



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title.....	i
Application Summary.....	ii
I. Mission, Key Design Element, Enrollment, And Community.....	1
a) Mission Statement And Object.....	1
b) Key Design Elements.....	2
c) Enrollment, Recruitment, And Retention.....	7
d) Community To Be Served.....	12
e) Public Outreach..... (See Table 2 a).....	13
f) Programmatic And Fiscal Impact.....	15
II. Education Plan.....	15
a) Achievement Goals.....	15
b) School Schedule And Calendar.....	18
c) Curriculum And Instruction.....	19
d) Assessment System.....	26
e) Performance, Promotion, And Graduation Standards.....	27
f) School Culture/Climate.....	29
g) Special Student Populations And Related Services.....	32
III. Organizational And Fiscal Plan.....	35
a) Applicant(s) Founding Group Capacity.....	35
b) Board Of Trustees And Governance.....	37
c) Management And Staffing.....	40
d) Evaluation.....	49
e) Professional Development.....	51
f) Facilities.....	55
g) Insurance.....	56
h) Food, Health, And Transportation Services.....	56
i) Family And Community Involvement.....	59
j) Financial Management.....	60
k) Budget And Cash Flow.....	62
l) Pre- Opening Plan.....	63
m) Dissolution Plan.....	65

Required Attachments

- 1) Organization Chart
- 2) Resume For Proposed School Letter
- 3) Evidence Of Community Outreach

- 4) Admission Policy And Procedures
 - 5) First Year Calendar
 - 6) Sample Daily Schedule (Student/Teacher)
 - 7) Student Disciplinary Policy
 - 8) Hiring And Personal Policies And Procedures
 - 9) Constitution By-Laws
 - 10) Code of Ethics
 - 11) Budget And Cash Flow Template
 - 12) Charter School Trustee Background Information
- Certification and the Assurance Statement (signed By Applicant)**

I. MISSION, KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS, ENROLLMENT AND COMMUNITY

A. Mission Statement and Objectives

The Friendship Tech Charter School of Excellence (FTCSE) will empower students to become aspiring leaders by creating life-long learners, critical thinkers, and problem-solvers through a rigorous interdisciplinary STEM academic program.

Motto: Today's Learners.... Tomorrow's Leaders

Objectives

Friendship Tech Charter School of Excellence (FTCSE) will offer the residents of Mount Vernon a choice for their child educational journey. FTCSE will create an alternative to the public elementary education options currently in place in Mount Vernon, New York for low-income and under-educated students. Through our rigorous interdisciplinary STEM academic program, fifty percent or more of our (FTCSE) students will meet and/or exceed the New York State Common Core learning standards. We will create college and career ready students who are critical thinkers and problem solvers. The curriculum will be supported by high quality individualized instruction and multiple forms of assessment. Our students will surpass their Mount Vernon public school counterparts in academic achievement, technology literacy, the Arts, conscious discipline, and community involvement. We plan to achieve these objectives utilizing four critical methods:

1. *Highly Qualified Instructional Staff:* We will hire New York State certified Early Childhood/Childhood teachers who will be supported professionally with scheduled staff development and classroom mentoring. Teachers will learn to use best practices, research, and assessments to guide lesson planning, instruction and student achievement.
2. *Technology:* The use of technology will augment the rigorous interdisciplinary STEM-based curriculum by providing multiple entry points for students to maximize digital literacy while increasing ELA and math proficiencies and connecting them to the greater community.
3. *Assessments:* Assessments are an integrated and ongoing part of FTCSE's mission to ensure that every child achieves their potential through a rigorous academic program. The use of summative and formative assessments will measure student learning and drive individualized and group instruction as well as identify students who require differentiated instruction and/or academic intervention. Baseline assessments will be used to measure national norms; on-going formal and informal assessments will provide real-time feedback to teachers to guide planning and instruction.
4. *Conscious Discipline:* Through the use of Conscious Discipline, teachers and parents will work together through research-based character education assemblies, projects, and curricula to learn conflict resolution and character traits that foster a healthy academic, social, and emotional environment at school, home, and in the community. Teachers and parents will be supported in responding to daily conflict, affording them an opportunity to teach critical life skills to their students which will help to further develop future leaders.

FTCSE will meet or exceed the six objectives of the New York State Charter School Law in the following ways:

- a) FTCSE will *model constructivist pedagogy* by introducing a blended-learning program that utilizes a computer-based learning management system to integrate digital content and assessments. This approach will allow teachers to focus on the individual needs of students and provide targeted small group instruction.
- b) Our co-teaching program will *provide new professional development opportunities* for teachers and staff to plan and deliver instruction, use formative assessment data to improve practice, and foster collaboration and growth.
- c) Our combination of an inquiry-based interdisciplinary STEM curriculum with an emphasis on *developing the whole child* – the physical, emotional, social, and academic well-being – will provide parents a viable alternative within the public education system.
- d) The founders of FTCSE believe that in exchange for a high degree of creative autonomy in the design and implementation of our school’s interdisciplinary STEM curriculum and character development program, we will be held accountable for measurable student achievement and produce results that *demonstrate performance at the highest levels*.
- e) The FTCSE K-4 charter school in the Mount Vernon community will *provide a learning alternative* for students currently at risk of academic failure. Our success will be measured by the performance of our low-income and minority student population made up of English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities who are currently attending public schools performing well below NYS standards.
- f) The FTCSE will *create life-long learners* by providing our students with engaging multimodal and relevant hands-on and technology-based learning experiences, which exceed NYS grade level requirements, to increase their motivation, inspiration, and achievement.

B. Key Design Elements

There are five key design elements that make FTCSE uniquely positioned to identify and meet the needs of the Mount Vernon student population. These elements, modeled after Hofstra University’s research-based teaching and learning lab located in the Hofstra’s School of Education, exceeds the New York State Common Core learning standards. Our program will provide our students with a rigorous interdisciplinary STEM academic program, which will create college and career ready students who are critical thinkers and problem solvers.^{1,2} This constructivist-based curriculum will be supported by high-quality individualized instruction and multiple forms of assessment, thereby allowing our students to surpass their Mount Vernon public school counterparts in academic achievement, technology literacy, the Arts, conscious discipline, and community involvement and foster their growth as life long learners and aspiring leaders. Our five key design elements are built around five elements of capacity framework; *Rigorous Instruction* where students are actively engaged in ambitious intellectual activity and developing critical thinking skills; *Supportive Environment* where the school culture and classroom is learning friendly, safe, and where students feel supported by their teachers and peers; *Collaborative Teachers* who are student centered and committed to the success and improvement of their classroom and school. This collaboration is fostered through professional development, strengthening the skills of each teacher within a culture of respect and continuous improvement whereby the student receive the maxim benefit of learning; *Effective School leadership*, the Executive Director leads by example and nurtures the professional growth of

¹ J. Brooks & J. Caliendo, “STEM Studio: Where teaching is learning and learning is research,” *Hofstra Horizons*, 2010 : 10-15.

² I. Plonczak, J.G. Brooks, G. Wilson, R. Elijah and J. Caliendo, “STEM Studio: Where Innovation Generates Innovation,” *Phi, Delta, Kappan* 2014: 95:5 (52-56).

teachers and staff, developing and delivering the instructional and social emotional support that drives student achievement; *Strong Family and Community Ties*; Community-base partnership that encourage and support student-base learning provides the practical resources to further the learning experience of each child. We will develop partnerships with families, businesses, and community-base organizations to bridge various components into one learning unit. *Therefore, the six capacity elements framework is the structure that supports the five key design elements. Without the framework, the mission of FTCSE cannot be achieved.* The five key design elements are.

- 1) **Interdisciplinary STEM-Based Curriculum:** FTCSE's unique curriculum design will address the widening achievement gap by empowering the children of Mount Vernon as future leaders and preparing them for college and career readiness. The curriculum will infuse STEM content and careers into rigorous Common Core ELA and math instruction with interdisciplinary inquiry, project, and problem-based STEM design challenges. These student-centered lessons will require students' use of their prior knowledge, technology, and community resources to solve problems and design solutions. To further broaden learning across all subject areas, a *MakerSpace/STEM Lab* will be equipped with appropriate science laboratory equipment, building tools, such as Lego, LittleBits, and traditional wooden blocks, and common household and kitchen items so students may apply the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and engineering practices throughout the problem-solving process, thus fostering independent (self-directed) learning experiences in addition to working cooperatively with teachers, peers, and the community.

In addition, students will maintain journals throughout the day as they move through the activities. Instructional activities will highlight various careers, particularly those in STEM, and place students in a real-world situation as they navigate through the task. School trips and assemblies will align with the curriculum exposing students to the arts, sports, culture, and STEM disciplines. In addition, students will collaborate with community members on local projects, such as gardening and recycling that foster social awareness and real-world learning. These opportunities will create an on-going communication and partnership with the greater community. Students will also participate in school-based career related learning experiences with their families and the community, such as a STEM Career Festival. Students will use written, oral, verbal, and digital communication to share their discoveries with their families and community; teachers will use paper-based and digital formative assessments, such as Keeley's *Uncovering Student Ideas in Science*³ and *iReady*, respectively.

- ✓ *Expected Outcomes:* FTCSE students will outperform their Mount Vernon Public School peers on NYS standardized tests in ELA, math, and science. As mentioned, these third and fourth graders' performance on the ELA has worsened over the past two years and math performance continues to remain well below the state average. The innovative inquiry-based curriculum offered to FTCSE students will develop their critical thinking, problem solving, and reasoning abilities and equip them with the skills necessary to outperform their public school peers. In addition, due to the student-centered nature of the STEM program and *MakerSpace*, FTCSE predicts higher attendance rates and lower disciplinary problems associated with teacher-centered, disengaging curriculum, and time spent off task than the neighboring public schools.

³ P. Keeley, *Uncovering Student Ideas in Primary Science: 25 New Formative Assessment Probes For Grades K-2*, vol.1 (Arlington, VA: NSTA Press, 2013).

Several studies reported the effects of a laboratory-based science programs that did not use textbooks on elementary students' learning. One such study found that non-traditional (hands-on, inquiry-based) science programs increased students' reasoning ability and had a positive effect on other subjects.⁴ Another study reported students having "higher cognitive skills (critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, logical thinking) in reading, mathematics and communication skills"⁵ than their peers taught in a traditional science classroom. This inquiry-based curriculum will provide the FTCSE students with disabilities opportunities that challenge them to think within the domains of Bloom's Taxonomy⁶ and not the lower-level questions offered by traditional curricula. As a result, FTCSE predicts the majority of students will perform at or above state standards and surpass their Mount Vernon peers in ELA, math, and science.

- 2) **Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) and Social and Digital Consciousness:** Daily instruction will integrate rigorous reading and writing activities with technology to enhance students' critical thinking, problem solving, and content mastery in ELA, math, science, social studies, technology, and the arts.

For example, students' mastery of content knowledge and vocabulary will be supported by the following:

- i. Interactive computer based curricula and materials such as Science Fusion and *SmartBoard*. Technology will be used in conjunction with literary genres during instruction to develop students' high-level writing, reading, and verbal skills.
- ii. Students' digital and multi-media literacy will be developed through opportunities to create video projects on *SmartTablets* that will develop their written and verbal communication skills while engaging in discourse and debate with their teachers and peers.
- iii. Virtual lab data activities will support students' understanding of experimental design, and manipulation and control of variables, while increasing their data literacy.
- iv. *MakerSpace* stations will be designed to reinforce the practice of scientist and engineers as detailed in the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) by fostering skills in robotics, circuitry, mechanics, and comic book design to name a few.
- v. Students will learn how to use social media, podcasts, and email responsibly. With the guidance of their teacher, lessons will provide students with the opportunity to *Tweet* their "a-ha" moments via *Twitter* with their family members while in school and share their discoveries or inventions with their peers, community, and students around the world via social media, such as *Skype*. This practice intends to develop students' social awareness to promote positive, sensitive, and knowledgeable members of the Mount Vernon community and across the global marketplace.

These approaches will develop students' math and literacy skills and knowledge necessary to overcome the failing standardized test scores plaguing the Mount Vernon public schools.

- ✓ *Expected Outcomes:* Technology and targeted instruction will increase digital literacy as students utilize social media, podcasts, and email to communicate with their

⁴ J. A. Hattie, *Visible Learning: A Synthesis Of Over 800 Meta-Analysis Relating To Achievement* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009).

⁵ Hattie, *Visible Learning: A Synthesis*, 145.

⁶ N. G. Lederman, J. S. Lederman, & R. L. Bell, *Constructing Science in Elementary Classrooms* (Boston, MA: Pearson, Education, Inc, 2004).

community and students around the world while supporting STEM learning through the integration of traditional instruction. Technology stations within *MakerSpace* will provide opportunities for students to design, create, and build innovative projects. In addition, as part of the FTCSE character development program, students will learn proper etiquette and responsible use of digital communication.

- 3) **Blended Rotation Model:** The rotation model of blended learning will be established to allow students to move between computer-based and face-to-face instruction daily enhancing student learning and retention. The rotational schedule will include computer and iPad stations in math and reading, independent reading, journaling/reading response stations, and guided teacher instruction with targeted groups in addition to their STEM inquiry and problem based tasks. Students will work online independently, thereby having control over their learning pace and path to developing new skills and content. Students will interact with the teacher and their peers through cooperative, multimodal learning activities, hands-on learning centers, assemblies, and field trips. This blend of activities will concretize and reinforce what they have learned online and vice versa. The adaptive learning software, *Pearson's Envision Math* and *iReady New York*, will be used as a diagnostic and instructional tool to provide teachers with student data which not only inform teachers of how to restructure their lessons but individualized online lessons are created to address individual learning needs. The blended rotation model will provide student performance data to inform differentiation of instruction and provide instructional support services, thus ensuring that FTCSE students will function on or exceed grade level proficiency in the content areas.
- ✓ *Expected Outcomes:* The Blended Rotation Model will support student learning and achievement as measured on the NYS ELA and math standardized assessments. According to several studies that focused on computer-aided instruction, student feedback from the computer was less intimidating than teacher feedback. In addition, computer programs that put students in control of their learning increased motivation, engagement, and time on task. Computer programs were most effective for struggling students learning basic skills and students working in pairs (Hattie, 2009).⁷ Based on the research, the blended rotation model will provide our students with the knowledge and skills necessary to perform at or above NYS standards.
- 4) **Differentiated Instruction and Intervention Model:** Our instructional staff will be comprised of New York Certified Early Childhood and/or Childhood Education teachers, Special Education teachers, and an ESL/ELL teacher(s). Instructional support staff will be comprised of certified Early Childhood and/or Childhood teachers working as teacher assistance in providing individual students with their necessary accommodations to address specific educational skills and abilities. Teaching assignments will be based on two criteria: (1) using data for ability grouping and (2) student-teacher matching. The first uses authentic formative assessment data to create and deliver individualized and small group instruction based on the learning needs of students.⁸ Students will be grouped based on the *Journey's 2014 Common Core Learning* benchmark assessments, *Dream Box Math*, and daily observations as recorded by the teacher. Students who demonstrate the greatest needs will be placed in the smallest sized groups. Every six to eight weeks, teachers will formally reassess all students and develop new ability based groups. Teachers who are literacy and math specialists will be assigned to students who demonstrate the greatest need for instructional support. For example, a NYS certified literacy specialist may be assigned a group of six Kindergarteners that are in Tier Two of our Response to Intervention program

⁷ Hattie, *Visible Learning: A Synthesis*, 145.

⁸ National Center On Universal Design for Learning, accessed February 2014, www.udlcenter.org.

allowing targeted instruction and multiple opportunities to increase student learning in that specific area. A student who does not respond to Tier Two strategies will be matched with a specialist who will work with him/her in Tier Three strategies in which intervention will be individualized. If the student is successful with this intervention, he/she may be placed back into Tier Two; if not, the student may be screened for special education. Students with disabilities will be assigned highly qualified teachers experienced in special education instructional methods. ESL/ELL/LEP students will be assigned highly qualified teachers who are knowledgeable in research based best practices for these subgroups.

- ✓ *Expected Outcomes:* Our students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, will outperform their Mount Vernon School District peers. According to 2013-2014, Mount Vernon NYS assessment data,⁹ 91% of LEP students and 97% of students with disabilities scored at levels I and II on the ELA. In math, results were just as poor, with 88% of LEP students and 94% of students with disabilities scoring at levels I and II in math. *Not one student with disabilities performed at a level IV in math.* FTCSE's differentiated instruction and intervention model utilizing highly qualified teachers, assessment data and intervention will *not permit by design* this percentage of low level performers. FTCSE predicts that over time, the majority of our students will perform at or above NYS standards as measured on the state assessments.

- 5) **TECH: Teaching Each Child Holistically:** The *Resolving Conflicts Creatively Program* (RCCP), a program that introduces a value system by teaching individuals how to solve conflicts peacefully will be used school-wide. Teachers will be trained so that they may model this behavior for their students. The program fosters the development of problem solving by teaching such skills as perspective taking, negotiation, and decision-making. These problem-solving skills will further develop our students' self-esteem and provide the basis toward becoming future leaders. *Lessons in Character*, the elementary school character education curriculum will be adapted to help children to understand good character and conflict resolution through literature, which will further support ELA development. The curriculum is designed to extend beyond the school walls and into the child's home and community.

- ✓ *Expected Outcomes:* Several studies focusing on character education programs found that they were most effective for children ages 3 through 15 years old. In addition, the greatest effect of these programs was on improving peer relations.¹⁰ Research also shows that providing students with responsibility and leadership in school has the ability to change negative self-attitudes into positive ones that will be beneficial to the individual student as well as the culture of the learning community.¹¹ Based on this research, the addition of the *Teaching Each Child Holistically* key design element to the school model will further promote a safe, nurturing, and learning environment for the students at FTCSE that will ensure their academic success.

C. Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention

The Mount Vernon Public Schools have failed its students for the past several years. In 2013 and 2014, 82% of third and fourth graders in the district have consistently scored at Levels I and II on the NYS math exam. Over the past two years, third and fourth grade performance on the ELA has worsened. In 2013, 81% of students performed at Levels I and II, but in 2014, the number of

⁹ NYSED, accessed February 2015, <http://data.nysed.gov/>.

¹⁰ Hattie, *Visible Learning: A Synthesis*.

¹¹ M. Boynton, & C. Boynton, *The Educator's Guide to Preventing and Solving Discipline Problems* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), 2005).

students at these levels has increased to 86%.¹² The 2015 New York State standardized test results reflect that overall, little changes in students proficient levels have occurred. Minority students still rank the lowest at 11-12% respectfully.

❖ *Enrollment*

As written on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty:

"Give me your tired, your poor; Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free;
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me; I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"¹³

FTCSE will admit students without regard for race, creed, ethnicity, disability, or socio-economic background. We will meet or exceed enrollment and retention requirements for students as required by New York statutes section 2852(9)(b)(i).

FTCSE will recruit from Mount Vernon district preschool programs, community-wide childcare educational centers that have graduated their pre-K children and families with children in elementary school. Early intervention programs will be notified of FTCSE goals, programs, and expectation for all students, including ELL and special need students. FTCSE will admit new students between the ages of five and seven-years old who live in the Mount Vernon community without regard for race, creed, ethnicity, disability, or socioeconomic background. Should the school receive more applications than there are student seats, FTCSE will use a lottery to determine entrants to the school.

At full capacity, FTCSE will maintain an enrollment of 315 students, inclusive of 7% attrition. The maximum projected enrollment, inclusive of attrition, is 337 students. This enrollment will foster a small school environment with close student and family connections while nurturing systemic academic learning principles. FTCSE will implement a structured, high-expectations culture that will benefit students for five full years. We believe that starting our school at the kindergarten level will allow us to intercede, reshape, form, and assist students during a pivotal time in their academic, social, physical, and emotional development. (See Table)

Table 1: Projected Enrollment Table Over the Charter Term¹

Grade s	Age Range*	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
K	5-6	63	63	63	63	63
1st	6-7	48	63	63	63	63
2nd	7-8		48	63	63	63
3rd	8-9			48	63	63
4th	9-10				48	63
Totals		111	174	237	300	315

*Students' ages may extend beyond the range specified in cases where they have been advanced or retained a grade prior entering FTCSE

Given the challenges of creating a new school with an innovative academic program, we believe it is prudent to devote our resources to opening with kindergarten and 1st grade. Starting with only two grades consisting of full day kindergarten and first grade classes will allow FTCSE to

¹² NYSED, accessed February 2015, <http://data.nysed.gov/assessment38.php?year=2014&subject=Mathematics&instid=800000035289>.

