

PROSPECTUS

I. Executive Summary

Mission Statement: Avance Charter High School will prepare its students to become college graduates and community-grown leaders in a nurturing and academically rigorous environment. Avance Charter High School will accomplish this by offering a college preparatory curriculum that integrates community service and builds on the community assets of East Harlem.

Key Design Elements and Unique Characteristics: To achieve its mission, ACHS will create a high school that has the following key design elements and unique characteristics. Each key design element corresponds to one of the school's four cornerstones: Academic Rigor, College Preparation, Community Assets and Leadership Development.

Academic Rigor: The following elements speak to ACHS' academic rigor and our recognition that students will come to us with academic deficits that need to be addressed in order for them to meet and exceed our rigorous learning standards, matriculate into college and become future leaders.

- **Extended Day and Year:** ACHS' school day for students is from 8:00 a.m-6:00 p.m. There will be 195 days of school (exclusive of Saturday Academy). The main instructional portion of the school day is from 8:00 am- 3:15 pm during which time students are engaged in instruction in the core subjects of English, math, science and social studies, foreign language study, and grade level seminars and advisories. The mandatory extended day portion of the school day is from 3:30 pm-6:00 pm. During this time students are engaged in tutoring and extracurricular activities.
- **Saturday Academy:** Like the Extended Day, this is mandatory for all students and is time during which students receive academic support and participate in extracurricular activities. Saturday Academy will run from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. twice a month for the full school year.
- **Summer Bridge Program:** ACHS will institute a three-week academic Summer Bridge Program for incoming 9th graders prior to the start of the school year focused on academic remediation and preparation and school acclimation.
- **High Standards:** The promulgation of high standards will be a hallmark of ACHS. Clear and public standards for what students should learn at all grade levels will be the guide for all stakeholders to know what knowledge and skills students *must* master in order to be prepared to succeed in college. The school's standards are aligned with NYS' newly adopted common core standards.

College Preparation

- **Curriculum:** ACHS' high standards are accompanied by a rigorous college preparatory curriculum that offers opportunities for accelerated instruction. This rigorous curriculum is consistent with our belief that all students can excel. Studies show that the quality and intensity of high school coursework are the most important determinants of success in college—more important than class rank or scores on college admissions tests.¹ ACHS' course sequence progressing from 9th to 12th grade is rigorous and ambitious. In addition to 4 years each of English and math, students will also take 4 year sequences in Science and Social Studies. By 11th grade, students have the opportunity to take a selection of AP Courses in English, history, science and math. While ACHS will not impose requirements over and above what is required by the Regents to receive a NYS Regents Diploma, we will *expect* them to accomplish more, including taking 4 years of a language other than English and passing one AP course. ACHS will partner with local colleges to allow students on an accelerated track to take college-level courses by 12th grade.
- **Instructional Practices:** Our teachers will use a synthesis of *data-driven* instructional best practices to deliver the school's rigorous curriculum to its students. Teachers will use a variety of instructional methods and techniques utilizing student assessment data to differentiate instruction in both homogeneous and heterogeneous groupings of students. Instructional methods will include, but not

¹ Adelman, C. (1998). *Answers in the toolbox*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

PROSPECTUS

be limited to, the workshop model, teacher-led seminars, Socratic questioning, student-directed instruction and project-based instruction. Our students should be exposed to a variety of teaching styles in anticipation of what they will encounter in college where they must make the seamless transition from, and be able to function in, one professor's classroom to another.

- **Extracurriculars:** Extracurriculars are aligned with our mission to prepare students to be successful in college and the world beyond not merely because they strengthen a student's high school resume (although that is an important consideration), but because participation in these activities has tremendous attendant benefits which support better student academic performance. These benefits include having a sense of community spirit and belonging, personal pride and an understanding of the value of fair play, an increased sense of honesty and trustworthiness, and, importantly the prevention of negative behaviors like substance abuse and gang affiliation.

Leadership: At ACHS, we expect our students to embody and actively live the principle that leaders are in service of others. At ACHS, to lead does not mean to hold power over all, but rather to be in service of others and to be in positions to bring about positive change for the benefit of others.

- **Mentoring:** Every student will be matched with an adult in the school community who will serve as his or her mentor over the four years. The mentor is expected to provide academic and social/emotional support to the student and be a person with whom students can explore issues that are impacting their lives. The mentor in providing support, guidance and advice further illustrates the principle that leaders serve.

- **Community Service:** Every student will be required to participate in community service activities, both as a group and as an individual. These activities will be integrated into the curriculum so that students apply what they are learning to community problems and in doing so gain an understanding of how their actions can effectuate positive change.

Community Assets: ACHS will bring to bear the assets of the community to support student learning and their development as leaders. Students need to know that there are numerous examples of leaders and role models from East Harlem and need to be cognizant of the rich resources that are present in their own neighborhood. Internalizing this will help build our students' self-esteem and self-confidence and help them realize that success in school and in life *is* for them, not just for other people's children as many of them often believe. Drawing on the rich resources of East Harlem means we will take field trips that are integrated into the curriculum and offer internships for students in junior and senior year in nonprofit organizations serving East Harlem. Professionals from or working in East Harlem will be invited to speak with and provide mentoring to our students.

Founding Group Capacity: Our planning team consists of experienced school leaders, non-profit executives, community residents and local business people who collectively have the requisite skills and professional backgrounds to design and implement a strong charter school educational program and operational plan to address start-up challenges related to opening a school. This team has over 12 years of collective experience working directly in charter schools and East Harlem, raising private dollars and increasing the academic achievement of students. Lead Applicant Tony Lopez, whose family roots are in East Harlem, has over 20 years executive leadership and start-up experience in the nonprofit and charter school realm, including having served as the VP of Leadership & Resource Development for the NYC Charter School Center. Known for his commitment to public education and progressive change that leads to opportunities for all young people, he brings a credible community perspective to this endeavor. Other members include the current leader of Our World Neighborhood Charter School, a marketing associate for Believe Charter School Network, an accomplished former high school principal, a retired CSD 4 School Superintendent who is currently the Director for School Leadership at Adelphi University's School of Education, a bilingual and special education teacher, an East Harlem-based architect and an East Harlem resident with 15 years of nonprofit management experience.

PROSPECTUS

- II. Student Population
 - A. Student Enrollment

Grades	Projected Enrollment Table				
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
9th	100	125	125	125	125
10th		100	125	125	125
11th			95	115	115
12th				95	115
Ungraded					
Totals	100	225	345	460	480

- B. Target Populations
 - Understanding of the Target Population*

ACHS will be located in Community School District (CSD) 4 serving students from the East Harlem Community. East Harlem’s boundaries are from East 96th Street to 142nd Street, Fifth Avenue to the East River. Affectionately called El Barrio, East Harlem stands as one of the largest Latino communities in New York. Traditionally a destination for new immigrant families, East Harlem continues to be home to many who are new to this country.

There are 37 schools located in East Harlem. Many of these schools rank among the lowest performing in the city. Among elementary and middle school students, only 34% meet NYS ELA standards and only 35% meet NYS math standards. East Harlem’s middle school students enter low-performing high schools outside their community including Washington Irving High School, Louis Brandeis High School and Norman Thomas High School where the graduation rate is 42%.

