCA’s daily schedule, there is ample time that can be used for additional intensive English language instruction, and students may also be assigned additional practice in the Rosetta Stone software in English in the after-school program. ELL students whose English proficiency is at the “beginner” level, will receive a daily period of “pull-out” intensive instruction in English. Students at the “high beginner” and “intermediate” level will receive the support of a "push-in" ESL teacher to provide one-on-one and small group support when necessary. In the event that more than 20 students in the school speak Spanish,or another language, both pull-out and push-in

support will be provided in Spanish by a bilingual education teacher, as needed.

SNCA plans to provide all necessary staff and specialized curricular materials to enable ELL students to achieve proficiency and attain the high standards established for all students in the school. SNCA will directly provide or make referrals through the Family Center for appropriate support services that may be needed by ELL students in order to achieve and maintain expected levels of academic performance. Such services may include individual counseling, group counseling, home visits, and parental counseling. SNCA will be prepared to address the needs of students who are struggling with the ESL program by providing, if it is determined to be the best course of action, assistance from an Educational Assistant who speaks that child's non-English language. SNCA will seek to hire ESL teachers and Educational Assistants who speak the foreign language that is most common among its students, which in all likelihood will be Spanish. Parents of ELL students will be kept abreast of their child's progress in English language acquisition in the language they best understand, where possible.

(See section III-4-a.)

e. *Present a detailed plan that addresses how the achievement needs of ELL students will be monitored and how that process will be sued to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and ensure that the needs of ELL students are met.*

In order to ensure that the ESL program is achieving the desired results (students are making progress in the acquisition of the English language and making prgress academically), an annual program evaluation will occur. In order to determine if any programmatic modifications are necessary, SNCA will evaluate the progress of its ELL students on our academic assessments and against that of the non-ELL students. SNCA will also track how many students are declassified as ELL and the number of instructional years it takes for this declassification to occur.

5.Admissions Policy and Criteria

a. *Describe the student admissions policy and criteria*

It shall be the policy of SNCA to give preference in admissions to students from the South Norwalk area. In the event that the school's enrollment is not filled with students who reside in that area, students from elsewhere in Norwalk will be eligible for admissions.

b. *Discuss the student recruitment process and timetable to ensure effective public information to attract a diverse student body*

Two months prior to the lottery each year, we will send all parents of grade-appropriate students in the district a letter and brochure introducing South Norwalk Collegiate Academy and inviting them to a series of a parent information sessions to learn more about our program. Norwalk Public Schools will provide us with the mailing address of all eligible families to facilitate this effort. We will also advertise in several local papers, visit community organizations, and churches, [and will include information for interested families on our website. The lottery will be conducted in a public place and open to parents and the public in April.

But in addition, because we recognize the importance of building a diverse community, the school will make a deliberate effort to recruit students often missed by conventional advertising: English Language Learners and Hispanics. Aside from translating and adapting all advertising materials to emphasize the South Norwalk Collegiate Academy's ESL program, we will also collaborate with relevant churches in the catchment area to advertise our school at their Catechism programs. Furthermore, to reach as wide an audience as possible and to mitigate the negative impact of a language barrier, we will advertise and hold several information sessions in Spanish during the months leading up to the application due date. At these special events, both parents and students alike will get a chance to learn about our school's unique curriculum, ask questions in a friendly setting, and obtain a paper copy of the Spanish application.

The school will make a concerted effort to hire Spanish-speaking staff to keep this line of communication open between parents and the school long after the recruitment and admissions processes.

c. Describe the process and timetable to be used for admitting students, including a plan for the admissions lottery or other random selection.

A two-tiered lottery will determine admission into South Norwalk Collegiate Academy. The system works as follows: all applicants from South Norwalk are put in group one and all applicants who reside in the Norwalk school district and whose application materials indicate they live in another zip code will be placed in group 2. In order to admit any student from group 2, all students from group 1 must be admitted. Within each group, admission is random by lottery. This set-up accomplishes the important goal of assuring that South Norwalk students, who are being underserved by the Norwalk Public School District, have the opportunity to attend a local school that will meet their needs.

To assure that we fill the maximum number of seats available, a waitlist will also be drawn at the lottery. If any accepted student rejects his acceptance or cannot attend for any reason, the first student from the waiting list will take his place. The lottery will be conducted in public, with parents and community members invited to attend, in order to ensure transparency and confidence in the process.

The only criteria for entrance into the lottery will be: (1) on-time submission of an application form; (2) student's eligibility for placement in the grade for which he or she is applying; and (3) residence in the City of Norwalk. Siblings of current students at the school will be given preference for admission and are guaranteed a place, though they must also submit an application.

Once admitted, parents and students will sign the South Norwalk Collegiate Academy Contract that *spells* out the obligations and responsibilities of students, parents, and the school. Since our school will function as a powerful partnership between teachers, parents, and their children, we want to make clear our expectations and mutual commitments from the outset. If the enrollment form is not submitted by the due date, the child will no longer be considered eligible for a seat in the school, and the seat will be offered to the first individual on the waiting list. We will continue to accept lottery applications after the lottery application due date, which will be considered in the order of receipt after the consideration of all applications submitted by the deadline.

d. Discuss the capacity of the school's plan to attract, enroll, and retain students from among the populations described in Section 32 (c) (A) (i) to A (v) of the Public Act 12-116.

The student recruitment and lottery process is focused on attracting low income students with a history of low academic achievement. The entire school design is for the purpose of engaging these students from South Norwalk and their families in an educational program and school community that will enable them to be prepared to succeed in college and be citizen of the world.

e. Explain how these policies further the mission of the school in a non-discriminatory manner.

South Norwalk Collegiate Academy does not discriminate on the basis of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, English language proficiency, special needs status, or any other basis. In accordance with state law, siblings of enrolled students will be given admissions preference. Except as outlined in the preceding explanation of the lottery system, no other forms of special treatment or preference will be given in the admissions process.

f. Describe how your charter school will seek to provide a diverse educational experience for students.

We will ensure a diverse educational experience through several measures:

- **Diverse teaching staff:** Our teaching staff will be ethnically and gender diverse so that students will have as teachers and mentors a group of professional adults from all backgrounds and walks of life.

- **Diverse curriculum**: Students will be exposed to a variety of viewpoints and lifestyles through the inclusion of culturally diverse and rich literacy works, history topics, and civic models. In particular, students will study works and periods pertinent to African-American and Hispanic cultures. As discussed above, the school will supplement Core Knowledge's history curriculum with references to African-American and Hispanic cultures whenever possible and relevant. Our

literature offerings, too, will reflect a deliberate attempt both to integrate the social studies topics and to reflect the backgrounds of our student population. Student will begin study of a world language beginning in kindergarten.