¹³ E. Lazarus, (1883). *The New Colossus*, accessed January 2015, <http://www.ladytorch.com/statue-of-liberty-poem.html>.

effectively meet the needs of these students while implementing the academic program and planning for additional grades. FTCSE will then add one grade each year, attaining full enrollment in year 5. This growth pattern limits enrollment to 174 students in the first two years of operation. We wish to serve as many students as possible, but also recognize that a strong and stable school culture is critical to the success of the academic program.

Class size will not exceed 30 students. Each class will incorporate a lead teacher plus a teaching assistant to create a teacher-to-student ratio of approximately 1:15. We believe that three classes per grade at the maximum enrollment of 315 students will provide a ratio of 1:11. This will allow us to maintain an equitable and cohesive school community. We intend to admit new students to fill empty seats up through 2nd grade when we can most effectively integrate new students into the school culture with minimal disruption. Based on the experience of other successful high achieving elementary schools that encourage and embrace strong parental engagement, we believe we can limit attrition to approximately 7% per year on average during the term of the charter.¹⁴ Provided a charter is granted, an aggressive media blitz announcing an open enrollment process for applications between January 15-March 31, 2017 will commence for the zip code areas 10550, 10551, and 10553. All parents desiring to enroll their child/children in FTCSE are encouraged to apply. Student enrollment will be based on 111 students in the first year, and 63 students for each preceding year for the duration of the charter. All applications up to 111 will be enrolled. If the number of applications exceeds 111, a lottery will take place on April 15, 2017 and the first 111 students selected from the lottery will be admitted. Remaining applications will be placed in a “pending admissions file” and used to backfill any vacancies that may occur during the school year based on a second lottery process. The process for admission in future years will follow the same process. FTCSE will conduct a public lottery and secure that an outside/independent company will oversee the lottery process. FTCSE will make every effort to publicize the lottery through social media outlooks.

❖ *Recruitment*

To meet or exceed targeted recruitment requirements of students with disabilities, English Language Learners and students who qualify for free and reduced priced lunch, FTCSE will attract students and families utilizing aggressive marketing campaigns via radio, local newspapers, social media, our webpage, flyers, daycares, community centers, the Mount Vernon Library, apartment complexes, churches, supermarkets, and community outreach house meetings. The strategy for recruitment also includes outreach to Mount Vernon district pre-school programs and community-wide childcare educational centers that will have children graduating from pre-k. Scheduled open houses and information nights will be advertised in the media and on the school’s website. Through these efforts, the school will reach a broad range of families and prospective students. Additionally, flyers will be posted in public places, such as libraries and district recreational facilities.

ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS, AND STUDENTS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS FOR THE FREE AND REDUCED PRICE LUNCH PROGRAM.

General Recruitment Strategy

Word of mouth, radio and social media advertising will be used in addition to public bulletins at train stations, bus stops and networking with key players in the community. Our advertising strategy will include visit to churches, soup kitchens, social service agencies that provide

¹⁴ “The Characteristics that Sustain High Growth Public Charter Schools,” accessed August 2, 2014, <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/charterschools/best/highgrowth.pdf>.

services/programs which support students with disabilities, clinics, job service, public library, daycares, preschools, community centers, apartment complexes, supermarkets, community outreach, and house meetings to inform and distribute literature in multiple languages of the school's lottery process for potential students. We will pass out fliers at Wal-Mart/discount stores, advertise in the primary language of the community we have targeted, hang fliers around town, go to ethnic restaurants (like African American, Spanish, Portuguese) and pass out fliers with FTCSE class schedules.

Recruitment of Students with Disabilities:

FTCSE will recruit students with disabilities utilizing its outreach, marketing and advertising efforts cited above. FTCSE will focus its targeted recruitment strategies on learning institutions (New York State Early Intervention programs and the Westchester County Early Childhood Direction Center) that serve students with disabilities. FTCSE will ensure that all outreach include an explanation of services to support students with disabilities with special mention of our inclusionary model of educating children. We will cater to the needs of these students with appropriate facilities and aids.

Recruitment of English Language Learners:

FTCSE will recruit English Language Learners (ELL's) students utilizing recruiting materials in multiple languages, translators at recruiting events and bilingual staff members. Our recruitment will target the Mount Vernon Spanish and Portuguese communities as well as agencies that focus on families where English has become their second language. We will also work with the Bilingual Technical Assistance Center (BTAC) for support with recruiting ELL's. We will distribute information to local clergy whose congregations are non-English speakers. We will recruit bilingual teachers who will reflect and promote ethnic diversity.

- Create school recruitment/lottery materials in English and in the school community's predominant languages.
- Secure resources for translation services to assist parents, students and teachers in meeting the needs of ELL community.
- Place phone calls to ELL families utilizing ELL family members who are already in our school community and have them be spokespeople for our school.
- Hire bilingual staff and faculty members and recruit volunteers who can help answer families' questions and fill out paperwork. We will host open-house meetings in non-English communities and provide translated materials and presenters who can translate for families.

We will provide services in multiple languages, and find and utilize community interpretation services for lower-incident languages.

Recruitment of students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced priced lunch programs:

FTCSE will recruit students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced priced lunch programs by advertising to families in high need poverty areas and areas with the lowest performing schools in Mount Vernon. Poverty areas include but are not limited to Levister Towers, Ebony Gardens and The Plaza (Lefrak Housing) housing complexes, which are identified by the state of New York as low-income family units. We will post advertisement throughout the school campus encouraging all parents to apply for the meal program.

Retention of Those Identified in the School's Mission:

We will retain students by engaging their families in our general education program during the regular academic year, summer academy, and Saturday clubs. Students and their families will be engaged in conferences, workshops, family nights, and visitations. Collaborating with community and cultural organizations, we will provide students and families wraparound services such as tutoring, before and aftercare services, music and the arts and mental health services in addition to targeted assistance to at-risk, struggling and ELL students. FTCSE is committed to establishing and maintaining a trusting and working relationship with families to promote children's learning and development in a positive parents-school-teacher's-student's partnership.

Retention Strategy

Our goal is to retain 80% of FTCSE students over the course of our first five-years. Mount Vernon Public School district has a large transit population and we are expecting an unusually large percent of student turnover because of the transit culture. However, our retention strategy will provide the formula to retain 80% or more of our students and minimize attrition. FTCSE will:

1. Update throughout the academic year our database with current and accurate information of all parents or guardians as we build a partnership in the collaboration of the educational services provided to our students.
2. Use social media outlets (Facebook; constant contact, periscope, and friendshipstem.com website) as a tool that will constantly inform and engage parents in the life of FTCSE regularly.
3. Ensure that parents of students who are eligible for free or reduced meals are provided the application and assistance with filling out the paperwork with regular nutrient information.
4. Distribute recruitment material in English, Spanish, and Portuguese; which are the dominant languages and cultures in the Mount Vernon area.
5. Advertise in multitude languages the wrap around services, early arrival and late pick-up offered by FTCSE throughout the recruitment process.
6. Promote Saturday students and family oriented academy.
7. Provide use of the FTCSE STEM computer LAB to parents in assisting them in their technology literacy.
8. Provide clear information to incoming parents through conducting multiple orientation sessions and written documentation of our policies and educational approach.
9. Hire faculty and staff that speak multiple languages to assist parents of ELL students in navigating their child(ren) educational journey.
10. Ensure special education students are achieving at a level that is significantly higher than special education students within the Mount Vernon Public School District. We will ensure that in addition to IEP specifications, special education students are receiving adequate academic support from classroom teachers such that they can succeed in the classroom.
11. Ensure that students are learning English fast enough to move out of IEP designations within 2-3 years and are subsequently able to succeed academically. We will ensure that in addition to IEP requirements, students are receiving adequate academic support from classroom teachers such that they can succeed in the classroom.
12. Increase communication with parents of struggling students so they are receiving at least

monthly progress updates in person, text, emails or phone calls.

13. Ensure that parents understand iReady and are able to navigate the software to ensure that student homework assignments are completed.

Retention of Students with Disabilities:

FTCSE will retain students with disabilities by providing opportunities to learn in the least restrictive environment. We will provide an integrated co-teaching model with a full time certified special education teacher. The teacher will apply push in and pull out methods of instruction to meet student's specific needs. A Special Education Coordinator along with teachers whose credentials reflect training in special education will provide additional targeted support and intervention to meet the needs of students with disabilities and oversee the special education program in collaboration with the school's leadership team. The Special Education Coordinator will work closely with classroom teachers to assess and monitor student growth. The Special Education Coordinator and FTCSE's leadership team will communicate with parents on a regular basis regarding their student's progress and any IEP modifications needed to provide opportunities for students to excel.

Retention of English Language Learners:

FTCSE will retain ELL students by hiring a full time certified English as a Second Language (ESL) bilingual teacher who will deliver push in, and pull out ESL instruction and work in collaboration with school leadership and teachers to improve student's language acquisition skills and academic performance. The ESL teacher will use the Journeys curriculum to support ELL students with targeted instruction and intervention strategies. FTCSE will provide an ESL resource center for students, their families, and school staff to share literature in diverse languages, strategies for increasing language acquisition at home and a forum for support. The resource center will be open during after school hours, and in the summer for continuous access to information in diverse languages. FTCSE will partner with the Bilingual Technical Assistance Center (BTAC) to ensure best practices and pedagogical methods will be used when working with English Language Learners.

Retention of students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced priced lunch programs:

Retention will occur through our summer academic enrichment program that will provide free or reduced breakfast, lunch, and snacks to all eligible enrollees of the free or reduced meal program. Ultimately, FTCSE will recruit, retain, and educate students of all abilities. FTCSE will admit students via lottery without regard to race, creed, ethnicity, disability, or socio-economic background. To monitor and track student retention, FTCSE will respectfully communicate with parents throughout the year about issues that are important to them, and to continuously monitor and measure the parents' perceptions of the program and of their children's safety and educational progress.

D. Community to Be Served

According to 2013 U. S. Census data, Mount Vernon has a population of 68,224 people.¹⁵ Mount Vernon is the ninth most populated city in the state of New York.¹⁶ It is the third largest and most densely populated city in Westchester County with a 75% poverty rate among its students

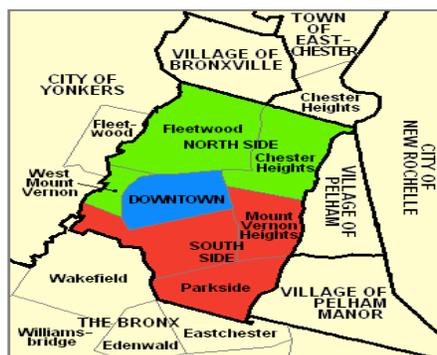
¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, accessed February 2015, <http://quickfacts.census.gov>.

¹⁶ City Population, accessed February 2015, <http://www.citypopulation.de/USA-NewYork.html>.

based on the free and reduced lunch program.¹⁷ Children born into poverty are less likely than their well off peers to have acquired the literacy skills necessary for academic success. Unfortunately, this is reflected in student performance throughout the Mount Vernon school district.

According to U.S. Census 2010 data, there are 15,342 residents per square mile in Mount Vernon compared to the New York State average of 411 people per square mile.¹⁸ The four major sections of Mount Vernon covering an area of a four square mile radius are highlighted in Figure 1.¹⁹ The railroad tracks divide the north and south side and provide a glaring visual of the socio-economic divide. The residents and families who reside on the south side of Mount Vernon are predominantly under-privileged. According to the 2013 New York State Demographic Report Card data, high needs children overwhelm the elementary schools on the south side of Mount Vernon. This is also true of the elementary schools on the western border of the city. Therefore, one may conclude that in the Mount Vernon community, the north side school children are academically better prepared than south side students because of the socio-economic divide. However, in 2013, one of the top-ranked elementary schools in the Mount Vernon district performed worse than 50.7% of elementary schools in the State of New York. On the opposite extreme, one of the lowest achieving elementary schools in the district ranked worse than 94.8% of all elementary schools in New York State. When looking at proficiency on the state's math and ELA exams, Westchester county students outperformed Mount Vernon students by 26%, with only 40.7% of all Mount Vernon Public School District students in grades 3-8 attaining proficiency on the state's exams.²⁰ Another study rating schools in the Mount Vernon District in relationship to neighboring districts, found that the graduation rate in Mount Vernon School District is 63%. On a scale rating districts from one to ten, 10 being the best, the Mount Vernon School District received a 3, while its close neighbors, Pelham and Tuckahoe, were both rated 9, and Bronxville rated 10.²¹

Figure 1: Map of Mount Vernon City's Neighborhoods and Surrounding Towns



The elementary school population of the Mount Vernon District during 2012-2013 was 6,250 students; the FTCSE intends to serve approximately 5.4% (315 students) of this population.

¹⁷ "Testimony of Mt Vernon City School District," accessed July 14, 2014, <https://www.governor.ny.gov/assets/documents/MidHudsonHearing9-10-12/JudithJohnsonTestimony.pdf>.

¹⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, accessed February 2015, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/3649121.html>.

¹⁹ "Map of Mount Vernon Neighborhoods," accessed February 2015, <https://images.search.yahoo.com>.

²⁰ Mount Vernon School District Report Card 2012-13, accessed January 2014, <http://data.nysed.gov/>.

²¹ "The Best School in the Mount Vernon School District," accessed August 4, 2014, <http://www.zillow.com/ny/districts/mount-vernon-school-district-435227/#/ny/districts/mount-vernon-school-district-435227/p=1&bb=-73.877113%2C40.919009%2C73.850849%2C40.940733®ionId=435227&zoom=14>.

While Mount Vernon is a highly diverse community with regards to socio-economic viability, the public schools fall short of producing students meeting NYS proficiency standards in ELA and math. In a testimony by Judith Johnson regarding the condition of the schools in Mount Vernon, she discussed the community's inability to pay for education in addition to the district's loss of \$13 million in education assistance based on GAP Elimination Adjustment.²² In addition, from 2008 to 2011, the Mount Vernon per pupil expenditure dropped from \$19,501 to \$11,217. By comparison, average New York State per pupil expenditure *increased* during this time from \$16,796 to \$21,038.²³

While all of these issues can not be resolved by the advent of a new charter school, FTCSE can begin to address the educational needs of a portion of these economically disadvantaged students by offering a unique and rigorous academic and character development program unrivaled by the current public schools system.

E. Public Outreach

- ❖ **See Table 2 Public outreach**
- ❖ **Attachments 2b: Evidence of Public Review Process.**
- ❖ *Initial Assessment of Sufficient Interest*

Feedback received as a result of the group's community outreach effort encouraged FTCSE's founding group to adjust the original proposal by increasing the number of children to be served, including STEM as an innovative approach to learning, and placing a greater emphasis on math and ELA proficiency to ensure that the New York Common Core Learning Standards are met. The community residents were concerned about the students' behavioral issues that affect the learning environments of fellow students. Based upon several conversations with residents, the founding group was influenced to add a fifth key design element TECH (Teaching Each Child Holistically), that would provide peer mediation, increased parent participation, and community involvement. Our scholars will receive character education and instruction in conflict resolution to prepare them emotionally, socially, and physically to deal with conflicts and cultural differences. The founding group explored various curricula that would address the residents' concerns. The founding group decided that infusion of the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP), a proven tool for urban school children like those of Mount Vernon, would create a positive and safe learning environment further preparing our scholars as future leaders for college and career readiness. We will integrate Conscious Discipline with (RCCP) that provides an additional parental component.

The community expressed concern regarding ways in which a rigorous STEM program would be implemented in the early grades. In addition, community stakeholders were interested in our plans for meeting New York State Common Core Standards. This feedback led the founding group reconsidering the originally proposed curricula and STEM integration, and as a result, secured a STEM specialist who demonstrated to the group how a strong literacy foundation may be interwoven into STEM learning thereby reinforcing and developing children's knowledge and skills across all disciplines. We reconsidered the technological and curricular tools necessary to accomplish our mission and adopted the research-based elementary STEM teaching and learning lab model of interdisciplinary instruction in place at Hofstra University's School of Education. In turn, we created *MakerSpace* stations within each classroom setting. In addition, the founding

²³ The Federal Education Budget Project, accessed February 2015, <http://febproject.newamerica.net>.

²⁴ The Federal Education Budget Project.

board increased school-wide practices relating to college and career awareness, including assemblies, events, field trips and integration in math, ELA, and STEM lessons.

Because of the low New York State ELA and math standardized test scores, stakeholders also inquired about the types of assessment tools to be used in the lower grades to track student achievement. The founding group developed an authentic formative assessment program that will utilize one or more of the following methods: benchmarks, IEPs, Pearson, i-Ready and the New York State ELA, Math, and Science tests to create and deliver individualized and small group instruction based on individual student performance. The Danielson Rubric assessment will become the benchmark for evaluating our teachers' effectiveness.

Initial assessment of parent interest

Friendship TECH Charter School of Excellence public outreach committee have engaged the community in various media outlooks, conversations and forums to assess parental interest of our new proposed school. This formal process of collecting data has occurred over the past 3 years. The data was collected from parents who have enrolled their children in the local childcare centers in the city, public forums, community surveys and support letters from parents. FTCSE founding team has identified several recruitment feeders for the launching of FTCSE proposed school with in City of Mount Vernon that has established itself within the Mount Vernon community as a viable, successful, developmentally appropriate early childhood program. The founding group has reach out to Early Childhood Learning Centers which are partners with the Mount Vernon School District over the past three years to provide Universal Pre-K program. In our inquiry many of the parents has requested and encouraged FTCSE to continue their efforts to establish a small elementary school that will build upon the learning their children received at the Early Childhood Learning Center in Mount Vernon. The parents are aware that students are selected by an open competitive lottery process. Parents of who have their children enrolled in the school district offered their support in the formation of FTCSE. Parents were happy to learn of an alternative that has the potential of improving their child(rens) learning. Parents were pleased at the prospect of longer schools days, afterschool programs and a new parental academy that would offer the parents the skillset to assist in their understanding of STEM. Many of the parents weren't aware of what STEM consisted of and welcome this new innovated approach of preparing their child to become college and career ready.

Assessment Analysis

Three different surveys were distributed and we gathered over 1200 responses not including the countless number of conversations with parents who were in support of improving and providing a better quality of education for our children in Mount Vernon. Several parents provided letters of support and a commitment to enroll or recruit prospective students to ensure we reach maximum enrollment. FTCSE determined based upon the assessment of parents that there was a high interest in enrolling their child (ren) in the proposed school and the finding suggest that we will met or exceed enrollment prospect. Our analysis is based on surveys, pre-enrollment interest and direct conversations with several parents who wanted educational choice as an option. Below is the breakout of how the survey numbers mat the categories. Our survey indicated that academics were the strongest concern, safety and location ranked second, classroom size and student teacher ratio were also a major concerns. Their measure of consideration regarding enrollment of the children in FTCSE program is that those concerns were met.

F. Programmatic and Fiscal Impact

❖ *Programmatic Impact*

We believe FTCSE will have a positive programmatic impact on the entire school system in the Mount Vernon community. Our school will open with just over 111 students and our anticipated

full enrollment of 315 students in 2021 would constitute 5.05% of the district enrollment of approximately 6,250 students housed in 16 schools. Since the public elementary schools in Mount Vernon are not performing at acceptable levels according to the 2012 New York State School Report Card, FTCSE as an alternative school would provide a stimulus toward innovation as well as cultivate collaborative relationships toward increased student learning.

Currently, there are no elementary charter schools in the Mount Vernon community. Since student test scores are below NY State standards based on the recent New York State School Report Card for elementary schools in the area, FTCSE would be a viable educational alternative that would impact local schools by modeling innovative programs and sharing effective pedagogical practices. As we intend to work with the same types of students as the other elementary schools in the Mount Vernon community, our success will hopefully draw other educators to learn from our methods and explore opportunities to collaborate in areas such as professional development, parent involvement, extra-curricular activities, and community building.

❖ *Fiscal Impact:*

The FY12-13 Mount Vernon School District budget was 224,000,000. In Year 1 FTCSE expects to enroll 111 students (1.68% of the district enrollment) and anticipates per pupil revenue of 1,763,370, which is .87% of the district budget.

In Year 5, we expect to enroll 315 students (5.07% of district enrollment) and anticipate per-pupil revenue of \$5,038,200, which is 2.25% of the district budget. When considered as a proportion of the overall Mount Vernon education budget of \$224,740,413, FTCSE will account for only a fraction of a percent.

II. EDUCATIONAL PLAN

A. Achievement Goals

FTCSE has rigorous academic standards. We will enable students to meet the proficiency levels of the NYS ELA and math assessments by the end of the fourth grade. Students will be assessed regularly across all academic areas using formative assessments, teacher observations, technology-based embedded assessments, portfolio assessment, and running records. Formative and summative assessments will be used to monitor individual progress, inform planning, guide and differentiate instruction, and modify intervention plans. This will create the foundation for curriculum mapping, professional development, efficacy of the school's curriculum and pedagogical practices.