The 37 public schools in CSD 4 serve students in grades K-12. CSD 4 is comprised of thirteen elementary schools; eight middle/intermediate/junior high schools; seven K-8 schools; three 6-12 schools; and six high schools. CSD 4 serves a population of approximately 13,960 students from culturally diverse backgrounds, including many new immigrants from the Dominican Republic and Mexico. The issues confronting students and families include poverty, language barriers, difficulties brought on by substance abuse, a lack of educational and employment opportunities resulting in political disempowerment, a high rate of asthma in children along with a plethora of health problems in adults. Most important is the paucity of home-grown, grassroots leadership that possesses the power, influence and community interest to bring on sustainable economic and developmental change.

According to the latest available ethnic data (2007-08), the student population of CSD 4 is: 1% American Indian/Alaska Native; 4% Asian or Pacific Islander; 32% Black or African American; 62% Hispanic or Latino, and 2% White. Approximately 8.9% of the students have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and receive the full continuum of special education services. Additionally, 13% of the Students are English Language Learners (ELLs), with Spanish as the dominant language among the vast majority. 1.2% of the total population of ELLs consists of individuals designated as Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE). During the 2008-09 school year, 32.5% of ELLs were served in transitional bilingual education classes; 5.7% were served in dual language programs; and 60% were served in free-standing English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.

The majority of Students in CSD 4 are from low-income families with more than 87.3% qualifying for free or reduced priced lunch. Approximately 2.64% of Students are in temporary housing (STH). Almost all the schools in CSD 4 are Title I schools. There is an overwhelmingly high poverty rate in East Harlem—42% of families live below the poverty line and over 30% of families earn less than \$10,000 per year. There are 24 New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments located

PROSPECTUS

in East Harlem. NYCHA housing, along with other publicly-funded subsidized housing, constitute nearly two thirds (66%) of all housing stock in the community.

The academic performance of Students with Disabilities (SWD) and ELLs in all grades is of significant concern, as both groups represent a disproportionately high percentage of students performing at Level 1 in both ELA and mathematics. (See chart below.) The pattern of decline for middle school students is even more severe for ELLs and SWD. The percentage of these students in Level 1 sharply increases beginning in sixth grade. For SWD, the results are significantly worse in the eighth grade with an increase in the percentage of students performing on Level 1 in ELA and math.

	% LEP students scored at level 1 in ELA	% LEP students scored at level 1 in Math	% SWD students scored at level 1 in ELA	% SWD students scored at level 1 in Math
Grade 5	5.3	8.3	8.0	18.1
Grade 6	7.2	13.7	9.7	28.7
Grade 7	17.8	17.2	8.0	23.8
Grade 8	5.6	16.5	20.4	37.0

(Source: CSD 4 District Comprehensive Plan 2009-10)

SWD continue to struggle in high school as indicated in the table below that highlights the percentage of SWD who pass the Math A and English Regents compared to the percent of all students who pass these Regents exams in the three East Harlem high schools.

2008-09 Regents Performance in Math & ELA for three East Harlem High Schools

School Name	% of Students Passing Math A Regents	SWD Passing Math A Regents	% of Students Passing English Regents	SWD Passing English Regents
The Heritage High School	49%	33%	73%	41%
Central Park East	37%	14%	56%	50%
Urban Peace Academy	29%	44%	59%	42%

(Source: NYSTART CIR 2008-09, % of LEP Students unavailable)

While the graduation rate for all students in CSD 4 is 61%², the graduation rate for SWD and ELLs is only 22% and 17%, respectively.

ACHS' Outreach Plan

ACHS' comprehensive recruitment plan will ensure effective outreach to all families, including those families of students who are ELLs, SWD and/or eligible for free- or reduced-priced lunch. The recruitment plan will include direct marketing, street outreach, community partnerships, print advertising and event components. All printed materials will be translated into Spanish as well as any other dominant languages of the community. The school's website will also be accessible to people who are not English speakers. Our overall initiative will consist of identifying and developing relationships with key leaders and contacts of local schools and community organizations. Specifically, our strategy will primarily involve outreach and ongoing communication with Principals, Parent Coordinators and Guidance Counselors of the following CSD 4 middle schools: Esperanza Preparatory Academy, Global Neighborhood Secondary School, Harbor Sciences and Arts, Harlem Link and Village Academy Charter Schools, Isaac Newton Middle School for Math and Science,

² Percentage of the 2004 cohort in CSD 4 that earned a local or Regents diploma by August 31, 2008

PROSPECTUS

J.H.S 013 Jackie Robinson, James Weldon Johnson, M.S. 224, M.S. 45, P.S. 007, P.S. 050, P.S. 096, P.S. 108, P.S. 171, Renaissance School of the Arts and Tag Young Students.

Our outreach efforts will be bi-lingual and inclusive presentations at both traditional and non-traditional community venues. For example, traditional venues will include; tenant association meetings of local housing projects; Community Board 11 meetings; Union Settlement House; The Hope Community; back to school nights at local middle schools and local community based organizations that serve the middle school population especially those that serve local residents of NYCHA and other subsidized housing. Non-traditional outreach efforts will include bi-lingual flyers distribution at playgrounds, basketball courts, community centers, parks and recreations, the East Harlem Chamber of Commerce, ESL adult learning centers, small local churches, and local bodegas, to ensure that the neediest families are informed and have an opportunity to enroll in ACHS. In addition, the planning team will collaborate with community organizations such as the Harlem RBI and the East Harlem Tutorial Program which can provide venues for recruitment drives, and open houses to families of the target population. The ACHS planning team has already engaged the community in the planning process by making presentations to the District Leadership Team, Community Education Council and the Youth and Education Committee of Community Board 11.

Our recruitment efforts are aimed at high poverty and non-English speaking communities and thus will be effective in ensuring that the school enrolls a population of ELLs and students eligible for free- and reduced priced lunch that meets the targets set forth by the New York State Education Department. The outreach and marketing efforts will only be successful if we can demonstrate to families that meet these profiles our desire to serve these special populations with an academic model that has the staffing, programs and interventions in place to meet the needs of ELLs, SWD and Title I students along with a school culture that welcomes these special populations and their families. Therefore, all our outreach efforts will focus particularly on how our model will successfully address the needs of these students and how our culture is welcoming of all learners.

Our efforts to recruit these student populations will include: (1) print advertisements in both English, Spanish and other identified languages of the community that include specific information about ACHS' special education program and staff, instructional methods and staff to support ELLs and academic intervention programs for Title I students; (2) presentations regarding the ACHS' comprehensive programs will be held throughout the district, at CBOs and public middle schools; and (3) personal meetings with the Principal and/or specialized staff (Special Education staff, ESL staff, reading specialists) with any parents of SWD or students suspected of having a disability, ELLs or Title I students who express an interest in learning more about how ACHS will be able to meet the student's needs. Any publicity that the school uses to inform parents and students about ACHS during the admissions process will be carefully vetted to ensure that no statement, photo, statistic or other element might discourage parents of SWD or parents of students suspected of having a disability, or any other special populations from participating in the admissions, lottery and enrollment process. Such publicity will, where appropriate, include specific reference to the policies and procedures of ACHS that describe its compliance with all laws, regulations and guidelines related to the education of SWD and ELLs. ACHS will also provide the general public with information about its educational practices related to special education and its philosophical commitment to the inclusion approach in the education of its SWD. Accommodations will be made for any students or family members with disabilities for application completion and the lottery announcement.

