

Mayor of Providence

Angel Taveras

December 23, 2011

Deborah Gist, Commissioner
RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
255 Westminister Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Commissioner Gist:

As Mayor of Providence, I am pleased to join with Mayor Charles A. Lombardi of North Providence to submit an application to establish The Grace School Academy. The Grace School Academy will be an innovative, fully inclusive school serving 306 Providence and North Providence students in grades K-8. Our goal is to open this school for the 2012-2013 school year.

The Grace School Academy will be located on the campus of Meeting Street, in the heart of South Providence. Students selected in the lottery will join with Meeting Street School's students that have severe and profound disabilities to create a fully inclusive educational program that can be a model for inclusive education throughout Rhode Island and across the nation. I respectfully request the Board of Regents' approval of the Grace School Academy and would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.

Thank you for your consideration of our application.

Sincerely,

Angel Taveras
Mayor of Providence

cc: The Honorable Charles A. Lombardi, Mayor
John M. Kelly, President of Meeting Street

TOWN OF
NORTH PROVIDENCE



STATE OF
RHODE ISLAND

CHARLES LOMBARDI
Mayor

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
2000 Smith Street
North Providence, RI 02911
Phone 232-0900
Fax 232-3434

October 21, 2011

John M. Kelly, President
Meeting Street
1000 Eddy Street
Providence, RI 02905

Re: The Grace School Mayoral Academy

Dear John:

On behalf of the City of North Providence, I want to join Providence Mayor Angel Taveras to offer my enthusiastic and full support for the application you are submitting to the Rhode Island Department of Education to establish The Grace School Mayoral Academy. Meeting Street's innovative and proven model of inclusive education for students of all abilities (and all socio-economic classes) will provide a valuable laboratory and training environment for all North Providence educators and allied staff to adopt world class practices in a variety of areas, including: inclusive education, differentiated instruction, student assessment, co-teaching, and curriculum development.

I am particularly excited to support the mission of The Grace School Mayoral Academy, which is:

The Grace School Mayoral Academy is committed to an inclusive educational model focusing on the academic and social success of the whole individual, preparing students to meet the challenges of secondary education and beyond. Working with parents and community partners, The Grace School Mayoral Academy will serve as a local and national model of inclusive education.

Serving as a member of The Grace School Academy Board with Mayor Taveras, parents, and Meeting Street representatives, we will have a unique opportunity to improve student outcomes for all North Providence and Providence students.

I look forward to working with you on this important initiative to afford the opportunity to all North Providence families to have educational options for their children.

Sincerely,

Charles Lombardi
Mayor

December 16, 2011

Deborah Gist, Commissioner
RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
255 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Commissioner Gist:

Enclosed please find our complete application to establish The Grace School Academy for the 2012-2013 school year. The Grace School Academy would combine students from local school districts, including Providence and North Providence, with students with severe and profound disabilities attending Meeting Street to form the first fully inclusive Mayoral Academy/Charter School within a school in Rhode Island. At full operation, we would have 306 students enrolled in The Grace School Academy.

Given the clear evidence of the myriad of benefits of inclusion for students with and without disabilities, along with Meeting Street's track record of educational success for students of all abilities, we believe that The Grace School Academy can be a state and national model for effective inclusive educational practices that yield real results. In addition, our goal is to make The Grace School Academy a prototype for other fully inclusive schools across our country.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the work of your staff over these many months as we have refined our application.

I look forward to the opportunity to discuss our application in more detail. If you have any questions regarding our application, please call me at 533-9212.

Sincerely,



John M. Kelly
President

COVER SHEET

CHARTER SCHOOL INFORMATION

Proposed Charter School Name: The Grace School Academy
School Location (city/town): Providence, RI
Contact person name: John M. Kelly, President
District: Providence
Mailing Address: 1000 Eddy Street
City/State/Zip: Providence, RI 02905
Telephone: 401-533-9212
FAX: 401-533-9101
Indicate the grade level(s) of the Proposed Charter School: K-8

PROJECTED STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Projected Student Enrollment 1st year: 128
Projected Student Enrollment 2nd year: 162
Projected Student Enrollment 3rd year: 196
Projected Student Enrollment 4th year: 218
Projected Student Enrollment 5th year: 240
Total Number of Teachers: 37
Teacher/Student Ratio: 1:10

Do you presently have access to a facility suitable for a school? Yes No

NOTE: Reviewers will not penalize applicants who do not have access to a facility at the time of application submission. Reviewers, however, will look positively on applicants who have identified future facilities.

Is this a **new school** or a conversion? Yes No

Identify the districts from which you plan to draw students: Multiple districts including but not limited to Providence and North Providence

Which type of charter are you applying for?

- District
 Independent
 Mayoral Academy



Signature of Contact Person

12/16/17

Date



COLLETTE
VACATIONS

May 12, 2011

John M. Kelly, President
Meeting Street
1000 Eddy Street
Providence, RI 02905

Dear John:

This letter is to affirm the support of the Meeting Street Board of Trustees for the application to the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to establish The Grace School Mayoral Academy to educate students from grades K-8 who live in Pawtucket and Providence.

The vote of our Trustees to endorse this application is the culmination of a year of Board discussion on the merits of Meeting Street's participation in this venture. Ultimately, we have determined that our participation – as members of The Grace School Mayoral Academy Board and as the contracted educational service provider for the Mayoral Academy – is wholly consistent with our values about inclusive education and our belief in the ability of all students to learn and succeed.

Furthermore, this effort is wholly aligned with our goal to establish an early child development pipeline that will prepare children, starting before birth, to enter school healthy and ready to learn. Specifically, our participation in The Grace School Mayoral Academy will enable us to create a model for educating children from birth through eighth grade.

The Board recognizes that participation in The Grace School Mayoral Academy will require a wide range of commitments by our agency to ensure the academic and social success of each student, including Trustee participation on the Board of Overseers, financial support through fund development efforts, and the commitment of our facility. I speak for the entire Meeting Street Board of Trustees when I say that we are fully invested in fulfilling these commitments and helping The Grace School Mayoral Academy become a national model for inclusive education promoting academic and social success for all.

For the past 65 years, Meeting Street has been looked to as an innovator and leader in the education of children. Our participation in The Grace School Mayoral Academy is both a reflection of this past and a commitment to remaining a leader well into the future.

Sincerely,

John Galvin, Chair
Meeting Street Board of Trustees

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Grace School Academy, a not-for-profit corporation led initially by the Mayors of Providence and North Providence, proposes to establish an innovative K-8 Mayoral Academy, The Grace School, for students from multiple school districts, including but not limited to Providence and North Providence. The Grace School Academy would combine students from local school districts with students with severe and profound disabilities attending Meeting Street School to form the first fully inclusive Mayoral Academy/Charter School within a school in Rhode Island. The Grace School Academy intends to establish a performance based contract with Meeting Street, an Educational Service Provider and leader in the education of students of all abilities for 65 years, to operate this school in accordance with local requirements, state regulations, and federal law. Meeting Street is a Rhode Island not-for-profit corporation and a 501(c)(3) organization.

The mission of The Grace School Academy is:

The Grace School Academy is committed to an inclusive educational model focusing on the academic and social success of the whole individual, preparing students to meet the challenges of secondary education and to become lifelong learners. Working with parents and community partners, The Grace School Academy will serve as a local and national model of inclusive education.

We have developed The Grace School Academy in response to the educational needs of students of all abilities living in these communities. While the recently released 2010 NECAP scores show some improvements in reading and math, far too many urban students are lagging behind their suburban peers and low income students, particularly from Latino backgrounds, have a significant achievement gap compared to their middle class peers. At the same time, one of the limitations of mayoral academies and charter schools is that they tend to have a very low enrollment rate of students with severe and profound disabilities, even though many of these students would benefit from an educational model that is highly personalized, promotes differentiated instruction, and has small classes with high teacher-student ratios. The Grace School Academy would address this gap in our current array of alternative public educational offerings and serve as a replicable model for other mayoral academies, charter schools, and school districts by working in collaboration with Meeting Street to provide a fully inclusive education program for their students. In fact, part of our mission will be to serve as a training ground and teaching site for teachers, administrators, parents, and others to learn about inclusive educational models and translate them back to their own districts and communities, both in Providence and North Providence as well as statewide and beyond.

Studies indicate that inclusive (i.e. fully integrated) educational environments improve the intellectual, sensory, and social development of students of all abilities. Children educated in inclusive classrooms demonstrate an increased acceptance and appreciation of diversity, better communication and social skills, greater development of moral and ethical principles, a greater number of friendships, and increased self-esteem.

A National Model for Inclusive Education Promoting Academic and Social Success for All

The Board of Directors of The Grace School Academy will enter into a performance contract with Meeting Street, an educational leader for 65 years and a national pioneer in inclusive education for more than a decade at the preschool level and since 2007 at the elementary school level. Meeting Street School's inaugural inclusive third grade class all tested proficient on reading and math on the 2009 NECAP tests, with 40% testing proficient with distinction. In 2010, its third and fourth grade classes met or exceeded the statewide averages for reading and its fourth grade class exceeded the statewide average for math.

Our educational model will be standards-based and meet the requirements of RIDE in accordance with the Basic Education Plan. The curricula we will use will be evidenced based and integrated with technology to help our students succeed in the 21st century. Our approach will combine co-teaching, differentiated instruction, and promoting a positive school climate. Our co-teaching model will use certified educators teaming with licensed therapists to provide an integrated educational experience that focuses on the strengths and needs of each individual child. This effort will be further reinforced through differentiated instruction, where our educators will teach to each child rather than to the entire class. This individualized approach will account for and inspire each of our students' learning styles and different language backgrounds. Through the use of Response to Intervention and Multi-Tier System of Supports, ongoing data collection and teacher assessment will enable us to identify struggling students and customize individualized academic supports before students fall behind. Finally, our educational approach will promote a positive school climate through our adoption of the Responsive Classroom approach and our commitment to an inclusive school community.

Our proposed educational goals include student achievement in both academic and social emotional areas, and include:

1. Grace School Academy students will meet or exceed the statewide level of proficiency on the NECAP (or statewide equivalent).
2. 80% of students will make continuous progress toward meeting or exceeding grade level benchmarks.
3. 100% of students with IEPs will meet the Alternative Assessment standards for their grade level.
4. 100% of students will participate in daily Responsive Classroom practices and activities.
5. Students will have regular conferences with their teacher to review performance data and set personal goals.

While The Grace School Academy's business plan projects enrollment of 240 students by the fifth year of operation, the ultimate student enrollment, 306 students (17 students per class who will enroll in The Grace School Academy through the lottery, two classes per grade for each grade K-8), will be achieved by the eighth year of operation. These students will attend school with approximately 54 students with severe and profound disabilities that come to Meeting Street through school districts from across Rhode Island as well as from nearby Massachusetts and Connecticut. In addition, The Grace School Academy seeks to include two pre-kindergarten classrooms as part of its charter if and when the State of Rhode Island funds pre-kindergarten in the future as part of the State funding formula for public education. Meeting Street will lease

part of its Eddy Street campus, the first LEED certified K-12 school in Rhode Island and designed for future expansion, to The Grace School Academy to operate the school.