Overall, instruction at the school will reinforce messages of multiculturalism and diversity. As a means to this end, our music program will incorporate a diversity of composers and musical traditions. Students will learn about and celebrate holidays and traditions (Three Kings Day, Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Kwanzaa, St. Patrick's Day, etc.) from multiple cultural groups, on top of participating in relevant field trips and after-school activities.

F. Describe how the proposed charter school will impact the reduction of racial, ethnic, and economic isolation in the region where the school will be located.

The founders of South Norwalk Collegiate Academy believe that one of the most important problems facing America is the dramatic gap between the achievement of poor, African-American and Hispanic students and their wealthier, white peers. This achievement gap has manifested itself across the nation, and Connecticut is no exception. And as shown elsewhere in this application, neither is Norwalk.

However, we believe that that achievement gap is a direct result of too few effective practices in their schools, not the social or economic backgrounds of the students at these schools. Unfortunately, there is currently no school that is adequately serving the needs of South Norwalk students. By offering a rigorous curriculum and setting high standards with mechanisms that allow students to perform at these levels, South Norwalk Collegiate Academy hopes to offer South Norwalk residents a viable education for their children while simultaneously reducing the documented achievement gap in Norwalk Public Schools. Our hope is to construct and execute a successful school model that, when replicated on a state-wide or nationwide scale, will make an even bigger impact on student achievement. We also hope that the innovative, effective practices of our school will be adopted by other public schools in the Norwalk.

Most importantly, by providing the opportunities, structure, and support systems our students need to be college-ready and college-bound, our school will ensure that students get the door-opening, life-changing opportunities that college offers young people. In doing so, we will be breaking cycles of poverty and socioeconomic isolation within our students' communities and families.

6.Student Discipline Policies

a. *Describe the acts for which a student may be disciplined, including the consequences or range of consequences resulting from committing such acts, including expulsion and suspension (in- and out- of school)*
b. *Describe the* school's *policies and criteria regarding student expulsion and suspension, for both general education students and special education students and the educational alternatives available to students* who are *expelled or* suspended.

The rules governing student behavior at SNCA will be derived from the two pillars of our concept of student "character:" (1) student belief that their effective effort is the most important determinant of their school success; and (2) being a responsible member of a classroom and school community. Behavioral expectations for student effort must be clear and consistent. They will include school attendance and punctuality, beginning each class period promptly with the materials needed for the lesson, maintaining focus on the learning tasks, remaining engaged in learning without distractions, asking for help when something is not understood, and seeking additional work when an assignment is completed. Expectations for responsible citizenship in a community will include wearing the school uniform each day, active listening and paraphrasing to demonstrate understanding, communicating thoughts and feelings in an appropriate manner, working as a member of a team, respecting cultural differences, and resolving conflicts in a non-violent manner.

SNCA administrators and staff will instill these expectations in our students by teaching them the concepts behind them and the reasons for them through our school culture curriculum in morning meeting or advisory. This understanding is essential to students' capacity to apply them to new situations without needing to be reminded. The adults in the school community will also reinforce these expectations through a positive student behavior management system. From the outset, teachers and

administrators will agree upon a common set of classroom rituals and routines that will identify specific positive student behaviors and praise and rewards for them. Educating parents about these expectations and reinforcement of them will occur in school newsletters, parent education workshops and in teacher/parent conferences. In addition, there will be school-wide recognition and rewards for exhibiting good character and effort.

While a positive consistent culture will be the foundation of student discipline, we recognize the need for a consistent set of penalties for students who frequently fail to adhere to expectations. These too will be agreed upon from the outset by administrators and teachers and may include loss of privileges, after-school detention, and in-school suspension.

Continual disruption of the learning process by a student will result in in-school suspension. During the period of this suspension, students will receive regular classroom work and expected to complete it. Special education students will receive support from a certified special education teacher during the suspension, as per their IEP's. Because the health and safety of everyone in the school community is paramount, SNCA will have a strict policy of no tolerance for possession of illegal drugs and alcohol, possession of dangerous weapons, and fighting. Violations of these policies will result in student suspension, which may be as long as an entire semester. The school will make every effort to find an appropriate alternative educational environment for the student during the period of suspension. The Principal will reserve the right to recommend expulsion from school of a student whose presence constitutes an ongoing threat to the safety of the school community. Student expulsion will occur only after a hearing and action by the Governing Council.

Students who are suspended will be required to make appropriate amends for their actions before being welcomed back into our community. Suspended students will also be responsible for making up all missed work within an agreed upon timetable.

c.Include the due process procedures the school will follow in applying the discipline policy for all students,,including students eligible for special education.

Students whose behavior merits a suspension (in-school or out-of-school) will receive a hearing before the principal, with his/her parent or guardian present. At the hearing, the student will be presented with the violation of school policies resulting in the suspension and evidence of that violation, and may ask questions of the principal or staff present about the evidence. The student and parent will be allowed to provide evidence to disprove the allegation of violation of a school policies. The principal's decision will be final. A student whose out-of-school suspension is more than 5 days may appeal the decision to the Governing Council. Student expulsion will occur only after a hearing and action by the Governing Council. In cases of both suspension and expulsion, the principal and Governing Council will follow the due process requirements of the student's IEP. Due process rights of students and their parents described above will also pertain to expulsions.

d.*Include a description of the proposed qualifications and certification endorsement of the administrator that will perform the suspension or expulsion.*

The principal of the school will be a certified school administrator at the school level.

e.The plan explains how in-school suspension will be staffed by properly state-certified personnel, including an allotment of space for services to be delivered in the facilities plan.

In-school suspension will take place in an instructional area supervised by the Principal or Dean of Students, who will also be a school administrator certified at the school level.

7.Student Health and Welfare

a. Describe the school's plan for the *provision of health and welfare* services *to* students, including services of a school nurse, vision and hearing screening, immunization requirements and mandatory health assessments. Discuss *what* services *will be provided and by whom. Indicate how the school intends to comply with applicable health and welfare* statutory *requirements.*

We are committed to providing a learning environment where our students feel safe, supported and sustained, not only intellectually, but also physically and emotionally. We realize that no child, no matter how highly motivated, can thrive at SNCA when hungry, cold, or ill. To this end, we plan to take several steps to ensure the health and welfare of our students.

In adherence to the school health and sanitation requirements outlined in Chapter 169 of Title X of the Connecticut General Statutes, SNCA will arrange with our community partner, the Norwalk Community Health Center to assign a part-time nurse to the school. Where needed, she will refer students to the Center for health services.

In accordance with state and federal law, we plan to provide our students with healthy and nutritious breakfasts and lunches in addition to high quality snacks. We will contract with either NPS or an experienced food service management company, to provide students with breakfasts, lunches, milk services and a la carte items in accordance with the Connecticut State Board of Education Regulations re: Nutrition Standards for School Breakfasts and Lunches as outlined in I0-215d of the Connecticut Agencies Regulations. Our physical education and health education curriculum will also teach important concepts, skills, and behaviors concerning diet and nutrition and physical fitness.