Test results from the following assessments will be analyzed to affirm FTCSE's extent to which it provides an unparalleled education for all of its students, including kindergarten through grade 4 benchmarks; grades 3 and 4 NYS ELA, and math; and grade 4 NYS science.

➤ Goal 1: *ELA Common Core Proficiency*

FTCSE students will develop proficiency in reading, writing, listening and speaking by the end of the fourth grade. These goals will be measured in the following ways:

- 1) *Individual Benchmark Gains.* Students in grades k through 2 will demonstrate at least 3% growth per year on Terra Nova Complete Battery: Reading and Math benchmark assessment. Students in grades 3 and 4 will demonstrate at least 3% growth per year on Terra Nova Common Core: Reading and Terra Nova Common Core: ELA benchmark assessments.

- 2) *Grade-Level Comparative Performance.* The percent of students in grades 3 and 4 achieving proficiency on the NYS ELA assessments will exceed the Mount Vernon public schools' average for the same grade.
 - 3) *Individual Performance Based Assessment.* At the end of the 4th grade, all students will create a STEM research project and present it to their classmates, teachers, parents, and community members during a school-wide science fair. A rubric will be designed by the faculty aligned to the NYS Common Core ELA 4th grade reading, writing, listening, and speaking standards. Fourth grade students will be able to speak, write, listen, and/or speak for information and understanding; literary response and expression, and critical analysis and evaluation.
- *Goal 2: Math Common Core Proficiency*
FTCSE students will demonstrate proficiency in mathematical critical thinking and problem solving. These goals will be measured in the following ways:
- 1) *Individual Benchmark Gains.* Students in grades k through 2 will demonstrate at least 3% growth per year on Terra Nova Complete Battery: Reading and Math benchmark assessment. Students in grades 3 and 4 will demonstrate at least 3% growth per year on Terra Nova Common Core: Math benchmark assessment.
 - 2) *Grade-Level Comparative Performance.* The percent of students in grades 3 and 4 achieving proficiency on the NYS Math assessments will exceed the Mount Vernon public schools' average for the same grade.
 - 3) *Individual Performance Based Assessment.* These goals will be measured daily through the blended rotation model, which will utilize Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's *GoMath* adaptive learning software to provide student performance data that will inform differentiation of instruction, instructional support services, and professional development, thus ensuring that students will function on or exceed grade level proficiency in math.
- *Goal 3: Science Proficiency*
FTCSE students will demonstrate proficiency in science content knowledge and inquiry ability. This goal will be measured in the following ways:
- 1) *Individual Benchmark Gains.* Students in grades k through 2 will demonstrate at least 3% growth per year on Terra Nova Complete Battery: Science and Social Studies benchmark assessment. Students in grades 3 and 4 will demonstrate at least 3% growth per year on Terra Nova Common Core: Science benchmark assessment.
 - 2) *Grade-Level Comparative Performance.* The percent of students in grades 4 achieving proficiency on the NYS Science assessment will exceed the Mount Vernon public schools' average for the same grade.
 - 3) *Individual Performance Based Assessment.* These goals will be measured *daily* by: grades k through 4 students' ability to continually demonstrate their development of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Science and Engineering Practices²⁴ through inquiry-based and problem-based lessons and projects as well as creating presentations that will be evaluated by teachers trained in using a rubric created by a STEM expert.

²⁴ Achieve, Inc. (2013), *Next Generation Science Standards*, accessed on February 5, 2015, <http://www.nextgenscience.org/>.

- 4) *Individual Performance Based Assessment.* At the end of the 4th grade, all students will create a STEM research project and present it to their classmates, teachers, parents, and community members during a school-wide STEM fair. The judge's rubric from the Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) Elementary School Science Fair²⁵ will be used to assess students' performance.
- *Goal 4: Technology Literacy*
FTCSE students will develop technology literacy as measured by a standards-based rubric developed by the faculty. By the end of the fourth grade, all students will be able to use technology to:
- 1) Create and solve math problems
 - 2) Access ELA related programs and readings and create ELA based projects
 - 3) Research and create STEM projects and report results from their experiments
 - 4) Communicate with other classrooms and share their work with the greater community and work independently and with a parent/guardian to monitor their personal academic progress
- *Goal 5: Social Studies Proficiency*
FTCSE students will demonstrate proficient Social Studies content knowledge and inquiry ability. This goal will be measured in the following ways:
- 1) *Individual Benchmark Gains.* Students in grades k through 2 will demonstrate at least 3% growth per year on Terra Nova Complete Battery: Science and Social Studies benchmark assessment. Students in grades 3 and 4 will demonstrate at least 3% growth per year on Terra Nova Common Core: Social Studies benchmark assessment.
 - 2) *Individual Performance Based Assessment.* These goals will be measured *daily* by: grades k through 4 students' ability to continually demonstrate their development of knowledge in social studies and current events through community based projects and presentations that will be evaluated by teachers trained in using a teacher-generated rubric.
- *Goal 6: Interdisciplinary Proficiency*
The ELA, science, math, social studies, and technology goals will be measured daily through teacher-generated rubrics and observations. The integration of STEM content across all disciplines will require students to:
- 1) *Individual Benchmark Gains.* Apply relevant math skills to collect, organize, and represent data appropriately, such as in the form of diagrams, tables, and graphs
 - 2) Recognize appropriate texts to use in research and building content knowledge
 - 3) Write clearly and concisely to report findings and share information
 - 4) Use multiple forms of technology to design, build, and communicate STEM experiments and findings

B. School Schedule and Calendars

The 2016- 2017 FTSCE school year will consist of 196 instructional days compared to the Mount Vernon public schools' 180 - 6 hour and 55 minute days. Our school day will operate for 8 and a half hours, Mondays through Fridays from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each week with the option of an additional two hours of enrichment from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. There will be two

²⁵ Brookhaven National Laboratory, accessed February 2015, <http://www.bnl.gov/education/static/scienceFair/linkableFiles/pdf/JudgingRubric2010.pdf>.

early dismissal days per month to allot for professional development during which instructional time will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 1:30 p.m. The longer FTCSE school day and additional 16 instructional days per year will provide our students with more than 400 student-teacher contact hours than their Mount Vernon public school peers. Our extended school day will provide our students with increased instructional time, which maximizes time on task to master the skills and content knowledge in the core subjects. The extended day also affords special needs students and ELL learners increased academic coaching and technological support by the specialists.

The weekly schedules reflect the elements described in our mission statement and school overview, which focuses on student-centered instruction, character development, college and career readiness, blended learning, and provides teachers time for collaboration, planning, and professional development. Table 2 provides a brief overview of the student and teacher daily schedule. Detailed weekly schedule samples for students and teachers for K-1 and 2-4 are provided in Attachment 3a.

Table 2: Student-Teacher School Day Example

Time	K-1 Students	K-1 Teachers	Time	2-4 Students	2-4 Teachers
7:20 a.m.	Doors Open		7:20 a.m.	Doors Open	
7:30 – 8:00	Breakfast	Teachers arrive	7:30 – 8:00	Breakfast	Teachers arrive
8:05 – 8:30	Morning Meeting		8:05 – 8:30	Morning Meeting	
8:30 – 9:45	STEM Block		8:30 – 10:00	STEM Block	
9:45 – 10:30	Elective/AIS	Preparation/ Collaboration	10:00 – 10:20	Recess	Communicate with Parents
10:30 – 10:50	Recess	Communicate with Parents	10:20 – 11:40	Math Block	
10:50-12:30pm	Math Block		11:40-12:30 pm	Lunch	
12:30 – 1:20	Lunch		12:30 – 1:15	Elective/AIS	Preparation/ Collaboration
1:20 – 2:50	ELA/Social Studies Block		1:15 – 2:45	STEM Block	
2:50 – 3:35	Elective/AIS	Preparation/ Collaboration	2:45 – 3:30	Elective/AIS	Preparation/ Collaboration
3:35 – 3:50	Pack up & dismissal		3:30 – 3:50	Independent Reading/AIS	
			3:50 – 4:00	Pack up & dismissal	

Student Schedule

The 2017-2018 academic year for the students will commence August 21, 2017 and conclude June 29, 2018. A four-week Monday through Thursday summer school session is scheduled for July 10, 2018 through August 9, 2018 for students not meeting benchmark assessment proficiency.

The school day will begin with a half hour breakfast, a 20 minute restroom/snack break, and a 50 minute lunch, which includes a half hour indoor/outdoor recess, weather dependent. Students in grades k and 1 will be dismissed beginning at 3:50, while students in grades 2 through 4 will be dismissed at 4:00.

Teacher Schedule:

Each day, teachers will have a duty free lunch and an additional 20 minutes to communicate with parents via email or by phone. Additionally, teachers will receive a total of one hour and fifty minutes of preparation time, where they will collaborate and lesson-plan with their co-teachers and content specialists, meet with the directors, and analyze student data to inform upcoming

instruction. Each month, all teachers will have approximately 6 hours of early release time for grade level planning meetings, individualized professional development sessions, and/or school wide meetings. Quarterly, evening parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled at the school to discuss student progress, showcase student projects, and recruit parents as partners in the academic and social development of their children.

C. Curriculum and Instruction

The lack of interest, competency, and participation in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) related subject areas among American students is, in part, a result of how these subjects have been traditionally taught, whereby the teacher transmits information to his/her students through lecture, textbook reading, and vocabulary memorization. Traditional science teaching, which dominates American classrooms, contradicts the nature of genuine science learning as being a dynamic, complex process that relies on a variety of skills in order for children to *construct meaning*. In recent years, however, evidence collected from brain research and studies on how children learn supports the learner-centered, or constructivist, theory that learning occurs through constructing or building on prior knowledge. This theory, therefore, is not a teaching theory, but rather a theory of learning and meaning making.^{26,27,28} This challenges traditional teaching as it recognizes that “a school is something more than curriculum and teaching.”²⁹ FTCSE philosophy is grounded in research and the constructivist theory. Children must be viewed as individuals who learn at different rates and interpret information differently such that curriculum and instruction should be guided by the notion that “the student is infinitely more important than the subject.”³⁰ The learning environment, therefore, must focus on the whole child, whereby the child is actively engaged in tasks that require exploration, discovery, and construction of new knowledge through meaning making.³¹ This mirrors FTCSE’s mission to teach each child holistically.

In keeping with FTCSE’s curriculum design and instructional practices will focus on student-centered learning practices, specifically blended learning and problem-based learning (PBL), while integrating ELA into STEM throughout the school day. Instructional materials will be research-based, appropriate for high needs students, and aligned to NYS Common Core Learning Standards. However, selected materials may need to be reviewed by administration, faculty, and professional developers to determine their suitability for our student population.

One may consider Confucius’ words from 2,500 years ago when reflecting upon how our children need to be prepared for college and careers:

“I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.”³²

²⁶ M. G. Brooks & J. G. Brooks, “The courage to be constructivist,” *Educational Leadership*, 1999: 57(3), 18-24.

²⁷ J. Bruner, *Toward A Theory Of Instruction* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1966).

²⁸ Hattie, *Visible Learning: A Synthesis*.

²⁹ W. M. Aiken, (1942) *Adventure In American Education: The Story Of The Eight Year Study*, Vol. 1 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), 3, 29.

³⁰ N. Noddings, (2003). *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1942), 20.

³¹ M. S. Schiro, *Curriculum Theory: Conflicting Visions and Enduring Concerns* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2008).

³² Confucius, accessed online February 2015, <http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/25848.html>.

Teacher Centered: I hear and I forget

A student-centered learning environment challenges traditional teaching that views children as blank slates³³ and promotes the role of students as passive receptors of information, which deprives the learning experiences necessary for every child's normal development. Teacher-centered classrooms are also organized in isolation rather than socially, which promotes lecture-based instruction. Science teachers especially fall prey to direct instruction, as there are many terms to learn, and as a result, teaching facts is often equated with gaining knowledge. Therefore, opportunities for developing deep understandings is lost as discussions focus on teacher dominated question-answer sessions and factual recall. Students are also given written assignments intended for reinforcement, but Vygotsky³⁴ warns these activities do not provide opportunities for students to develop the skills necessary to think, reason, process, and build on what they have learned. Student-centered learning opportunities on the other hand, allow children to transform facts into concepts through inquiry and become critical thinkers and problem solvers. Bruner reminds educators that "knowledge is a process, not a product."³⁵

Vygotsky³⁸ also blames lectures for not providing the cultural, or social, component necessary to aid in a child's social, emotional, and concept development. Lecture, he believes, prevents interaction between children, thereby limiting their ability to learn through language. He calls this direct approach useless, as the teacher "only accomplishes nothing but empty verbalism" and results in "a parrot-like repetition of words by the child." Dewey had warned educators that more harm would be done to a child if he/she is subjected to learning that is irrelevant to his/her life and is made to sit quietly and follow rules.³⁶

Research supports the positive impact of the social atmosphere and movement that takes place in the Montessori classroom on memory and recall. Movement also controls a child's mood and facial expressions, which directly affects memory and deep processing of information. Those who smile and interact with others process information more effectively, whereas those who sit motionless and emotionless may process nothing at all.³⁷ FTCSE, therefore, will provide our children with "Movement and Music" electives. The research-based physical education program, SPARK, will allow FTCSE k-4 students to participate in daily play³⁸ consisting of games and activities that provide opportunities for physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Brain research also suggests that listening to music and playing instruments at an early age stimulates the areas within the brain associated with improvements in cognitive, emotional and social development, and increases mathematical and spatial reasoning.³⁹ Our kindergarten through first grade students will sing songs from different cultures and grades 2, 3, and 4 students will have the opportunity to participate in chorus and learn instruments. Providing a

³³ A. S. Lillard, *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007).

³⁴ L.M. Vygotsky, *Thought and language* (Cambridge, MA: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1962), 83.

³⁵ J. Bruner, *Toward a theory of instruction* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1966), 72.

³⁶ J. Dewey, *The School and Society and the Child and the Curriculum* (New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1962).

³⁷ Lillard, *Montessori: The Science Behind The Genius*.

³⁸ D. Fromberg & D. Bergen, eds. *Play from Birth to Twelve: Contexts, Perspectives, and Meanings* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006).

³⁹ L. Miller-Kase, (2013), "Using Music to Close the Academic Gap," accessed February 2015, www.theatlantic.com.

social environment where students communicate with one another also promotes learning across all disciplines, especially in STEM.

Blueprint Curriculum: I see and I remember

There is a great deal of emphasis on *what students must know* in curriculum design. Contrary to Vygotsky's belief that science learning cannot be separated from everyday learning experiences, standards-based science curriculum focuses on topics important to scientists, rather than what is meaningful to the students.⁴⁰ Decades ago, Aiken recommended the need for "practical applications" in science classrooms and criticized curriculum for lacking in creativity because of its "blueprint" of meaningless activities.⁴¹ Curriculum, therefore, needs to consider the individual learner and the learning process.⁴²

The popularity and push toward hands-on science instruction has led to the over-use of activities and ignores the need for students to construct knowledge. Hence, doing science is often mistaken for learning science.⁴³ Since simple observations are not sufficient, activities must provide students with the total experience of a concept or process. Many activities, however, are still flawed despite these efforts as they focus largely on observational skills, which are seeing science through demonstrations.

Almost seventy-five years ago, Aiken recognized the value of integrating technology into classroom instruction and encouraged educators to "use radio recordings" because the "great possibilities...on learning."⁴⁴ Recent research has indicated that computer animation applications have a positive effect on student learning and retention of abstract scientific concepts.⁴⁵ For example, using an iPad or SMART Board to show bacterial replication as an example of asexual reproduction may aid in recall. Based on this research, FTCSE will incorporate the blended learning instructional model across all core content areas to maximize student-centered instructional practices. Blended learning will enable our students to become "active and interactive learners," while increasing the "interaction between student-instructor, student-student, student-content, and student-outside resources" and providing "formative and summative assessment mechanisms for students and instructor."⁴⁶

Problem-Based Learning: I do and I understand

Montessori stresses that learning occurs through all of the senses, therefore watching and listening is insufficient. As a result, in addition to a blended learning, elementary-school science curriculum, FTCSE will create a PBL curriculum modeled after the inter-disciplinary, STEM PBL curriculum offered at Hofstra University to visiting elementary students from local high needs districts.

⁴⁰ Howe, (1996), "Development of science concepts," 35-51.

⁴¹ Aiken, "Adventure in American Education," 17, 46.

⁴² Bruner, *Toward A Theory Of Instruction*, 72.

⁴³ L. D. Yore, & D. F. Treagust, (2006). "Current realities and future possibilities: language and science literacy-empowering research and informing instruction." *International Journal of Science Education*, 28(2-3), 2006: 291-314.

⁴⁴ Aiken, *Adventure in American Education*, 80.

⁴⁵ K. Dalacosta, M. K. Paparrigopoulou, J. A. Palyvos, & N. Spyrellis, "Multimedia application with animated cartoons for teaching science in elementary education," *Computers and Education*, 52(4), 2009: 741-748.

⁴⁶ C. D. Dziuban, J. L. Hartman, & P. D. Moskal, (2004), "Blended learning," *Center for Applied Research, Research Bulletin*, 2004(7). Accessed online February 2015, <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ERB0407.pdf>.

Problem-based learning is a student centered approach which places students in the role of scientists who are actively involved in their learning.^{47, 48} These PBL activities require students to observe, think, reason, and process what they are learning, which increases motivation, makes the experience more meaningful, and increases retention.⁴⁹ During these activities, students are given the “big idea” in the form of a problem they have to solve through various applications of science and/or engineering practices, such as experimentation and manipulation. The tasks are written to encourage the practices of scientists and engineers as outlined in the Next Generation Science Standards (Figure 2).

Figure 2: NGSS Science and Engineering Practices⁵⁰

1. Asking questions (for science) and defining problems (for engineering)
2. Developing and using models
3. Planning and carrying out investigations
4. Analyzing and interpreting data
5. Using mathematics and computational thinking
6. Constructing explanations (for science) and designing solutions (for engineering)
7. Engaging in argument from evidence
8. Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information

Learning for All: Special Needs Students and ELL’s

Vygotsky stresses the need for lessons to focus on students’ strengths, not weaknesses, so each PBL task is designed so that students of varying levels of ability may accomplish it. The teacher’s role, then, is to support each learner through guiding questions, such as “What is your evidence to support your claim?” or “Can you prove to me how you came to that conclusion?” For example, in a traditional classroom, a visually-impaired or blind student may be excluded from many activities, as they are often print-based or visual. This PBL curriculum would enable the learner to use all of his/her senses, as Montessori stresses; the student is provided with opportunities to touch, smell, or even taste objects and describe their textures, scents, and tastes thereby developing the child’s verbal communication skills. An ELL may not have the English vocabulary to describe pulley systems or friction, but the lessons would allow him/her to understand, learn, and internalize the concept as he/she works through the problem and develops science vocabulary as his/her English-speaking skills improve. The learning opportunities, being social in nature, also allow for the non-English speaking students to communicate with their bilingual pairs, thus creating a community of learners. Successful science learning in this setting will increase students’ motivation and self-esteem.

Next, is classroom organization. In keeping with Dewey and Vygotsky’s call for a social setting, Montessori’s need for movement, Bruner’s need for choice, and Aiken’s curriculum across the disciplines, several stations will be set up, each containing different types of materials necessary

⁴⁷ M. Perrin, “Inquiry-based pre-engineering activities for K-4 students,” *Journal of STEM Education*, 5(3-4), 2004: 29-34.

⁴⁸ D. D. Minner, A. J. Levy, & J. Century, “Inquiry-based science instruction: what is it and does it matter? Results from research synthesis years 1984-2002,” *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 47(4), 201: 474-496.

⁴⁹ M. A. Mastrioperi, & T. E. Scruggs, “Text versus hands-on science curriculum: implications for students with disabilities,” *Remedial and special Education* 15(2), 1994: 72-85.

⁵⁰ *The National Academy of Sciences*, “A Framework for K-12 Science Education: Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Core Ideas” (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2012), 42.

for children to solve the problem-based task presented in a variety of ways. There will be trade and reference books to incorporate literacy, careers, multiculturalism, and history; manipulatives, scales, and rulers will support math learning and abstract concepts; iPads, SMART Boards and computers will provide learners with the opportunity to become researchers as they use these technological devices for learning support and/or further investigation of the topic. Students will be able to move freely from station to station as they are given the opportunity to learn at their own pace. They are also able to interact with one another—the room is alive with active participants as they discover, share, and discuss their findings with each other.