The Grace School Academy will be a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation with an eleven (11) member governing board whose sole purpose is to operate the Grace School Academy according to the terms and conditions of its State charter. In terms of Board composition, the Board will be chaired by the Mayor of Providence or the Mayor of North Providence. The Mayor of Providence will also appoint one designee to the Board and will be encouraged to make this appointment his or her school superintendent. Five (5) Board members will be appointed by Meeting Street's Board of Trustees. Grace School Academy Founders, a group of parents that have helped to create our inclusive model, will recommend three (3) parents to serve on the Grace School Academy Board of Directors, as well. The Board will enter into a five year performance based contract with Meeting Street to operate the school under the terms and conditions of the charter and in accordance with all local, state, and federal requirements. A copy of this contract is included as an appendix to this application.

Operationally, we will maintain a wholly separate set of records and ensure that all charter school funds are segregated from other funds to ensure the proper accounting and management of these resources. Meeting Street will maintain all funds in accordance with the RIDE Uniform Chart of Accounts (UCOA) and will conduct a separate audit of these funds in compliance with RIDE requirements and as required by contract with The Grace School Academy. Meeting Street has extensive experience in doing just this; most recently through a federal grant award to operate an Early Head Start program. Strict time and cost accounting systems are already in place and would be used in the operation of The Grace School Academy to ensure that all federal, state, local, and privately raised funds are segregated, tracked, allocated, and accounted for accordingly.

Meeting Street is well positioned and highly qualified to serve as the Educational Service Provider for The Grace School Academy. A copy of a draft performance contract between The Grace School Academy and Meeting Street for these services, which outlines the scope of work and terms and conditions of Meeting Street performance, is included as an appendix to this application.

Established in 1946, Meeting Street is a leader in the education of students of all abilities and maintains a highly regarded reputation in the community as responsible stewards of public funds. Meeting Street serves nearly 3,000 children each year from diverse socio-economic, geographic, and ethnic/racial backgrounds across several programs, including Early Intervention, Early Head Start, Bright Futures Early Learning Center, Meeting Street School, and Outpatient Services. With respect to educating students with special needs, Meeting Street School educates children from more than 20 school districts from Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Meeting Street has an invested Board of Trustees, engaged parents, and a loyal base of donors that have supported our school in a myriad of ways and help us raise \$2M annually to support our three educational programs and early childhood and therapeutic programs.

SECTION I – MISSION STATEMENT

1) Explain the mission of your proposed charter school.

The Grace School Academy is committed to an inclusive educational model focusing on the academic and social success of the whole individual, preparing students to meet the challenges of secondary education and become lifelong learners. Working with parents and community partners, The Grace School Academy will serve as a local and national model of inclusive education.

ATTACHMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: NONE

SECTION II – STATEMENT OF NEED

1) Explain the need for this particular school in the community it will serve and the target student population.

It is clear that socioeconomic status is a defining factor in a child's educational trajectory and outcomes. As a result, children from the greater Providence area find themselves far behind their middle-class peers when it comes to school readiness and school performance. Providence has the third highest child poverty rate in the country for a city with over 100,000 residents (according to the U.S. Census). In fact, Providence ties with New Orleans as the third poorest city in the nation for children. Moreover, Rhode Island has the highest poverty rate of the six New England states and Providence is the second poorest community in the State. According to data from Rhode Island Kids Count, Providence has the second lowest median family income for families with children under 18 in RI. In all, 22.5% of Providence children under age 6 live in extreme poverty and 18.8% of Providence children under age 18 live in extreme poverty.

Further compounding these factors is that 32% of Providence children are born to mothers without a high school diploma. As a result, Providence went from being nationally ranked 25th in terms of child poverty in 1990 to 3rd in 2000, the largest increase of any major city in the country. In all, 34% of all school age children in Providence live in poverty. It is clear that children most at risk of not achieving their full potential and destined for a life dependent on state and federal assistance are children who live in poverty. A 2009 Providence Journal article reported that “youngsters from low-income families can be 18 months behind in academic readiness and language development by the time they start kindergarten.” Indeed, Providence School Department data confirms the impact of poverty on educational outcomes:

- only 47% of 4th graders are reading at proficiency (worst in Rhode Island);
- only 40% of 4th graders are at math proficiency (2nd worst in Rhode Island);
- 92% elementary school daily attendance rate (lowest in Rhode Island); and
- almost a third of Providence's children arrived in kindergarten ill-prepared to learn their letters.

The gap grows as students get older, as only 41% of Providence 8th graders are at reading proficiency and only 28% of Providence 8th graders are at math proficiency. Daily attendance drops to 90% in middle school, again the lowest in Rhode Island. By high school, the effects are magnified even more, with only 63% of Providence students graduating.

Perhaps most telling of all is that only 74% of school age children started and ended the school year in the same school – the lowest stability/highest mobility rate in Rhode Island. The transience of our students is directly related to poverty, high rents, high rates of home foreclosure, and homelessness among our families.

Rhode Island and Providence also suffer from a significant achievement gap that separates the performance of Latino students from their peers. Rhode Island's Latino students had the lowest scores in both fourth and eighth grade math and reading tests of any state in the nation. On the

2010 NECAP exams, only 52% of Latino students scored proficient in reading and 35% scored proficient in math, well below the statewide averages of 71% and 55%, respectively. Providence has the highest percentage (65%) of schools that are not making sufficient progress in the State. In terms of elementary schools, 19 Providence elementary schools were listed in the R.I. Department of Education's 2010 School Classification as Schools Not Making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). As a result, many families are seeking alternatives to the traditional public school system. In 2008, the Providence Journal noted that "it is harder to get into some RI Charter Schools than it is to get into the Ivy League." For some urban charter schools in Providence, the acceptance rate in 2008 was as low as 4.5%.

The educational gaps for poor children in Providence are even more striking in Lower South Providence, the neighborhood where Meeting Street invested \$25M to build its new campus. Half of the State's persistently low-achieving schools are in the neighborhood, where 20% of students have Limited English Proficiency and 18% have Individual Education Plans (IEPs). In addition, Woods Elementary has a 32% chronic absenteeism rate while Fogarty Elementary has a 25% chronic absentee rate. All seven of the schools in our neighborhood are Title I and the entire neighborhood is within the attendance zone of two public high schools meeting the criteria for low-performing: Cooley Health and Science Technical Academy and the Providence Academy of International Studies.

While The Grace School Academy will draw its pool of Providence students from beyond the Lower South Providence neighborhood, it is critical to understand the neighborhood context where the school will be located, as it is our goal to become a highly attractive and accessible school for areas students, families (proximity will promote parent engagement and family partnerships), and the surrounding community as a whole. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Lower South Providence had 1,764 households and 5,744 individuals. Nearly 40% of the residents were under age 18; over 55% were Hispanic with a large African-American population (34.7%), and a mix of other races and ethnicities; 35% of the population was foreign-born, with over half of those households speaking a language other than English.

In North Providence, student achievement rates are higher but are still not as high as they could be. Only two-thirds of North Providence fourth graders are meeting proficiency levels for reading or math. The district also has a 33% higher suspension rate than the rest of the state. Children in North Providence are at higher risk than their peers statewide. The child abuse and neglect rate in North Providence is 10% higher than the state average and North Providence children are 30% more likely than other Rhode Island children to be participating in Early Intervention due to a developmental delay, disability, or significant risk factors for not meeting developmental milestones. And children in North Providence are 50% more likely to be living with their grandparent(s) than other Rhode Island children.

In terms of community context, 10% of North Providence children live in families that are below the family poverty threshold. In all, the median household income in North Providence is nearly 10% below the Rhode Island average; unlike the rest of the state, the median household income actually dropped from 1990 to 2000. (The above data is from the 2011 RI Kidscount Factbook)

Statewide, 25-35% (depending on grade) of elementary and middle students tested below standard for reading on the 2010 NECAPs. For math, the results were worse, with 37-67% of students (depending on grade) testing partially proficient or substantially proficient this past year. While the reading scores appear to remain relatively steady from 3rd to 8th grade, the percentage of students testing proficient in math drops significantly by the time students reach 8th grade. Students from low income families, urban communities, or homes where English is not the primary language spoken all fared worse on these standardized tests compared to their peers statewide. The Grace School Academy is committed to educating students of all abilities and, at the same time, will place special emphasis on outreaching to, engaging, and supporting children (and their families) that are at the greatest risk for struggling academically.

At the same time, alternative educational models traditionally have not been successful at including students with significant disabilities in their schools. According to the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), a February 26, 2010 hearing of the U.S. House Education and Labor Committee to discuss the impact of charter schools on the public education system (as part of its preparation process to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, now known as No Child Left Behind) heard many concerns from witnesses and members of Congress regarding recent studies that an under-representation of students with disabilities enrolled in charter schools and “counseling out” practices which may discourage prospective families of students with disabilities from enrolling their child because special education services and supports are unavailable.

For example, the CEC reported that Dr. Tom Hehir, Professor of Practice at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and former Deputy Secretary of the US Department of Education under President Clinton, testified that while some charter schools can provide students with disabilities with a high-quality education and offer parents school choice options, on the whole charter schools generally serve fewer children with disabilities than traditional public schools. Additionally, Hehir testified that charter schools serve far fewer students with more significant disabilities, and in some instances, none at all. According to Hehir, under-representation is problematic for a variety of reasons including: civil rights concerns, it compromises the ability of charter schools to claim better approaches to serving students for whom the current education system has failed, may present a financial disadvantage to traditional public schools, and the existing financial disincentive for charters not to educate students that may require costly services.

There is a paucity of recent studies that have assessed enrollment practices and patterns of students with disabilities, particularly those with severe disabilities, in charter schools.

According to the Atlanta Examiner, in efforts to understand what research reveals about student with disabilities in charter schools, the U.S. Department of Education funded two studies to examine how students with disabilities perform in charter schools. The first study, Charter Schools and Students with Disabilities: A National Study (Fiore et al., 2000) found that:

- the enrollment of students with more significant disabilities in charter schools was relatively rare;

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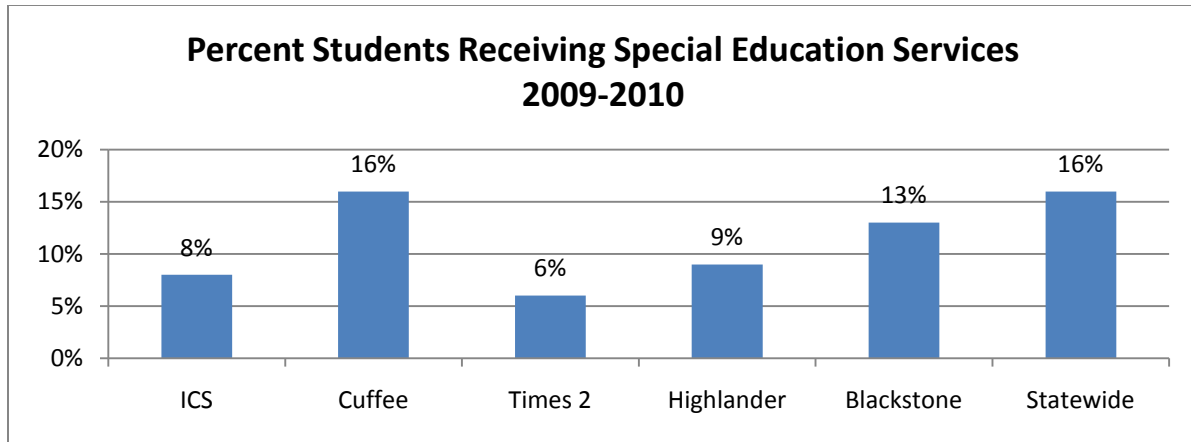
- staff at some charter schools sometimes "counseled" parents of students with disabilities against enrolling in the charter school;
- most charter schools had little data to verify the impact of their program on students with disabilities; and
- some barriers included lack of adequate funding, lack of extracurricular activities, and transportation.