At SNCA we also value good social, emotional, and mental health in our students. In addition to teaching about this kind of health in our health education curriculum, our Family Center's social worker and community outreach workers will counsel students on issues such as peer pressure and conflict, sex education, drug abuse, and anger management—both individually and in groups. The Center staff will also refer students and their families to our community partner, the Child Guidance Center of mid-Fairfield County for counseling and social services
students who are motivated to do this work. The After-school School Program will also offer arts enrichment courses in conjunction with community arts organizations.

SUMMER SCHOOL: SNCA plans to provide a four week summer school program, following the first year of school operations, through a partnership with a community organization with experience in operating summer and/or after-school programs. Midway through the first year of the school, we will conduct a needs assessment with teachers and parents to identify the priority student needs which will be the focus of the program—e.g. "catch up" classes in ELA and mathematics for students who have not met grade level standards, and enrichment in the arts, and individual and team sports.

IV. SCHOOL VIABILITY & ADMINISTRATION

I. Human Resources Policies and Information

a. *Describe the criteria and standards to be followed in the hiring and dismissal process of teachers, administrators, and other school staff.*

SNCA is committed to providing the excellence in school leadership and teaching that will enable our students to reach the rigorous academic goals and the personal and social development that are central to our mission. That excellence in professional performance is a function of two variables: (1) employing educators who possess the beliefs, knowledge, and skills that consist with our core values; and (2) their continuously learning new practices and improving upon existing ones in their work at the school.
Certain beliefs are "non-negotiables" in our hiring process. Candidates for employment at SNCA must demonstrate evidence of these attributes early in the hiring process in order to be seriously considered for further review. First and foremost among these is a belief that all children, especially those from low income backgrounds, are capable of developing intellectually and achieving at high academic levels. An essential corollary to this belief is a dogged persistence to find the educational practices that will enable students who are not performing as expected to reach the school's standards. As a "teacher of the year" once noted, "I want to thank all of my students for being patient while I tried to find the right strategies for teaching them." This persistence also includes a constant focus on the relevant learning goals and objectives of the students they are educating and a desire to obtain the assessment data and feedback from students, parents, and colleagues which provides evidence of student progress. In addition, we are seeking educators who eagerly participate in building professional teams and in a school community that will support outstanding student performance.

Recruitment:

In order to attract the finest candidates, SNCA will cast a broad net to attract applicants. In particular, in order to hire a faculty that mirrors the diversity of the student body, we will make concerted efforts to attract a large number of applicants who are teachers of color. As a new charter school, we recognize that part of our recruitment strategy must be to raise awareness of our school and its unique features. We will use the following sources to help locate educators with the personal and professional attributes we seek:

- **Charter School Networks:** Through our membership in the Connecticut Association of Charter Schools, our relationship with the Achievement First Schools, and contacts with KIPP and other national networks of charter schools, we will spread the word about our school and its openings for employment.
- **Executive Search Firm:** We plan to employ Gelber Search Associates, an executive search firm in Newton, Massachusetts, with a track record of recruiting school leaders for charter schools on the east coast, including founding school leaders and school leaders of color.

- **Notices to colleges and universities:** SNCA will inform the career service offices at many prestigious colleges and at historically black colleges and universities and those with large numbers of Hispanic students and use a national database for career service offices to list our openings.
- **Local Public and Private Schools:** SNCA will make a concerted effort to attract top teachers in public and private schools in Stamford, Norwalk, Bridgeport, and New Haven with experience in urban schools.

- **Web site advertisements:** SNCA will advertise openings on many web sites, including the following sites: CT REAP, Center for Ed Reform, Klingenstein Center, Monster.com, JobTrak, Project Connect, Education America.

- **The SNCA web site:** SNCA will post job openings on our web site and in postings on Facebook and Twitter.

SNCA is fortunate to have the assistance of Achievement First, the foremost educational management organization operating successful charter schools in Connecticut. From the earliest work of our School Planning Team, Nedgine Paul, the Executive Assistant to the President of AF, served as the AF liaison to SNCA, offering advice and connecting us to Human Resources and curriculum and professional staff at AF and facilitating visits to AF schools. AF has generously offered SNCA the use of their schools as sites for “walkthroughs” by our school leader candidates and their classrooms for demonstration teaching by our teacher candidates.

Teacher Selection:

The SNCA teacher selection process is designed to identify the degree to which candidates possess the beliefs, knowledge, and skills we seek in outstanding teachers. A key stage in the process involves a candidate commenting on a case study of a student who is struggling to master the content of a class lesson, even after several interventions by his teacher. We want to assess the candidate’s commitment to finding the instructional strategies that will enable the student to succeed and her resourcefulness in developing those strategies. We also ask the candidate to provide a successful lesson plan of her creation so that we can assess her capacity to teach to high levels of conceptual understanding. We also ask her to provide examples of student work which she considers to be “exceptional,” in order to assess her level of expectations of students..

The teacher selection process at SNCA includes the following steps:

I) Advertise open positions
2) Obtain a large pool of quality candidates
3) Initial resume screen
4) Teacher fills out online application with written essay to assess beliefs and writing skills
5) Application screen
6) Visit to AF school to teach lesson

7) Interview with SNCA administrators and Planning Team members
8) Reference check
9) Follow-up interview (if necessary)
10) Job offer

In addition to the beliefs and commitments identified above, the hiring criteria for teaching positions include:

- Knowledge of subject areas to be taught, including understanding of important concepts
- Capacity to develop curriculum units and lesson plans that combine instruction in basic skills and critical thinking
- Knowledge of student assessment methods, including performance assessments
- Knowledge of the cultures of SNCA students
- Capacity to empathize with students
- Commitment to one's own professional development
- Effective performance as a teacher, especially in urban areas
- College degrees, advanced degrees and certification
- Recommendations from prior employers

(Please see the Attachment #7: "Teacher, ESL Teacher, and Special Education Teacher Job Descriptions.")

Educational Assistants

Educational Assistants will be paraprofessionals who provide key instructional support to teachers in differentiating instruction. They will be assigned by a teacher to provide tutoring to individuals and small groups of students who need additional guided practice in specific reading, writing, and mathematics skills—during regular classroom instruction and in pull-out activities. They will also provide even more practice to students who require tutoring in the after-school program.

All Educational Assistants at SNCA will possess at least an associates degree and will have demonstrated the required knowledge and ability to assist in academic instruction by their performance on the ParaPro Exam administered by the Educational Testing Service.