The FTCSE Curriculum

The following curricular components will be integrated into daily instruction at FTCSE:

Class	Grades K-1	Grades 2-4
Science	<p><u>Science Start K-2</u> Science/Literacy Integration. Research: In a study of preschoolers from low and middle-income families, results from language and literacy measures showed gains were statistically significant. Students also demonstrated knowledge in science content and vocabulary, in addition to developing their scientific reasoning and communication skills.</p>	<p><u>Pearson, Interactive Science</u> Print and Digital Interactive resources for Blended Learning; ELL support. Research: Pearson Interactive Science students being outperformed their peers on the Developed Science test and the TerraNova science test.</p>
	<p>The first half of each science class will focus on the curriculum as presented in the selected texts, <i>Science Start</i> and <i>Interactive Science</i>, for grades K-2 and 3-4, respectively. The second half of the class will utilize a PBL hands-on curriculum that will have been written to be aligned to content within the text, New York State Elementary Core Curriculum in Science and the NGSS to ensure students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Some weeks will be dedicated to entire design and research projects that will be showcased at the next parent-teacher meeting.</p> <p>All students will participate in annual science fairs where grades K-3 will produce a class project and 4th graders will produce their own project. In keeping with an interdisciplinary STEM curriculum, 4th graders will also design their own research project on any topic of their choice. Topics may be related to science, the community, and the school; in any case, they are scientists who will need to collect data based on their research question and analyze that data. They will then prepare a written report, perhaps to present at an upcoming conference, or a breaking news report for the local newspaper. Students will also be required to prepare an oral presentation of their research project with visuals, such as a poster or a PowerPoint. This presentation will require them to share their findings with their peers, teacher, and parents.</p>	
Technology	<p>Technology will be incorporated throughout the day, each day, by the blended learning instructional model. Most curricula selected have a computer-based component to afford the FTCSE students opportunities to work independently</p>	

	<p>through these programs. In addition, the curricula include interactive White Board activities. In the <i>MakerSpace</i> and <i>STEM Lab</i> and field trips, students will be introduced to various forms of technologies, their uses and the careers associated with them. Over the years from k to 4, students will learn how to use email and Twitter to share their findings, experiments, and projects; they will learn Microsoft Word and PowerPoint for producing reports and projects.</p>		
Engineering	<p>The <i>MakerSpace</i> and <i>STEM Lab</i> will provide students with PBL tasks that focus on NGSS engineering design and practices aligned to their science curriculum. They will be given challenges to design new or improve old technologies and then develop their ELA skills to write an advertisement for their new product that they will record as a commercial. Additional materials will be provided to develop gross and fine motor skills while building and designing various structures. Lego, CitiBlocks, LittleBits, scissors, tape, rulers, to name a few, will provide opportunities for young children to develop these skills.</p>		
Math	<p><u>Houghton Mifflin Harcourt’s <i>GoMath</i>;</u> <u>Pearson’s <i>Investigations in Numbers, Data, & Space</i></u> This math curriculum supports the blended learning instruction model, and provides supplemental materials for ELLs. This interactive math curriculum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supports students to think mathematically and develop number sense 2. Develop students’ computational fluency 3. Develop skills in and connections among basic mathematical areas, such as measurement and data, necessary for success during PBL activities in the STEM lab 4. Focus on mathematical reasoning 5. Developing literacy skills, and the ability to communicate math content; 6. Differentiated for a variety of learners <p>In addition, the hands-on materials available for use with this curriculum will not only concretize young learners’ ideas about math, but will support students with disabilities and ELLs. Their math skills and reasoning will be further developed as they must apply these new skills to solve the PBL science and engineering tasks in the <i>Maker Space</i> and <i>STEM Lab</i>.</p>		
ELA	<p><u><i>Lucy Calkins: Common Core Reading and Writing Workshop Curriculum</i></u> This curriculum will teach students opinion/argument, information, and narrative reading and writing with increasing complexity and sophistication. The lessons foster high-level thinking, including regular chances to synthesize, analyze, and critique, while developing and refining strategies for writing across the curriculum. Students will be supported in gaining greater independence and fluency through intensive reading and writing opportunities. Strategic performance assessments are included to help teachers monitor students’ mastery and differentiate instruction.</p>		
	<table border="0"> <tr> <td><u><i>FOSS Science Stories</i></u> Colorful and engaging pictures, directly related to the text, require students to examine and analyze pictures to make connections and</td> <td><u><i>Seeds of Science/Roots of Reading</i></u> This program integrates science and literacy to develop science knowledge and vocabulary, while building science and ELA skills and</td> </tr> </table>	<u><i>FOSS Science Stories</i></u> Colorful and engaging pictures, directly related to the text, require students to examine and analyze pictures to make connections and	<u><i>Seeds of Science/Roots of Reading</i></u> This program integrates science and literacy to develop science knowledge and vocabulary, while building science and ELA skills and
<u><i>FOSS Science Stories</i></u> Colorful and engaging pictures, directly related to the text, require students to examine and analyze pictures to make connections and	<u><i>Seeds of Science/Roots of Reading</i></u> This program integrates science and literacy to develop science knowledge and vocabulary, while building science and ELA skills and		

	think critically	strategies
	<p><u>Sally Ride’s Cool Careers</u> These leveled readers prepare students for college and career readiness while integrating STEM. These readers are ideal for independent and group reading.</p>	
	<p>Additional leveled trade and picture books for each classroom library will be organized by genre and subject in labeled baskets. These will be available to students during independent reading times or D.E.A.R. Writing and reading centers will be also available for students to journal, work on projects, and so forth. The interdisciplinary nature of the literacy class will further develop students’ knowledge in science, math, and social studies, that they will apply to their building of new knowledge during the activities they encounter in those classes.</p>	
Social Studies	<p><u>Pearson’s myWorld</u> This curriculum teaches social studies content through ELA reinforcement. Since it is community based, it will be used in conjunction with Sally Ride’s <i>Cool Careers</i>. In addition, the classrooms will be decorated with maps, flags, charts and other resources to promote social studies/literacy learning. Again, this integration of different disciplines fosters children’s ability to see the interconnected themes of the different subject areas.</p>	
Physical Education	<p>SPARK program and equipment. This research based physical education program is linked to increased participation in games during gym class, improved physical fitness, development of gross motor skills and hand-eye coordination (throwing, catching, kicking), and improved overall academic achievement. Students will engage in these activities during gym class and recess after lunch, weather permitting.</p>	
TECH (Teaching Each Child Holistically)	<p>Part of the mission of FTSCE focuses on character development and College and Career Readiness. The following programs will be integrated during student-teacher morning meetings and into core disciplines: <u>Resolving Conflicts Creatively Program (RCCP)</u> This introduces a value system by teaching individuals how to solve conflicts peacefully. <u>Lessons in Character</u> This character education curriculum that enables children to understand good character and conflict resolution through literature, which will further support ELA development. The curriculum is designed to extend beyond the school walls and into the child’s home and community. This will foster a safe, and healthy learning community where children will not be afraid to take risks associated with PBL environments.</p>	
Music	<p>Children will learn and sing songs from different cultures during this time, thereby increasing social awareness, respect and tolerance while increasing literacy skills.</p>	<p>Children will receive instruction in musical instruments and join the upper elementary chorus that will perform at the 4th grade moving up ceremony.</p>

All students will design their own musical instruments in the *MakerSpace* and explore the science of sound. They will create advertisements describing how their instrument works, its cultural origins, and its uses.

D. Assessment System

The following normed assessments will be used for students K-4 and administered in the fall and spring of each school year:

Assessment	Grades	Subject(s)
Terra Nova: Complete Battery	K-2	Reading & Math
Terra Nova: Complete Battery	K-2	Science & Social Studies
Terra Nova: Common Core	3-4	Reading
Terra Nova: Common Core	3-4	ELA
Terra Nova: Common Core	3-4	Math
Terra Nova: Common Core	3-4	Science
Terra Nova: Common Core	3-4	Social Studies

The Executive Director and/or Director of Pupil Services and teachers will use the assessment instruments to establish student performance baselines, which will be used throughout the year to measure academic growth. In addition, the formative and summative assessments embedded within the chosen curricula will be used to measure student growth and achievement and compare FTCSE student data to national norms. These assessments, which will take place throughout the academic year, will be used to guide instruction, analyze the appropriateness of the chosen curricula, and assess teacher effectiveness. Teachers will be responsible for creating a student portfolio which will contain formative and all summative assessments. Teachers will also collect, analyze, and report assessment data to the Executive Director and/or The Director of Pupil Services. Students’ portfolios will become an on-going record of their performance from kindergarten through the fourth grade, which will be used to inform their future teachers. Assessment results will be shared with parents/guardians throughout the school year to support them in working with their children at home.

The planned assessment calendar is as follows:

	Terra Nova					New York State Assessments			GMADE/ GRADE
	Complete Battery		Common Core			ELA	Math	Science	
	Reading & Math	Science & Social Studies	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies			
August	K – 2	K – 2	3 – 4	3 – 4	3 – 4	3 – 4			
September									K
October									
November									
December									
January	K – 2	K – 2	3 – 4	3 – 4	3 – 4	3 – 4			
February									
March									
April							3 – 4	3 – 4	

May							4	K
June	K-2	K-2	3-4	3-4	3-4	3-4	4	

E. Performance, Promotion, and Graduation Standards

Promotion Criteria

Grade promotion will be based upon the students' meeting the appropriate New York State Common Core grade level standards. Students demonstrating significant achievement gaps across any or all content areas will continue remediation and undergo further cognitive and emotional evaluations. The Director of Pupil Services will oversee this process and ensure appropriate services are provided to the child. In addition, the school leadership team, including the Executive Director and Director of Pupil Services, and the teacher(s), will analyze the portfolio data to ascertain the possibility of retention. They will meet with the parents/ guardians no later than January 1 of that school year to create an alternate academic plan to prevent retention. Retention, therefore, will be decided on an individual basis.

At the end of the third grade, students who do not meet the grade standard for ELA and mathematics will be retained only when alternate interventions are unsuccessful. Their next year's placement, therefore, will serve as a transitional grade three-four class, thus fostering students' further academic growth, and emotional and social development. This additional year intends to prepare these students to meet the rigors of the grade four NYS Assessments and the challenges of fifth grade. The transition grade three classroom teacher will meet with the school leadership team to discuss each student's needs and will be provided with professional development in the pedagogical strategies necessary to support these students.

Special Student Population: Students with IEP's and those in the process of evaluation will be advanced to the next grade based on individualized promotion criteria and the assessment data contained within the portfolio.

Exit Standards:

FTCSE students will exit the program proficient in math, science, literacy, and social studies content knowledge. They will have acquired the problem-solving and critical thinking skills necessary to be successful academically in the fifth grade. They will have gained self-esteem and confidence leading to respect for themselves and their community. STEM skills will equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in the global marketplace. The application of technology in the classroom will introduce them to the world of research and communication. They will have gained exposure to various careers and colleges, thus providing them with long-term goals and a hope for the future. Our students will leave us with self-regulating skills that serve to establish appropriate social and emotional attitudes.

The tables below highlight specific areas of student academic growth and achievement from the first grade to the exit standards at the end of the fourth grade based upon the Common Core Learning Standard in ELA and math, and technology.

ELA	
1 st Grade	4 th Grade
Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.	Refer to specific details to describe a character, setting, or event in a story/text.
Refer to key ideas to describe characters, settings,	Refer to details to describe the meaning of the text

and major events in a story. Identify words and phrases in stories or poems referring to feelings or senses.	and to make inferences. Determine the meaning of words and phrases in context.
Read prose and poetry of appropriate complexity with prompting and support.	Explain differences in genre, such as poems, drama, and prose; refer to their structural elements (i.e. verse, rhythm, and meter for poetry) when writing or discussing the text.
Identify the narrator of the story.	Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person.
Use illustrations in a story to describe the characters, setting, or major events.	Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.

As appropriate, students in the 1st through 4th grade in math will be able to...

Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
Model with mathematics.
Use appropriate tools strategically.
Use appropriate tools strategically.
Attend to precision.
Look for and make use of structure.
Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

As appropriate, students in the 1st through 4th grade in technology will be able to...

Students will know what technology is.
Students will know how technology is used.
Students will know how technology is integrated into their daily lives.
Students will apply their technology knowledge and skills to address real-life problems and make informed decisions.
Students will employ technology to enhance their reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
Students will know how to access, generate, process, and transfer information using appropriate technologies.
Students will know how to apply technological knowledge and skills to design, construct, use and evaluate products and systems to satisfy human and environmental needs.
Students will know and understand the relationships and common themes that connect mathematics, science, and technology and apply the themes to these and other areas of learning.

F. School Culture/Climate

FTCSE strives to create a learning family where faculty, staff, and parents create a partnership to teach students the ways in which one learns, form relationships, communicate, show empathy, and cooperate with others. Students, parents, staff and administration share the responsibility of providing a culture of discipline for the educational enrichment, safety, and holistic well-being of

our school. The Conscious Discipline program will support the students' development of the seven skills of self-discipline, which are: composure, encouragement, assertiveness, choices, empathy, and consequences.

Our discipline policy, administered by the administration, faculty, and parents, will be aligned with the *Responsive Classroom*⁵¹ philosophy. Visual and verbal cues and increased teacher proximity will be in place if a disruption to FTCSE's Conduct Standards occurs. Additional methods, such as using a "take-a-break" spot, a "fix-it plan," or a "team meeting,"⁵² will be used to maintain a safe and productive learning environment. "Take-a-break" will be a place where a child reflects on their behavior before returning to the group, which will provide the child an opportunity to decompress. If the child continues to misbehave, a "Fix-it-Plan" will be completed with an adult prior to returning to the classroom. If the poor conduct continues a behavioral plan will be developed during a "Team Meeting." The teacher will assess the immediate needs of the child, taking time to discuss the issue, and contact the parents/guardians.

All FTCSE administration and staff will uphold the philosophy of the discipline policy. We believe that successful leadership and teaching emerges from a systemic culture where examples are set by those who are given authority to govern, lead, and teach. We will support one another, thus creating a learning team.

FTCSE will engage parents and the community by directly involving them in the life of our campus. For example, parents will be encouraged to serve on school committees and assist in concretizing the learning tenants as outlined in our school's objectives and key design elements. Community involvement will be fostered through our outreach team and school website. We will encourage local vendors to advertise, provide premiums for fundraising, and support the STEM based programs.

FTCSE strives to create a learning family where faculty, staff, and parents create a partnership to teach students the ways in which one learns, form relationships, communicate, show empathy, and cooperate with others.

Code of Conduct that Builds on TECH and Conscious Discipline

The school leader will design a Code of Conduct to compliment the Key Design Element of Teaching Each Child Holistically (TECH) and the Code of Conduct will also apply the critical methodology of Conscious Discipline as reflected in the discipline policy. Given that one of the key design elements is TECH (page ii, application summary), our approach to student behavior management and discipline is to develop a sense of shared community, empathy, and responsibility within each student. By this, it means each student will learn the importance of being a member of a classroom community and that each classroom or grade is a member of the school community. Second, the school's discipline policy will be implemented through Conscious Discipline. In this policy, teachers and students will work together through research-based character education assemblies, projects, and curricula to learn conflict resolution and character traits that foster a healthy academic, social, and emotional environment at school, at home, and in the community. Teachers will model supporting one another and students in

⁵¹ *Responsive Classrooms: Educators Creating Safe, Challenging and Joyful Elementary Schools*, "About Responsive Classroom," accessed June 6, 2014, <https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/about-responsive-classroom>.

⁵² *Responsive Classrooms Educators Creating Safe, Challenging and Joyful Elementary Schools*, "Positive Time Out," accessed June 6, 2014, <https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/article/positive-time-out>.

responding to daily conflict, affording them the opportunity to teach critical life skills to their students (mission page 1).

Training Seminars Prior to School Opening

Moreover, the school leader will conduct training seminars with the instructional staff prior to school to support them in preparing those critical day-to-day decision-making strategies in disciplining their students. Included within the seminars should be: role playing exercises, viewing video presentations related to TECH and Conscious Discipline, journaling and reflection activities, as well as reading research-based literature related to the programs. More information related to the programs may be incorporated into the seminars as determined by the school leader to build capacity within the instructional staff to appropriately engage students in behavior self-management.

During the training seminars, the school leader will share FTCSE's Code of Conduct with the instructional staff to solicit their feedback as to what they can proficiently and effectively support. The school leader will share and discuss the Code of Conduct with the instructional staff to build an understanding and create a context for offering feedback to the school leader. This should also help instructional staff to independently manage classroom behavior. The Code of Conduct is included within the discipline policy and is its major component.

Once this list has been finalized, the Code of Conduct is presented to parents at the Parent Orientation Meeting, prior to school starting. The Code of Conduct is a living document that is subject to revisions, editions, deletions and reorganization as determined by the administration, instructional staff, parents, and students (when necessary).

The school leader will create a school climate advisory committee composed of three (3) parents; two (2) teachers, and two (2) students who will assess the discipline policy on a monthly basis to determine whether the policy is functioning appropriately to maintain safety and order within the school climate to conduct learning. The school climate advisory committee serves as the advising entity to the school leader and can be removed from the committee at the request of the school leader.

FTCSE shall establish a student driven safety guard unit. This unit will help provide student safety and discipline on the school campus. The safety guard unit will start at grade 3, as junior officers and progress to senior status. The school climate advisory committee shall facilitate the Student Safety Unit program. The students will learn how to resolve conflict, negotiate disagreements and model leadership skills. *Resolving Conflicts Creatively Program (RCCP)*, will be the program used as the model in the implementation of the student safety unit.

This code of conduct will include the following items, but more may be added:

RULE 1 - DISRUPTION AND INTERFERENCE WITH SCHOOL

No student shall cause or attempt to cause (either directly or indirectly) a disruption or interference with school by any means including, but not limited to, any of the following behaviors:

- 1) Class disruption. Student behavior that is repetitive or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to teach and/or students' ability to learn
- 2) Disorderly conduct. Any act that substantially disrupts the orderly learning environment, or poses a threat to the health, safety and/or welfare of students, staff and others

- 3) Refuse to identify himself/herself upon request of any teacher, principal, superintendent, school bus driver, or other school personnel
- 4) Urge, encourage, or counsel other students to violate any rules of the Student Code of Conduct
- 5) Dress inappropriately

RULE 2 - DAMAGE, DESTRUCTION OR MISUSE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY OR EQUIPMENT

A student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to school property or alter/misuse school technology or any other equipment, including accessing unauthorized areas on the computer. A student shall not steal or attempt to steal school property. A student shall not access/alter school/teacher/student records. A student shall not possess, sell, use, buy or transmit stolen school property or attempt to possess, sell, use, buy or transmit stolen school property.

RULE 3 - ABUSE, THREATS, INTIMIDATION, ASSAULT OR BATTERY ON A STUDENT, TEACHER, PARENT OR SCHOOL EMPLOYEE.

Regardless of intent, a student shall not: Make oral or written communication, create a document, or make a symbolic gesture or contact of a threatening, undermining, or provoking nature to or about a school employee or in the presence of a school employee. This includes, but is not limited to, disrespectful conduct, insult, use of profanity, ethnic, racial, sexual, disability, or religious slur, or harassment and includes the development of a "hit list," "people to kill," "people to shoot," or a statement about bringing a weapon to school and injuring people.

The prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Oral threat/verbal assault
- 2) Written threat
- 3) Rude and/or disrespectful conduct including but not limited to symbolic gestures and insults
- 4) Use of profanity
- 5) Ethnic, racial, sexual, religious, or disability slur
- 6) Harassment - Repeated words (verbal or written), conduct, or action that annoys, alarms, or causes distress and serves no legitimate purpose
- 7) Any expression (oral, written, or gesture) which has the effect of undermining the authority of the school employee or distracting staff and/or students from the learning environment, including writings of a threatening or provoking nature

(See Attachment 4 Student Discipline Policy/Student Code of Conduct for more detail.)

The school leader will include the Conscious Discipline curriculum professional development rubric throughout the academic year that will develop the skillset for implementing a well rounded discipline program.

G. Special Student Populations and Related Services

FTCSE will provide an opportunity for students with disabilities to learn in the least restrictive environment. All students, including students with disabilities, ELLs, and gifted and talented, will be placed in a general education classroom. In addition, all students will receive the appropriate services based on their special needs. For example, ELLs will receive specialized or modified instruction in their academic courses to ensure the Common Core Standards are met.