The second study, Project SEARCH: Special Education as Requirements in Charter Schools (2001) found that:

- charter school applications often provided little more than reassurances that special education services would be provided; they generally did not require demonstration of the capacity to meet those obligations;
- most charter school liaisons had limited understanding of federal, state, and local sources of special education funding and ways to access resources;
- charter schools often had difficulty locating appropriate certified special education teachers and related services personnel; and
- in many cases, the philosophy of charter schools conflicted with special education requirements.

While these studies are nearly a decade old, it is clear that some of these challenges still remain. For example, in New Orleans, the city with the highest percentage of students in charter schools in the nation, charters educate about 60% of New Orleans' public school children. But they serve only about 38% of the students with autism, 37% of those with an emotional disturbance, and only about 23% of the students with multiple disabilities. In Denver, only two students with severe cognitive or physical disabilities were among the 7,000 charter school students in Denver Public Schools for the 2009-2010 school year. As such, a 2010 report by the University of Colorado's Education and the Public Interest Center found that enrollment disparities of students with disabilities in schools operated by educational management organizations (95% of which are charter schools) and traditional public schools remain. In all, less than 10% of students enrolled in the 598 schools surveyed had IEPs, compared to the national average of 13.6% of all students.

Locally, charter schools in Rhode Island have not enrolled students with severe and profound disabilities and have under-enrolled students with disabilities in general, as compared to the statewide average. The following chart depicts this under-representation at the five charter schools in Providence and North Providence that offer a K-8 education.



Inclusive education has been a significant focus of schools, parents, and advocates over the past two decades to improve the educational outcomes of students with disabilities. In the past decade, the combination of the No Child Left Behind Act, the President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education (2002), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act have challenged and encouraged the widespread adoption of inclusive education for all students. That said, changes in actual practice seem to be lagging, as the percentage of students educated in inclusive settings (i.e., inside the general education classroom for more than 80% of the school day) only increased from 45.3% to 52.1% (OSEP Annual Report, from 1995 – 2004). This means that barely half of these students are fully included with their peers each day. The focus of our educational model will be to improve the educational outcomes for every student.

ATTACHMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: NONE

SECTION III – EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

1) Provide a detailed description of your proposed charter school's educational program:

a. Guiding Principles

The Grace School Academy will adopt the following guiding values that frame its work with children and their families:

- Respect – we treat ourselves and each other with respect and as we ourselves would like to be treated
- Integrity – we are honest and keep our promises
- Compassion – we comport ourselves and treat each other with dignity, understanding, and compassion
- Inclusivity – we acknowledge and embrace differences and incorporate these differences to form one community
- Excellence – we strive for excellence in everything we do

The above values have also been Meeting Street's values as an organization for more than 12 years and have guided the development of its successful inclusive educational model starting with the Bright Futures Early Learning Center in 1998. Furthermore, we have selected these values because they align with our overall mission for The Grace School Academy, primarily to be an inclusive educational model focusing on the academic (excellence) and social (integrity, compassion, inclusivity, and respect) success of the whole individual.

Staff will adopt these values in their day to day lives as educators and administrators will support our students' academic and social development both in the classroom and in the community as they move through and beyond their elementary and middle school experiences. The mastery of these values will become evident in the character and behavior of our students in school as they learn from staff modeling.

b. Philosophy of Teaching, Learning, and Administration

Our philosophy of teaching, learning, and administration will be based on creating a positive learning environment where each student is supported in their development of academic and social skills. A rigorous, research based curriculum will provide all students within a meaningful learning context that is cognizant of individual learning styles and needs. Transdisciplinary teams of educational and therapeutic professionals will work in concert to implement integrated programs focused on the whole learner.

Specifically, our approach will be grounded in the following tenets:

- Children learn best through activities that challenge the abilities they have and encourage them to reach for new ones. To accomplish this, we will build on each child's individual abilities and interests to encourage his or her natural learning process.

A National Model for Inclusive Education Promoting Academic and Social Success for All

- We will teach to each student and individualize our approach to the unique strengths of each learner and balance this approach by having our transdisciplinary teams work with every student to ensure that all children benefit from our educational community.
- Time for joint planning and collaboration is essential for effective educational programs. Planning time will be built into the daily, weekly, and monthly schedule to ensure effective communication across all classroom staff (teachers, teaching assistants, therapists, social workers, etc.) and allow for the seamless integration of practice. Ongoing joint meetings will ensure time for planning, professional development and learning, and assessing and reviewing each student's progress on a continual basis.
- A proactive approach is key to helping child development. As needed, classroom team members will develop, in partnership with each child's family, intervention activities based on an assessment of the child's developmental strengths and needs as well as the family's goals, resources, and priorities.
- Children need to use their developing skills in different ways and in different settings so that they can generalize them and use their skills independently. We will work with families to help them support their children by reinforcing learning strategies at home and engaging families with ongoing communication and activities through our Parent Staff Organization.
- Children are curious and inquisitive by their nature. Our responsibility is to create a nurturing learning environment that supports students' natural interests to explore and safely take academic and social risks.

c. Method of Providing Instruction

Our method of instruction will be grounded in co-teaching and differentiated instruction. By incorporating these researched best practices and strategic subject area resources, we will create a positive school climate that focuses on the individual child's strengths and abilities and integrates their personal learning styles and interests to engage their own learning process. Supplementing this effort will be our use of the Responsive Classroom approach, Response to Intervention process, and positive behavior management strategies.

Our co-teaching approach will combine a full time general education teacher from The Grace School Academy with a special education teacher from Meeting Street. General education teachers will be full time employees of The Grace School Academy. A sample classroom level budget has been included to reflect how we will allocate and separate time and effort of classroom staff. Key principles of effective co-teaching include sharing leadership roles in the classroom; co-developing instructional planning strategies that benefit all students; implementing methods that organize students for small group instruction within the regular classroom; and ongoing use of strategies to help teachers develop and maintain close co-teaching relationships. Leadership will be provided for this approach by Margaret Knowlton, Head of The Grace School Academy, who will oversee all educational staff and student support services and is responsible

for the academic and social outcomes for all students. Professional development targeted at the six co-teaching approaches will be provided to all staff.

Differentiated instruction is a second, critical component to our instructional approach. Our commitment to differentiated instruction will drive delivery of instructional support services and individualized instruction for all students. Core to this approach includes using strategies of applied differentiated instruction that integrate standards, curriculum, performance and technology, as well as include ongoing assessment of student progress and accommodations for successful differentiation. In order to respond to a continuum of student needs and fulfill State and Federal requirements, we will train all classroom staff (certified teachers and other allied professionals who support our students) on Response to Intervention/Multi-Tier System of Supports (RtI/MTSS). RtI is a researched based process of determining appropriate support and interventions to supplement the core curriculum to meet the needs of all learners. This framework for instruction bases decisions on benchmark and progress monitoring data to improve achievement. RtI systems combine universal screening and high quality instruction for all students with interventions targeted at struggling students (Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades, IES, 2009). RtI is increasingly used with MTSS, a “coherent continuum of evidence based, system-wide practices to support a rapid response to academic and behavioral needs, with frequent data-based monitoring for instructional decision-making to empower each student to achieve to high standards” (Kansas Department of Education). Together, these strategies operate ideally in classrooms comprised of students with diverse needs to ensure that all students are successful. In addition, all students who are not meeting appropriate benchmarks in reading will have a Personal Literacy Plan as required by RIDE.

Given our focus on creating a school community that supports all students, regardless of their needs and strengths, the final pillar of our approach will be the establishment of a positive classroom environment. To this end, we will adopt the Responsive Classroom approach. Responsive Classroom is a nationally recognized model that is successful in creating a school and classroom climate and culture that embraces inclusion and students of all abilities by emphasizing social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe school community. A three year quasi-experimental study of the Responsive Classroom model conducted by Dr. Sara Rimm-Kauffman (University of Virginia, Curry School of Education, Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning) from 2001 – 2004 compared three schools implementing the Responsive Classroom approach at a school-wide level with three non-implementing schools in an urban school district in the northeastern United States. Her central finding was that the Responsive Classroom approach is associated with better academic and social outcomes for elementary school children.

Her key findings included:

1. Children at schools using the Responsive Classroom approach showed greater increases in reading and math test scores.
2. Teachers felt more effective and more positive about teaching
3. Students had better social skills.
4. Teachers offered more high-quality instruction.

5. Students felt more positive about school.
6. Teachers collaborated with each other more.

We will supplement this approach with a positive behavior management program, as it is possible that some students may exhibit undesirable behaviors in the classroom that may impact the learning environment for all students. Professional development in this area will help teachers identify and address the underlying antecedents of these behaviors and develop appropriate plans and interventions to prevent or minimize these behaviors in the future.

Contributing to our success of this approach is our commitment to low student-teacher ratios in the classroom. At full maturation, each classroom will have 17 Grace School Academy students who enroll through the lottery. These students will be joined by approximately 3 students from Meeting Street School for a class size of approximately 20 students. Staffing for this model will comprise a full time Grace School Academy general educator and a half time Meeting Street special educator will spend the other half of his or her time in the second classroom of that same grade level (i.e., one special education teacher will span both third grade classrooms). A full time Meeting Street teaching assistant will span the same two classrooms, alternating with the special education teacher. In this way, we will always have two staff in each classroom (plus any individual personal care assistants for designated students with disabilities, student teachers, and volunteers) for 20 students, for a total staff to student ratio of 1:13.

There are two exceptions to this structure. The first is to provide additional support to our youngest students, we will place an additional full time Grace School Academy teaching assistant in each kindergarten and first grade classroom, to create a staff to student ratio of 1:6.67. In grades 2-8, this additional support will be provided by other professionals, such as a resource teacher, reading specialist, ELL specialist, and/or a math coach, based on student need.

The other exception is that as we implement our model, our grades 2-6 classrooms will have an enrollment of up to 12 students from the lottery. These students will be joined in their classroom by approximately 6 students from Meeting Street School. The staffing for these classrooms will be 1 full time general educator, 1 full time special educator, and 1 full time teaching assistant for a total of three staff for approximately 18 students, a ratio of 1:6. By the ninth year of operation, this classroom structure will be phased out as all classrooms in grades K-8 will have approximately 20 students (17 Grace School Academy students who enroll through the lottery and approximately 3 Meeting Street School students).

d. What is the Process for Improving Student Learning and Assessing Student Progress

Ongoing assessment of student progress and the improvement of student learning will be a core function of our educational staff. Given our student centered approach to education and commitment to differentiated instruction, the assessment and evaluation of each individual student will be an ongoing and continuous process. Our teachers and other classroom and school staff will use a combination of standardized assessment tools, observation, informal assessment, and student projects and demonstrations to provide data on how each student is learning. Based on the data, and through our ongoing planning discussions, our staff will identify areas of strength for each student where they can be increasingly challenged, as well as areas of student

need and what kinds of assistance they may need to master the educational content. This process requires ongoing assessment and modification to instruction to improve student outcomes. This data will be reviewed with students regularly in so that individualized goals and plans can be established to help students get or stay on track as part of their student learning plan (SLP).

Daily homework will also be a requirement of the students to review learned material and reinforce skill development. Consistent with our philosophy, homework will be differentiated based on each student's ability to complete his or her work independently. In addition, each student will be required to read each day for a minimum period of time at home, to be documented by a parent signature and entered into a reading journal.