Executive Director and Principal (K-8)

The Executive Director and Principal of SNCA will be recruited and hired through a selection process aided by Gelber Search Associates, as noted above. Key steps in the process include:

1) Facilitation of the Board Trustees deciding the key hiring criteria
2) Networking and screening of candidates by the search firm
3) Visit to an AF school for a walkthrough and observation of classrooms
4) Day long visit to Norwalk for interview with School Leader Selection committee, which includes Planning Team members, simulations, and meetings with community leaders
5) Reference checking by search consultants
6) Final interviews with the Board and selection of finalist by the Board
7) Negotiation of employment contract of the finalist with the Board, assisted by search consultants

In additions to the beliefs and commitments identified above, the key hiring criteria for the school leaders at SNCA include the following:

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

- Successful leadership in a school or community organization, preferably one serving urban Children and their families
- Capacity to build effective relationships with elected and appointed public officials

- Excellent written and oral communications skills
- Financial management skills
- Track record in raising funds from private benefactors and foundations
- Capacity to analyze organizational problems and to implement systemic solutions to them

PRINCIPAL:

- Knowledge of exemplary practices in curriculum and instruction and in the use of data on student learning to improve instruction
- Capacity to develop relationships with students and staff that support their effort and development
- Excellent written and oral communications skills
- Capacity to lead in the development of a school community and culture, based on a mission and core values
- Experience and competency in the cultures of urban students, especially African-American and Hispanic students
- College degrees, advanced degrees and certification
- Recommendations from prior employers (and in some cases, staff and students)

Please see the Attachment #8: "Executive Director and Principal Job Descriptions and Academic Dean and Dean of Students")

Dismissal:

The Governing Council of SNCA will be responsible for the annual evaluation of the performance of the Executive Director and Principal and will have sole responsibility for an annual decision regarding the extension of the two school leaders' annual employment contracts. The Council's Finance and Management Committee will conduct a mid-year review of the performance of the Executive Director, based on the job description for the position and the progress of the school in achieving the goals of the annual School Improvement Plan. That committee will draft a year-end evaluation of his performance, based on student assessment data and relevant feedback from staff and parents regarding the above criteria, for review and approval by the entire Council. The Council's Education and Accountability Committee will follow a similar process in the annual evaluation of the performance of the Principal.

The Principal will be responsible for the annual evaluation of the performance of teachers and support staff at SNCA, all of whom will be employed under one year contracts, subject to annual renewal by the , Counci, upon recommendation by the Principal, except for the School Manager and Administrative Assistant, whose performance will be evaluated by the Executive Director. Teachers will be evaluated based on two set of performance criteria:

(1) observations of classroom instruction by the Principal and Academic Dean;
(2) and (2) evidence from the student assessment data that their students are achieving at or above standards and/or making sufficient progress toward those standards. The Principal will make a recommendation regarding the renewal of the contract of each teacher and staff for approval by the Council. Coiuncil authority to overturn the recommendation of the Principal regarding a contract renewal will be limited to cases of a serious violation of a teacher's right to due process under the evaluation system.

b.Describe the targeted staff size and the teacher-to-student ratio aligned to the school mission, students served, and budget.

Each classroom at the elementary level (K-5) will have a teacher and an educational assistant (paraprofessional) with 20 students. The educational assistants will remain with the same student cohort throughout the day, when teachers specialize in literacy/social studies or mathematics/science in grades 3-5. The combined student to staff ratio in each classroom will be 10:1. We project one special education and one ESL teacher for the elementary grades, with a second teacher in each area in the middle school grades. In addition, there will be part-time teachers in world language, physical education/health, and the arts. These positions will become full-time positions when the school grows to grades K-3. The resulting student-teacher ratios will range from 12.8 to 13.7. When the school social worker, community outreach worker, and educational assistants are included, the total staff working

directly with students will number 12 in Year 1, with a student-staff ratio of 6.6. In Year 5, when the school has grown to grades K-5, the total number of staff will be 26.6. At the middle school level (6-8), there will be teacher specialists in all of the academic subject areas, as well as in physical education/health and performing and visual arts. These small student-teacher ratios are necessary to provide the level of individualized instruction and personal attention needed by low income students.

The administrative and support staff will include the Executive Director, Principal, and Administrative Assistant in Year 1 and grow to four persons in Year 2, when the Dean of Students is added, and grow to six persons in year 3, when the Academic Dean, and the School Manager are added.

c.Provide job descriptions for all certified staff.

(Please see previous attachments with job descriptions.)

As previously noted, the School Manager will be responsible for the management of the school budget, facilities, scheduling, and technology systems. The Administrative Assistant will be responsible for internal and external communications at the school, maintenance of student records and personnel records, and other clerical duties, as determined by the two school leaders. These two positions will be filled by non-certified staff. The Academic Dean (K-8) will be responsible for assisting the Principal in teacher evaluations, and for facilitating curriculum development, professional development and the student assessment system, under the supervision of the Principal. The Dean of Students (K-8) will be responsible for a productive and orderly school climate through the student behavior management system, and for coordination of student support services, including the Family Center, special education, English as a Second Language, and after-school program. The Dean positions will be filled by certified teachers or administrators.

Some of the major roles and responsibilities of SNCA teachers are outlined below. This list is a guide to the key responsibilities of teachers at SNCA, which may be subject to changes by the Principal, based on evolving circumstances at the school.

- *Middle* School *Teaching Loads* — Teachers in grades 6-8 will be specialists in one academic subject and will teach a maximum of 275 minutes per day, plus advisory. In most cases, teachers in the middle grades will have three preparations (different grade levels taught).
- *Elementary School Teaching Loads* —The teaching load for primary teachers (K-2) will consist of teaching six hours per day, with 90 minutes daily of prep time and a 30 lunch period. Teachers in grades 3-5 will be specialists in literacy/social studies or mathematics/science and will teach a maximum of six hours, with the same prep time and lunch period as the primary teachers.
- *Summer Teacher Institute* – New teachers at SNCA will be expected to participate in the Institute--4 weeks in length. The Institute for returning teachers will usually be one week in length, although the Principal will reserve the right to schedule an additional week, under special circumstances. Teacher pay for the Institutes will be a $1,000 per week stipend, which will not be part of their base salary.
- Classroom *Set-up* – Each teacher will be expected to spend at least two days to set up her classroom over the summer, as part of her contractual obligation.
- *Prep Periods* —Each teacher will have at least 90 minutes of duty-free preparation periods a day; if necessary, teachers may leave the building during these times; on reduced-hour days (chiefly Fridays), teachers may not have formal preparation time.
- *Grade Level Team* meetings —All teachers will attend a grade level team meeting for at least one hour a week; the team may decide more meeting time is necessary. Grade level teams generally meet during common lunch/prep periods.
- Parent Conferences, *Field Trips* —As part of the SNCA program, teachers are expected to attend teacher/parent conference nights and chaperone field trips.