Application and Admissions Periods and Procedures

Using these recruitment strategies, starting on or before January of each year, or immediately after authorization during the school's first recruitment season, ACHS will advertise open registration and families, if they choose, can meet with staff and learn additional details about the school through the various open houses and meetings. Interested families may submit applications, either in, person or

PROSPECTUS

through the mail, e-mail or fax, beginning January 15 through April 1. If the number of applications exceeds the number of seats available in the school, a lottery will be used to assign spaces. This lottery will be held annually on or around April 15 and will be open to the public and overseen by the ACHS administration and/or Board to ensure that the lottery is fair and adheres to all applicable law. A disinterested party, unaffiliated with ACHS, will draw the names during the lottery to ensure integrity of the process. Names will be drawn randomly by grade to fill available seats. After those names are drawn, names will continue to be drawn after all available spaces have been filled in order to form a waiting list at each grade level currently offered at the school

Provision of Services to LEP/ELL Students: ACHS shall serve any and all Limited English Proficient (LEP)/ELL students by providing supportive instruction so that they achieve proficiency in the English language as quickly as possible. ACHS 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. ACHS ensures that LEP/ELL students (ELLs) will not be excluded from curricular and extracurricular activities based on an inability to speak and understand the language of instruction, and also that ELLs will not be assigned to special education because of their lack of English proficiency. Parents whose English proficiency is limited will receive notices and information from the School in their native language to encourage participation in ACHS.

ACHS' process for identifying ELLs and the method by which it will determine which students may need assistance is as follows: (1) If English is the only language spoken in the home as indicated on the Home Language Survey (HLS), then the screening process need not continue; (2) If the home language is other than English or the student's native language is other than English, then appropriate school staff should interview the student and the parent/guardian in English, or when necessary in their native language; (3) If the student speaks a language other than English and speaks little or no English, then the school should administer the Language Assessment Battery-Revised (LAB-R). A student who scores below the designated proficient level is LEP, thus eligible for ESL services. The LAB-R is administered only once to each incoming student; and (4) After placement into ESL services, student progress in English language proficiency is measured annually with the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). The scores on the NYSESLAT indicate the proficiency level the student has achieved each year, and whether or not the student's level of English proficiency is high enough to exit ESL services.

NCLB requires that the language arts proficiency of all students who are ELLs be measured annually as part of school and district accountability. NCLB requires that the English proficiency of all ELLs be annually assessed. To measure the progress in English acquisition of ELLs, ACHS will analyze annual NYSESLAT results. Scores on the NYSESLAT indicate the proficiency level students have achieved each year, and whether or not a student's level of English proficiency is high enough to exit ESL services. Any student classified and receiving educational services as an ELL who subsequently tests above the established cut-off point will be deemed to be no longer in need of ESL services.

ACHS will utilize the New York State Learning Standards and Performance Indicators for English as a Second Language (ESL) to guide modifications of standards and identify performance. These learning standards include sample classroom tasks according to English Proficiency Level (Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced). In order to measure progress of the ESL program academically and proficiency of English acquisition, English Language Learners (ELL) will be evaluated annually based on their performance on the NYSESLAT. If an ELL student is not demonstrating appropriate progress in the areas, adaptations will be made to ensure success for the student. Any ELL student who performs at a specific proficiency level will exit the program and no longer require the ESL services; performance on the NYSESLAT is the only measure that will determine when a student exits the ESL program. All students, regardless of language proficiency, will be provided the

PROSPECTUS

necessary curriculum and instruction to allow them to achieve to the high standards set for all students in ACHS.

Student progress will be tracked through standardized and non-standardized assessments to compare data of ELL students to non ELL students, in addition to declassified students. The following goals will be addressed and used as benchmarks as adapted from TESOL:

1. Students will use English to communicate in social settings.
 - a) In social interactions
 - b) For personal expressions and enjoyment
 - c) Use learning strategies to extend communicative competence
2. Students will use English to achieve academically in all content areas.
 - a) To interact in the classroom
 - b) To obtain, process, construct, and provide subject matter information in spoken and written form
 - c) Use appropriate learning strategies to extend their sociolinguistic and socio-cultural competence

ACHS will utilize many strategies and support for ELL and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. In particular, the ELL Coordinator/teacher will use the sheltered English instructional (SEI) model in both push-in and pull-out settings. With SEI, ELLs receive the same academic content as those students who are English proficient. All instruction will be in English; however, the level of English used for instruction—both verbal and written—will be modified for any ELL if necessary. Teachers of ELL and LEP students will modify instruction in order to ensure success. Teachers will activate prior knowledge to facilitate future learning accomplishments. Teachers will initially become familiar with students' backgrounds and familial cultures. This will allow the teachers to engage students in literacy experiences that connect with students' diverse backgrounds. With this rich, cultural dimension, teachers will enhance learning, comprehension, and enthusiasm in the classroom. Students who struggle with unfamiliar vocabulary and complex grammatical will be able to participate in class by contributing what they already know to the class discussion. Some techniques to activate prior knowledge include brainstorming and discussion, the use of graphic organizers, using visuals in texts, incorporating short and long term experiences, and writing about what we already know. Learning strategies may include visualization, questioning for clarification, and grouping and classifying information. Teachers of ELL and LEP students will identify learning preferences and style by completing Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Inventory. Once learning style(s) are determined, multimedia such as sound, motion, printed words, visuals etc. can be utilized to teach ELL and LEP students.

ACHS will provide all instructional staff who work with ELLs with specialized curricular materials to enable ELLs to achieve proficiency. ACHS will also directly provide or make referrals to appropriate support services that may be needed by ELLs in order to achieve and maintain a satisfactory level of academic performance. Such services may include individual counseling, group counseling, home visits, parental counseling. ESL program research indicates successful performance on ELA assessments is based on the development of both oral proficiency and cognitive academic language proficiency, which includes the language skills required for literacy and complex thinking such as reading comprehension, writing mechanics, critical thinking skills, study skills, and academic vocabulary. Strategies that promote the acquisition of cognitive academic language proficiency

PROSPECTUS

include SEI³, which is "a means for making grade-level academic content more accessible for ELLs while at the same time promoting their English language development."⁴

All instructional staff will attend ELL training as part of ACHS' professional development. The training is designed to provide all teachers with strategies and techniques for working with this population. Teachers will be supported with professional development to utilize special instructional strategies sometimes referred to nationally as Sheltered English Techniques (SET) or Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) for delivering content to English language learner students in English. ELLs will receive instruction from their subject teacher and, as needed, discrete ESL instruction from the highly qualified ELL Coordinator/teacher. ACHS will use the new ESL standards document entitled, *The Teaching of Language Arts to Limited English Proficient/English Language Learners: Learning Standards for English as a Second Language* as a guide to ensure that ELL students meet the same standards as the general student population.

Classes and support will be structured to accommodate the needs of a variety of ELL and LEP students and learning requirements. Other approaches to ESL instruction that may be undertaken at ACHS are the following:

- English as a second language – mostly English with support for students in their native language
- Transitional bilingual education – instruction for some subjects is in the student's native language but a certain amount of time each day is spent entirely on developing English skills
- Two-way dual language education – team teaching in dual languages; one teacher teaches in English and the other in the native language

Based on the identification and needs of ACHS' ELL population, ACHS' ELL Coordinator/teacher and Director of Curriculum and Instruction will identify the best approach for students.