Examples of tools we will use to assess progress on an ongoing basis include: weekly/monthly assessments/tests that are from the curricula, running records, portfolio entries, and progress monitoring materials from AIMSWeb. Teachers will participate in data teams to review the most current information about each student and plan for instruction. The AIMSWeb benchmarking and data management system will be utilized for each student.

School leadership will monitor the data collection, review and instructional goal setting processes to ensure that each student is succeeding or receiving the appropriate supports and interventions to succeed.

Report cards will be sent home on a trimester basis for parents. Parents will be required to sign off that they have received and reviewed this assessment of their child's academic performance.

e. Provide a detailed overview of curriculum objectives and content in the main subject areas.

A high-quality research based, standards driven academic curriculum, offered in an inclusive environment, helps to ensure that each student is learning at his/her highest level. The core academic program will be English language arts, math, and science and social studies. Each component of our educational program offers on line resources that offer supplemental lesson plans, additional teaching resources, and information for students and their parents. The curriculum will be delivered by a team of educators in each classroom and is supported by our art, library, music, and physical education teachers, resource teachers, occupational therapists, speech therapists, physical therapists, nursing staff, and a school social worker.

The below outlines our academic approach for grades K-6. Curricula for grades 7-8, to be developed, will meet the same rigorous quality standards (e.g., evidence based, RI standards, GLE/GSE compliant) and will build upon the content knowledge and skills developed by our students during these school years. Furthermore, our entire curriculum will be aligned and comply with the Common Core State Standards as established by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).

English Language Arts

For reading, we will use the Houghton Mifflin Reading Program because it is compatible with all federal, state, and local education standards, is based on years of research on

language skill development, and because we believe that it delivers the highest quality literature program. Houghton Mifflin Reading is comprehensive in that it includes the five components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. For each theme, there are set objectives, specific assessment goals that correlate with national testing formats, and leveled book titles to support the same skill strategies at an appropriate instructional level for each student. Information is provided for teachers to run flexible groups at a variety of instructional levels. There are also additional instructional plans for “re-teach lessons” for students needing additional support and “challenge lessons” for those needing to stretch. These lesson components support our use of differentiated instruction and make the content available to all students. These materials work well with the ELL population when using the leveled readers with scaffolded vocabulary and increasing comprehension complexity. Teachers are offered a variety of testing formats so they can focus on specific data they are seeking without over testing. This affords teachers the opportunity to see if their students have met specific unit or skill goals.

According to the U.S. Department of Education’s What Works Clearinghouse, “the *Houghton Mifflin Reading* system is a reading program for instruction in grades K – 6. It uses Big Books (authentic literature), anthologies, Read Alouds, and audio compact discs to provide step-by-step instruction in reading. *Houghton Mifflin Reading* was developed based on the findings of the National Reading Panel. The product is designed to be used as a full-year curriculum program with instruction on developing oral language and comprehension, phonemic awareness, decoding skills (phonics, analogy, context, and word recognition), fluency, reading comprehension, writing, spelling, and grammar. Instruction is organized by a set of themes (10 for grades K-1 and 6 for grades 2-6) with selected Big Books (fiction and non-fiction literature) and other classroom activities to highlight the theme. (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/wwc_houghtonmifflin_090908.pdf)

We will use the Lucy Calkins Units of Study writing curriculum to support our writing program. This curriculum was created by the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project out of Columbia University. The strategic scaffolding of writing skills brings students to a proficiency level that will produce positive results on benchmarks and state testing as well as equip our students with the writing skills needed to achieve beyond our classrooms.

The design of explicit and sequential instruction of skills and strategies of good writing organized into month long units of study supports the development of successful writers. Mini lessons, conferences, small group sessions, sharing of work, and management skills during writer’s workshop time all add to the success of this model. Within this model students are exposed to daily writing of longer periods of time to build up volume and stamina while writing in a variety of genres. This model will assure that we are providing our students with the level of experience with writing that they will need to succeed in secondary education, and for social success with real life writing applications.

Math

For math, we will use Everyday Mathematics, a highly acclaimed, research-based curriculum developed out of the University of Chicago that is proven to build students’ mathematical

knowledge from the basics to higher-order thinking and critical problem solving. According to the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse, "*Everyday Mathematics* is a core curriculum for students in prekindergarten through grade 6. At each grade level, the *Everyday Mathematics* curriculum provides students with multiple opportunities to learn concepts and practice skills. Across grade levels, concepts are reviewed and extended in varying instructional contexts. The distinguishing features of *Everyday Mathematics* are its focus on real-life problem solving, student communication of mathematical thinking, and appropriate use of technology. This curriculum also emphasizes balancing different types of instruction (including collaborative learning), using various methods for skills practice, and fostering parent involvement in student learning."

(http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/elementary_math/eday_math/effectiveness.asp)

There are a number of features that make Everyday Math compatible with the mission of The Grace School Academy. Everyday Math was developed with the National Council of Teachers of Math standards for student learning goals, which in turn connect to GLEs and the content of Everyday Math. The information provided in the differentiation handbook allows each student to make progress and the teacher the ability to modify activities based on different academic strengths and learning styles. There are options for lessons that focus on readiness, enrichment or support for ELL students. Cross curricular suggestions also help to integrate mathematical language, thinking and application to other academic areas.

(appendix) These options to modify and customize the lessons support our focus on providing differing instruction to students as well as providing them with a curriculum that will support the development of higher order thinking skills, something we know students need to be successful in higher education setting.

Science

For science, we will use the Scott Foresman program along with various science kits (GEMS kits, KITES, etc.). These materials will complement our educational approach that promotes inquiry based learning to help students become more observant, more inquisitive and more reflective. Inquiry based learning is wholly aligned with science education by training students to increase their inductive and deductive reasoning abilities and encourages students' observation and critical thinking skills. Through this approach, students will test their own personal concepts and learn from the new knowledge added.

The curriculum and materials will be adapted for each student based on their abilities and learning strengths so that all students are engaged with the materials. Our use of the Scott Foresman curriculum will enable us to easily scaffold our instructional approach to meet varying learning styles and reading levels, as well as offer honors level education for those who demonstrate proficiency.

There are a number of features of these materials that will support the differentiated instruction model for our students as well as the rigorous expectations for all. Even when instruction is differentiated for students, the same standards are addressed thereby making the content accessible to all students. Developing a high level of competency with higher order thinking questions, models of inquiry and the ability to manipulate and understand data are

part of that academic profile necessary for current and future educational success. This is accomplished in part with the use of the scientific method and process skills embedded into these materials. In addition there is a target reading skill embedded into each lesson so students are taught how to read for science in all instructional levels of the differentiated materials. The model moves students and teachers from an adult directed style of learning to one where students are managing the investigation and the results independently. This developmental process is crucial for students to reach the ultimate goal of conducting science investigations independently engaging in full inquiry.

The Scott Foresman Science also provides extension projects that integrate Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), a national initiative to develop skill competencies in these areas, within the context of a researched based curriculum. Scope and sequence charts are provided that indicate the National Science Education Standards and show the progression across the grade levels. Teachers are directed to specific lessons within the science material that provide cross-curricular bridges for integrating other academic areas into science.

Social Studies

We plan to use the Scott Foresman Social Studies program. This curriculum is similar to our science curriculum in how it integrates technology and offers leveled readers to support differentiated instruction. The three leveled readers for each lesson utilize the same key vocabulary, comprehension skill and same topic, for learners with a wide range of abilities, including ELL students. The program has a focus on vocabulary and embeds reading instruction into each lesson. There are a variety of assessment options from informal to formal, as well as portfolio and performance assessments. In addition, there are rubric based assessments for a variety of writing styles. This provides teachers with criteria to evaluate narratives, expository pieces, literature reviews, document reviews, and other writing formats. There are also a number of specific templates and graphic organizers provided to support this writing instruction within the context of social studies. This emphasizes the bridge between language arts and social studies instruction that is essential for students to be successful in every content area. This is also an inquiry based curriculum, focusing on essential questions that will help to stimulate the curiosity of our students.

In addition, each classroom will have a variety of non-fiction leveled books, a regular component on current events, and other supplemental activities and resources (e.g., Time Magazine). Together, the design of these materials lends itself to the integration of social studies with other curriculum areas (such as English Language Arts) and will encourage students to connect the social studies topics to their own lives and experiences, further enhancing the relevance of social studies to our students.

It is important for our students to have a solid background in social studies and a longitudinal perspective on how our nation came to be. This information will help them develop the concept of good citizenship and what that means for their future and to prepare them to be active participants in civic life.

f. Educating English Language Learners

Nationally, as well as locally, students who are English Language Learners (ELLs) have lagged in academic performance as compared with their English language speaking peers. This achievement gap is highly pronounced in Rhode Island, which has one of the largest gaps in the nation, with Providence home to a large and growing Latino population.

The Grace School Academy recognizes that ELLs are not a homogenous group; they come from an array of countries of origin and have a wide range of language proficiency in their native language, as well as in English and different levels of subject matter. They are also very diverse in terms of their educational background, schooling (including early care and education experiences) socio-economic status, age at arrival, personal experiences, etc.

Given these factors, The Grace School Academy recognizes that there is no one size fits all approach to supporting these students. In order to offer best supports for ELLs, teachers and administrators must draw from a range a research based strategies, pedagogy, and instruction to support ELLs in developing language proficiency. In order to attain this, The Grace School Academy will offer comprehensive professional development for all staff.

One of the strategies we will use to support ELLs is Sheltered instruction. Sheltered Instruction is an approach to teaching that promotes language development and content area learning. Teachers adapt grade level content lessons to the students' levels of English language proficiency. At the same time, teachers focus on English language development and help students increase proficiency in English.

The Grace School Academy will use the W-APT WIDA Access Placement Test to screen incoming students who may be designated as ELLs to assist with planning for individualized instruction and supports. We will also use the ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State). The ACCESS is a English proficiency assessment for ELLS that we will use to report to the State as well as to evaluate progress and overall English Language Proficiency. The Grace School Academy is committed to adhering to the five English Language Proficiency Standards as established by WIDA and endorsed by RIDE. These standards, which reflect academic and social language, are:

- Social and instructional language
- The language of Language Arts
- The language of Mathematics
- The language of Science
- The language of Social Studies

ATTACHMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: Curriculum Program Material Samples and Report Cards

IV. Governance

1) Provide a detailed explanation of how your proposed charter school will operate:

a. How will the governing body be chosen?

The proposed charter will be held by The Grace School Academy, a 501(c)(3) not for profit corporation with an eleven member governing board whose sole purpose is to operate The Grace School Academy according to the terms and conditions of its State charter. In terms of Board composition, the Board will be chaired by either the Mayor of Providence or the Mayor of North Providence. The Mayor of Providence will also appoint one designee to the Board and will be encouraged to make this designee his or her school superintendent. Five (5) Board members will be appointed by Meeting Street's Board of Trustees. Grace School Academy Founders, a group of parents that have helped to create our inclusive model, will recommend three (3) parents to serve on the Grace School Academy Board of Directors, as well. A draft copy of the bylaws is attached.

In addition to promoting academic and social success for our students, we also seek to become a national model where The Grace School Academy can serve as a training environment and laboratory for all North Providence and Providence educators and allied staff, as well as professionals from other school districts, to adopt world class practices in inclusive education. Working together, we will be able to innovate in areas such as curriculum, instruction, parent engagement, and community partnerships and apply lessons learned.