FTCSE classrooms are all-inclusive, safe learning spaces where students share their ideas. Students will have access to technology such as Smart Boards, laptops, and iPads, which will

support students' learning at their level. All students will be supported by a general education teacher and teacher assistant in their classrooms. FTCSE will have a special Education classroom teacher that will have dual function of classroom teacher and Special Education Lead Teacher Coordinator, ELL/ESL lead Teacher Coordinator, and certified special education/ELL/gifted and talented teachers will provide additional targeted support and intervention to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Students with IEPs and limited English proficiency may be placed into small group instruction where they will work with appropriate service providers, such as the occupational therapist, speech therapist, school counselors, and all other specialized staff. FTCSE will partner with Mount Vernon School district/BOCES to ensure that the above services are rendered to students with special needs. A line item for these services will be a part of the FTCES school budget.

Serving English Language Learner Students

FTCSE will conduct a home language survey of ELL students after the awarding of enrollment as the first screening process to identify students with limited English proficiency. The home language survey shall be based on the following four questions.

- What is the language most frequently spoken at home?
- Which language did your child learn when he/she first began to talk?
- What language does your child most frequently speak at home?
- What language do you most frequently speak to your child?

Perspective Kindergartens shall be administrated a Listening and Speaking Test. This is an oral proficiency test intended for students in pre-K through 1st semester of grade 1 to determine the child primarily language. (This test will be given no earlier than May prior to entering kindergarten.) A Reading and Writing diagnostic tests will be administrated to all incoming students to determine language proficiency. ELL students will be identified through those oral and written diagnostic-testing processes. Once the student is classified as ELL, FTCSE Special Education Coordinator will administered the ACCESS for ELLs® assessment. ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) is a secure large-scale English language proficiency assessment given to Kindergarten through 12th graders who have been identified as English language learners (ELLs). This test will monitor students' progress in acquiring academic English.

FTCSE will provide services for all ELL students, those services shall be rated for their effectiveness annually through student proficiency performance outcomes. The ultimate goal is that all ELL students attained the language proficiency needed to participate meaningfully in content area classrooms without program support and on state academic content tests without accommodations. The ELL programs shall be evaluated through student performance outcomes. The ELL student's performance shall demonstrate an improvement in cognitive academic language, expanded vocabulary, and longer sentences, comprehensible and fluent. The variety of complex topics is just a few indicators of the effectiveness of FTCSE serious approach to serving ELL students.

The Special Education program should be evaluated annually though a Quick Check created to address the needs of students housed in the special education program. The Executive Director should perform this evaluation. The Executive Director will conduct observations in the classrooms; assess the facility accommodations and curriculum. The Executive Director shall observe or inquire about ALL items. This will establish a baseline and allow for progress to be

monitored throughout the school year. Once the baseline has been established, the Executive Director with the Special Education Program team will derive plans to continue to identify resources to help increase the expertise of professionalism in serving special needs students.

The blended-learning program at FTCSE will allow the teacher to closely monitor student growth and progression through collecting summative and formative assessment data. This data will inform teachers of their students' individual learning needs so that they may focus planning around these identified strengths and weaknesses. Students at risk for academic failure who test into Tiers two or three of FTCSE's RTI model will be referred to our special education coordinator who will then refer the student to the CSE. In addition, this approach will allow teachers to provide targeted small group instruction to all students.

Special Education Training

The Special Education Coordinator, ELL/ESL Coordinator, and certified special education/ELL/gifted and talented teachers will oversee the special education program in collaboration with the school's leadership team. The Special Education Coordinator will work closely with classroom teachers to assess and monitor student growth in addition to providing ongoing professional development focusing on appropriate teaching strategies for students with disabilities, ELLS, students at risk for academic failure, and the gifted and talented. The Special Education Coordinator and FTCSE's leadership team will communicate with parents/guardians on a regular basis their student's progress and any IEP modification needed to provide opportunities for student success.

Our Special Education Coordinator will be responsible for:

- Attending all CSE meetings
- Ensuring teachers are following all students' IEPs
- Contacting the CSE for all reevaluations or revisions to students' IEPs
- Identifying students requiring CSE referrals
- Providing training/instruction for all staff on strategies for identifying students with special needs and providing appropriate instruction materials and support
- Ensuring that FTCSE is in compliance with federal and state regulations
- Monitoring student progress
- Managing IEP records

For new students with IEPs, FTCSE, with support from families and the Mount Vernon School District, will ensure that they receive all entitled services. FTCSE will:

- Secure all new students' IEPs
- Collaborate with the CSE to suggest modifications to any pre existing IEPs
- Provide all services that are identified in the student's IEP
- Provide students with comparable services, if necessary, until parents/guardians can meet with the Special Education Coordinator who will then start the referral process to the CSE
- Work with the CSE to determine if special education services provided by FTCSE meets the student's educational goals
- Contract with external parties, such as the Mount Vernon School District, for services such as a speech therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, and counseling

ESL Staff Training

FTCSE will hire a full-time certified English as a Second Language (ESL) bilingual teacher who will provide ESL support and implement the English Immersion model. All baseline assessments will be given in the students' native languages. FTCSE will provide an onsite ESL resource center for students, their families, and school staff to share literature in diverse languages and provide strategies for English language acquisition at home. The resource center will be open during and after school hours and in the summer. FTCSE will:

- Identify students who may have Limited English Proficiency (LEP) utilizing a baseline assessment, Imagine Learning
- Providing training/instruction for all staff on best strategies for identifying and supporting LEP
- Ensure that FTCSE is in compliance with federal and state regulations
- Provide individual/group ESL remedial services for ELLs through Imagine Learning assessment data

Gifted and Talented

At FTCSE, our target population is students at risk for academic failure. However, we are prepared for students who will not fit into that demographic, specifically, the gifted and talented. As a result, teachers will receive professional development on gifted and talented instructional strategies. Teachers will administer the baseline assessments, Pearson G Made and GRADE, to identify gifted and talented students. Assessment data in conjunction with SmartBoards iPads, laptops, and complementary software will be used to differentiate instruction. These students will remain in their respective classrooms and will receive supplemental support at their increased level of inquiry and learning.

RTI Tier One Core Instruction

FTCSE will provide students with high quality classroom instruction coupled with small group and differentiated instruction. Instruction will be implemented utilizing the blended rotational model, differentiated staff model, and curricula that have demonstrated to raise RTI scores. RTI time is scheduled for 20 minutes each day, 5 days per week during the individual and small group intervention. Unit tests, administered by the classroom teacher, will determine whether a student may move from one RTI level to the next. Based on results, the student will remain, transfer to the next tier, or revert to the former tier.

FTCSE curriculum includes Common Core aligned assessments, which will be administered three times per year. Students who have not yet demonstrated proficiency or mastery will receive additional support from the general education classroom teacher. Strategies will include re-teaching through the differentiated staffing model, small group instruction, and learning stations. Additionally, FTCSE will provide after school enrichment three days per week to further instruction for tier one students.

RTI Tier Two Strategic Intervention

Students who do not show adequate progress toward proficiency or mastery level in content areas will receive intense pullout intervention. Students will be ability matched in groups of six students or less during selected times to work on skill development with specialized staff.

RTI Tier Three Highly Intensive Instruction

If instruction and interventions fail to advance students' learning, the Special Education Coordinator and classroom teachers will refer students to tier three RTI intervention, which is scheduled for 20 minutes each day every day. Intervention at this level will only be given to

groups of less than four students by the Special Education Coordinator, the ESL Coordinator, and the Director of Pupil services. Intervention at this level will be concentrated in specific areas of need, such as foundational literacy skills and basic numeracy. Specialized staff will record students’ progress and response to teaching strategies daily. In the event that the student does not show increased growth, the Special Education Coordinator will refer the student to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) after consultation with the student’s parent/guardians and consent is granted.

For students without IEPs performing below grade level who are suspected of having a learning disability based on assessment results and teacher observations, FTCSE will:

- Implement strategies to address academic difficulties
- Provide remediation services, such as Tier II and Tier III interventions
- Utilize internal special education staff to provide a push in/pull out instruction
- Refer students to CSE who do not demonstrate progression following Tier II and Tier III RTI
- Work with the CSE to write IEPs

III. Organizational and Fiscal Plan

A. Applicant Group Capacity

Summary of the Founding group Capacity

Applicant Group Member Name & Email Address	Current Employment	Relevant Experience, Skills & Role in Applicant Group (Key Words)	Proposed Role(s), if any	Proposed Position on the Board	Length of Initial Term	Voting Member Y/N
Dr. C. Nathan Edwers bishopnedwers@aol.com	CEO/Pastor	Leadership and organization	Trustee	Chairperson	3	Y
Paula Scarlett-Brown PScarlettbrown@	Educational Consultant	Principal Administration Reading	Executive Director Employee		None	N
Michael A. Campbell michael.campbell71@verizon.net	Engineer	Budgets analysis strategy	Trustee		3	Y
Michael A. Valentine Esq. mavalentinelawyer@hotmail.com	Attorney	Law, litigation Real estate	Trustee	Attorney	2	Y
Samuel N. Wilson Jr. CPA samuel_wilson_cpa@sbcglobal.net	CPA	Accounting Budgeting Cash Flow	Trustee	Treasurer	2	Y
Dorothea Muccigrosso aceit4243@gmail.com	Assistant Superintendent	Curriculum Teaching Research	Trustee		2	Y
Sherri Edwers sedwers@yahoo.com	NYS Teacher	Curriculum Teaching Special Ed	Trustee	Assistant Secretary	3	Y

Felicia Leary felicia.leary@ gmail.com	NYS Administrator Children Services	Children Svcs. Outreach	Trustee	Community outreach Liaison	2	Y
Charles J. Ray cjray3@aol.com	Adjunct Prof. Mathematics	Charter school experience	Trustee	Trustee	2	Y
Julia Caliendo, Ed.D julia.c.caliendo@hof stra.edu	Admin., Hofstra Univ.	STEM Specialist, Science Lab Instruction	Trustee	Vice Chair	3	Y

In January 2013, a team of concerned parents, educators, professionals, and community activists were assembled to discuss the feasibility of starting the first Elementary Public Charter School in the City of Mount Vernon. By November 2013, a founding board was formed from persons with a wealth of experience in public and corporate life, and with administrative and educational experiences. Two-Thirds of the founding group members are educators and currently serve or have served in the New York Public and Private schools. The remaining members bring significant leadership and community connections to the group. Decisions at the board level give first priority to the educational advancement of FTCSE students through a process of deliberation, observing best practices and building consensus.

Project Progression

The first meeting held on November 2013, brought together the initial founding group, Dr. C. Nathan Edwers, Dorothea Muccigrosso, Madeline Holtzman, Nycolle Woodard, Sherri Edwers, Cheryl Corn, Karen K. Senior, and Samuel N. Wilson, Jr. These persons expressed a compelling desire to improve the educational quality of students in the Mount Vernon District. At this meeting, the concept for the school was developed, the name was chosen, and the mission statement began to emerge. The founding group decided on the best strategies to inform the public of FTCSE's intention to form a public charter school. An outreach committee was formed to develop a strategic plan for reaching the community stakeholders, residents and parents of student who would be eligible to enroll in our new charter school.

From December 2013 to the present, five public forums, small groups meetings, surveys and a petition drive was conducted throughout the city of Mount Vernon which resulted in 1000 signatures in support of a new charter school in the Mount Vernon School District. During this period and as a result of suggestions from the general public, the founding board identified the key design elements, suggested potential locations, and identified resources to support this process. The founding board secured the assistance of consultants and hired the Charter School Business Management Company to oversee the fiscal drafting of the application. Currently none of the founding board members plan to seek employment with FTCSE.

August of 2014, the founding group submitted their first full application for our proposed charter school NYSED charter school authorizers. We were afforded a full review and invited to capacity interview October 2014. Upon the feedback from the State authorizers the founding board decided in November 2014 to withdraw its application for further consideration. The founding group decided to examine carefully the NYSED authorizers comments and make improvement to the application narrative. The decision from the majority of the founding group was to revamp and resubmit the proposal in the 2015 first round. The board invited new potential members to strength it capacity and identified an educational leader for the position of Executive Director. The board secured a STEM specialist who would guide the board in the creation of the

interdisciplinary STEM academic program. The board continued its outreach by conducting several additional group meetings, distributing fliers, and the publishing of two articles from the Westchester County Journal News. February 2015 the LOI was submitted for consideration and we were denied to submit a full application. The founding group decided to re-submit in the second round June 2015 LOI and we were denied to submit a Full application. The founding group met and decided to participate in October 2015 third round in the submission of a full application and submitted a full application. Also in October 2015, a statutory public hearing was held at Mount Vernon Board of Education Center about the proposed application of FTCSE. During November 2015, FTCSE received a summary of finding form NYSED Authorizers. After careful review in December 2015, FTCSE proposed Trustee Board decided to withdraw its full application for further consideration. During February 2016, FTCSE's Trustees submitted a LOI which was accepted and was invited to submit a full application during the first round.

B. Board of Trustees and Governance

Proposed Founding Board of Trustees

Trustee Name	Voting	Position	Length of Initial Term
Dr. C. Nathan Edwers	Y	Member	3
Dr. Julia C. Caliendo	Y	Member	3
Michael Campbell	Y	Member	3
Sherri Edwers	Y	Member	3
Michael A. Valentine	Y	Member	2
Felica Leary	Y	Member	2
Samuel Wilson	Y	Member	3
Dorothea Muccigrosso	Y	Member	2
Charles J. Ray, III	Y	Member	2

(See section 3A for Board Member background information)

Provided a charter is approved after the first five years of operation, the Board of Directors will practice a system of rolling terms of office to ensure consistency of leadership while attracting fresh educational leaders to continue to vision and adopt best practices and principles to continue the forward progress of student educational advancement. In the event a board member leaves before their term has expired, replacement board members will be elected in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of FTCSE. The current configuration of the board members has made a commitment to stay with FTCSE for the first full term.

Open Meeting Law

FTCSE will adhere to the Open Meeting Law of the State of New York. Article 7 section 103 states, "Every meeting of a public body shall be open to the general public, except that an executive session of such body may be called and business transacted thereat in accordance with section one hundred five of this article. Public bodies shall make or cause to be made all reasonable efforts to ensure that meetings are held in facilities that permit barrier-free physical access to the physically handicapped, as defined in subdivision five of section fifty of the public buildings law. A public body that uses videoconferencing to conduct its meetings shall provide an opportunity to attend, listen and observe at any site at which a member participates. Public bodies shall make or cause to be made all reasonable efforts to ensure that meetings are held in an appropriate facility which can adequately accommodate members of the public who wish to

attend such meetings.”⁵³

FTCSE Trustee Duty of Care

FTCSE trustee board members must act in good faith and exercise the degree of diligence, care, and skill that an ordinary prudent individual would use under similar circumstances in a like position. To conform to this standard, trustee board members should:

- a) Regularly attend and participate in board meetings and committee meetings where applicable
- b) Read, review, and inquire about materials that involve the institution, especially board minutes, annual reports, other reports, plans, policies, and any literature that involves the institution
- c) Have fiduciary responsibility for the assets, finances, and investments of the institution and exercise due diligence, care, and caution as if handling one’s own personal finances; and responsibilities to ensure that financial resources are being used efficiently and effectively toward meeting the institution’s goals, in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and that its assets are properly safeguarded
- d) Use one’s own judgment in analyzing matters that have an impact on the institution

Conflicts of Interest

Trustee board members owe allegiance to the institution and must act in good faith with the best interest of the institution in mind. The conduct of a trustee board member must, at all times, further the institution's goals and not the member's personal or business interests. Consequently, trustees board members should not have any personal or business interest that may conflict with their responsibilities to the institution. A trustee board member should avoid even the appearance of impropriety when conducting the institution's business. Acts of self-dealing constitute a breach of fiduciary responsibility that could result in personal liability and removal from the board.

The Board of Trustees have a written conflict of interest policy that clearly sets forth the procedures to be followed in instances where a board member's personal or business interests may be advanced by an action of the board, including a provision that the trustee/board member may not participate in any decision to approve any transaction where such conflicting interests may be advanced. The policy also includes a requirement that each trustee board member provide full, ongoing disclosure to the institution of any interest the trustee board member and/or his or her family has in any entity that the board transacts business with. The policy should be reviewed and discussed with the institution's attorneys and auditors prior to its adoption.

In addition, there are specific provisions concerning conflicts of interest in section 715 of the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law (applicable to education corporations chartered by the Board of Regents).

Friendship TECH Charter School Trustee Governance Practices and Procedures:

Our founding board understands full well the responsibility of governing a public charter school. The board will have a performance contract with the Board of Regents that provides the school with the autonomy to design and operate its programs in exchange for accountability for results, namely academic performance, organizational viability and fiscal soundness. The board’s roles

⁵³ Committee on Open Government, accessed August 3, 2014, <http://www.dos.ny.gov/coog/openmeetlaw.html>.

and responsibilities include:

- Establishing the school's mission and school design
- Ensuring adequate resources for implementation of the school program
- Recruiting, hiring and evaluating the Executive Director
- Approving major policies and regularly reviewing and revising them as necessary
- Preparing for and attending board and committee meetings
- Making informed decisions to support the success of the school
- Monitoring program implementation and compliance with the charter agreement and relevant laws and regulations
- Facilitating long term strategic planning
- Recruiting and orienting new board members and assessing board performance
- Participating as appropriate in the grievance process
- Enhancing the school's public standing

The qualifications to serve on the Friendship Tech Public Charter School board of trustees will include:

- Belief in and support of the mission and design of the school. Possessing the attitude that all children and especially those at risk can and will achieve academic excellence
- Demonstrated understanding of board duties
- Willingness to attend board and committee meetings and volunteer for board work
- Experience and expertise in a relevant field, such as: education, business, management, finance/accounting, law, government, personnel, marketing/public relations, fundraising, and/or community relations or organizing
- The capacity to examine performance data, financial documents and management reports and make informed decisions in the best interest of the school
- Be at least 18 years of age and USA citizen
- Complying with the background check of New York State Children and Family services

Board Governance

The by-laws of FTCSE dictate that the Trustee Board will have at least five members and include the following positions: President/CEO, Secretary, Treasurer and Parent Representative and not to exceed nine member as prescribed by FTCSE Constitution and Bylaws. Board members will serve staggered three-year terms. The board will meet monthly at the school location; the agenda will be developed by the President/CEO in consultation with the Executive Director and will include a written report by the Executive Director, a financial report and opportunity for public comments. A package of action items will be distributed to board members prior to all board meetings in a timely fashion. A quorum of three must be present to constitute a legal meeting. Minutes will be taken at all board and committee meetings; copies of which will be posted on our website and archived in the school office. The board shall establish a finance, education, and executive committee as standing committees to oversee the work of the Executive Director. Committees will have a job description that clearly describes their duties.

The Board will delegate authority for the day-to-day operations of the school to the Executive Director, who will oversee all operations of the school and report directly to the full Board during a regular meeting or a special called meeting, members being duly notified. The board will establish measurable annual performance goals, conduct mid-year and end-of-year evaluations of the Executive Director, and ultimately hold him or her accountable for implementation of Board's policies and procedures. The Board will clearly communicate its reporting requirements to the Executive Director, including content, format and frequency of data. At a minimum, the Executive Director will present a dashboard at each board meeting,

including enrollment, attendance, financial, compliance and student performance data.

Parent and Staff Involvement

The board will encourage parent and staff input into the governance of the school. To ensure the participation of parent in the process of board decisions a parent representative will be selected by the school's leadership team and the PTSA to serve on the board for one academic year. Annually, a new parent will be afforded this opportunity through the process outlined. The parent representative shall have no voting rights and will recuse themselves from any issues concern their child or relative enrolled in school. FTCSE will adhere to the Open Meeting Law excluding executive sessions that deal with personnel issues. The public will be given the opportunity for public comment, and surveys of parents and staff will be used as part of the school's oversight and the Executive Director's evaluation. The board will enact and publicize a grievance policy that contains a clear process for bringing issues to the attention of the board and for the board to respond in a timely fashion. Board members will also regularly visit the school and attend school community events.

Recruitment, Orientation and Training

As needed the board will recruit and vote on the appointment of new members who demonstrate adequate qualifications and commitment as described in the Constitution and By-Laws. The board shall solicit recommendations from the larger community, business and education communities for suitable board candidates. All new trustees will receive orientation materials, including a copy of the charter, board member job description and committee descriptions, previous board meeting minutes and dashboards, school email and major polices. The board will undertake ongoing governance training to ensure all members have a common vision of the board's roles and responsibilities and best practices.

C. Management and Staffing

FTCSE will not contract with a CMO or partner organization. The New York Board of Regents oversees the FTCSE board through the NYSED Charter Schools Office. The autonomy of FTCSE shall be preserved and the board shall act in concert with the New York Board of Regents to fulfill the intent of Article 56 of the New York Charter Law Act 1998. Our organizational chart is designed to separate operational duties from academic responsibilities and allow instructional leaders to focus a significant portion of their time to supporting instruction. *See attachment 8a* for a detail description of our hiring and personnel policies and procedures for how positions will be filled and governed. The Board of Trustees is responsible for maintaining the laws, rules, policies and guidelines as required by New York State Board of Regents. They ensure that the academic/programmatic plan of FTCSE is fully adhered to.