Provision of Services to Special Education Students: ACHS will educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, with their non-disabled peers to the extent appropriate and allowed by each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) prepared by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) of the students' school district of residence and all applicable federal laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). ACHS shall not discriminate in admission and enrollment practices on the basis of a student having or being suspected of having a disability. All special education programs and services at ACHS shall be provided in accordance with Education Law § 2853(4)(a) and applicable federal laws and regulations and in accordance with the IEP recommended by the CSE of the students' school district of residence.

ACHS will provide instruction to special education students in the most inclusive environment possible, subject in all instances to the requirements and restrictions included in each student's IEP. ACHS will provide support services to students to ensure that IEP mandates and measurable goals are met. Present performance levels will be supported and documented through the Educational Benefits Plan in each IEP. ACHS will not place a student in a learning environment that is inconsistent with the IEP, nor will it limit its acceptance of students with disabilities to students with IEPs that require a full inclusion program. In accordance with the State Education Law Section 2853(4) et al, ACHS will provide services required by the IEP, either directly, by contract or by agreement with the school district. If ACHS requests that the district provide a self-contained class or resource room for a student, it will work with the district to place the student in a self-contained

³ Cummins, J. (1989). *Empowering minority students*. Sacramento, CA: California Association for Bilingual Education.

⁴ Short, D., Hudec, J., & Echevarria, J. (2002). *Using the SIOP model: Professional development manual for sheltered instruction*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

PROSPECTUS

class or resource room operated by the district at a location other than ACHS, if that is appropriate to the needs of the student. However, if a self-contained class or resource room on the school site is determined by the school district CSE to be the appropriate placement for the student, and if ACHS requests that the school district provide such services, a self-contained class or resource room must be provided by the school district. In this situation, ACHS and the district CSE will work with the parents to design a program that implements the IEP, addresses the student's needs and is integrated into the School's educational programs and makes use of the School and school district resources. In this situation, ACHS and the CSE will work with the parents to develop an IEP that meets the student's needs and design a program that is integrated into the charter school's educational programs and makes use of charter school and school district resources.

Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of students with disabilities from the regular educational environment will occur only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily, in accordance with the IEP. Special education students, when appropriate according to their IEPs, will receive their adapted curriculum work, and other therapies such as speech-language therapy and occupational therapy, within a regular education classroom. Special educators and therapists will come to the regular education classroom, when appropriate, to provide services to small groups of regular and special education students. A special education teacher, paraprofessional or aide may sit with them to help implement the goals of their IEPs. Students with disabilities will also be expected to participate in, and receive credit for, nonacademic, extracurricular and ancillary programs and activities with all other students to the extent allowed by the IEP. Students with disabilities will receive all notices concerning school-sponsored programs.

If ACHS is unable to directly provide services to the extent necessary, it will seek appropriately certified or licensed individuals to provide services from CSD 4. The services to be provided may include, but are not limited to: speech language pathology and audiologist services; psychological services; physical and occupational therapy; recreation, including therapeutic recreation; early rehabilitation counseling; orientation and mobility services; diagnostic and/or evaluative medical services and student and/or parent counseling.

ACHS will employ a full-time special education teacher in its 1st year and special education teachers will be hired based on the number of students with IEPs as the school grows to ensure compliance to Educational Law. ACHS will ensure that the special education programs and services as indicated on each student's IEP will be provided directly to the student during school hours. ACHS special education staff will provide consultation and support to classroom teachers, work in the general education classrooms with special education students individually and in small groups, provide resource room services and serve as special education consultants to the overall school community. ACHS classroom teachers will be knowledgeable about the needs of students with disabilities; informed of their responsibilities for particular students; receive the support they require to implement a student's program; and implement any modifications or accommodations in their classes in accordance with the students' IEPs. Teachers will receive on-going training regarding the education of special needs students including during the pre-opening professional development prior to the opening of school each year.

In the case of students suspected of having undiagnosed disabilities, the ACHS will adopt a referral process that implements all procedures as outlined in the regulations of the NYS Commissioner of Education for initiating a referral in accordance with Part 200.4 of the Regulations. A referral may be made by a teacher, parent or person in parental relationship, a professional staff member of ACHS, a physician, a judicial officer, a representative of a public agency, or a student over 18 years of age. The Regulation identifies specific requirements for referrals initiated by professional staff members and will be followed. All staff will receive training in these procedures.

PROSPECTUS

Initial evaluations, re-evaluations, and revisions of IEPs, and the procedures relating thereto, are the responsibility of the local educational agency—the school district of a student’s residence (*see* 34 CFR §§300.22, 300.312 and 300.340 *et al*). ACHS will implement the IEP developed by the CSE of the student’s district of residence for each student with a disability, and will cooperate with the student’s district of residence to ensure that all services as recommended in that IEP are provided to the student.

ACHS will provide substitute coverage for teachers to ensure they are able to attend CSE meetings. As required by the IDEA, the student’s regular education teacher will be involved in the development and implementation of a student’s IEP. ACHS will ensure that the teacher is knowledgeable about the student’s needs and will help implement any modifications or accommodation as determined by the CSE. Every teacher of a student with a disability will be provided a copy of the student’s IEP. Training will be provided by the special education staff for teachers to ensure that teachers fully understand the IEP of each student and its instructional implications. With support from the special education staff, general teachers will be able to establish modifications in the general education classrooms.

Quarterly progress reports regarding the progress of each student and his or her IEP, as well as copies of all report cards, will be provided to the parents of each special education student and to his/her district of residence. The district is welcome at any time to monitor ACHS’ implementation of its special education program. ACHS’ special education staff will interact with the students’ district(s) of residence in a number of ways, including seeing that referrals are made for students suspected of having a disability; fulfilling reporting requirements of the resident district; ensuring that all appropriate school staff participate in meetings of the resident district CSE; and establishing a reporting structure in accordance with applicable law whereby the district of the student’s residence is provided progress on the degree to which the services on the IEP are being provided.

III. School Design

ACHS was conceived in response to the persistent under-representation of people of color in positions of leadership in the all sectors—corporate, public, private and nonprofit—locally and nationally. If children from East Harlem, especially those from immigrant and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, are to succeed in life and be able to become our country’s future leaders, they needed to be provided with the knowledge, skills and discipline to emerge later as college graduates and community leaders. East Harlem students also need exposure and access. They need *exposure* to relate how what they are doing in school today relates to success in life tomorrow. They need *access* to role models, especially those who came out of the East Harlem community, and persevered despite similar personal and environmental challenges, to become leaders in their fields. This is critical in motivating students to stay in school and work hard because only through this exposure and access can they be given a very real and tangible image of what they themselves could become in the future.

Our School’s design draws from the life experiences of its founders who had life-changing opportunities to attend early college readiness programs, to have community mentors, to have internships to engage in community service and to have exposure to the world of work all while in high school. These elements have been incorporated in the school design so that ACHS students can benefit from these experiences that they may otherwise not have. The founders of ACHS want to honor their roots and repay all those who helped them become the leaders they are today. The best way to do that is by giving forward and providing the young people of today’s East Harlem with these same opportunities afforded to them. We hope we create a new cycle of giving forward and look ahead to days in the near future when our students return to help shape future generations of children in East Harlem.