Creating a combined successful K-8 school with a professional training environment will ensure that the North Providence School Department and Providence School Department will have additional resources to help in their efforts to develop all of their educators into world class teachers. As such, our governance model will include one appointment be a senior level education official from the Providence School Public School District, ideally the superintendent. Such a close connection with the two school departments will facilitate a collegial relationship and ultimately a partnership that can contribute to the success of all students in these two communities.

At the same time, to ensure that we build off of the 65 years of experience and success that Meeting Street has had educating children of all abilities, the Board of Directors will also have five representatives from Meeting Street's Board of Trustees. Finally the Board of Directors will also have parent representation; three parents will provide a valuable parent perspective on the governance and leadership of The Grace School Academy, Ultimately, this mix of members on The Grace School Academy Board will uniquely position our school to become a model for other communities.

b. What will be the relationship between the governing body and the school? Provide an organizational chart for the school and a narrative description of the chart. The materials supplied should indicate clearly the reporting structure of staff to the board of trustees and staff to the school director(s). If the charter school would contract with a company for management services, explain the company's role in the organizational structure of the school.

A National Model for Inclusive Education Promoting Academic and Social Success for All

The Grace School Academy Board of Directors will be responsible for overseeing the Head of The Grace School Academy, who will in turn hire and supervise the general education staff. The Board of Directors will also engage Meeting Street to serve as an educational services provider and enter into a performance based contract with Meeting Street to ensure the academic and social success of each student in accordance with the mission of the school, the requirements of the charter, and the performance expectations of the Rhode Island Department of Education. Specific functions include ensuring that appropriate and sufficient resources are available to the school for it to fulfill its mission and that its contracted educational service provider provides allocates these resources in a manner that enables each student to succeed. This includes ensuring sufficient space, qualified personnel, and current materials to support our students. At the same time, The Grace School Academy Board of Directors is ultimately accountable for student outcomes and results and will hold Meeting Street accountable for achieving these outcomes as its contracted third party educational service provider.

An organizational chart is attached.

c. How will your proposed charter school be administered?

The Grace School Academy Board of Directors will oversee the Head of The Grace School Academy, who will in turn oversee all Grace School Academy general education teaching staff. This position will provide the critical educational leadership link between The Grace School Academy and school operations and is responsible for ensuring that all school goals are met, performance standards are achieved, and student outcomes are realized. A description of the role of the Head of School follows below:

Head of School – this position is responsible for the day to day operation of the school, ensuring that all available resources (human, financial, technology, facility, capital, etc.) and processes are aligned with the academic and social success goals for each student and for the school as a whole. This includes all academic and supplemental educational services (resource, etc.), including ensuring that all eligible students receive a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive setting and that all Individual Education Plans, 504 plans, RTI plans, and other accommodations are developed and implemented in accordance with state and national requirements as well as best practice. If the Head of School does not have his or her Rhode Island Special Education Administrator Certificate, he or she will be supported in obtaining it. In the interim, special education would be the responsibility of Meeting Street’s Director of Special Education.

Ms. Margaret Knowlton has been identified as The Head of The Grace School Academy. Ms. Knowlton has nearly 25 years of experience as a Rhode Island educator, both as a classroom teacher and public school administrator. Her leadership experience includes serving as Elementary Principal and Assistant Superintendent of Schools in North Smithfield, Curriculum Director and Elementary Principal in Lincoln, and educator in an integrated program in Pawtucket where she taught students with and without disabilities, as well as ELLs. She is a certified Principal and Superintendent in the State of Rhode Island. In 2007, she was named the Nationally Distinguished Elementary Principal for the State of Rhode Island.

A National Model for Inclusive Education Promoting Academic and Social Success for All

The Grace School Academy will contract with Meeting Street for therapy, health, social work, and other ancillary educational services, as well as for all back office support services and administrative services. Meeting Street's administrative structure is wholly aligned to support our student centered goals and position the school as a national model for inclusion.

Meeting Street's administrative leadership team includes the following professionals.

Director of Developmental Services – this position is responsible for the provision of therapeutic services for all students who have IEPs or need developmental supports in order to be successful in school as both students and members of the school community.

Business Manager – this position is responsible for ensuring that the non-human resources (finance, facilities, school operations, transportation, technology) are aligned with and available to support the mission of the school.

Meeting Street's administrative leadership team is overseen by the Senior Director of School Age Services, Susan Stambler. Ms. Stambler is a certified elementary and middle school principal in Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York and certified superintendent in New York and Rhode Island. During the past dozen years, she has led two K-5 elementary schools (one in New London and one in Coventry) as school principal. She is in the process of completing coursework to be certified a special education administrator in the fall of 2011. Given our goal to become a national model, the Senior Director of School Age Services is also the primary liaison between the Meeting Street and the research and academic communities.

d. To what extent will the parents, professional educators and the greater community be involved in the governance and operation of your proposed charter school?

With respect to the Grace School Academy Board of Directors, it is our goal to have the Mayor of Providence appoint his superintendent or other senior educational leader from the Providence Public School District to also serve on the Board. This level of participation will help to link the work at The Grace School Academy to the educators who work at the Providence School Department and leverage his or her expertise.

Our governance structure also includes parent representation on the Grace School Academy Board of Directors, as the Grace School Academy founders will recommend three (3) parents to serve on the Grace School Academy Board of Directors. We believe that building parent voice into the leadership structure of our school will help us further ensure that The Grace School Academy remains responsive to the academic and social needs and goals of our students and families and to ensure that our school always reflects the needs of the larger communities we serve as well.

An additional opportunity for parents and the community to participate in the governance and operation of The Grace School Academy will be through serving on The Grace School Academy's School Improvement Team. The School Improvement Team will comprise members of the school community (parents, community, educators, etc.), be staffed by the Head of School, and have a parent who is also a Board member serve as its chair. This group will meet on a

A National Model for Inclusive Education Promoting Academic and Social Success for All

monthly basis, review school and student data, conduct self studies, assist in the preparation and evaluation of the school improvement plans, and provide recommendations to the Head of The Grace School Academy and The Grace School Academy Board of Directors. This committee will also serve as the Institutional Review Board for The Grace School Academy, reviewing all external research projects to ensure that the rights, privacy, and safety of students and others are fully protected.

e. To the extent possible, provide resumes of members of initial governing body.

No members of the initial governing body, other than the Mayor of North Providence and the Mayor of Providence, have been identified as yet to serve on the board of the governing body.

f. Describe the Due Process procedures by which teaching personnel and parents can legally challenge decisions.

The Grace School Academy policy will mirror Meeting Street's existing policy, whereby any employee can appeal a decision made by the organization. This process generally involves having the employee first speak with their direct supervisor to try to resolve any conflict. Our Human Resources department can facilitate this discussion as necessary. If the conflict is not resolved, the employee can pursue this issue with the supervisor's supervisor, up to and including The Grace School Academy's Board president. The Grace School Academy Board president has the final authority on the matter. This does not preclude the employee from pursuing legal action against the agency, as employees do not give up their legal rights as a condition of employment.

Parents are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the classroom teacher or staff first. If these concerns are not resolved, parents can then go to the Head of The Grace School Academy to seek resolution. Ultimately, the parent, if not satisfied, can bring his or her concerns to The Grace School Academy Board of Directors. If preferable, the parent can first request a private meeting with Meeting Street's president, acting as an agent of the Board, to determine whether a meeting with the entire Board is indicated. Decisions made by the Board are final; at the same time, nothing in our process is designed or intended to preclude parents from exercising their legal rights with RIDE.

g. Please provide a copy of the proposed school's by-laws.

A copy of the proposed by-laws is attached.

ATTACHMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: Bylaws, Resumes, Organizational Chart with Narrative, and Job Descriptions

SECTION V – ACCOUNTABILITY

1) Summarize your most important goal(s) and associated measures in relation to the following categories:

As previously stated, the mission of The Grace School Academy is:

The Grace School Academy is committed to an inclusive educational model focusing on the academic and social success of the whole individual, preparing students to meet the challenges of secondary education and beyond. Working with parents and community partners, The Grace School Academy will serve as a local and national model of inclusive education.

As such, we have aligned our educational performance goals and organizational viability goals with our mission statement. Our educational goals reflect our aspirations to support the academic and social success of each student. Goals 1 and 2 speak to the academic success of students without special needs while Goal 3 relates to the academic achievement of students who have special needs. Goal 4 relates to all of our students and our intent to nurture the social success of our students. Finally, our organizational viability goals speak to our vision of becoming an effective national model that other schools and communities can learn from and adopt.

a. Educational performance

The Grace School Academy will adopt, adhere, and hold its educational service provider (Meeting Street) accountable to the RIDE adopted performance standards for Charter Schools/Mayoral Academies. As part of the application process, we have reviewed the proposed performance measures and are confident that we will be able to achieve these levels of performance for our students based on our educational model.

The selection of these goals will result in concrete evidence that our students are making the substantial progress required to meet and exceed all measurement benchmarks. The goals reflect our focus areas of academic rigor, social competencies, and with these achievements, we become a national model of excellence. With these goals we will be able to set benchmarks in our focus areas, track progress over time, and identify areas that may need more attention and support.

With respect to educational performance, our goals for student achievement are as follows:

Goal 1: Grace School Academy students will meet or exceed the statewide level academic performance.

Measure 1: NECAP scores

Measure 2: Reading Benchmarks (DRAs)

Goal 2: 80% of students will make continuous progress toward meeting or exceeding grade level benchmarks.

A National Model for Inclusive Education Promoting Academic and Social Success for All

- Measure 1: AIMSWeb Results
Measure 2: Fountas and Pinnel Benchmark Reading Assessment Results
Measure 2: Student promotion rates
- Goal 3: 100% of students with IEPs will meet grade level expectations (AAGSEs)
- Measure 1: NECAP scores
Measure 2: Alternate Assessment Results
- Goal 4: 100% of students will participate in daily Responsive Classroom practices and activities.
- Measure 1: Responsive Classroom recording forms
Measure 2: Discipline/Suspension/Expulsion rates
- Goal 5: Students will have conferences with their teacher to review performance data and set personal goals until their next conference.
- Measure 1: Progress monitoring data
Measure 2: Conference logs

b. Organizational viability.

Organizational viability means that The Grace School Academy is making demonstrable progress in achieving its three overarching goals:

- Goal 1: To create a successful inclusive K-8 educational community
- Measure 1: Student retention rates
Measure 2: Parent satisfaction rates
Measure 3: Parent participation rates in PSO, parent teacher conferences, and family events
Measure 4: NECAP scores from 3rd - 8th grades
Measure 5: High school acceptance rates
Measure 6: Teacher/Education staff retention rates
Measure 7: Student acceptance rates (applications per available slot)
Measure 8: Ongoing attainment of the educational goals listed in the prior section
- Goal 2: To serve as a national model and local resource for the inclusive education of elementary school age students (K-8).
- Measure 1: Number of teachers trained in educational approach
Measure 2: Number of professional journal articles published about educational model
Measure 3: Number of outside presentations made
- Goal 3: To operate The Grace School Academy in a financially responsible manner

A National Model for Inclusive Education Promoting Academic and Social Success for All

- Measure 1: Revenues exceed costs on an annual basis
- Measure 2: All RIDE resources are managed and accounted for in accordance with state and federal auditing standards
- Measure 3: Amount of private and other funds raised and generated to supplement school operations

ATTACHMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: None

SECTION VI – VARIANCES AND WAIVERS

Besides the provisions noted in RIGL 16-77.[2-4]-7, charter schools are allowed to request variances and waivers from state and district regulations

1) Describe specifically the state regulations and, if the proposed school is an in-district charter, district policies from which a variances or waiver is sought.