The Management & Staffing Plan provides the scope framework for FTCSE. This plan documents the management approach; roles and responsibilities as they pertain to FTCSE's administration of the school mission. The management needs of FTCSE should be fulfilled by administrators, faculty and staff who possesses these traits; self-driven, adaptable, given to details, flexible, teachable and creative. FTCSE management priority is to hire a school leader (Executive Director) who will assemble a team of administrators who will execute the mission of FTCSE. The *capacity* framework of the school shall provide the administrators the structure that will define the role of each administrator in the implementation of the five key design elements. The organizational chart above shows the hierarchy structure employed. This chart affords each administrator the understanding of their function and the levels of accountability prescribed by the FTCSE Board of Trustee. The narrative defines the administrator's role for the purpose of

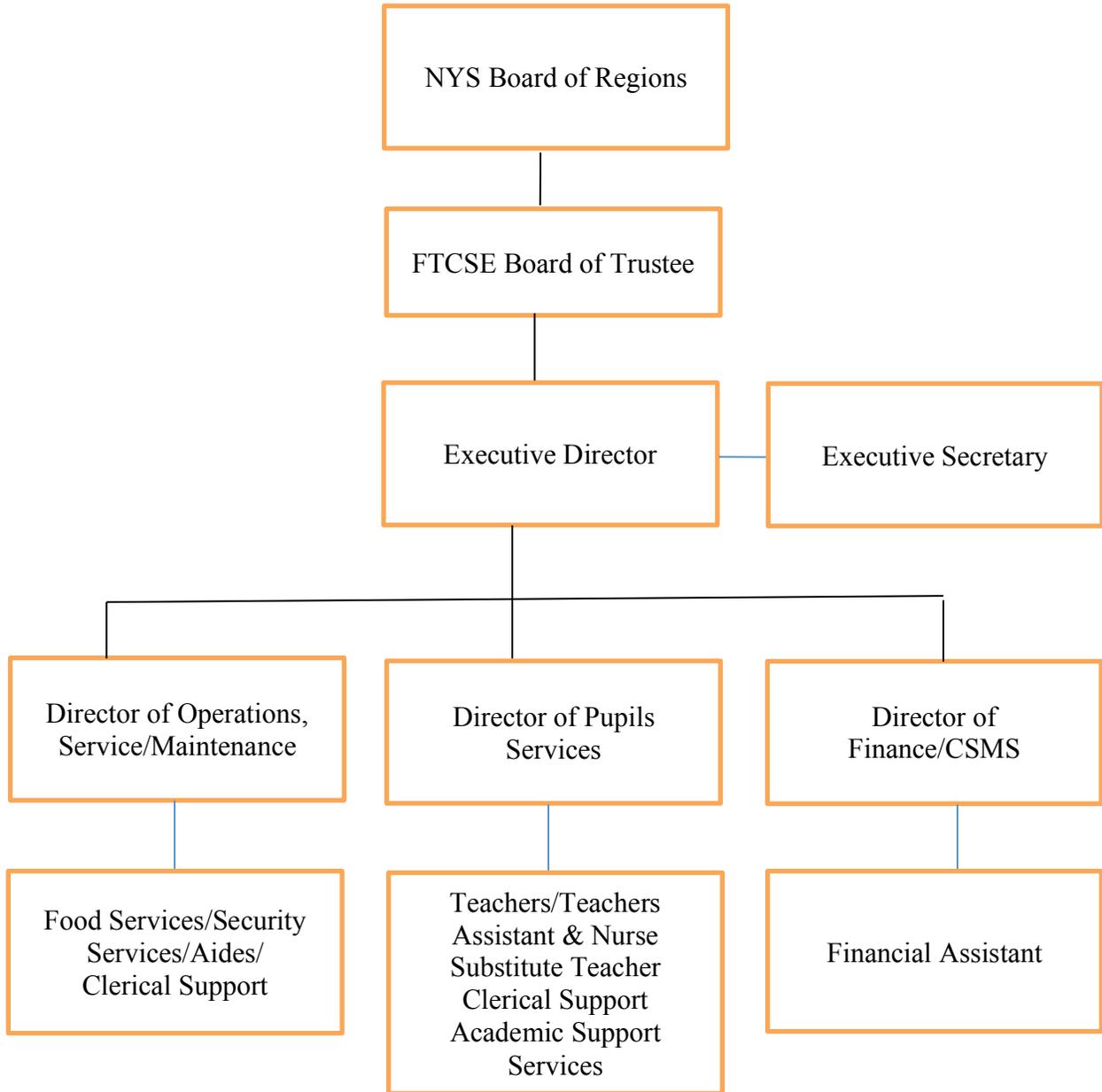
carrying out of their daily duties in fulfilling the school mission that teach each child holistically by empowering all students to become aspiring leaders, life-long learners, critical thinkers, and problem-solvers through a rigorous interdisciplinary STEM academic program to be successful in competitive k-4 academic programs.

The New York State Department of Education Board of Regents grants the charter which authorizing FTCSE to exist as a public charter school. FTCSE Board of Trustee bears the ultimate responsible to oversee the functions of the school as prescribed by the charter contract. The key appointment of the Trustee Board is to select a competent school Leader (Executive Director, See attachment 8b) that will build a staff of competent administrators to assist in the daily functions of day-to-day operation of FTCSE. The Executive Director runs the school and may call on assistance within the various communities specialized experts in the area of STEM. The Executive Director of FTCSE will adhere to the requirements of No Child Left Behind and Education Yes School Improvement efforts. He/she will assist in Grant Applications Scheduling Testing—MEAP Student Demographics/Attendance/Grades (Computerized) Teacher Evaluations/IEPs/ Student Supervision/Discipline K-4 Special EducationK-4 Curriculum and run the daily operation of the school.

This section is the most critical and is the nut and bolts of the overall operation of Friendship Tech Charter of Excellence. The organizational chart provides the hierarchy structure that will be adhered to by all persons associated with FTCSE. The New York State Department of Education Board of Regents grants the authority of FTCSE to function as a charter entity. Therefore, the ultimate governance shall rest upon the FTCSE Trustee Board with the New York State Department of Education Authorizers ensuring that NYS stationary compliances are met.

New York State Department
of Education Board Regents

FTCSE HEIRARCHY STRUCTURE



Requirements of Executive Director

- Superior grasp of effective instructional and behavioral methods and strategies for educating urban child
- Strong process orientation, people person, and project management skills with the proven ability to train, supervise and coach professional staff in order to foster a cooperative team environment
- Intellectual agility, a commitment to maintaining rigorous standards, and a demonstrated ability to think strategically and execute on multiple priorities simultaneously
- Ability to thrive in a fast-paced, dynamic, and rapidly-changing environment
- Ability to leverage computer software programs and other technology that will support the learning environment
- Understanding of public education and charter schools is desirable

Education Required

- Master's Degree or Doctorate in Education Administration, School Building Leadership Certification and working towards School Administration/Supervisor
- 4-7 years of demonstrating classroom experience, preferably within an urban school setting
- 2+ years of demonstrated success supervising or leading a team of educators
- Prior experience working within a corporate, entrepreneurial or start-up environment also a plus

The Management & Staffing Plan answers the following questions:

- How is the Scope Management of FTCSE defined
- Who has authority and responsibility for scope management areas
- How the scope is measured and verified (i.e. Quality Checklists, Scope Baseline, Work Performance Measurements, etc.)
- The scope change process (who initiates, who authorizes, etc.)
- Who is responsible for accepting the final project deliverable and approves acceptance of project scope

How is the Scope Management of FTCSE defined:

FTCSE shall consist of four tier levels of leadership management scope. The first tier is the New York State Department of Education Board of Regents that authorizes the execution of charter issuance of FTCSE. FTCSE is directly accountable to adhere to the dictates prescribed within charter contract. FTCSE is under the direct supervision of Board of Regent Authorizers. The second tier is FTCSE board of Trustee who oversee the function of FTCSE, it programmatic design, establishing the school's mission and school design, and ensuring adequate resources for implementation of the school program. Recruiting, hiring and evaluating the Executive Director, approving of all hiring and firing of personnel as recommended, adopting the annual school budget, approving all line items adjustments, approving major policies and regularly reviewing and revising them as necessary, monitoring program implementation and compliance with the charter agreement and relevant laws and regulations, facilitating long term strategic planning, recruiting and orienting new board members and assessing board performance, enhancing the school's public standing and the approval of all recommended successors. Third tier is the school leader (Executive Director) who is responsible for the daily day-to-day operation of the school, the administrative programmatic designed, hiring of supportive administrators, fiscal oversight, professional development of faculty, the annual evaluation of performance of faculty and administrators using the Danielson rubric assessment tools, function as the community liaison, the selection of grade appropriate curriculum selections, the creation of FTCSE school yearly calendar and field trip activities, extending the invitation of specialized experts in the area of

STEM, report monthly to FTCSE’s Board of Trustees of school progress and outcomes, monitor the growth of intake of new students with projected prospectus and chart and track the implementation of the school mission. Fourth tier consist of the administrative team (Director of Operation, Director of Pupil Service and Director of Finance). These administrators serve at the privilege of ED. The administrators function on the same level collaborating with each other in their assigned areas to fulfill the mission of FTCSE.

I. Who has authority and responsibility for scope management areas:

Executive Director	Authority	Responsibility
	<p>FTCSE Board of Trustee Grant the ED the authority to administer the affairs of the school as prescribed by the charter contract.</p> <p>Executive Director shall provide monthly report to the entire board of school progress. Committees may require regular update depending on project scope and assignment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports directly to the Board of Trustee via periodic meetings and is responsible for the overall management and operations of FTCSE. • The Executive Director ensures that the capacity fame and mission are aligned by regularly evaluating the performance of faculty and staff. The mission focus shall always be the main focus of faculty meeting providing any assistance to strength FTCSE faculty through regularly scheduled professional development sessions. • Responsible for overseeing the timely vetting and approval of the annual school operational budget. • In conjunction with (his/her) direct reports, Directors of Operations, Pupil Services and Director of Finance are responsible for the effective day-to-day operations of FTCSE. • Oversee that the reporting of student progress cards, New York State Board of Education progress reports and student-performance testing are conducted as prescribed by State Law. • In conjunction with (his/her) Director of Pupil Services evaluate teachers on effectiveness teaching approach and classroom management styles. Conduct unannounced classroom observations and meet with the head teachers about their observations. This evaluation shall be conducted periodically. • Executive Director shall be responsible for the professional development of the entire school personal and shall call on assistance of qualified expertise for the enhancement of personal performance. • Responsible for instructional leadership to teachers, which consist of curriculum proficiency, professional development, faculty meetings, feedback, one-to-one professional enhancement and evaluation of each teacher’s overall performance with their students and interaction with FTCSE parents. • The Executive Director shall administrate all disciplinary process with the assistance of the Director of Pupils. • Responsible for the administrative policy implementation and school leadership. • Responsible for maintaining the vision, high ideals, and academic goals set forth by the Board of Trustee as outlined in the charter authorized by the New York State Board of Regents charter. • Ensures that the school is properly staffed and funded and keeping the board of trustees fully informed of school and student progress, providing written assessments of FTCSE operations. • Public face of the FTCSE school and is responsible for community outreach organizational development and recruitment. • Provide leadership and administrative oversight for the acquisition

		<p>of new staffing, and oversight of current curricular.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for fostering a positive atmosphere and maintaining discipline and order within the FTCSE facility and on school property. • Encouraging and initiating continued improvement in curriculum and teaching methods, subject area specialists, and faculty. • Maintaining effective communication to keep the staff, students, and parents properly informed. • Responsible for the hiring and Firing of teachers and staff members to assist in the fulfillment of the school mission. • Responsible along with the Director of Pupil’s service for the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers. <p>Actively participating and encouraging staff participation in parent-teacher and other community groups, as a means of developing understanding, cooperation, and respect for school objectives and endeavors.</p>
<p>Director of Operations</p>	<p>Authority The Executive Director shall hire the DOP who will execute the prescribed duties under the direct supervision of the ED. The ED shall conduct weekly staff meeting monitoring the functions and implementation of projects. The DOOP must be prepared to provide update of the scope of their management services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly report to the Executive Director (he/she) will be responsible for maintaining the day-to-day operations of the school grounds & facility and will be directly responsible for code compliance governing food service and custodial services. • Supervise and coordinate food service and transportation needs, and assist in the staffing of breakfast, lunch and snacks in the cafeteria. • Responsible for the daily inspection of FTCSE grounds & facility. • Ensure that the facility and associated hardware is suitable & safe for occupancy by students and faculty. • Order and purchase all consumable supplies needed to support the facility & grounds. • Responsible for ordering school furniture, school curriculums, school supplies and receiving the ordered goods. • Conduct inventory of all school property throughout the year. • Ensure timely response, and completion of task that impact the proper operations of the FTCSE grounds & facility. • Provide weekly status to executive director regarding budgetary needs that may adversely impact the operations of FTCSE grounds & facility. • Ensure that the building is physically and environmentally safe for occupancy by students and faculty. • Ensure compliance as set forth by the city and state of New York building codes are not violated. • Marketing of FTCSE in the soliciting of new parents <p>The director of operations or his /her designee must be available or ensure coverage for the facility is available around the clock.</p>
<p>Director of Finance</p>	<p>Authority The Executive Director shall hire the DOF who will</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible to provide direct report to the Executive Director and will work collaboratively to ensure budgets are vetted, to monitor expenditures, to oversee the in flow of cash, to prepare

	<p>execute the prescribe duties under the direct supervision of the ED.</p> <p>The ED shall conduct weekly staff meeting monitoring the functions and implementation of projects. The DOF must be prepared to provide update of the scope of their management services.</p>	<p>reimbursement reports to local school district, to distribute scope changes that will be implement by the hire Finance Assistant and to sign off with the necessary approval of all purchase orders in a timely manner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School will contract with Charter School Business Management (CSBM) the first year of the school operation to fulfill the financial management related tasks and provide the training to the Finance Assistant until the Director of Finance is hired in Year 2. • CSBM/Director of Finance is responsible for the daily accounting, preparation of the budget, financial reports, as well as advising the Executive Director on matters of funding and cost. • The Executive Director, Director of Pupil Services & Operations Director will work with CSBM/Director of Finance to ensure that transactions are managed and recorded properly and that the school’s financial policies and procedures comply with city, state and federal regulations. • Shall recommend to the Executive Director a Finance Assistant to aid the function of the Director of Finance. The duties shall consist of data entry, reports filing, and collection of receipts.
<p>Director of Pupil Services</p>	<p>Authority</p> <p>The Executive Director shall hire the DOPS who will execute the prescribe duties under the direct supervision of the ED.</p> <p>The ED shall conduct weekly staff meetings monitoring the functions and implementation of projects. The DOPS must be prepared to provide update of the scope of their management services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will function as the assistant executive who will coordinate all student activities including lunch period monitoring and staffing, afterschool activities, field trips, parent-teachers night, school discipline, and including but not limited to assisting the Executive Director. • Directly report to the Executive Director and will work collaboratively to ensure budgets are vetted and approved in a timely manner. • Ensure that management needs are understood and met. • Is responsible for the emotional and physical health of every student under our care. • He/she will attend to the ongoing needs and concerns of students outside of their academic coursework. • Responsible for giving teachers daily directives and priorities of the school from the Executive Director. • Will assist the Executive Director in the responsible for instructional leadership to teachers, which consist of periodic staff meetings, observing providing feedback & one-to-one evaluation of each teacher’s performance. • Facilitating training and performance development after evaluations. • Ensuring that teacher’s and nurse’s licenses are current. • Will be responsible for communicating with parents any concerns that arise with their children in a timely manner as well as coordinate services with the school Nurse as required. • Will be responsible for the wrap around services, Saturday and Summer Student/Parent Academy.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will assist in the administrating of student disciplinary procedures. • This position will be filled at the starting of year 3 of operation. The Executive Director along with the director of operation will assume these responsibilities during the first two years of operation.
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II. How the scope is measured and verified (i.e. Quality Review Rubric, Scope Baseline, Work Performance Measurements, etc.)

Quality review of the management and staffing plan shall be conducted annually. The board of Trustee shall hire outside consultants to evaluate the staffing plan to ensure that capacity frame and design elements are compatible. The evaluation baseline shall derive from a self-study performed by the administrative educational team. The Executive Director shall commission an administrative educational team including teachers, parents and community stakeholders annually to administrate a quality checklist. FTCSE Quality Review Rubric provides the criteria to determine the quality and alignment of lessons and units to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in order to: (1) Identify exemplars/ models for teachers’ used; (2) provide constructive criteria-based feedback to enhances teacher performance; and (3) review existing instructional materials to determine what revisions are needed. This will ensure that FTCSE will remain current with educational trends and high performance outcomes.

FTCSE Quality Review Rubric focus shall consist of:

1. Curriculum - Pedagogy – Program Assessment
2. School Culture - Positive learning environment - High expectations
3. Structures for Improvement - Leveraging resources
4. Teacher support
5. Teacher supervision
6. Goals and action plans
7. Teacher teams and leadership development
8. The monitoring of assessment data and systems implementation
9. School leadership - Parents & stakeholders involvement – Executive Director administrative team

The quality review rubric results shall provide the frame in assessing the overall school performance. FTCSE Board of Trustee shall receive a written comprehensive report of the facts of its finding.

III. The scope change process (who initiates, who authorizes, etc.)

FTCSE’s Board of Trustees must approve all implementation of scope changes. The material gathered through the quality review rubric shall become the baseline for meaningful discussion and scope changes. The Executive Director shall initiate changes with input from the assigned administrative authority that they will execute the scope changes in the area of their responsibility. Those changes are to be rolled out in a matter that will not disturb the teaching climate of FTCSE. Great care will be made in providing the professional development required in the training of faculty and staff regarding their responsibility to carry out the scope change process. FTCSE shall conduct meetings with Parents of students in FTCSE on the roll out of the scope changes in a timely matter.

IV. Who is responsible for accepting the final project deliverables and approve acceptance of the project scope

The department administrators will accept the final project deliverables and execute them through the various channels within their scope of service. The Executive Director shall ensure through collaboration with the administrative team that the project scope or changes to the scope of service have the final approval and acceptance of the project scope by FTCSE board of Trustees before implementation.

FTCSE has developed strategies for recruiting and retaining effective teachers and knows that the successfulness of the implementation of the mission and key design elements of FTCSE hinges on the successful instructional care performed by FTCSE's faculty. The recruitment of high performance teachers and instructors and retaining them will have the highest priority of FTCSE's Board of Trustees. Hofstra University Education Department has been identified as a source to help guide FTCSE in identifying teachers who are currently or have graduated from their Education Department that offers a STEM major. STEM Studies at Hofstra University offers a Bachelor of Arts degree program, this offers FTCSE a potential pool of new teachers and graduates who majored in elementary education with STEM background to fulfill the mission of FTCSE. The teachers who major in STEM offers FTCSE the teaching staff that have a broad understanding of the scientific and mathematical foundations of the natural and human-made worlds. This is exactly the type of knowledge that Friendship Tech Charter School of Excellence elementary school teachers need in order to provide more meaningful educational experiences for our students. The recruitment will not be limited to colleges and universities but FTCSE will launch a progressive campaign by attending professional job fairs, placing ads in professional teacher journals, posting jobs openings on FTCSE social media outlets (school website, school Facebook) and common known social media outlets (Indeed.com, Glassdoor.com, Teacher-Teacher.com, Monster.com, Career Builder.com), reach out to various networks, fraternities, sororities and professional business groups.

The retention of teachers will be based on an annual increased of salaries which are expected to increase by 3% each year as well as equalized salaries tied to standards. FTCSE will offer competitive salaries and benefits to all new hirers based largely on the years of teaching or work experience and their level of educational attainment. FTCSE will create career ladders for teachers involving greater responsibility for increased compensation and improving staff development (other than new teacher support). FTCSE will create incentives that will offer teachers and staff members financial rewards regarding the results of their work performance evaluation and student achievement outcomes. FTCSE will initiate programs to subsidize teacher education in return for teaching commitments to FTCSE. FTCSE will establish Teacher Support Systems that will consist of Trustee board members, parents, and community stakeholders. FTCSE will implement scheduling changes that allow common planning time for same-grade or same-subject teachers. FTCSE will establish a High Quality Mentoring program pairing experienced teachers with new teachers. This program shall be known as FTSCE Teacher Buddy Club. Yearly performance reviews will be conducted based upon students' performance that result in teachers being awarded commendations, citations, and teacher of the year. Each academic quarter, a teacher will be awarded a citation for the most improved, highest student performance outcomes, classroom décor, and student behavior. This award will include a special lunch, a gift card, and a reserved parking space designated for the awardee. FTCSE shall provide longevity pay for teachers who have served FTCSE for more than three years. Teacher pay and working conditions shall have one of the highest priorities for FTCSE faculty. A teacher lounge will be created in a manner that will provide comfort and relaxation for teachers during their

lunch and break times.