PROSPECTUS

The ACHS environment is infused with its core values: Wisdom, Integrity, Service and Execution (WISE). At ACHS “*wisdom*” does not only mean scholarly knowledge or learning which we will impart to our students, but it also has the deeper meaning of knowledge of what is true or right coupled with just judgment as to action. *Integrity* at ACHS means that learning is best fostered through honest, continual self-evaluation, personal discipline and self-improvement. Reflective practice is expected to be carried out by all the school’s stakeholders. At ACHS, *service* is an important component of leadership. We will emphasize that to lead means to serve others and to use the power one has as a leader to effectuate the kind of positive change to benefit the community. Service will come to life at ACHS through a process whereby students learn and develop through active participation in organized service experiences that actually meet community needs. Finally, students must *execute* actions, actions to benefit themselves and others, and following through to the completion of those actions. This value should guide how they approach school work, extra-curricular activities, leadership activities, community service and, ultimately, their life.

Our educational model and school culture draws elements from other successful school models including MATCH Charter School in Boston, and the recently renewed International Leadership Charter High School, particularly as it relates to providing accelerated learning opportunities for students who have been traditionally unsuccessful in school. At ACHS, those opportunities take the form of AP classes and partnership with local colleges to allow students to take freshmen level courses when they have placed out of the most advanced level courses offered at our school.

The following responses provide greater depth to how our school will fulfill the eligibility criteria and outcomes delineated in the New York State’s charter school law.

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

At ACHS, student achievement is the focus. By using assessment data in a consistent and strategic way, grade level, classroom and individual growth plans targeting specific academic deficiencies will be created. From the onset of school, growth targets will be set for every child through an analysis of students’ previous academic performance (scores on 8th grade NYS assessments) as well as intake assessments focusing on ELA and mathematics proficiencies. Students found to be performing below grade level will be provided with additional instructional support and targeted intervention designed to address academic deficits.

ACHS will have a Reading Specialist on staff beginning in the first year of operations. By year 3, the school will add a second Reading Specialist. ACHS does not believe in a one size fits all approach to reading intervention and therefore is loath to purchase one reading intervention program for students in need of reading support. Instead we want Reading Specialists to have flexibility to use a variety of programs with students based on students’ identified needs and how students respond instructionally. A one size fits all approach will not work because successful intervention has to be one that works with each student and giving the Reading Specialist the flexibility to identify strategies that work for each student will accomplish that goal. An important role of the Reading Specialist will be to also work with teachers on how to bring strategies into the classroom (such as QAR-Question Answer Relationships or Reciprocal Teaching), both of which can be incorporated into any curriculum (with all subjects) and are beneficial to all students (even those reading at or above level). It is important to note that the ESL Teacher will also provide support to students below grade level in reading.

For those students found in need of additional scaffolding in math, ACHS math teachers will develop individualized math intervention strategies designed to meet every child’s academic needs. These interventions will be based on researched programs modeled after RTI and AIS programs in NYC and nationally. Students will be reassessed on an ongoing basis to identify growth and adjust

PROSPECTUS

academic interventions when appropriate. All assessments will be designed with Regents style questions.

ACHS will use a data-driven approach to ensure that student achievement for all students continues to increase and the gap in achievement between students of color and their white counterparts decreases. The Head of School and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction will evaluate the effectiveness of our instructional program in meeting these goals through an analysis of disaggregated data. This data will be shared with the Board of Trustees and revisions in the instructional program to better meet these goals will be incorporated based on this analysis.

Teachers play the most important role in ensuring that student achievement increases and gaps in achievement levels between students of color and their white counterparts are eliminated in their work with students in the classroom. While the methods of instruction will vary from teacher to teacher, subject to subject and grade to grade, all teachers will utilize an overarching framework in how the lesson is structured. The framework involves continual assessment and reflection. An observer should be able to walk in any classroom and see the following commonalities: (1) before the lesson or unit begins, teachers must have assessed if the students have the prior knowledge to be ready to learn what is about to be taught, (2) throughout the lesson or unit the teachers continually assess to ensure that students are grasping concepts as lessons and units progress, and (2) teachers assess at the end of the lesson or unit to determine if students are able to synthesize what has been taught. Continually assessing students throughout the course of the lesson or unit to ascertain their level of understanding can, for instance, take the form of informal pivotal questions to more formal summative assessments or unit exams. Teachers must be able to be flexible in their lessons to be ready to shape the lesson depending on student readiness. They need to understand where their teaching was not effective so that they can make the necessary real time adjustments when students fail to grasp a concept. Teachers must always know what their students do not know as well as the depth of what they understand. This requires constant and continual assessments of students' skill and knowledge through these formal and informal methods. Reflective practice is critical and we expect our teachers to be meta-cognitive about their teaching and learning. Through our use of a robust student information system, teachers will have access to real time data that will allow them to identify each of their student's strengths and weaknesses and track growth and mastery on content standards. Implementing *data-driven* instructional best practices will ensure that teachers are able to tailor and differentiate instruction to address the individual needs of their students, increasing achievement and decreasing academic deficits. Our professional development for teachers will continue to build their capacity to deliver data-driven instruction.

Our extended day, extended year, Saturday Academy and Summer Bridge elements all provide the necessary time on task to address student's academic deficits especially in reading and math and provide ongoing academic support to ensure that challenges they face in English and math are addressed. The Summer Bridge program for incoming 9th graders is designed to immediately address their academic deficits in ELA and math. At the start of Summer Bridge students' achievement in math and English is assessed and instruction is provided to address students' gaps in knowledge and to give students a head start on the first year's curriculum. As part of our plan to ensure all students meet our rigorous learning and performance standards, we are requiring *all* students to participate in tutoring in the extended day portion of our school day and Saturday Academy. At ACHS, tutoring is for *all* students regardless of their competency or level of academic achievement. Students who have not demonstrated grade level proficiency will receive additional assistance; students that are on level are advanced. In either case, students will be placed in small groups with ratios of 1:1, 3:1, 5:1 and 10:1 utilizing certified teachers, college students and peer tutors to deliver instruction.

PROSPECTUS

- b. *Increase high school graduation rates and focus on serving at-risk high school student populations (including re-enrolled dropouts and those below grade-level).*

In choosing CSD 4 and the East Harlem community to site its school, ACHS is demonstrating its commitment to serving an at-risk student population. All students who are eligible to attend public high schools in New York City are eligible to attend ACHS; therefore, the school does contemplate re-enrolling drop-outs from other institutions as long as at the time they seek to enroll, ACHS has grown to include the grade that they will enter. As the data of *Section II.B. Target Populations* illustrates, CSD 4 has a predominance of at-risk students by virtue of their growing up in poverty. The link between poverty and low academic achievement is illustrated in the poor middle school performance on the NYS ELA and math tests for students in CSD 4 with 26% of 8th graders scoring a level 3 or 4 on the NYS ELA test and 33% of 8th graders scoring a level 3 or 4 on the NYS math test in 2010. We believe that traditionally unsuccessful and underserved students can learn at high levels and experience academic and personal success. Thus, ACHS has designed a school model that will put this belief into action and will offer an environment that encourages students to graduate from high school.