Under RIGL 16-77.4-2 (Procedure for creation of a mayoral academy), the law states that:

“Each mayoral academy established pursuant to this chapter may, by written notice to the commissioner of elementary and secondary education, elect to have this subsection apply (or not apply) to its teachers, administrators, and employees:

- (i) Teachers and administrators in a mayoral academy shall be entitled to prevailing wages and benefits as enjoyed by other public school teachers and administrators;
- (ii) Teachers and administrators in a mayoral academy shall be entitled to participate in the state teachers’ retirement system under chapter 8 of title 36;
- (iii) Employment in a mayoral academy shall be considered "service" as that term is defined in chapter 16 of this title.

The Grace School Academy elects to have the above sections **not apply to its teachers, administrators, and employees.**

The Grace School Academy, Inc. also requests a variance of Regent Regulation C-5-2(c) with respect to enrollment procedures. Specifically, The Grace School Academy shall have a “siblings policy” which will exempt siblings of Grace School Academy students from the lottery.

Further there will be a policy exempting children of teachers and founders from the lottery in accordance with Board of Regent Regulation C-5-2(c). Our Founders have the joint responsibility of helping to form The Grace School Academy, assisting with outreach efforts to publicize and promote The Grace School Academy to prospective families, and recommend parent representatives to serve on the Grace School Academy Board of Directors.

2) Please provide a rationale for the request that explains why the variance or waiver is being sought and how the school’s proposed method will address the concern that gave rise to the regulation.

We are committed to enrolling students regardless of their or their family’s race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression status. We are further committed to enrolling a student body that reflects the larger student population of the communities we serve with respect to limited English proficiency, free/reduced school lunch status, and children at risk.

We are requesting a variance of Regent Regulation C-5-2(c) pertaining to the percent of total enrollment exempt from the lottery for children of teachers and founders in the first year of operation only. In subsequent years, The Grace School Academy will ensure that the percentage

A National Model for Inclusive Education Promoting Academic and Social Success for All

of incoming students exempt from the lottery does not exceed 5% and after approximately 5 years, children of founders and teachers of The Grace School Academy will be at or below 10% of total Grace School Academy enrollment.

This variance will solidify community support, investment, and participation in the school. Teachers and founding members, who have been integral in the development of The Grace School Academy, will continue to participate in the operation of the school as well as being important liaisons to the public.

In addition, our “siblings policy,” which will exempt siblings of Grace School Academy students from the lottery, will further build our school community and support families who seek to have their children attend the same school and be part of the same school community.

ATTACHMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: None

SECTION VII – SCHOOL YEAR

1) *How do you intend to structure your school day and school year? Provide a sample schedule and calendar.*

The academic day at The Grace School Academy will operate from 8:15AM to 3:00PM each day. We are also actively exploring providing an extended school day. We recognize that many of the families of our students are working or are in school, and are not available to pick up or receive their child at 3:00PM each day, and may not have access to affordable and high quality after school services. At a minimum, we will offer before school programming beginning at 7:30AM, and afterschool programming until 6:00PM for all students. The after school program will include academic enrichment, use of Meeting Street’s fully accessible and inclusive computer lab and library, and recreational opportunities, as well as clubs. From 3:00-4:00PM Monday –Thursday, students will participate in an after school academic academy. From 4:00-6:00PM on these days, students will participate in structured teacher directed school clubs and supervised recreation activities. After school programming on Friday will be more recreational in nature and may include trips within the community.

While the actual schedule varies daily and weekly based on the lesson plan and related activities each classroom’s educational team has planned, our teachers, following the requirements of RIDE’s Basic Education Plan (BEP), uses the basic guidelines below in planning each educational day. This schedule may also vary depending on each student’s learning plan (SLP) or individualized Education plan.

Language Arts activities:

Morning Group, Reading, Writing and Spelling

Math including functional math activities

Health Education

Social Studies and Science with emphasis on hands-on projects

Educational Enhancements:

Art, Library, Music, Physical Education

The academic school year will start on the Tuesday following Labor Day and end on the third Friday of June, for 182 days and 1,092 instructional hours (6 instructional hours per day). We will also provide an eight week (an additional 38 days) extended school year program for all of our students, which will also be fully inclusive. A proposed school calendar for the 2012-2013 school year is included in our application.

With respect to educational programming during the summer months, the National Campaign for Grade Level Reading, a 10-year effort by a consortium of national foundations to move the needle on third grade reading proficiency and address the developmental and academic targets that children need to reach to be successful, has found that

“research spanning 100 years has proven that students lose ground academically when they are out of school for the summer. The problem is particularly acute among low-income students, who lose an average of more than two months in reading achievement in the summer. This slows their progress toward third grade reading proficiency. And it exacerbates the achievement gap since their middle-

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class peers, who are more likely to be in enrichment programs or reading at home, actually make slight gains over the summer. In fact, researchers at Johns Hopkins University attribute two-thirds of the achievement gap in reading to unequal summer learning opportunities in the elementary school years. By the end of fifth grade, disadvantaged children are nearly three grade equivalents behind their more affluent peers in reading. This can affect whether the student will earn a high school diploma or go to college.”

(<http://www.gradelevelreading.net/policypractice/summer-learning-loss/>)

The Grace School Academy recognizes that the social and academic success of our school is in part contingent on providing a consistent and sustained educational program for all of our students. As such, The Grace School Academy and Meeting Street are committed to ensuring the necessary funds to support an extended school year program for all of our students. Meeting Street will partially subsidize students to attend this 6-8 week enrichment program in July and August.

Participation in the extended school day and summer academy will be encouraged for all students and required for students who are not meeting academic standards. Meeting Street has found that part of its students’ success on standardized tests is a result of their participation in summer education programs at Meeting Street as part of its extended school year program.

The summer enrichment program will follow a schedule that is similar to that of the academic year. During the summer blocks of instructional time will be rotated with outdoor and recreational activities, as well as field trips that connect to the curriculum. In keeping with the concept of learning differences and styles, these additional learning opportunities will provide a differentiated learning experience to help all students master curriculum content.

ATTACHMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: School Calendar and School Day Samples

SECTION VIII – STUDENT AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

1) Describe the student and operational services to be provided by the local district; list the conditions and terms as applicable.

The Grace School Academy Board of Directors will employ a full time Head of School to operate The Grace School Academy. Core responsibilities of the Head of School include: directing and leading the development of The Grace School; developing curriculum and educational goals and objectives for The Grace School; overseeing all school staff, including hiring, termination, performance appraisal, and assignments; establishing a professional development program for all school personnel that is aligned with agency objectives; designing and implementing The Grace School’s inclusive education model for grades K-8; leading the integration of education and therapy staff to become a multidisciplinary team; establishing and maintaining collaborative relationships with the Providence and North Providence School Departments (as well as other districts throughout the State), the RI Department of Education, parents and parent groups, accreditation agencies, professional groups, and the public; and, managing the successful and efficient delivery of all education instructional and related services provided by The Grace School, including, but not limited to, IEP/Personal Learning Plan formulation and implementation, and services for ELLs.

At the same time, The Grace School Academy will enter into a performance based contract (attached) with Meeting Street for student and operational support services. The Grace School Academy is entering into such a contract based on Meeting Street’s experience and expertise in these areas as well as to achieve operating efficiencies and control school costs. Under contract, Meeting Street will provide the following functions for The Grace School Academy:

a. Financial Management and Business Operations

Meeting Street’s Business Operations Manager will be responsible for preparing and administering the preliminary school budget and overseeing the completion of the final annual budget; facilitating the auditing of the annual budget by independent, federal and state auditors; preparing all necessary financial reports for the Board of Directors, and all applicable federal and state agencies; supervising the daily operations of the transportation, payroll functions, purchasing, and food service operations; supervising and evaluating all Business Office personnel; providing oversight and monitoring of all business office functions (including all revenue funds, fixed assets inventory, purchasing, accounts payable, accounts receivable and payroll); preparing projected year end revenue and expense reports for The Grace School Academy Board on a monthly basis; and ensuring that all school funds are accounted for in accordance with UCOA requirements.

b. Human Resource Management

The Grace School Academy will contract with Meeting Street, its educational service provider, to provide human resource management functions for The Grace School Academy. These support activities for The Grace School Academy include:

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- staff recruitment (including sourcing, screening, interviewing, credential verification, salary negotiations, hiring, and onboarding);
- staff training (including orientation, initial training, and ongoing professional development);
- staff performance management (including developing supervision processes, performance evaluation tools, and performance based compensation models)
- staff benefits management (including FMLA and workers compensation, payroll, etc.)

Meeting Street has provided comparable human resource management services for About Families, LLC, a state certified CEDARR service provider for more than six years.

c. Student Transportation During the School Day

Meeting Street School employs a part time (25 hour/week) school bus driver and maintains an adapted school bus to support inclusive educational activities in the community during the school day. This bus and bus driver will be made available to The Grace School Academy for field trips and other off site school activities. The Grace School Academy will work with the North Providence School Department and the Providence School Department to ensure that transportation is accessible for students at the start and end of every school day.

d. School Meal Services

Meeting Street has a full time cook and a full service kitchen/cafeteria to accommodate Grace School Academy students. As a result, our meals exceed state nutrition standards, are culturally and ethnically sensitive to recognize the diverse cultural backgrounds of our students, and customized for student dietary restrictions. Meeting Street has participated in the federal free and reduced school lunch program for many years and is well versed with the requirements for participation and reimbursement.

e. Student Health Services

Meeting Street will provide student health services for The Grace School Academy through the two nurses that it currently has on staff. In 2009-10, Meeting Street provided health services for the Mariposa/ Highlander program's universal pre-K classroom that was based at Meeting Street. These services included basic first aid as well as monitoring children with special health care needs or concerns.

Meeting Street also has a part time medical director, Dr. Robert Griffith, who is a community pediatrician in private practice. Dr. Griffith consults with Meeting Street educational staff and its nurses for three hours/week and will be available as needed for The Grace School Academy.

f. Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services

Given Meeting Street's extensive experience working with students with disabilities, a full time special education administrator is always on site. With respect to support services, The

A National Model for Inclusive Education Promoting Academic and Social Success for All

Grace School Academy will contract with Meeting Street for licensed occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech and language pathologists. These resources will be made available to all Grace School Academy students who need such services. In addition, Meeting Street currently has a part time resource teacher on staff to work with those students who are struggling academically, a part time audiologist and teacher of the visually impaired, along with a full time school social worker. Meeting Street will provide all student support services under contract to The Grace School Academy. Meeting Street contracts out for behavioral analysis, psychological, and psychiatric evaluation services.

A separate lease agreement will be signed between The Grace School Academy and Meeting Street for the use of Meeting Street's facility.

- 2) *If third parties provide support services, then please specify in detail the terms and conditions of those relationships. To the extent possible, please include the following details in your response:*
- *the length of the proposed contract; performance evaluation measures; the terms for the contract's renewal; all provisions for termination; and*
 - *copies of the last two contracts that the educational service provider has executed with operating charter schools.*

Meeting Street has extensive direct experience serving as a third party educational service provider for over 60 years through its provision of special education services for students with disabilities on behalf of Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut school districts. These educational and support services are provided in accordance with each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and in conformance with state education requirements and federal law. In addition, Meeting Street has for many years provided therapeutic services to local school districts to help them meet their IEP requirements. Meeting Street has also provided training and consulting to local school districts and is a RIDE-approved provider of Supplemental Education Services for students in Providence.

A draft copy of the performance based contract between The Grace School Academy and Meeting Street is attached.