d. Provide a *copy of the certification* endorsement *for all classroom* teachers *including principals and professional support staff on or* before the *opening of* school; *also include a description* of *their* proposed *qualifications; indicate the number* of *staff who will pursue* certification *via the alternate* route *program* (provides expedited *certification through education and experience).*

All relevant SNCA staff certifications will be submitted prior to the beginning of the school year. All SNCA teachers will need to possess or obtain up-to-date teacher certification from the state of Connecticut, but

we reserve the right to employ teachers who are by our standards the most qualified candidates available for a vacant position, if they are eligible to receive certification via the alternate program.

e.The Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM) for beginning teachers includes guided teacher support and coaching and completion of the "instructional modules." The TEAM Program is designed around five professional growth modules in order to provide a framework for the support of new teachers. The modules are classroom environment, planning, instruction, assessment, and professional responsibility. Describe how the school will implement the TEAM Program:

- *Describe how the school will select the TEAM facilitator and TEAM Coordinating Committee and sure that these educators have the knowledge and skills to implement the program.*
- *Describe how the school will select mentors and ensure that they have participated in the required training prior to mentoring.*
- *Describe the school's process of review of reflection papers on the five modules and ensure that the reviewers have participated in the required training.*
- *Describe how the school will provide support and professional development to beginning teachers and their mentors.*

Each summer, new SNCA Teachers, including beginning teachers, will participate in a four week New Teachers' Institute which introduces them to our school culture, standard classroom management routines, curricula and planning and delivery of instructional programs, as well as the system for assessing student learning. A series of seven professional days built into the school calendar will enable the teachers to deepen their understanding and skills in these areas. Weekly teacher team meetings on Friday afternoons will enable them to solve common instructional problems and share effective strategies. Teachers may also attend case management conferences on the needs of individual students. Daily common planning periods for teachers on the same grade level will focus on the progress of the students on that grade level.

Following the New Teacher Institute, each beginning teacher will be assigned a mentor to engage in the reflection on his/her specific needs for his/her development in the five modules prescribed by the TEAM Program: (1)classroom environment; (2) planning; (3) instruction; (4) assessment; and (5) professional responsibilities. Based on that self-assessment, the teacher and mentor will select which modules to focus on in the first and second year of the program and plan the activities in those modules. Mentors may be literacy and math coaches, experienced teachers, or the Academic Dean. Given the rich set of professional development opportunities available to SNCA teachers, the focus will be on those SNCA practices in which the beginning teacher is in need of the greatest learning. The Principal will serve as the TEAM Coordinator, and the TEAM Coordinating Committee will consist of the principal, academic dean and the mentors. The school will contract with the Norwalk Public Schools for mentor training for the TEAM Coordinating Committee.

g. When describing how the proposed charter school will implement the Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation:

- *Indicate the decision to adopt the State SEED model for teacher and administrators evaluation <u>OR</u> describe the planning process to design an alternative that meets the Core Requirements outlined in the Guidelines (June 2012)*
- *Describe how the school will ensure that teachers and administrators are prepared to implement the system.*

SNCA will adopt the SEED model. The school will contract with the Norwalk Public Schools or the Connecticut SDE for training for a committee of administrators and teachers in how to develop our own system of indicators in the four required areas:

(1) student academic growth and development
(2) observation of teacher or administrator performance and practice.
(3) parent feedback
(4) whole school learning indicators

Teachers whose summative performance rating by the Principal or Academic Dean at the mid-year check-in is rated below "proficient" will be placed on "probationary status." At the-end-of-year conference conducted by the Principal in April, the teacher will be recommended for contract non-renewal, if his/her

summative rating has not reached the “proficient” level.

The SNCA school culture will stress continuous learning by teachers as well as students through a myriad of methods of informal feedback. Both the Principal and the Academic Dean will be expected to visit each classroom at least once a week, in addition to their lengthy visits for formal observations, and to provide ongoing feedback about both students and staff. The doors to all classrooms will always be open, and teachers will be encouraged to provide informal feedback to their colleagues. “ Feedback” Is defined in our school culture as information which will help the learner, student and adult, improve through his/her practice and will be eagerly sought by all members of the school community.

g.Describe human resource policies governing salaries and fringe benefits, hiring, personnel contracts, affirmative action, which align to the school mission, students served, and budget.

Salaries and benefits at SNCA will be competitive with those paid in Norwalk Public Schools, adjusted upward by 5% for teachers to compensate for our longer school day and year. In addition, teachers will be paid a $1,000 per week stipend for their participation in the Summer Teacher Institutes, in addition to their base salaries. Teachers will also be eligible for a bonus to be paid to all staff members, if the school as a whole meets the achievement goals set by the SNCA Board of Trustees in the annual School Improvement Plan. Teachers will also be reimbursed for tuition expenses in graduate courses that are relevant to their duties at SNCA.

All SNCA administrators and staff will be employed on renewable one year contracts, as will teachers in their first or second year at the school. Third year teachers will be eligible for tenure at the start of their fourth year, and the tenure of teachers on leave from a public school district to teach at SNCA will be honored. As previously noted, the Governing Council will have the sole authority to renew all teacher and staff contracts, acting upon the recommendations of the Executive Director or the Principal. The Board will have the authority to overturn a recommendation of the two administrators only in cases of a serious violation of the due process outlined in the teacher evaluation system. SNCA administrators will also reserve the right to change the schedules and/or reduce the teaching loads of teachers and staff. As a matter of policy, SNCA will retain the right to dismiss a staff member during the course of a one year contract, in cases where his/her conduct compromises the safety of students or adults in the school.

The Governing Council and administrators of SNCA will vigorously pursue a policy of employing a diverse staff that reflects the background of our students and families. The key strategy will be to actively recruit African-American and Hispanic candidates, including those who are bilingual in English and Spanish, in order to have a diverse pool of qualified candidates from which to select people who meet our high standards.

As previously noted, providing the students at SNCA with the effective teaching which will enable to reach the challenging academic goals of the school is a function of hiring teachers with the right personal and professional qualities and engaging them in ongoing professional development (PD) that expands their repertoire of teaching practices. This PD will occur on three levels:
(1) in workshops during our annual Summer Teacher Institute and a series of monthly PD days during the school year, when school is closed to students;
(2) during weekly Friday afternoon teacher team meetings, when school is dismissed early; and
(3) during daily common planning periods, when teachers plan lessons together.

In the early years of the school, when new teachers are joining the staff each summer, the Summer Teacher Institute will engage them in an intensive four week introduction to the school’s curricula, teaching practices, and school culture

(See section I-4-c.)

2. Building Options

a. Describe *your present options* for *a* school *building, including your* timetable for *identifying and acquiring* it.