Students will graduate from ACHS because we will give them a reason to stay to graduate. ACHS will believe in them and give them the chance to see for themselves the successful futures that await them. We will also provide them with the skills, knowledge, discipline and access to get there. We do not underestimate how important this will be in the lives of our students. In his January 25, 2011 State of the Union Address, President Obama highlighted how expectations can have a positive impact on the lives of students, he relayed the following:

“Take a school like Bruce Randolph in Denver. Three years ago, it was rated one of the worst schools in Colorado; located on turf between two rival gangs. But last May, 97% of the seniors received their diploma. Most will be the first in their family to go to college. After the first year of the school’s transformation, the principal who made it possible wiped away tears when a student said, “Thank you, Mrs. Waters, for showing that we are smart and we can make it.””

ACHS will welcome students who are below grade level, and the design of the school year which includes an extended day, extended year, Saturday Academy and Summer Bridge was purposeful because we knew that we needed the time on task to provide remediation to students in need and move them towards achieving our rigorous learning and performance standards.

The notion that all students are expected to attend college will permeate the school. All adults will use the phrase “When you go to college...” and not “If you go to college...” Each teacher will name his or her classroom after the college from which he or she graduated. ACHS will have weekly seminars as part of its schedule that will emphasize college readiness and preparation. As part of the school day, freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors will take a seminar course based upon a spiraled curriculum focusing on preparation for college. In freshman year, students discuss the transition from middle school to high school and the behaviors, self-discipline, motivation and other habits that are characteristic of successful people that they need to emulate and internalize in order to achieve their personal goals. In sophomore year, discussion builds on the life experiences of community leaders and how college helped shape their futures. In junior year, the seminar focuses on preparation on the college admissions process and includes a parent information component, particularly around financial aid. By senior year, the seminar focuses on what to expect in college and how to draw on what they have learned about self-discipline, self-motivation and proper study habits when they move from a high school environment that has provided them with significant support and motivation to a college where they will assume full responsibility for making the most of the opportunity. Through these seminars, our students will genuinely examine their own possibilities for post-high school education and beyond and begin to create academic plans based on personal goals (such as those practiced at the Double Discovery Center at Columbia University and the Harlem

PROSPECTUS

Center for Education in East Harlem). Likewise, peer-to-peer assistance, computer software, online programs, partnerships with local colleges, and other educational non-profit organizations will be made available to students.

The seminars provide opportunities to utilize the community assets of East Harlem to bring to life how the work students are doing now will prepare them for successful futures. We will invite professionals and leaders from a variety of fields whose roots are from East Harlem to speak to our students and share their own personal experiences and obstacles they overcame to become who they are today. We will also seek to provide internship and community services opportunities for our students in East Harlem nonprofit organizations and public agencies serving the community so that they have a chance to apply their skills and knowledge for the benefit of others.

Just as ACHS must be ready and able to identify and fill in gaps in students’ learning in order for them to achieve academic success, so too must it be equipped to identify and address “all the baggage that goes along with being poor”⁵ that is negatively impacting a child in his or her performance at school. To this end, ACHS believes school must become the loving and nurturing family and supportive community. Therefore, an integral part of the school model is the relationships that are built between student and adults in the school. In particular, every ACHS student will be matched with an adult in the school community who will serve as his or her mentor over the four years of high school. We recognize that for some of our students, adults—including teachers in previous environments—have disappointed them or even worse failed them outright, and so the ability to view an adult-mentor as a dependable, caring, consistent, reliable person can have tremendously positive outcomes. Respectful relationships of this nature are essential for students at-risk of academic failure.^{6 7} By associating school with a positive mentor relationship, students are provided with the motivation and desire to come to school every day and work hard to succeed.

c. Focus on academic achievement of middle school student populations and preparation for transition to high school (if applicable). Not applicable.

d. Utilize a variety of high-quality assessments to measure understanding and critical application of concepts
 Fundamental to ACHS’ educational program is the use of assessment data to identify student needs and tailor instruction to address them further described in III.e. The following table provides a breakdown of the School’s assessment protocol.

<i>Name of Assessment</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Grades Administered</i>	<i>When Administered</i>
NYS Regents Exams (ELA, Math, Global, Science, US History and others for Adv. Regents Diploma)	To assess high school students’ mastery of NYS Learning Standards and to graduate from high school	9-12 Students will take the Regents exams until they pass	January, June, August *
Scantron Performance Series Reading/Language Arts	Identify reading fluency, competency, reading comprehension and writing development levels.	9-12	Upon entrance in to the school and every June thereafter
Scantron Performance Series, Mathematics	Identify number fluency and math skills for grade level	9-12	Upon entrance in to the school and

⁵ Slocumb, P. & Payne, R. 2000. Identifying and nurturing the gifted poor. *Principal*, 79, 5, 28-32. WilsonWeb July 10, 2001.

⁶ Hixson, J. & Tinzmann, M. 1990. Who are the at-risk students of the 1990’s? North Central Regional Educational Laboratory Website.

⁷ Ciaccio, J. 2000. A teacher’s chance for immortality. *The Education Digest*, 65, 6, 44-8. WilsonWeb July 16, 2001.

PROSPECTUS

			every June thereafter
PSAT/SAT/SAT II (Formerly College Board Achievement Tests)	Indicators of preparedness for college in verbal, math and subject specific areas.	10-12	When administered by the College Board*
Advanced Placement Tests	To measure mastery of content in AP course.	11-12	May/June*
Curricular Unit Assessments	Commercial or teacher-developed summative assessments covering material from an entire unit of study to assess mastery of topic areas within core subjects.	9-12	Ongoing
NYSAA	Identify students' ability to meet or exceed grade level standards in all areas for Special Education students if required by their IEP	9-12, if mandated by the student's IEP	October-February*
LAB-R	To determine English Proficiency	9-12, if identified by the HLS and staff assessment	September (or within 10 days of student's enrollment)
NYSESLAT	To determine when students identified as ELLs become proficient in English	9-12, if required by LAB-R	April/May*

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

The use of assessment data will lie at the core of all decision-making processes at ACHS, including but not limited to decisions related to teaching and learning, staff evaluation and allocation of resources.

Data to Inform Instruction

ACHS' assessment program will provide the data to determine student achievement by individual student or disaggregated by class, grade and school. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction, under the direction of the Head of School, will work with teachers to review and analyze student assessment data on an ongoing basis to identify strengths and gaps in the instructional program. Analysis of student data will include the disaggregating of data into such categories as gender, ELLs, SWD, free and reduced lunch status and race, as determined to be appropriate and helpful, and will provide information about ACHS' degree of success not only in the aggregate but also with respect to the disaggregated categories. This will enable ACHS to make modifications in its instructional program (curriculum and/or teaching pedagogy) and to implement effective interventions to ensure that the specific academic needs of *all* students are addressed. Based on this information, ACHS teachers will be expected to identify instructional strategies and practices they are employing that are successful and those that need to be improved.