	FTCSE Budgeted Staff Growth Table				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
	2017-18	2018-19	2020-21	2021-22	202-23
Grades Served:	K-1	K-2	K-3	K-4	K-4
Enrollment:	111	174	237	300	315
Position					
Executive Director	1	1	1	1	1
Director of Operations	1	1	1	1	1
Director of Pupil Services	--	-	1	1	1
Assistant Finance	1	1	1	1	1
Director of Finance	--	1	1	1	1
Administrative Staff	1	2	2	3	3
Kindergarten	3	3	3	3	3
1st Grade	2	3	3	3	3
2nd Grade	--	2	3	3	3
3rd Grade	--	--	2	3	3
4th Grade	--	--	--	2	3
Teachers - SPED	1	2	3	3	4
Teachers	4	6	10	13	13
Physical Ed Teacher	1	1	1	1	1
Music Teacher	0.5	1	1	1	1
Science and Tech Specialist	1	1	1	1	1
Aides	2	4	6	8	8
Therapists & Counselors	1	1	1.	1	1
Nurse	1	1	1	1	1
Librarian	--	--	--	--	--
Custodian	1	1	2	2	2

D. Evaluation

Board Evaluations

The board will develop a self-evaluation instrument and use it annually to check its performance. Domains will include member attendance and participation, communication and stakeholders, regular review and revision of key policies and procedures, financial oversight, evaluation of school leadership, handling of grievances, and adherences to the mission of the school. The board will use the results of these evaluations to inform the development of strategic goals and action plans. The board will also monitor its composition to maintain adequate skill sets with which to govern the school as well as diversity to ensure a variety of perspectives.

Programmatic Audits

Programmatic audits will focus on two things: quality of implementation and results. The Executive Director, Director of Pupil Services and the Director of Operation through planning meetings and direct observation will monitor implementation of technology, software, curriculum programs, interventions and assessments. Teachers will be expected to annotate lessons after the lessons have been taught. The information will be used at the end of the year to evaluate implementation of curriculum and pedagogy. Once we have ascertained that our

programs have been implemented with fidelity, analysis of student performance data will be the primary method for evaluating efficacy. We will disaggregate data and look for trends in sub-groups. FTCSE will submit an Annual Report to its authorizer detailing its performance and progress towards its accountability goals. We will also seek to participate in inter-visitation with other high performing “no excuses” schools that result in critical feedback. Finally, we expect to have regular oversight visits by our authorizer and will use any constructive feedback to make necessary changes to the academic program.

Executive Director Evaluation

The Board of Trustees will conduct an annual evaluation of the Executive Director focused heavily on academic achievement and financial stability. At the beginning of the year the board and Executive Director will establish measurable process and outcome goals for the year. A mid-year review will be conducted of the progress of the goals set forth at the start of the academic year. At the end of the year, a written performance appraisal will be issued. The evaluation will seek input from the Executive Director, teachers, staff, families, students and the board. Data sources will include assessment results, enrollment and attendance, student retention, parent satisfaction surveys, grievance records, and budget information and audit results.

The FTCSE board shall examine the effectiveness of the school’s leader position (Executive Director) using a rubric rating scale tailored to the mission of FTCSE. The evaluation rubrics shall consist of Core Components of School Performance, High Standards for Student Learning, Rigorous Curriculum (content), Quality Instruction (pedagogy), Culture of Learning & Professional Behavior, Connections to External Communities and Performance Accountability. The rubric rating scale shall provide information to board to assess areas of strengths and weaknesses of the Executive Director. These rubrics are organized around seven domains areas covering all aspects of the Executive Director job performance: The Diagnosis and Planning, Priority Management and Communication, Curriculum and Data Supervision, Evaluation, and Professional Development, Discipline and Parent Involvement, fiscal management and Management and External Relations. The board will use outside sources to effectively evaluate and implement any recommendations for the professional growth of the Executive Director. The rubrics are designed to give the Executive Director an end-of-the-year assessment detailing where the Executive Director stands in all performance areas with an action guidance plan for performance improvements.

Evaluation of Teachers

Evaluation of teachers will include explicit performance standards administered by the Executive Director in collaboration with FTCSE staff. A teacher performance rubric with five levels of practice—ineffective, developing, proficient, effective, and highly effective will address issues of planning, instructional delivery, assessment, and classroom management. Teacher performance rubrics will set clear expectations for instructional rigor and classroom management, and they will also cover the blended rotational model of teaching, collaboration and implementation of inquiry based science pedagogy. Assessment Systems, and student progress toward objectives will count the most in teacher evaluations, and teachers must be adept using the assessment systems. The Danielson Rubric by Charlotte Danielson will be used to evaluate our teachers. This evaluative tool reflects the style of teaching in alignment with the Common Core standards, and, they envision, for literacy and mathematics initially, deep engagement by students with important concepts, skills, and perspectives. They emphasize active, rather than passive learning by students. In all areas, they place a premium on deep conceptual understanding, thinking and reasoning, and the skill of argumentation (students taking a position and supporting it with logic and evidence).

Evaluation of Financial Operations

The Board will set up policies for procurement and reporting that will ensure fiscal accountability. The board will review FTCSE’s actual to budgeted spending patterns, monthly

cash flow projections, quarterly financial reports, and its academic interim assessment data every six to eight weeks. Data pertaining to school culture compiled by the Executive Director will be reviewed monthly to maximize the effectiveness of FTCSE’s learning environment. Yearly, Friendship Charter School of Excellence will be audited by an independent auditor.

Evaluation Of School Program By Families & Students

Annually in May, we will administer annual surveys to assess parent and student satisfaction in areas such as instruction, school culture, and communication. Results will be disseminated by Christmas Break. We will also infer satisfaction based on our enrollment numbers and retention of students from year to year. We believe our attention to parents through regular communication, the involvement in student activities and their academic progress will increase their participation and satisfaction in our school. A complaint process will be developed for parents to register issues and concerns that come up from time to time to build upon the relationship of trust and mutual concern for the students achievement.

D. Professional Development

The tools that will be used during professional development will be educational conferences, lectures, and presentations to update current software applications. The formal and informal classroom observation of teachers using content and skills learned during professional development opportunities will ensure that the continued mission of FTCSE is met. The development of the teacher will lead to greater professional understanding and growth which will reflect in planning and classroom instruction. The professional development will focus on strengthening the knowledge and professional skills of the resident teacher. The focus of the professional development is to enhance the usage of STEM interdisciplinary curriculums.

FTCSE will provide teachers with frequent and ongoing formal and informal professional development opportunities. In August of each year, four days will be set aside for professional staff development and orientation. During the school year, bimonthly staff development meetings will take place. Teachers will participate in numerous activities such as formal training sessions, collaborative planning periods, curriculum development, structured observations, peer coaching, and mentoring. The main goal of professional development will be to increased teacher satisfaction and effectiveness, and improve student learning outcomes.

FTCSE’s professional development shall consist of workshops, school visits, coaching, research, peer observations and support for the teacher. This approach will be focus driven targeting the specific core disciplines, which will ensure that key design elements are met and that the school mission is being fulfilled. FTCSE’s teachers will be responsible to commit to a minimum of 80 hours of professional development for their improvement and mastery of new skills and subject material. FTCSE’s professional development shall be ongoing throughout the academic year. The duration of FTCSE’s professional development will allow time for teachers to learn new strategies and grapple with the implementation process. The objective of longer duration provides greater impact toward advancing teacher practice, and in turn student learning.

Example of High Quality Professional Development for Teachers

<p>TEACHER AS TECHNICIAN</p> <p>Technical skill training</p> <p>Teacher’s role: To implement particular skills or strategies which are backed by research</p> <p>Focus: Explaining the skill and strategy and research</p>	<p>Teacher as an Intellectual</p> <p>An inquiry process where teachers innovate</p> <p>Teacher’s role: An intellectual examining broad research on learning and developing innovative classroom strategies to achieve goals</p>
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<p>base behind it with support for the teacher as he/she tries to transfer the skill or strategy to the classroom</p> <p>Structure: Workshop and Coaching</p>	<p>Focus: Exposing teachers to pedagogical research in teacher’s content area and provides support for innovation and implementation through a local teacher community</p> <p>Structure: Professional Learning Communities</p>
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Teacher as Technician: A Coaching Model

STAGE ONE: Introduction to New Teaching Ideas

1. New teaching methodology is presented to teachers and the research supporting it.
2. The presentation of the material requires active learning, not passive learning from the teachers
3. Modeling has been shown by research to be very helpful at this stage
4. The content is not generic, but focused on the exact concepts a teacher teaches

STAGE TWO: Support During Implementation in the Classroom

1. A coach meets with the teacher before he/she teaches a lesson with the new teaching skill, hearing the teacher’s concerns about the lesson and giving feedback on the structure of the lesson.
2. The coach then observes the lesson with the new teaching skill.
3. The coach and teacher meet together after the lesson to debrief, and they create suggestions to improve using the teaching skill in the next lesson.
4. The cycle is repeated several times, as research shows that it can take as many as 20 practices for teachers to master a new instructional skill.

The time given for this process is extensive, as research shows effective professional development is ongoing and longer in duration than traditional models.

Teacher as Intellectual: A Professional Learning Community Model

STAGE ONE: Introduction to New Teaching Ideas

“Artifacts” such as, student work and standardized test scores are presented, spurring thought and discussion among teachers

Teachers engage actively, not passively, in reading and analyzing the artifacts, identifying how they connect to challenges they’re facing in the classroom

The artifacts are not generic, but focused on the exact concepts a teacher teaches

STAGE TWO: Support During Implementation in the Classroom

1. Teachers identify a predominant area of concern after their analysis of artifacts together, the team develops a teaching innovation that addresses the concern raised.
2. All teachers on the team practice the new strategy in their classroom. Because this implementation stage is the most difficult and comes with the highest likelihood for frustration, the teachers reconvene after implementation to “coach” one another. They share how the lesson went and brainstorm how to improve its use or tweak it for future lessons. If possible, teachers may observe one another to see others teach with the new innovation.
3. The cycles of implementation and team discussion are extensive, as research shows that it can take as many as 20 practices for teachers to master a new instructional skill.
4. The time needed for this process is considerable, as research shows that effective professional development is ongoing and longer in duration than traditional models.

FTCSE’s professional development will 1) expose teachers to various pedagogical strategies and the research bases behind them, and 2) support teachers as they implement the research based strategies in their classroom, recognizing that implementation is the most difficult learning stage for teachers.

The schedule of professional development will consist of the following: August (month before school begins) – 3-4 Day Orientation: The School Leader will introduce all staff and instructional staff will review all policies and policy guides for staff, parents, and students.

Each subsequent month during the Academic Year: The school leader will conduct professional development which will entail reviewing present key design elements and addressing how each one is implemented during the daily operation of the school—specifically within the classroom and throughout the entire school facility. Assessment data, journal entries, and anecdotal evidence will be collected in order for the school leader to process with the school leadership team, collectively. Adjustments and revisions may be elected to add to present policy handbooks and guides as a way to facilitate further growth within the organization. Each monthly professional development session will consist of a three hour session and the schedule will coincide with the academic calendar.

Culminating Professional Development Session – 2 days: These two days will be conducted by the School Leader to have instructional staff pack-up their rooms and also give teachers an opportunity to put forth feedback that can help the Instructional Leader plan for the the next school year. This process is helpful to the School Leader because it raises the level of accountability and also incorporates continuity into the planning process of improving the school’s efficiency, efficacy, and equity in the process of delivering instruction to students.

As part of its professional development program, FTCSE will provide frequent training sessions offered by both in-house and outside experts in areas of particular importance. Among those training sessions will be those specifically targeted to meeting the needs of students with disabilities, ESL students, and other at-risk learners. Within the school, the Director of Pupil Services and SPED Coordinator will be responsible for presentations aimed at working with these groups of students. Improved student learning outcomes will be the most significant measure of the effectiveness of professional development.

The Executive Director and/or Director of Pupil Services will also be responsible for providing members with training. These sessions may focus on assisting teachers in tailoring teaching techniques to meet the needs and learning styles of students on how best to work with parents and community members. Student and parent satisfaction will be one means of determining the effectiveness of this training.

FTCSE will ascertain the effectiveness of its professional development program in a variety of ways. Participants’ satisfaction with various types of professional development will be studied through the use of questionnaires and interviews. An examination of the participants’ learning will also be measured and may be carried out by means of participant demonstrations, reflections, and the completion of targeted assignments. The participants’ use of the knowledge and skills they have attained will be determined above all by improved student learning outcomes. Outcomes may be in the area of academic performance or achievement, or may include changes in attitudes, skills, and behavior. Among the regularly scheduled training session that will be offered are:

Pre-Service – A central focus of the pre-service two-week training will be communicating FTCSE’s goal of providing students with intense ELA and STEM instruction and the means by which this will be carried out. We will place particular emphasis on best practices related to providing at-risk students with the highest quality literacy instruction possible. The Director of

Pupils and SPED Coordinators will be responsible for this portion of the training and they will ensure that teachers are familiar with the special needs presented by at-risk students and the teaching methods and practices that may be used to provide the most effective instruction.

A portion of the pre-service training will also be devoted to presentations by the Director of Pupil Services who will apprise the teachers and staff of the particular needs of the community and the ways in which we may be culturally sensitive to students, their parents, and our neighbors.

The summer pre-service will also include team building, team communication, setting clear school-wide expectations for classroom rules and regulations, designing the classroom space, creating lesson plans for the first weeks of school, and laying the groundwork for the year's curriculum.

Grade Level Meeting - Two times each week teachers will meet together in their grade level teams. During these meetings, teachers will work on planning and will discuss the successes and failures experiences during lessons. They will strategize how the educational team can best support each other in problem areas of learning. Teachers will also use this time to analyze data. The analysis will be used to inform their teaching in subsequent lessons. Differences in results among grade level teachers will also be analyzed. Throughout the year, teachers will participate in constant peer observation and provide each other with critical feedback during the grade level meetings. The Director of Pupil Services will participate in these meetings on occasion in order to observe and to offer support. The Executive Directors' participation will be announced prior to the meetings.

Staff Meetings – On Friday afternoons each week following the dismissal of the students, teachers will meet together to discuss pertinent topics. In accordance with its use of Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching, staff meetings will include a focus on observation—peer, administration, and self-reflection—and feedback on critical aspects of instruction, including planning, delivery, classroom environment and professional responsibilities. At least once a month, staff meetings will include presentations by members of the support teaching staff—special education, ESL, and reading intervention—in order to support their peers in developing skills in working with students with special needs. In accordance with good teaching practice, data analysis will be another focus of staff meetings, with reports from grade level teams, the Executive Director and the Director of Pupil Services. Finally, staff meetings may, from time-to-time, be staff driven with topics determined by specific concerns or interests.

Professional Development Days – Four times each year, students will be dismissed at noon in order to provide teachers with the opportunity for extended professional development. The day will be broken into a variety of activities supporting the topics discussed during the weekly faculty meetings. Meetings may be whole faculty, grade level, and cross grade level. The day will also offer the opportunity to meet with outside, professional staff development.

Faculty members will be solicited for suggestions for meeting topics several weeks. They will offer discussion and training topics targeted to specific needs and interests. Faculty members with particular experience or abilities may present at these meetings.

Mentor Meetings – Following the first year of operation, the school will identify new teacher mentors. These mentors will be experienced teachers who have demonstrated an understanding

of and commitment to FTCSE’s mission, vision, goals, educational philosophy and programs, as described in the school’s charter. Mentors will be provided to offer new teachers someone who can supplement the other forms of professional development and who can respond, in an informal manner, to questions and concerns. The mentor will observe the new teacher in the classroom and will also assist the teacher in creating professional development goals. Mentors and mentees will work together to develop a portfolio over the course of the year that will be used in determining the effectiveness of the program.

F. Facilities

After thorough research and a feasibility study of possible sites for the housing of FTCSE, it was determined that two possible locations have been approved for educational usages that would be considered for the future home of FTCSE. The board reviewed the layout of both sites and determined that cost of renovating the second site 214 E. Lincoln Avenue Mount Vernon, New York would not be the best fiscal decision for the initial start-up.

1. 261 Lincoln Avenue Mount Vernon, New York approximately 20,000 square feet of space has been previously approved by the New York State Department of Education for educational use. The recent occupants were BOCES and Amani Public Charter Schools. The building currently meets the Local and State Fire code requirements. The building is a multi-level facility that has stairs throughout for easy access to each floor. This proposed location is in move-in condition and only requires the classrooms to be painted at the expense of the landlord. The building contains the following spaces.

- The entire building is Wi-Fi friendly
- Ground Floor: 11 air conditioned classrooms (1 handicapped and 2 private lavatories), nurses office, Administrative office and boardroom
- Main Floor: Assembly Hall/Multiple-purpose room classrooms (1 with private lavatory)
- 3rd Floor: 3 air conditioned classrooms (1 with private lavatory)
- Handicapped accessible
- Teachers Lounge
- Small outdoors play area

Size of Rental Space: 9,508 sq. Ft. Area to be used by Tenant to include:

Tenant exclusive Space Usage 9,508 sq. Ft. (as shown in attached diagram)
 Rooms #4,5,6,7,8,9 library, office, nurse room & lunch area (7 a.m. – 3 p.m. exclusive).
 Adult/ Handicap Toilet
 Corridor, Entrance Stairs
 Tenant will have parking privileges in the lot

Total: 9,508 sq. ft. at \$2.65 sq. Ft. = \$25,196.20 per month that include the following;

- Heat
- Snow removal of parking lot
- Electrical Con Edison utility
- Water

Renter utility charge breakdown total

Heating Fuel	\$16,498.80
Snow removal	2, 500.00
Electric Con Ed	8,518.00
Water & Taxes Sewer	2,771.20
Total	\$30,288.00/yearly- cost for utility

2,524.00 = Monthly cost for utility
25,196.20 = Monthly space cost
\$27, 720.20 =Total rental monthly fee

In the first year of operation, FTCSE will need 6 classrooms. Each year thereafter, three additional classrooms will be added until we reach capacity of 15 classrooms. Under the current configuration, FTCSE's space is more than adequate to meet the needs of its growth plan. Additionally, FTCSE has presently a verbal commitment with the First United Methodist Church of Mount Vernon, which is directly adjacent to FTCSE's facility for the use of its gymnasium during the school hours.

If FTCSE is granted a charter, the board will enter into formal negotiations with Friendship Community Development Corporation.

G. Insurance

Based on the insurance policies obtained by similar charter schools, here is the approximate coverage we expect to secure:

- General Aggregate: \$2 million aggregate and \$1 million for each occurrence
- Umbrella Liability: \$5 million limit of coverage
- School Leaders Errors & Omissions: \$1 million in coverage
- Student Accident: \$500,000 aggregate per accident
- Student Accident Medical: \$25,000 per accident
- Student Catastrophic Accident: \$1 million limit
- Auto: for non-owned vehicles used in school business
- Property: \$250,000 in coverage for school furnishings, equipment, and leased space betterments
- Workers' Compensation: rate determined by state of New York

Quotes and best rates were obtained from Baylis & Geist, Inc., Philadelphia Insurance Company, Church Mutual Insurance Company, Brotherhood Mutual and Guide One Insurance. It was determined that Baylis & Geist, Inc. would represent the school's interest best. FTCSE will hire Baylis & Geist, Inc., insurance agency during the pre-operational stage based primarily on coverage and cost. Based upon our conversation with insurance providers, we were given a verbal commitments that FTCSE is insurable. The school's budget uses a quote of \$25,000 for insurance premiums, rising \$5,000 annually through year 5.

H. Health, Food, and Transportation Services

Health Services Staffing

The school will work with the Department of Education and the Department of Health to provide a nurse to maintain students' records and supervise the disbursement of medication and the treatment of students who are ill or injured. The nurse will be responsible for all record keeping and correspondence related to these responsibilities. When the nurse is not on-site, those responsibilities will be assigned to the Director of Operations. At least four staff members will be trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of automated external defibrillator (AED) equipment. Vision and hearing screenings will be coordinated with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Health Records

Cumulative health records will be stored in locked file cabinets accessible only by authorized staff members. These records will include proof of immunization and authorization for administration of medication. All visits to the nurse, including reason and treatment, will be documented in each child's file. Parents will be expected to provide at least three emergency contacts in the event their child becomes ill or is injured.