Present plans are to provide the necessary classrooms, an area for physical education and the arts, and office—in the Grace Baptist Church education wing In Years 1 & 2 and to move into a permanent facility in Year 3. SNCA is currently under discussion with Norwalk developers, A. Flayan and Read Auerbach to renovate an existing structure as a permanent location in South Norwalk, which would provide the necessary facilities for the school at full enrollment—a total of 40,000 square feet.

b. *Explain how this site would* be *a suitable facility for the* proposed school, *including any plans to renovate and bring* the *facility into compliance with all applicable school building codes.*

The educational consultant to our School Planning Team, Dr. John Strand, who has extensive experience in planning the construction of new school facilities as a Principal and Superintendent of Schools, has developed an analysis of the space needs of the school. We have also benefited from an analysis of the space needs of a permanent school facility provided by Achievement First. These comprehensive analyses have identified the necessary classrooms, areas for instruction in the performing arts and visual arts, an all purpose area for physical education and food service, offices, conference rooms, a Family Resource Center, an outdoor play area, and all of the other facilities required of a permanent site for the school. The school start-up budget includes funds to employ an architect with expertise in school construction to assist in the planning and construction of the permanent site. We do not anticipate a need for significant renovations to the temporary site.

c. *Describe financing plans for acquisition* of the *facility.*

SNCA leasing temporary space for the first two years of school operations, and we have included the estimated cost of that lease in the school operating budget for those years. We will consider two options for acquisition of the permanent site: (1) purchase of an existing building and renovations to make it suitable for school use; (2) construction of a new building. The first is the preferred option. Once we know the costs involved in the first case, we will seek available federal and state funding for charter school buildings. When those sources have been exhausted, the Governing Coiuncil is committed to mounting a capital campaign to raise private funds for 50% of the remainder of the cost of purchasing and renovating the building. The other half of those costs will be acquired through a bank loan. The Projected Five Year Budget includes an item for "loan repayment" beginning in Year 3. In the case of construction of a new building for the school, we will explore the possibility of contracting with a third party to use federal market tax credits to construct the building and rent it to SNCA on a very long term lease. We have held preliminary discussions with a non-profit developer of cultural and educational buildings, including charter schools, about that possibility.

d. *Indicate the costs associated with your building, provide an explanation for how the cost was determined and ensure that they are aligned with your budget.*

The estimated rent in the budget for a temporary site for years 1 and 2 of $60,000 is based on a rate of $10 per square foot, including minor improvements by the landlord. The budget also provides funds for utilities and cleaning and minor repairs. The estimated cost of renovating an existing building not in use as a school for a permanent site is four million dollars, with half of it raised privately through a capital campaign and the other half through a mortgage, which will be paid annually, beginning in year 3.

4. Financial Plan

Prepare a pre-opening budget, a projected five year budget, projected cash flow for year 1 and a schedule of borrowings and repayments.

(Please see Attachments #9, 10, 11: "Pre-opening Budget" and "Projected 5 Year Budget" and "Projected Cash Flow."

The pre-opening budget of $533,000 does contain the cost of employing a school principal and an Executive Director in advance of the school opening, as well as an architectural consultant to assist in facility development, and a Summer Professional Development Institute for staff in advance of the school opening. As of March 1, 2013, SNCA has bank balance of $31,000. In addition, the Mayor of Norwalk is holding in escrow a total of $22,000 raised for the school at the Mayor's Ball of 2012. With commitments from Bruce and Diane Ritter, local philanthropists from Ridgefield, Connecticut, of $190,000 from their original matching grant of $250,000 and from Linda McMahon of Greenwich, Connecticut of a $100,000 grant, SNCA already has raised $343,000—more than 60% of the start-up budget. We anticipate raising the remaining necessary funds from local individuals and businesses. The Governing Council has

individuals who have the capacity to do that.

Ultimately, we are hopeful that the state of Connecticut will opt to grant parity funding to successful state charter schools, making our operations more fiscally sustainable in the long term. We anticipate supplementing our per pupil allocation with federal charter school start-up grants for the first three years of school operations, and Title 1, Title 2, and eRate grants on an annual basis, in addition to reimbursement for special education and ESL program expenses. Managing this effort will be a primary responsibility of the Executive Director.

a. *Explain the structure for managing the school's finances. Include any fiscal staff positions, required qualifications, and job duties*

The Governing Council will bear responsibility for financial oversight of the school, while the School Manager will be responsible for day-to-day management of funds and will have an accounting background. The Council will have a treasurer with expertise in finance, Gil Watkins, who is a CPA. The Council will be responsible for reviewing and approving the annual budgets prepared by the Executive Director prior to the beginning of our fiscal year. The Council's Finance and Management Committee will review quarterly financial reports prepared by the Executive Director and a year-end independent financial audit, with data concerning the school's revenues, expenditures, and cash flow. Notable deviations from the annual budget will be brought to the attention of the full Council with recommendations for corrective action.

b. *Describe how the school will track finances in its daily business operations.*

The School Manager will track the daily finances through the use of financial record-keeping software approved by the Treasurer.

c. *Describe the fiscal controls and financial management policies the Governing Council will employ to provide oversight of the school's financial position.*

(**See Section a. above.)**

d. *A financial statement audit, including Federal and State Audits, shall be performed annually by and independent CPA.*

(See Section a. above.)

5. Transportation

a. *Discuss plans for transporting students within the local school district to and from school. What arrangements if any have* been made *with the local school board/boards?*

As stipulated by the legislation governing Connecticut state charter schools, all SNCA students residing in our catchments area, the City of Norwalk, will be guaranteed school bus transportation to and from school by the Norwalk Public Schools. The school will reimburse the district for transportation on school days not included in the district calendar.

b. *If you plan to implement an extended day or extended year* program *which requires transportation* beyond *what the district provides, what arrangements will be made to transport these students?*

We expect most of our students to participate in the voluntary breakfast and after-school programs. Parents of students who do not participate will be required to arrange transportation for their children. The operating budget includes the cost of transportation of students on days when the school district is not in session.

C.Indicate what transportation options, if any, are available for out of *district students.*

There are currently no plans for students from outside the Norwalk public school district to attend SNCA.

6. Waiver Requests

A. Waivers of *existing state statutes can* be requested as *a part of the application (section I 0-66bb (d)* of the *Connecticut General Statutes). Please* describe *and* provide a *justification for waivers* of *statutes that the school believes are* necessary for the successful *operation of the charter school. Please note that the law specifically exempts certain statutes from waiver.*

SNCA is not requesting any waivers at this time. We anticipate requesting a waiver of the enrollment cap of 300 students in a K-8 school as our total enrollment approaches the projected maximum of 330 students.