In addition, we will also work with the Providence School Department and North Providence School Department regarding student transportation to and from school. In the case of the North Providence School Department, we also will coordinate our efforts with RIDE through its contracted student transportation services vendor for Northern Rhode Island.

ATTACHMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: Draft Performance Contract, Letter of Support

SECTION IX – BUILDING

1) If you have identified a space for the school, identify and describe the facility to be used for your proposed charter school. If not, please describe your plans for and progress towards identifying a suitable facility.

The Grace School Academy will be located on Meeting Street’s campus at 1000 Eddy Street in the heart of South Providence. This facility was built specifically to provide an inclusive educational environment and state of the art therapeutic resources for our students and other children we serve. Completed in 2007 following a \$15M capital campaign, entitled The Power of Inclusion, and five years of planning, Meeting Street’s 76,000 square foot building (which was designed to accommodate the addition of future classrooms) and 8 acre campus became Rhode Island’s first LEED® certified K-12 facility in Rhode Island in August 2009. The building includes a middle school size gymnasium, therapeutic pool, library, art room, cafeteria, and music room. All classrooms have access to natural light. Outside, the campus includes a fully inclusive playground, walking path, and youth soccer field.

The building is also conveniently located adjacent to the Thurbers Avenue exit from interstate 95 and is on a bus line, making our location highly accessible to students and families.

As part of the planning and start up process, ultimately we will need to build an addition to our existing facility to add classrooms. Our campus was designed with such an expansion in mind. Based on our enrollment plan, we anticipate being able to accommodate enrollment for the first two years of operation (2012-2013 and 2013-2014) in our current facility. While we will initiate construction planning activities starting in 2012, we will have two years to complete the project in time for the opening of school in September 2014, the first year we will need additional space.

2. List the detailed terms and/or conditions for its use.

The Grace School Academy will enter into a lease agreement with Meeting Street for use of the school building. A draft copy of this lease is attached.

ATTACHMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: Draft Lease Agreement

SECTION X – HEALTH AND SAFETY

1) Describe how you plan to ensure the health and safety of students and staff.

As The Grace School Academy’s contracted educational service provider, Meeting Street currently complies with the State and Federal requirements governing the health and safety of our staff and students. Health and safety matters are addressed by a standing Health and Safety Committee comprising school staff, human resources, health, and facilities management. Policies and procedures have been established for fire drills and emergency situations, including evacuations and shelter in place. All school equipment, ranging from computers to school buses to boilers, is on a maintenance schedule to ensure that equipment and systems are operating properly.

With respect to safety and security, our proposed location at 1000 Eddy Street in Providence has one public access point that is visually monitored at all times by our receptionist. All other entry areas are secured with swipe card access that is provided to our staff. Our playground and soccer field are also secured. A security guard is on site after 5pm and on weekends.

The building is the first LEED certified school in the state. As such, it has been designed and built with the health and well being of students in mind (e.g., emphasis on natural light, use of low VOC paints, use of non-toxic carpet, etc.).

2) Describe provisions for providing health services.

Student health services will be provided by full and part time licensed, registered nurses who are on site at all times during the school day. Student health services will be provided in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, as well as the RIDE *Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs (R16-21-SCHO)*. All student health services are provided under the supervision of Meeting Street’s Medical Director Robert Griffith, M.D. Dr. Griffith is on site one morning each week to meet with the nursing, therapeutic, and educational staff regarding student health related matters.

ATTACHMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: None

SECTION XI – EMPLOYEES RELATIONSHIPS AND HUMAN SERVICES

1) What are the terms and conditions of employment in your proposed charter school?

The Grace School Academy Board of Directors will oversee the Head of School, who will in turn oversee all Grace School Academy general education staff. All other educational, student support, and related administrative services will be provided on a contracted basis by Meeting Street.

Neither The Grace School Academy nor Meeting Street makes any representation that employment with either organization represents lifetime security or a guarantee of continued employment. Employment is at will with either party free to terminate the relationship.

The first six months of employment The Grace School Academy are considered a probationary period, which gives the employee an opportunity to adjust to the job and for his or her supervisor to evaluate the employee's performance. At the end of this period, performance is formally reviewed and performance goals are jointly developed for the next appraisal period. Every employee's performance is formally evaluated on an annual basis with a written performance appraisal. Quarterly meetings with each employee review progress made toward performance goals. Continued employment is contingent upon on-going satisfactory job performance and other factors.

The Grace School Academy is committed to recruiting, hiring, training, transferring, and promoting its employees, and ensuring that all other employment practices (i.e., salary and benefits administration, education and training programs, and social and recreational programs) are administered without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression status, age, national origin, or disability. Furthermore, we are committed to hiring staff that reflects the larger population of the communities we serve.

It is also The Grace School Academy's policy to protect employees and applicants from any coercion, retaliation, or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in any investigation pursuant to the equal opportunity laws.

Every attempt to provide reasonable accommodations for the employment of qualified individuals with disabilities who can perform the essential job functions will be made, unless doing so would cause undue hardship to The Grace School Academy or Meeting Street or unless the individual poses a direct threat to the health and safety of himself/herself or others.

2) What is the targeted instructional and non-instructional staff size?

The Grace School Academy will have one general educator for each classroom, along with a minimum of one full time resource teacher (e.g., reading specialist, ELL specialist, etc.), for a total of 37 educators when we achieve full enrollment (plus instructors in library, physical education, music, and art). We anticipate another eight to ten non-instructional staff who may serve as paraprofessionals in the classroom as well as in back office support function roles.

As described in Section III- Education Program, we plan to phase in our classroom model over

the course of eight years. At full maturation, each classroom will have approximately 20 students; 17 from The Grace School Academy who will enroll through the lottery. These students will be joined by approximately three (3) Meeting Street School students. Each classroom will have a full time general educator, a half time teaching assistant and a half time special educator, for a ratio of one staff person for every 6.67 students (except for kindergarten and first grade, which will have an additional teaching assistant in the classroom). When the special educator is not in the classroom, we will have a trained teaching assistant in the classroom, ensuring that there are at least two educational professionals in the classroom at all times. In addition, many classrooms may also have an individual aide (personal care attendant or nurse for a student with severe/profound disabilities pursuant to their IEPs), student teacher, parent volunteer, therapist, or other adults in the classroom.

3) What are the accountability evaluation procedures for all school employees?

The Grace School Academy will adopt the RIDE Evaluation protocol as part of its annual teacher performance evaluation process. The Grace School Academy is committed to creating an environment of support, feedback, and guidance to our professionals. As such, we maintain a rigorous and open performance management system for our employees. Continued employment depends on on-going, satisfactory job performance with either party free to terminate the employment relationship. A pay for performance compensation model reinforces the performance management system.

The Grace School Academy will supplement the RIDE Evaluation protocol with Meeting Street's system of on-going coaching and performance evaluation. Usually, performance is formally evaluated for the previous twelve months coincident with an anniversary date.

The purpose of the appraisal system is to provide an opportunity for supervisors and employees to assess job performance and achievement of the goals set at the last appraisal. Goals are set based on job responsibilities, The Grace School Academy's mission and core values, and the school's operating plans.

The performance appraisal discussion should be a frank, two-way conversation about the work, performance, and mutual goals and expectations. If there is disagreement with the review or the employee does not wish to sign it, the employee is counseled to discuss the situation with the Head of The Grace School Academy. A sample of performance appraisal tool, to be coupled with the RIDE Evaluation protocol, is included as an attachment.

New teachers will be assigned a more experienced teacher as a mentor and will meet regularly. Topics to be addressed during the year will be: lesson planning, components of effective instruction, managing support staff, using data to inform instruction, communicating with families, individual student data conferences, and other topics necessary to support a successful transition to The Grace School Academy. Teachers will meet weekly with the Head of The Grace School Academy and in turn will facilitate their own class team meetings weekly.

4) *What professional development activities are proposed to support goals?*

Professional development and creating a professional learning community are two priorities of our school. To this end, we have designed our school calendar to provide extensive time for professional development activities. The overall length of our school day and school year enables us to make this commitment to our staff without compromising instructional time for our students.

Currently 10 1/2 professional development days have been set aside for staff, along with monthly faculty meetings. Examples of training topics will include supporting the certification of staff for, AIMSWeb, literacy and instructional practices, technology, co-teaching, and the SIOP model for ELLs. In addition, our teachers will remain after school to attend team and department meetings.

As we move forward with embedding practices in literacy and numeracy, our professional development model will include an in class component. Teachers will participate in peer observations, modeling by other professionals, and receive feedback from supervisors relative to implementing newly acquired skills into classroom practice. Common planning time will be set aside to review student work and data so classroom teams can set and revise instruction.. Embedding professional development practices into the classroom provides a “proving ground” for collecting data on the success of new instructional strategies. With a goal of becoming a national model, this embedded practice creates classroom learning labs for demonstration and research. During this process all staff become part of a learning community with a clear focus on implementing best practices that prepare students for the future.

As professional learning organizations, The Grace School Academy and Meeting Street support lifelong learning for all staff and provide a reimbursement for continued learning. This becomes another route for professional development for staff and for newly acquired skills to be implemented into the class.

ATTACHMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: Draft Grace School Academy Employee Handbook and Performance Appraisal Tool

SECTION XII – DISCIPLINE POLICIES

1) *Please provide a description of the charter school’s student discipline rules and procedures for general education students. If your school is to have a provision for suspension or expulsion, include as well the long-term and short-term due-process protections for students and parents, and procedures and policies for implementing mandatory alternative instruction.*

Part of the mission of The Grace School Academy is to support the social success of our students by helping each student develop the social skills and competence to be successful in the world. Because social skills and competence are developed in the context of interacting in a school community, we have selected the Responsive Classroom approach to create an environment for both social and academic learning. Responsive Classroom provides for continual teaching, modeling and reinforcing of positive behaviors. The resultant positive climate creates an environment with reduced discipline problems and greater productivity. The program provides a continuum of strategies to encourage positive behaviors and discourage inappropriate behaviors.

Key features of Responsive Classroom include a morning meeting to set the tone and expectations for the day, working on “hopes and dreams” that become the foundation for a set of classroom rules, modeling the use of materials and social situations within the class, the use of logical consequences for poor behavior choices, and strategies to support classroom organization and problem solving. Our teaching staff will be using the *Responsive Classroom Assessment* to evaluate how successful they are being with the implementation of the program. This document is one component of the teacher evaluation requirement. The long term benefit of Responsive Classroom is the explicit instruction built into the program that teaches appropriate social skills that impact student success far beyond the context of the classroom and well into their adult lives. Incorporating such a program lays the groundwork for the development of social expectations that will add to the success for our students both within and after they leave our school.

In the event that there is a gap between the success of Responsive Classroom and the needs of the student, an individualized behavior management program will be developed in conjunction with the behavioral specialist. As part of the trans-disciplinary classroom team, student specific strategies will be embedded into the schedule and environment to provide an additional level of behavioral supports.

The use of positive reinforcement and social approval to increase desirable behaviors, and the use of decelerating consequences to decrease undesirable behaviors, serves as a basis for our methodology, and assures and protects that basic civil rights of our students. We do not use any form of corporal punishment, verbal abuse, or physical restraints. Behavior management programs are only conducted with the consent of the student’s parent or guardian and the Head of School.