Immunizations

The school will ensure that all new students adhere to New York State requirements for immunization before they attend. Parents or guardians must provide documentation that their child has received all required doses of vaccines or at least one dose of each of the required vaccines and is waiting to receive the subsequent doses at the appropriate time intervals. Required immunizations include: Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTaP, DTP, Tdap: 3 doses); Polio (IPV, OPV: 3 doses; measles /Mumps/ Rubella (MMR: 2 doses of measles containing vaccine and 1 dose each of mumps and rubella); Hepatitis B (3 doses); Varicella (1 dose). Parents or guardians may waive immunization in accordance with Public Health Law and exemptions to immunizations shall be granted if a licensed physician or nurse practitioner certifies such immunization may be detrimental to the student's health, or if the student's parent or guardian holds genuine and sincere beliefs contrary to such immunizations.

Medications

FTCSE will implement strict policies and procedures regarding the safe and secure administration of medication, which will be communicated clearly to parents and staff. FTCSE will only administer medication that is necessary to maintain students in school and which must be given during school hours. Prescribed medication that requires administration through a subcutaneous, intramuscular, or rectal route; or prescribed medication being administered through pumps, tubes or nebulizers; or oral, topical or inhalant medication needed by non-self-directed students will be given only by the nurse or licensed practical nurses under the direction of the nurse. The nurse may designate other staff to assist self-directed students taking their own oral, topical, and inhalant medication and will provide the training and supervision necessary to perform these tasks in a safe and effective manner.

FTCSE will require in writing both orders from a licensed prescriber and permission from parents/guardians to administer medication. All medications, including nonprescription over the counter (OTC) drugs, must be prescribed by a licensed prescriber on an individual basis. Written orders for prescription and nonprescription OTC medications shall include: student's name and date of birth; name of medication; dosage and route of administration; frequency and time of administration; conditions under which medication should be administered; date written; prescriber's name, title, and signature; and prescriber's phone number. The school may request additional information, such as self-administration orders or potential adverse reactions. Medication orders must be renewed annually or when there is a change in medication or dosage.

Prescription medication must be delivered to the school in the original container with an appropriate label including student name; name and phone number of pharmacy; licensed prescriber's name; date and number of refills; name of medication/dosage; frequency of administration; and route of administration. Similarly, OTC medication and drug samples must be in the original manufacturer's container/package. Medications will not be transported daily to and from school; parents will be expected to provide an adequate supply to remain at the school, which will provide locked storage, including refrigeration if required, within a secure health

office. The school nurse will maintain medical records insuring each child receives proper medications prescribed by the doctor. The licensed prescriber will be also informed so that the medication protocol can be reviewed and possible adjustments made, e.g., home administration, extended release medication. Students may carry and self-administer prescribed medication under circumstances meeting the following conditions: demonstrated need, particularly as it relates to asthma or allergies; written prescriber's orders and request by parents/guardians; and student receives effective instruction and demonstrates adequate level of responsibility.

Food Services

Eating healthy is a primary concern for FTCSE, especially in a culture and climate where children are economically at risk as well as at risk educationally. Across various indicators of diet quality, an association with academic performance was observed. Students with decreased overall diet quality were significantly more likely to perform poorly on the assessment. Girls performed better than boys as did children from socioeconomically advantaged families. Children attending better schools and living in wealthy neighborhoods also performed better.⁵⁴ These findings demonstrate an association between diet quality and academic performance and identify specific dietary factors that contribute to this association. Additionally, this research supports the broader implementation and investment in effective school nutrition programs that have the potential to improve student access to healthy food choices, diet quality, academic performance, and, over the long term, health.

Because we are concerned about the whole person, FTCSE is committed to the student from a holistic perspective. Rich's Food Service, Red Rabbit or Resolution Foods Service will be used on an ongoing basis based on a competitive bid process to provide daily breakfast, lunch and snack. The criteria to select a food services provider will include: cost, menu options, nutrition, logistics and capacity. We will hire staff with appropriate food handlers permits to serve meals. Students will not be required to participate in our meal program and can elect to bring their own food to school. We intend to participate in the Federal School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program, administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA); our meals will meet all nutritional requirements.

Prior to the start of school, the school will work with families to complete the online School Meals Application form at www.applyforlunch.com. The school will make computers available and provide assistance to ensure every student's free and reduced price lunch eligibility is documented. Each month the school will estimate meal participation and bill in advance families of full-paying or reduced lunch eligible students; differences between estimated and actual participation will roll over to the next pay cycle. Per federal regulations, students with a disability that restricts their diet will be served meals at no extra charge. The school will discretely track all meals eaten at the school; students' free and reduced lunch status will remain private. We will never turn away a student whose parent has not paid and have budgeted funds to cover such costs. The school will complete the Meals Served Report Form on a weekly basis to submit to the Office of School Food and Nutrition Services. If warranted by a sufficiently high proportion of low-income students, we will explore participation in the universal lunch program, which allows all students to eat free of charge.

⁵⁴ "Diet Quality and Academic Performance," accessed February 21, 2014, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pub/med/18336680>.

Transportation

FTCSE's students will receive transportation services for which they are statutorily eligible (section 2853(4)(b) and 3635 of the Education Law), including students in temporary housing, students with disabilities and students whose IEP's or 504 plan require provision for transportation. The school will contract with L & T Transportation and MRG Bus Service for bus transportation and will abide by their distance policies in transporting children to school. FTCSE students who live under .7 miles from FTCSE will walk to school. Students who live .7 miles or farther from FTCSE will be offered bus transportation. The Director of Operation will coordinate with the Executive Director the first 2 years of operation to assist parent with information regarding the scheduling, pick up and drop off of students who qualify for transportation services. In the third year of operation, the Director of Pupil will assume the total responsibility in the coordination of FTCSE transportation services. FTCSE will ensure that its students will be provided the necessary transportation requirements as prescribed New York Education Law. FTCSE will attempt to offer transportation to all students. FTCSE is committed that no child will be left behind because of transportation concerns. The largest pool of low performance students is concentrated on the south-side of the proposed school location. FTCSE has designed a progressive plan to recruit heavily in this area of the city. Transportation is one of the incentives the FTCSE will market. The cost is reflected in the projected operations budget.

I. Family and Community Involvement

FTCSE seeks to create a school culture that embraces and encourages family and community involvement. Parent coaching, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community will define the complete work of FTCSE. FTCSE will offer a broad range of school, family, and community activities that can engage all parties and help meet student needs.

Successful school-parent-community partnerships are not stand-alone projects or add-on programs but are integrated within the school's overall mission and goals. Our research and fieldwork show that parent-school-partnerships improve schools, strengthen families, builds community support, and increase student achievement and success. We believe that parent, family, and community involvement in education correlates with higher academic performance and school improvement increases the chance of students becoming life-long learners.

Parents will participate in ongoing workshops, and learn Conscious Discipline to use with students at home. They support the mission of the school by completing at least 15 hours of service to the school annually. We encourage all parents to schedule their service hours with our Parent Coordinator who will be managing this process. This service can be accomplished in several ways including but not limited to:

- Helping the office staff with administrative tasks
- Attending PTA meetings
- Chaperoning student activities
- Assisting with student and parent outreach for school wide events
- Assisting in the development and implementation of the school's Annual Community Events such as:
- Summer Bridge Program Celebration Night
- Family Picnic
- School Thanksgiving Dinner

- Fall Credit Night: Celebration of Student Achievement
- Spring Credit Night: Celebration of Student Achievement
- Spring Performance Day
- Second Cup (coffee/beverage) with the Executive Director
- Summer Credit Night & Awards Ceremony: Celebration of Student Achievement

Parent engagement programs are administered and monitored by the Parent Coordinator who, in conjunction with the Executive Director and the Parent-Teacher Association, develops additional service opportunities for parents. When schools, parents, families, and communities work together to support learning, students tend to earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, stay in school longer, and enroll in higher-level programs. FTCSE will develop a collaboration with parents that involve establishing an infrastructure for working together to implement the school's mission and achieve its goals.

One hallmark of authentic collaboration is a *formal agreement* among participants to establish mechanisms and processes to accomplish mutually desired results—usually, outcomes that would be difficult to achieve by any of the stakeholders alone. FTCSE will reach out to local community groups, Boy & Girl Clubs, Amani Public Charter School, Friendship for Tots, Inc., local early educational childcare programs, the Mount Vernon Library, Police and Fire departments, the Mount Vernon Public school district, Family Ties, Faith-Based organizations and companies that have demonstrated a desire to assist in the vocational awareness of life integration of practicum and theory. The above organizations have expressed a desire to assist and partner with FTCSE in the areas of mentoring, STEM awareness and life experiences. Each of these organizations has an ongoing relationship in providing their services to schools.

FTCSE has collaborated with these groups during the establishment of our Charter School. Westchester Family Ties has offered a wide range of support groups, advocacy services, parent coaching, and connection to community resources, as well as respite and youth development opportunities. FTCSE recognize the caregiver, as a full partner in planning for family's success based on a family's unique strength and culture. Thus, while participants may have a primary affiliation elsewhere, they commit to working together under specified conditions to pursue a shared vision and common set of goals.

J. Financial Management

The Financial Management Team consisting of the Board of Trustees, Executive Director, Operations Director, Finance Director (Year 2) and Financial Consultants is responsible for the financial management and fiscal oversight of the school. The Board of Trustees will establish policies and procedures to ensure that the school's assets are safeguarded and that complete and accurate financial records are maintained. On a daily basis, the Executive Director, Directors of Operations and Finance Director (Year 2) as well as the Financial Consultants are responsible for the day-to-day finance and operations of the school.

Financial Systems

The initial budget and five-year projections were prepared with the assistance of the school's financial consultants, Charter School Business Management Inc., (CSBM) which has extensive experience with creating and reviewing multi-year budgets based on firsthand knowledge from working with charter schools in and outside of New York City. CSBM will work with the school during the start-up phase to establish its financial policies and procedures manual, set up its

accounting system, train its board and staff members regarding charter school finance and serve as a consultant to the Executive Director. CSBM will also professionally develop the school's staff on the setup and maintenance of systems for accounting, student and staff records, payroll, tracking of student meals, enrollment and attendance, eligibility for free and reduced priced lunch, and special education and ELL services in preparation for staff to fully take on those responsibilities.

In Years 1, the school will contract with CSBM to work with staff to handle the daily financial responsibilities and to specifically provide training to the Operations and Finance Associate. CSBM will directly handle the daily accounting, financial budgeting and reporting functions (along with the Operations and Finance Associate) until the Director of Finance is hired in Year 2. CSBM will then provide professional development and support as needed to the Director of Finance and staff.

In its role, CSBM will also work closely with the school's Operations and Finance Team to ensure that the school is consistently adhering to its Financial Policies and Procedures, recording transactions in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures (GAAP) and conducting its finances in alignment with authorizers, local, state and federal regulations.

Financial Controls

The School will develop and maintain fiscal policies and procedures to ensure strong internal controls as well as provide accurate and timely financial information in accordance with GAAP and all required rules and regulations. These policies will be documented in the School's Financial Policies and Procedures Manual (FPPM), which will include the school's internal control structure as well as procedures for processes such as cash receipts, procurement, cash disbursements, and payroll. The manual will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees as well as an independent auditor who will formally report on their review and findings.

Budget

The Executive Director will prepare annual budgets with the assistance of the Director of Operations and the Financial Consultants/Director of Finance. The proposed budget will be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval by June 30th of each year. The school will also maintain a five-year budget projection and revise it each year based on current information and the long-term strategic plans.

The School's budget will be monitored and reported on monthly to the Board of Trustees. CSBM/Director of Finance will provide the board and school leadership with regular reports, including budget to actuals, cash flow projections and balance sheet; any significant variances will be reviewed and discussed with school leadership and the Board. Any major modifications to the budget will require the approval of the Board of Trustees.

Fiscal Audit

The Board of Trustees will select an independent certified public accountant (CPA) to conduct an annual financial audit pursuant to Education Law 2854(1)(c). The audit will be conducted in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). All audit findings will be reported directly to the Board of Trustees who will then work with school leadership to create and implement a corrective action plan. A copy of the audit report,

management letter and corrective action plan will be submitted to the state and authorizer by the November 1st deadline.

K. Budget and Cash Flow

The financial plans presented by FTCSE are sound as evidenced by the following conservative revenue assumptions and comprehensive expenditure assumptions:

- The primary source of revenue is from the school district Per Pupil Revenue following each student attending the charter school and is budgeted at the 2017-18 rate of \$17,144.
- Title I funding is included based on demographics of our current student population in Mount Vernon at 80% of the students being eligible. The rate per student of \$500 is forecasted for the term of the charter.
- The CSP grant will provide a school creation grant of \$500,000 to FTCSE. \$219,000 will be available for the start-up period with the remaining \$281,000 in year 1.
- Spending categories in personnel and “other than personnel” are comprehensive, wide-ranging and are tailored to student enrollment. Salary increases are set at a standard COLA increase of 3% per year.
- During the start-up period, FTCSE will provide the planning team office space, equipment, supplies, and any needed training facilities.

The line items included in the budget support the educational program of FTCSE. The budget assumptions includes staffing, consultants, curriculum, technology, supplies and facilities which are the key to the fulfillment of the mission set forth in this document. All assumptions are consistent with other charter schools of similar type and size in the greater New York area. See Appendix 9 for the detailed budget projections, cash flow and staffing assumptions for the first five years.

Pre-Opening Revenue

The School will operate on \$219,000 from the Charter School Planning grant (CSP) to cover the expense discussed below.

Pre-Opening Expenditures

Expenditures in the pre-opening period will be made to establish operating systems, procure supplies, recruit staff and students and to compensate the Executive Director, Director of Operations and Administrative Assistant.

Year-One Budget Revenues

The majority of revenues in Year 1 will come from per-pupil funding for general and special education students. Additional revenues will come from federal grant sources and local areas sources.

Year-One Budget Expenditures

The largest portion of the budget is based on salary and personnel cost such as taxes and related benefits comprising over 56% of expenditures. The remaining costs are allocated to school operations and facilities rental/maintenance.

Five-Year Budget Revenue

As with year one, the majority of the school's revenue over the remaining years presented will come from Per-pupil revenue. No significant changes will occur from other revenue sources.

Five-Year Budget Expenses

Salaries are expected to increase by 3% each year. Additional staff will be hired each year to accommodate the growth of student enrollment. In the event of dissolution, an escrow account has been set aside in the amount of \$75,000.

Positive Cash Balance

The cash flow section of the budget will show that the School is solvent throughout the five years shown and will have a healthy cash surplus at the end of Year 5.

Contingency Plan

The School will consider cutting costs or securing a line of credit in the event of a budget or cash flow shortfall. School Leadership is prepared to work with the Board in order to aggressively seek any needed funds through fundraising. The Board Chairperson is an experienced fundraiser who aggressively seeks alternative plans to secure financial resources.

L. Pre-Opening Plan

Once a charter contract have been signed, FTCSE Board of Trustees shall formally hire the Executive Director who shall immediately implement the recruitment strategy and build out the school's support staff to implement the school's mission and five key design elements.

The Executive Director bears the responsibility to recruit administrators, faculty and staff members by visit colleges and universities, attend professional job fairs, placing ads in professional teachers journals, posting jobs opening on FTCSE's social media outlets (school website, school Facebook) and common known of social media outlets (Indeed.com, Glassdoor.com, Teacher-Teacher.com, Monster.com, Career Builder.com), reach out to various networks, fraternities, sororities and professional business groups. It is expected that contractual agreements will by signed by both parties by February of the upcoming academic year. During the pre-operation the Director of Operation shall assist in the administrative paper work for all new employees.

The Exectuive Director will conduct an initial 3-4 day orientation a month prior to the school opening (August) to discuss the mission, key design elements, and share a definitive calendar with identified dates to conduct periodic professional development sessions. In the initial orientation, the Exectuive Director will suggest that staff maintain a reflection journal and s/he will encourage the instructional staff to discuss those specific reflections as to how they handle the role of being the founding instructional staff of the inaugural year of FCTSE. In this process, confidentiality will be emphasized, and teachers will have the opportunity to offer suggestions, recommendations, and explain how the school policy can be improved upon to by all stakeholders in a way that is transparent and sensitive to the improvement of the operations of the school.

Category	Task Description	Time Frame	Task Owner
Accountability	Develop Assessment Plan aligned with application	May 2016	Board Of Trustee/ Consultant
	Performance Framework	June 2016	Board of Trustees
Attendance	Develop Attendance Policy	June 2017	Executive Director
Curriculum & Instruction	Order needed instructional materials and supplies	August- November 2017	Executive Director, Director of Operations
	Create a detailed, specific course scope and sequence for all grade levels offered in Year 1	July 2017 – September 2017	Executive Director
Enrollment and Admissions	Plan and document recruitment and school marketing efforts	May 2017	Director of Operations
	Conduct lottery for school admissions	April 2017	Director of Operations
	Register students from seating offering and waitlist	April 2017 - July 2017	Director of Operations
Facility Preparation	Purchase classroom and office furniture	April 2017 - August 2017	Director of Operations
	Acquire location and facility	May 2016 - April 2017	Trustees & Executive Director
	Create Facility Completion Schedule	June 2016 – June 2017	Director of Operations
	Obtain Certificates of Occupancy	June 2017	Director of Operations
	Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance	April 2016- June 2017	Executive Director, Director of Operations
	Develop School Safety Plan	February 2017	Executive Director, Director of Operations
Financial Management	Establish bank accounts	December 2016	Trustee/CSBM
	Revenue planning (per pupil funds, SPED, IDEA, Titles I-V)	Jan 2016 - April 2017	Director of Operations, CSBM
	Fiscal policies and procedures established	September 2017	Board of Trustees & CSBM
	Audit procedures / GAAP and FASB No. 117 compliance	April 2017	Trustees
	Apply for a Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN)	June 2016	Trustees
	Cash flow projection for first year of operation	September 2016	Director of Operations & CSBM
Food Services	Develop plan for collecting free and reduced-price lunch forms	September 2017	Director of Operations
Performance Evaluation	Develop performance evaluation system	June 2016- July 2016	CSBM
	Determine performance goals	April 2016-	Executive Director &

		July 2016	Trustees
Policy Development & Implementation	Create and approve FOIL Policy	December 2016	Board of Trustees & Legal
	Create and approve Student Disciplinary Code	August 2016	Board of Trustees & CSBM
	Create and approve Complaint/Grievance Policies for staff	August 2016	Board of Trustees & Legal
	Create and approve Complaint Policies for parents	August 2016	Board of Trustees & Legal
	Create and approve FERPA policy	August 2016	Board of Trustees & legal CSBM
	Develop Student and Family Handbook	August 2016	Executive Director & legal
School Health Plan	Obtain services of physician	August 2016	Director of Operations
	Create a Health and Safety Plan	July 2016	Director of Operations
	Create Medications Administration Plan	July 2016	Director of Operations
	Create School Wellness Policy	July 2016	Director of Operations
	Obtain training and certification for first responders	July 2016	Executive Director

M. Friendship Tech Charter School of Excellence Dissolution Plan

In the event of closure or dissolution of FTCSE, the Board shall create a closure committee and delegate to the closure committee, the Executive Director and the Director of Operations the responsibility to manage the dissolution process in accordance with Education Law § 2851(2)(t). This process shall include prompt notification to parents of children enrolled in the school. A list of FTCSE students will be sent to the local district where the school is located and the school shall transfer student records to the student’s school district of residence, and the parents of enrolled students shall be notified of the transfer of records. After satisfaction of any outstanding debts pursuant to Education § 220, we would prefer to transfer any additional assets to another charter school within the Community School District in which the school is located or to the Mount Vernon School District. The proposed budget includes an escrow fund of \$75,000 to be used for legal and audit expenses in the event of its dissolution.

The dissolution process would begin with a meeting of the leadership team of the school (Executive Director, Director of Operations and the Director of Pupil Services) in addition to the Board Chair, the Board Treasurer, the Board Secretary and its legal counsel. The purpose of this meeting would be to confirm a plan and timeline that will be used to guide the dissolution process based on guidance from the New York State Education Department. Upon approval of the plan and timeline, the Executive Director, the Board Secretary and the Board Chair would meet with representatives of the NYSED Officer of Charter Schools or other appropriate staff to review and discuss the dissolution plan and timeline. The outcome of this meeting would be a final dissolution plan and timeline that would be used to manage the dissolution process of the School.