7. Charter School Self-Evaluation and Accountability

a. *Based on* your *mission statement and learning objectives, school management and governance, admissions policy and criteria, and financial plan, describe the school's* self-assessment *or evaluation design to ensure that the school is: 1) demonstrating educational progress of students; 2) meeting* its stated mission *and goals; 3) fiscally* solvent *and responsible; 4) making sufficient efforts to attract, enroll, and retain students from among the populations described in Public Act 12-116, Section 32 (c)(A)(i) to A (v); and 5) making efforts to* reduce *racial, ethnic, and economic isolation.*

The SNCA Governing Council, administrators, teachers, and staff will hold themselves accountable in a transparent and public way for achieving the school's mission and goals. This accountability will be accomplished through annual collection of a wide range of data regarding school performance and analysis of the data to determine the feedback in it—the strengths and successes of the school and the weaknesses/areas that need improvement. That analysis will lead to an Annual School Report, which will contain a School Improvement Plan for the coming year(s) and will be widely circulated to parents, local media, the school's community partners, and the State Department of Education. The school goals are outlined below. "SBA" refers to Smarter Balanced Assessments .

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Reading Achievement

Grade 1	DRA-2:	50% of students on grade level
Grade 2	DRA-2:	60% of students on grade level
Grade 3	MAP:	70% of students at grade level proficiency
	SBA	60% of students at/or above goal
Grade 4	MAP:	80% of students at grade level proficiency
	SBA:	70% of students at/or above goal
Grade 5	MAP:	90% of students at grade level proficiency
	SBA:	80% of students at/or above goal

Language Usage Achievement

Grade 1	MAP:	50% of students at grade level proficiency
Grade 2	MAP:	60% of students at grade level proficiency

Writing Achievement

Grade 3	SBA:	60% of students at/or above goal
Grade 4	SBA:	70% of students at/or above goal
Grade 5	CMT:	80% of students at/or above goal

Mathematics Achievement

Grade 1	MAP:	50% of students at grade level proficiency
Grade 2	MAP:	60% of students at grade level proficiency
Grade 3	MAP:	70% of students at grade level proficiency
	SBA:	60% of students at/or above goal
Grade 4	MAP:	80% of students at grade level proficiency
	SBA:	70% of students at/or above goal
Grade 5	MAP:	90% of students at grade level proficiency
	SBA:	80% of students at/or above goal

Character/Personal Development

Student Attendance:	school average of 95%
Student Suspensions:	less than 5% of students are suspended in a year
Student Effort:	90% of students rated by teachers as “meet expectations”
Student Retention:	95% or more of students remain in the school from year to year (excluding those who move out of the district)
Student Teamwork:	90% of students rated by teachers as “effective team members”

Teacher Professionalism:

Teacher Attendance:	98% teacher attendance (excluding serious illness)
Teacher Observations:	All first year teachers will be formally observed at least six times per year. All other teachers will be observed at least three times per year.
Professional Development:	Teachers will receive at least ten professional development days per year, including the Summer Institute for Teachers.

Organizational Stability:

Financial:	The annual school budget will be balanced between revenue and expenses. All salaries, pension payments, payroll expenses, payments to vendors, and other obligations will be paid on time.
Board of Trustees:	Attendance at monthly Governing Council meetings will average 80% or higher, and turnover in Board membership will be less than 20% annually.
Staff Turnover:	Teacher turnover will be less than 25% per year in the first two years and less than 10% per year thereafter.
Enrollment:	Total student enrollment will be at 90% of capacity or more in any year and will be comprised of at least 90 African-American and Hispanic children and at least 90% low income.

a. Describe *how you intend to* hold *your school accountable to both* parents *and* other *stakeholders.*

At SNCA we know that parent and family support of our students, especially communicating belief in their children’s capacity to achieve at high levels and reinforcement of the school value put on maintaining a high level of student effort, is essential to student success. Through our student-parent-school contract we will pledge to provide students with a safe, caring, and highly effective learning environment. We expect all parties to fulfill the specific responsibilities described below:

School Contract: All parents, students, and teacher advisors will sign the contract described above.

Parent Phone Calls: All parent phone calls will be returned within 24 hours. Parents will receive at least one phone call update on their child's progress from a teacher every quarter. Parents will also be expected to return calls from the teacher or school within 24 hours.

Weekly Progress Reports: Parents will receive a weekly progress report that outlines their child's assignment completion, effort, attendance and any discipline issues.

Report Cards and Parent-Teachers: Conferences: Parents will receive student report cards four times per year and will be expected to attend conferences with teachers twice a year to review student progress.

Parent Education Workshops: Parents will be expected to attend two workshops per year at the school’s Family Center on topics such as understanding student assessment reports, motivating student effort, and positive strategies for managing their children’s behavior. Workshop will be scheduled during the day, in the evenings, and on Saturdays to be convenient for parents to attend.

Student Home Study Area: Parents are expected to provide a quiet area for their children to do their homework and to read independently.

Parent Participation Report: Parents will receive a report each year which provides specific data regarding their fulfillment of the above responsibilities. Those who have fallen short of meeting the responsibilities will be expected to attend a conference at the school to discuss how to improve their performance.

Parent Leadership Council: The school will form a council of parent leaders which will meet monthly with school administrators to provide the school with feedback about parent concerns, will suggest topics for parent education workshops, and offer suggestions for improving the school. This Council will also participate in the process of developing the annual School Improvement Plan and will organize at least two major fund-raising or community awareness activities at the school per year.

School Update: Parents will receive a written communication from the school every week detailing upcoming events, Parent Leadership Council initiatives, and news from the school.

To enable parents, community stakeholders, the media, and regulatory agencies to hold the school accountable, SNCA will use the following mechanisms:

- **Annual School Report:** SNCA will publish an annual school report outlining school performance on a number of the indicators described above. The Report will analyze this data and draw conclusions about the strengths and weaknesses of the school both educationally and fiscally.
- **SNCA School Improvement Plan:** In response to the findings in the Annual School Report, the school will publish an Annual School Improvement Plan in which the Board of Trustees describes its goals for school improvement and strategies for achieving them.
- **External Evaluators:** SNCA anticipates an annual review of the school by an external evaluation team commissioned by the State Department of Education office responsible for making a recommendation regarding the renewal of the school charter in the fifth year of operation. If that review does not include an annual visit to the school, we will, with the help of Achievement First, commission a team of Board members, administrators, teachers, and parents from other Connecticut charter schools for that purpose.

The school will develop an electronic student information and personnel information system that maintains timely records for all school data required by the Norwalk Public Schools and State Department of Education.

7. Timetable

a. Provide a *detailed timetable* of projected steps *and* dates *leading* to *the opening* of the *charter* school. *The timetable should include, but is not limited to, outreach/enrollment, curriculum development, staffing, and building acquisition.*

April 20133
- Submit charter application

May 2013
- Build community support in local hearings on charter application

June 2013
- Obtain school charter

August 2013
- Commence search for Executive Director and Principal
- Begin Governing Council private fund-raising campaign for Pre-Operating Budget

Nov. 2013
- Sign Executive Director and Principal to employment contracts
- Establish school office
- Begin community awareness campaign among families, funders, educators, and legislators

Dec. 2013
- Complete campaign for private funding of the School Pre-operating Budget
- Negotiate lease for school site of Years 1 and 2

Jan. 2014
- Continue community awareness campaign

- Begin fund-raising for Year 1 of school Operating Budget
- Sign Administrative Assistant to employment contracts

Feb. 2014

- Begin teacher recruitment
- Begin student/family recruitment
- Develop systems for financial management—payroll, purchasing, accounting, etc.