Professional development will be aligned with this focus on data-driven instruction and will ensure that professional development activities support teachers in building their capacity to use data effectively. Teachers will be trained to analyze data and use that information in order to address student academic needs on a real time basis. ACHS has ensured that daily and weekly schedules will allow for teachers to have sufficient individual and common planning times to work with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and with each other within and across grade levels about data

PROSPECTUS

and strategies to improve student learning and achievement. In addition, each new school year will begin with two full weeks of pre-opening professional development, during which time the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, under the direction of the Head of School, will coordinate a process of establishing specific protocols, procedures and rubrics that ensure that the scoring of assessments and evaluation of student work is reliable and trustworthy and that the school's plan for using assessment data is aligned to the Accountability Plan to ensure that it supports the achievement of Accountability Plan goals.

Areas in need of improvement revealed through this analysis will be addressed in the school's professional development plan with the expectation that teachers requiring improvement in one or more areas will avail themselves of the appropriate training, technical assistance and staff development support provided by ACHS. ACHS' commitment to using data to drive instruction is demonstrated in the fact that "effectiveness of use of student assessment data" will be a criterion in teacher evaluation. Teacher accountability will include regular classroom observations completed by the Director of Curriculum and Instruction. Teachers are expected to provide evidence of planning that incorporates the use of student data in the process of making instructional decisions. Teachers will also practice a diagnostic/prescriptive approach to instruction that demonstrates a high degree of individualized instruction.

Administrator and Teacher Evaluation

ACHS will employ a data-driven approach to staff evaluation. Instructional data and other forms of analysis will be used to evaluate all administrators. The use of data to inform staff evaluations ensures to the greatest degree possible, that evaluations are conducted objectively. ACHS subscribes to Charlotte Danielson's philosophy that,

"An effective system of teacher evaluation accomplishes two things: it ensures quality teaching and it promotes professional learning. The quality of teaching is the single most important determinant of student learning; a school district's system of teacher evaluation is the method by which it ensures that teaching is of high quality. Therefore, the system developed for teacher evaluation must have certain characteristics: it must be rigorous, valid, reliable, and defensible, and must be grounded in a research-based and accepted definition of good teaching."⁸

ACHS will utilize Ms. Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* as the foundation for its teacher evaluation protocol which is a researched-based set of components of instruction, aligned to the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards. In this framework, teaching is divided into 22 components, clustered into four domains of teaching responsibility: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction and professional development opportunities. There is a clear rubric that defines and describes each component and provides a roadmap for improvement of teaching.

During the school's start-up period, the Head of School working with the Board and outside consultants (including those from the Danielson Group) will design evaluation processes and tools that utilize data-driven measures and clear rubrics to assess the performance of all staff. The Board will carry out an annual evaluation of the Head of School that uses key instructional benchmarks, progress towards accountability goals, operational benchmarks, staff and student satisfaction surveys, other criteria that measure the overall health of the school. The Head of School will evaluate the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and non-instructional staff using designated operational benchmarks in a similar fashion. The Head of School will delegate responsibility for the evaluation of teachers to the Director of Curriculum and Instruction who will formally evaluate instructional staff using the framework outlined by the Danielson Group's *Framework for Teaching* and their evaluation tools.

⁸ <http://www.danielsongroup.org/coaching.htm>

PROSPECTUS

Data Driven Board Decisions

The Board will use a data driven approach to monitor the academic, fiscal and operational progress of the school. Utilizing an organizational dashboard, the Board will review a report of performance indicators that aligns specific data with expected goals. An analysis of this data will allow the Board to objectively assess the school's progress towards accountability goals and to make informed decisions regarding changes to the instructional program, organizational structure and resource allocation.

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

The Board of Trustees will seek to establish an advisory relationship with CSD 4's District Leadership Team (DLT). ACHS will invite a member of the DLT to serve on the school's advisory committee to help identify local public schools to partner with and establish the scope for each partnership. ACHS is deeply rooted in the belief that the school leader, teacher, staff, students and community are a central element to a school's success. We will partner with low-performing, local schools to model independent thinking and positive relationships through the promotion of a healthy learning environment. Strategies that promote best practices include needs assessment, effective communication, reflective practice, accepting of school atmosphere, and family involvement activities. In addition, by the 3rd year of the school's operations, ACHS will provide professional development for these low-performing, local schools to make the decisions that benefit their students. ACHS embraces a site-based decision-making model in which all stakeholders take full responsibility for their students' success. As a professional community of learning, we will instill our values of collaboration, reflection and feedback for continual school improvement in East Harlem.

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

ACHS' planning team is currently being incubated by the High Performance Network and receives capacity building support by their subject matter experts. Our planning team has identified the following start-up challenges that we will address and overcome by our strong leadership and effective management strategies:

Strong School Governance

The current planning team and proposed Board of Trustees have been working together since January 2010, meeting weekly in person in order to thoughtfully and carefully plan for every aspect of ACHS' development. The founding Board of Trustees will continue to meet monthly and more frequently by committees, during the initial start-up year in order to closely govern and monitor progress, and maintain high standards. The Trustees will form at least three committees: Executive, Academic and Finance in order to immediately and effectively monitor the opening of the school including staff recruitment, curriculum and academic development, fund development, financial and facility-related reporting. The Board of Trustees will hire a Head of School shortly after authorization to ensure that ACHS has more than adequate oversight, organization and preparation for the start up of the school so that on day one, working systems are in place so that effective learning and teaching can occur.

Maintain continual "buy-in" to the school's philosophy and instructional approach by the school's participants

The magnitude of the task of recruiting staff and gaining student buy-in is significant during the start-up phase of a charter school and remains constant over time. The ACHS' Board of Trustees and Head of School will promote the school's mission and use it to guide the strategic direction of the school. Having a clear and specific school mission will allow the Head of School to shape instructional programs that in turn, improve teaching and learning in our school. A key strategy to gain buy-in among staff, is to select teachers who are eager to be a part of, or have input into new and alternative approaches and who are willing to take on added responsibilities that come with

PROSPECTUS

working in a small school setting. In addition to a week-long orientation and all-school retreat prior to opening the school, ACHS' Board of Trustees will emphasize recruiting credentialed teachers with prior public or independent school experience. This strategy will make the transition from mission to practice easier. To maintain buy-in, the Board of Trustees will expect the Head of School to ensure that the professional development plan allows for weekly reflection, and planning as well as the creative use of parents or volunteers to help free-up more staff time for professional development activities.

Invest in leadership

Charter School research suggests that start-up charters in particular, have diverse leadership needs. The leadership needs go beyond curricular and instructional areas and include a broad range of small business activities such as finance, marketing, procurement, legal and political issues. ACHS' planning team is addressing this by broadening its base for leadership to go beyond a single individual. The ACHS Board of Trustees will consist of diverse individuals with a range of legal, fiscal, fundraising, educational, real estate and other expertise. In addition, the leadership of the ACHS Board of Trustees will have keen ability to face and deal with the challenges related to political opposition of charter schools generally, that the school may experience in its early years.

Manage staff turnover

Staff turnover during the first two years of a charter school is not uncommon. To mitigate potential problems with this issue the planning team has identified a seasoned school leader with experience in recruiting and supervising the best talent for the school. As part of creating a pipeline for sourcing teachers and operational staff, the planning team will seek potential collaborations with organizations like Teach for America, New Leaders for New Schools, Education Pioneers, the charter school network and outsourced school professionals. Likewise, relationships with schools of education like Adelphi University, Hunter College or the NYU's Metro Center will be sought.