March 2014

- Initiate screening of teacher candidates
- Continue community awareness campaign and student/family recruitment
- Initiate acquisition of furniture and equipment and technology
- Plan Summer Institute for Teachers with curriculum publishers—e.g. American's Choice, Singapore Math.

April 2014

- Complete screening of teacher candidates and sign teacher contracts
- Complete facility renovations
- Deadline for student applications
- Conduct lottery for student admissions
- Secure line of credit with bank

May 2014

- Complete acquisition of equipment and furniture and technology
- Begin development of student and parent handbook and school policies and procedures manual
- Begin paraprofessional recruitment
- Negotiate school services contracts with NPS —food, transportation
- Negotiate contracts for insurance and building cleaning and maintenance
- Deadline for parents of children selected in the lottery to enroll their enrollment in the school
- Initiate purchasing of textbooks, software, supplies, etc.

June 2014

- Screening of paraprofessional candidates with teachers
- Employment of paraprofessionals
- Complete purchasing of textbooks, etc.
- Complete student and parent handbook and policy manual
- Establish payment schedule for state and federal aid to school and cash flow for school
- Complete private fund-raising campaign for Year 1 of School Operations

July 2014

- Begin Summer Teacher Institute
- Plan parent and student orientations

August 2014

- Complete Summer Teacher Institute
- Parent Orientation
- Student Orientation
- Prepare classrooms and school for school opening
- School opens

V. PREFERENCES

If you are claiming a preference for any of the following, complete *the* sections *below:*

1. Serving High-need Student Populations

SNCA will serve primarily students with a history of low academic performance and students who receive free or reduced-price lunch, pursuant to federal law and regulations.

a. *Refer to sections of the application that support the school's commitment and ability to servinthe student populations, including, but not limited to, the mission and vision, education program, student assessment, staffing, professional development, and admission policy and budget. Indicate how the school will lead to increased student achievement of such students.*

The children of South Norwalk who will attend this school need, first and foremost, a school community in which everyone, especially their teachers, believe that any past history of low academic performance and low income background does not limit their future school success who will have high expectations for their

academic achievement, and who will be resourceful in finding the educational strategies to make this happen. Our vision is for them to receive an enriched education currently reserved for children in private schools and affluent public schools—one that prepares them to think critically, solve problems, act globally and be competitive in the 21st century economy. To do that, we have designed an innovative school which will teach a world language beginning in kindergarten using state-of-the-are educational software (Rosetta Stone), use a world recognized mathematics program (Singapore Math), an inquiry based science program (FOSS), a martial arts program to build focus and confidence, and teachers who are specialized in math and science beginning in 3rd grade. Our pedagogy will combine data based skills teaching with constructivist teaching. We will use an adaptive student assessment system (MAP). Our school culture will build student and teacher belief that effort, not innate ability, determines success.

b. Explain specific strategies the school will use to attract, enroll, and retain students from the target student populations.

Besides the innovative, world class educational program which will attract parents and enable their children to achieve school success, SNCA will have a unique capacity to reach out to and engage the parents of South Norwalk through our Family Center, with a comprehensive set of community partners who will support parents in support their children.

3.Reduction of Racial, Ethnic, and Economic Isolation

As previously noted, the greatest cause of racial, ethnic, and economic isolation of the low income and minority children of South Norwalk served by SNCA is the large achievement gap between them and the other children in the Norwalk. By providing these children and their parents with a high quality alternative to the public schools they are currently required to attend, we will reduce that isolation.

4. Higher Education Institution

a. Verify that the applicant is a higher education institution.

N.A.

SNCA will be involved in a partnership with Norwalk Community College that will provide opportunities in adult education such as a GED program, ESL classes, and computer classes for the parents of SNCA students. Through its service learning program, the college will also encourage its students to serve as volunteer tutors in the SNCA after-school program.

5. Priority School District or Districts with at least 75% Racial or Ethnic Minority Enrollment

a. Explain where the students served by the proposed will reside.

One hundred percent of the students at SNCA will be drawn from the Norwalk Public Schools, a Priority School District. The target population is children from South Norwalk.
(See Section III-5-c. Admissions and Lottery Policies)

6. Location at Work Site

a. Describe the work site where the school would be located and who will be served.

The school will be housed in a temporary site during Years 1 and 2. In Year 3 and beyond, it will be housed in a facility of at least 40,000 square feet in South Norwalk, which has been renovated for school use. It will serve up to 330 students in grades K-8.

7.Serving an Underserved Geographic Location, Age/Grade Level, or Mission Not Addressed by Existing Charter Schools

a. *Describe how your charter school will* serve *underserved populations.*

SNCA will serve primarily students from South Norwalk, which is the section of Norwalk with the greatest number of low income and African-American and Hispanic students in Norwalk—the most underserved population in the Norwalk Public Schools, as evidenced by the previously noted achievement gap between them and the other students in the district. SNCA will focus exclusively on the challenge of accelerating the achievement of these students so that they perform at the same level or higher than the other students—in a school located in the community in which they live.

The only current charter school in Norwalk, Side By Side Charter School, has a limited number of seats for children from South Norwalk, due to a large number of children enrolled from other parts of Norwalk and other Fairfield County school districts.

VI.DOCUMENTATION

To be submitted* prior to *the granting of the charter:

I. Safety, Liability, and Insurance

a. *Describe your school's insurance* coverage *plans, including* health, *automobile (for pupil transportation), general liability, property,* officer *and employee liability.*

We will obtain the necessary insurance plans prior to the award of the charter and have included their costs in the operating budget.

b. Please *submit written documentation of*
- *Signed copy of facility lease;*
- *Approved inspection by a local building inspector;*
- Approved Inspection by the local Fire Department;
- *Health inspection certificate; and*
- *Compliance with all other federal and state health and* safety *laws and regulations.*

All such documentation and verifications will be provided in a timely fashion as they become available, subsequent to the negotiation of a lease for the facility.

2. Governance and Other Documentation

a. *Copies of incorporation documents.*

SNCA is a non-stock, non-profit corporation under Connecticut law.

b. *Board members' names and* addresses.

(Please see the Attachments: Resumes of the Founding Board Members of South Norwalk Collegiate Academy.)

c,d,e,f,g. Documentation of approved curriculum, bylaws of the governing council, school employment policies, and copies of certification endorsements for staff will be provided prior to school opening.