The first 3 months of the school's opening is critical to its cultural development and to making it a wholesome environment. Special programs to transition students and teachers (e.g., gang identification, conflict resolution and youth development approaches) will be leveraged from community experts within the non-profits in East Harlem and interwoven into the school schedule to minimize costs in layering programs later on.

Creating a school culture where professional expectations are clearly articulated in personnel policies, identification of key hires like the Special Education and ELL Coordinator by the Head of School and sufficiently trained operations staff are ways the Board of Trustees and School Leadership will manage staff turnover. Planning team members Genaro Esposito Montanez, VP of Human Resources for the nationally recognized College Summit organization, and Dr. Jorge Izquierdo, Director of School Leadership at Adelphi University's School of Education are our experts in educational and operational areas and will assist with sourcing candidates to work at ACHS.

Build the school's resource development capacity

Building on a comprehensive, planning process in the early phases of the school's development is critical to the long-term development and survival of ACHS. A strategy that ACHS' planning team is working on involves utilizing the fundraising experience of the non-profit executives on its Board of Trustees to develop and implement a long-range fund development plan. This plan will lay out the roadmap to raise restricted and unrestricted funds necessary to hire additional staff, provide enrichment activities or finance a permanent facility. As discussed in Section I, our team has demonstrated capacity in raising significant private funds. We also recently secured a \$30K Walton Foundation planning grant for ACHS.

Secure a facility

PROSPECTUS

In the event that NYCDOE space is not available the plan developed by the Avance's Facilities Workgroup are outlined below:

Short-term Plans

1. Survey available space in existing community facilities (i.e. non-profit organizations, commercial and/or residential properties) that require a minimum amount of retro-fitting, is ADA compliant and that can accommodate approximately 10,000 square feet for the first two (2) years of the school's operation in East Harlem/El Barrio.
2. Sign a short-term lease for this incubation phase.
3. Develop timeline and punch-list for renovation design, permitting, construction, and completion of the facility.
4. Secure funding for the design and construction of renovations. Hire an architect and related required consultants to design the school according to NYCDOE required specifications.
5. Obtain necessary NYC Department of Buildings (NYC DOB) permits, and a general contractor to carry out construction.

Site Surveys

To date, we have preliminarily identified the following potential alternate sites for ACHS in East Harlem/El Barrio:

2450 Fifth Avenue: Located between 142nd and 143rd Streets this is an existing facility with 43,000 square space on one floor of a loft-like building. It is ADA compliant and was originally designed and built as a public school about ten years ago and currently being used as artists studios, adult education and exhibition spaces. It includes over 24 classrooms, administrative offices, student support spaces, storage, cafeteria with kitchen, and a small gym among other spaces.

2253 Third Avenue/Taino Towers: Located between East 122nd and 123rd Streets this mixed-use complex built in 1979 contains four residential towers, an underground parking garage, community facilities, retail and office spaces. Currently a major tenant with over 15,000 square feet on the 3rd floor is operating an outpatient comprehensive health center, which is currently ADA compliant, and is due to vacate the space when the lease expires since it is relocating to a new facility nearby.

2269-2275 First Avenue: Located at the corner of First Avenue and East 117th Street this existing five-story brick and stone building was originally designed to house a public school. Last use was for the district offices of CSD4 when it was sold to a private developer to be converted into residential condominiums. Currently vacant with the interiors partially demolished and with a potential for 43,770 square feet of interior space to be renovated and made ADA compliant. The existing building has an extension on site and is adjacent to a vacant lot.

b. Demonstrate the support of the school district and the intent to establish an ongoing relationship with such district
CSD 4's Superintendent, Luz Cortazzo invited ACHS lead applicant Anthony Lopez, President of the Aprendes Foundation to serve on CSD 4' District Leadership Team (DLT) as the community representative and meeting facilitator, a role Mr. Lopez has played for the last two years. It was during the process of reviewing student performance data with the DLT to develop the District's Comprehensive Education Plan (DCEP) that the idea to create a community high school to meet the needs of the district was formed. In addition, an invitation by DLT member and Community Education Council (CEC) President Hector Nazario was offered to present the establishment of ACHS to the CEC. The presentation was made on April 14, 2010 and again on October 13, 2010. ACHS is committed to continue building the relationship with the DLT and CEC already established by its founding member. ACHS has received a verbal commitment from the CSD 4 CEC's President to provide a letter of support to include in our full application.

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

PROSPECTUS

There is a lack of quality high school alternatives for students in East Harlem, especially for those students whom we expect to serve in our school. As discussed in *Section II.B. Target Populations*, East Harlem is a high-poverty community. There is no shortage of research that links poverty to low academic achievement. In a 2007 medical journal study entitled “*The Impact of Poverty on Educational Outcomes for Children*,” published by the Canadian Paediatric Society, the authors state, “Children from low-income families often start school already behind their peers who come from more affluent families, as shown in measures of school readiness. The incidence, depth, duration and timing of poverty all influence a child’s educational attainment, along with community characteristics and social networks.”⁹

Student achievement in CSD 4 in English and math as measured by the performance on the NYS ELA and math test bears out this link between poverty and low academic achievement. In 2010, 26.4% of 8th graders scored a Level 3 or 4 on the NYS ELA test and 33.1% of 8th grades scored a Level 3 or 4 on the NYS math test. For all tested grades 3-8, only 36.2% of CSD 4 students met proficiency standards on the ELA test and 46.2% on the math test.

Academic performance like this not only eliminates these children from entering selective public high schools in New York City but also sets up children for future academic failure and the potential to become high school drop-outs if they do not have an opportunity to attend a high school that will meet their needs, address gaps, show them what their future can be and nurture their potential. With NYC’s high school graduation rate for all city students at only 59% in 2009 and the graduation rates of black and Latino students at 20 and 22 percentage points below their white counterparts¹⁰, respectively, there is no doubt that our students have many odds against their graduating from high school, and if they do ultimately graduate, will have the requisite skills, knowledge and discipline to be successful in college and beyond?

Clearly, all the data indicates that New York City generally, and CSD 4 specifically, needs more high quality, rigorous high schools and establishing a high performing charter high school in the community will provide access to a viable educational alternative to the students in East Harlem. Many people, in practicing educational triage, believe that it is too late to try to intervene with students in high school, because they are already lost and limited resources should be placed on younger students to prevent them from entering high school well below grade level. But the ACHS planning team rejects that notion and in fact believes the reverse. We have chosen to serve high school students because they, especially those who have been traditionally underserved academically, are *most in need* of a quality educational experience. We believe there is a tremendous urgency to reach these students *now* or it will really be too late. Incoming 9th graders are four years away from becoming an adult, and the kind of high school experience they ultimately have can mean they will either graduate to become productive members of society or be left without the skills and knowledge they need for success, potentially becoming burdens on society.

This is our mandate—to create high school of excellence that expects *all* students can and will achieve and to impart to our students the skills, knowledge and discipline of character to achieve our expectations of them, and by bringing to bear the community assets and leaders of East Harlem to the school, ultimately helping our students have those same high expectations of themselves.

⁹ HB Ferguson, PhD, S Bovaird, MPH, and MP Mueller, PhD, “The Impact of Poverty on Educational Outcomes for Children,” *Paediatrics and Child Health*, August, 2007.

¹⁰ http://www.nydailynews.com/ny_local/education/2010/03/09/2010-03-09_new_york_city_high_school_graduation_rates_on_the_rise.html