For a student that commits minor infractions of classroom rules, consequences consistent with Responsive Classroom may be an explicit re-teaching of the rules or, in rare circumstances, a time out. For students who have a pattern of difficulty following school rules, a “time out” in a buddy classroom (another teacher’s classroom) or a loss of a privilege may be an appropriate

logical consequence. For a single event, the classroom staff will address the problem with the student directly and send a note to the parent about the situation and the teacher's response. If there are patterns of recurrence, we will schedule a parent meeting. School support staff may be a part of these meetings to help jointly determine appropriate next steps to create a successful school environment for the student.

If necessary, more formalized monitoring can be arranged in the form of classroom observations, formal behavioral assessments and individual behavior intervention plans can be developed. For students with IEPs, all of these steps will be taken in conjunction with members of the family and the student's IEP team.

Suspension

With respect to policies and procedures relating to suspension and expulsion, a student may be placed on in-school/out of school suspension for serious misconduct that occurs on the School premises or off site during a school sponsored event. All suspensions and expulsions will be reported on the RIDE required forms on an annual basis, and a record maintained in the student's permanent record.

The Head of The Grace School Academy shall have the power to suspend a student. Only the Board of Directors may expel a student based on recommendation of The Head of The Grace School Academy.

A student may be subject to suspension in the following cases:

- Using harmful or negative language including language of a racist and/or sexist nature
- Engaging in a physical fight with any student on the school premises or off site during field trips
- Leaving the school grounds without permission during school hours
- Possessing and/or using any objects that may be construed as weapons
- Misusing the Internet on school premises
- Flagrant disregard for The Grace School Academy's values
- Harassing students or staff members
- Defacing school property

Upon completion of the allotted suspension time, the parent(s) are expected to come in with their child and meet with the Head of School.

Expulsion

A student who has had multiple in school or out of school suspensions may be subject to expulsion for one or more of the aforementioned offenses. Any serious action not listed above that a student commits which may be interpreted by the administration as bringing serious harm to oneself, others or school property can result in expulsion from school.

Students who demonstrate behaviors resulting in suspension or expulsion will need to undergo an evaluation by appropriately trained personnel (e.g., mental health clinician, psychologist, or psychiatrist) under contract to Meeting Street to determine what is needed for a long term plan to support success for this student. If necessary, we will assist families to accessing community based mental health services to receive support beyond the school.

Due process procedures will be in place for students who are suspended or expelled. For suspensions of ten days or less, the student will be given an oral or written explanation of the charge against them. The student will have the opportunity to explain their version of the story, including an explanation of any evidence in the possession of school officials. This notice and meeting (hearing) should take place prior to the student's removal from the school and must involve parent notification and participation at the meeting. If possible, the parent notification will be provided in the family's spoken language. If the student's behavior endangers people or property, and therefore must immediately be removed from school, the notice and meeting can follow as soon as is practical.

For suspensions of longer than ten days, or expulsions the student may immediately be removed from school if their presence endangers people or property or disrupts the school day. If so, the following will be implemented as soon as possible, otherwise will take place immediately before removal from school.

- a. The student and/or parent are given a written statement of the reason for the suspension or expulsion.
- b. The student and/or parent will be notified of their right to a public or private hearing and the right to be represented by counsel.
- c. If a hearing is requested the student and/or parent will be given notice setting the time and place of the hearing, scheduled to be timely, while giving the student and/or parent time to prepare for the hearing.
- d. The student shall have a right to representation at the expense of the student and/or family, and has the right to cross-examine and present witnesses in his/her defense.
- e. An electronic or stenographic record of the hearing and all evidence will be preserved for the Commissioner of Education in the event of an appeal.
- f. A copy of the record of the hearing will be provided to the student and/or parent at no cost.
- g. After the decision is determined the Head of School/or his/her designee will complete a written decision which will be made available to the student, his or her parent/guardian, and the Board of Directors and will be entered into the student's permanent record within a week of the hearing.
- h. The student and or/parent will be provided with a copy of the decision. A copy of the decision and the record of the hearing will be promptly forwarded to the Commissioner of Education in the event of the appeal.

Any student with a long term suspension or expulsion has a right to appeal the decision in writing to the Board of Directors within ten days of receipt of the decision of the initial hearing. An appeal is heard at the discretion of the Board Chair, by the full board or a subcommittee as

designated by the Chair. The Board sets a hearing date and notifies the student/parent in writing. This written notification includes: the charges and the evidence, the date, time and location of hearing, and notice that the family has a right to be represented by legal counsel at their own expense, to present evidence and examine witnesses. Any further appeals requested on the part of the family can be directed to the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Determinations as to the appropriate mode of alternative instruction will be made by the Head of The Grace School Academy in conjunction with the classroom teachers and the parent(s). For example, students will have access to alternative instruction through home tutoring provided by certified teachers or via SKYPE. In some instances services may be provided at a mutually convenient chosen location, such as a public library. The alternate instruction will commence within 24 hours of the decision to suspend if the length of the suspension is greater than three school days. In the case of expulsion, alternate instruction will be provided until a final determination of the expulsion hearing, and to the extent required by law.

2) *Please provide the discipline policy that the school will enact for students with disabilities.*

To the greatest extent possible, The Grace School Academy will maintain the same policy framework for students with disabilities and students without disabilities. Our inclusive philosophy and approach involves defining a single set of standards and practices for all students which are applied on an individualized and case by case basis. As such, we will implement the policy listed above in a manner that is sensitive, appropriate, and consistent with the needs of students with disabilities.

In the event that more individualized modifications are needed, the student's trans-disciplinary (IEP) team will convene and develop strategies and environmental supports to assist in student success. Within a six week period of implementing new strategies and collecting data, if student progress has not been made, a functional behavior analysis (FBA) and a behavior intervention plan can be created, and amendments reflecting these changes be added at an IEP meeting. Any other decisions regarding behavior supports for special needs students will comply with state and federal law, specifically with respect to the section on removal from school (34 CRF 300.5):

If necessary, a case by case decision will be made for students who violate school policies if they are an immediate threat to others or to themselves. The student may be sent home for the remainder of the day and up to a total of ten school days cumulatively during the school year.

In the event there is a pattern of behavior emerging that is warranting suspensions, we will perform an FBA, and develop a Behavior Intervention Plan in order to readmit the student to school as soon as possible.

If any IEP student has more than ten days of suspension within the same school year, any future suspendable event will be considered a change in placement, requiring the school to: provide educational services as mandated in the IEP during the suspension, develop an FBA if not already done, and provide intervention services designed to address the

A National Model for Inclusive Education Promoting Academic and Social Success for All

behavior so it does not recur. An IEP team will convene within ten days of the consideration of a change in placement to conduct a manifestation determination and decide if the behavior demonstrated by the student was caused by or had a substantial relationship to the disability, or was the result of the LEA's ability to implement the student's program.

If the behavior was not connected to the disability, the school has the right to discipline the IEP student in a consistent manner with students without IEPs according to the process described in the previous section.

If the behavior is connected to the disability, the IEP team must review or conduct an FBA and the behavior plan and make changes to support returning the student to the placement, unless the LEA and the family have an alternate placement agreement. There are special circumstances that would permit a longer term removal with temporary interim alternative education placements if needed, depending on the severity of the infraction. Parents reserve the right to appeal under 300.532.

Similar to the process for students without IEPs, determinations as to the appropriate mode of alternative instruction will be made by the Head of School in conjunction with the classroom teachers and the parent(s). For example, students will have access to alternative instruction through home tutoring provided by certified teachers or via SKYPE. In some instances services may be provided at a mutually convenient chosen location, such as a public library. The alternate instruction will commence within 24 hours of the decision to suspend if the length of the suspension is greater than three school days.

ATTACHMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: Parent Handbook

SECTION XIII – STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND DEMAND

1) Indicate the number of students that will be enrolled each year.

While the long term enrollment for The Grace School Academy will be 306 students, it will take more than five years to reach full enrollment. Student enrollment for The Grace School Academy will be:

- Year 1: 128 students
- Year 2: 162 students
- Year 3: 196 students
- Year 4: 218 students
- Year 5: 240 students
- Year 6: 262 students
- Year 7: 284 students
- Year 8: 306 students

This enrollment reflects operating nine classrooms in the first year of operation: two kindergarten classrooms, two first grade classrooms, and 1 class for each grade from grades 2-6. In each subsequent year, we will be enrolling two new kindergarten classes and promoting current students (who meet academic standards) to the next grade, up to grade 8. In addition, The Grace School Academy seeks to include two pre-kindergarten classrooms as part of its charter if and when the State of Rhode Island funds pre-kindergarten in the future as part of the State funding formula for public education. A chart depicting our five-year enrollment plans by grade is included as part of our budget narrative.

2) Explain in detail your rationale for selecting this particular school size, and provide demonstrable evidence of parental demand (i.e. petitions, letters of support, etc.) for the proposed enrollment figures.

This proposal was the result of 12 years of Meeting Street’s efforts to establish a model for inclusive education for students of all abilities. In 1998, Meeting Street opened the Bright Futures Early Learning Center, a nationally accredited and Bright Stars rated inclusive early learning center. Based on the success of the program and parent interest, in 2007 Meeting Street opened a model site for inclusive elementary education. In 2009, the inaugural third grade class all tested proficient on the NECAP for reading and math, with 40% testing proficient with distinction. The creation of The Grace School Academy is the next phase of our work to create a national, replicable, and sustainable model for inclusive education.

During the time that Meeting Street School has offered inclusive education, it has been able to continue to interest teachers and families through the results we have achieved with students. Examples of these results include:

- National accreditation as an early learning center;
- A graduate student study that found Meeting Street preschoolers were entering kindergarten ahead of their peers in literacy and numeracy; and
- NECAP test scores in the last two years.

Through these and other results, Meeting Street has found that student success brings positive attention and increased interest from parents who want their child to attend its school and from teachers and other educational professionals who want to work there.

It is based on this experience that we have identified a projected enrollment of at least 306 students to attend The Grace School Academy at Meeting Street's Eddy Street campus as an ideal size to create a vibrant K-8 community for students with and without disabilities. This size allows for greater specialization of our teaching staff, particularly at the middle school level, where subject specialization really begins. At the same time, this size enables us to operate inclusive classrooms that are still intimate enough so that students with special needs are not lost in our school.

Evidence of parental demand for The Grace School Academy is clear from Meeting Street's experience, where there are more applicants than slots. Many applicants are families that are unsuccessful in the annual charter school lottery. In the past, Meeting Street has worked closely with several charter schools to send information about its educational resources to the families who were not selected. Given the large number of families in our target communities seeking educational alternatives that offer small class sizes, individualized instruction, and low teacher student ratios, we are confident that we will be able to generate demand that far exceeds our capacity.

3) *Summarize your recruitment process and explain how the school and its program will be publicized and marketed throughout the community to a broad cross-section of prospective students, including to families traditionally less informed about school options.*

The Grace School Academy will seek to attract a diverse student body from the communities of Providence and North Providence, The school will appeal to families who are attracted by our teacher student ratio, rigorous academic standards, school day/school year model (described in section 9), our commitment to inclusion, diversity, and the concomitant focus on social emotional development, and our individualized approach to teaching each student. We expect that some students may come from inclusive preschool settings that are operated by the school districts we are serving.

Outreach to families will begin upon the Board of Regents' approval of The Grace School Academy. As one enrollment goal for our first year is to fill two kindergarten and two first grade classrooms, one focus of our outreach and recruitment will center on families who are in area preschools and child care centers, as well as children attending Head Start programs. Since relocating to South Providence in 2007, Meeting Street has established numerous community partnerships in the immediate neighborhoods and surrounding areas that are focused on helping children succeed. Meeting Street is committed to having a student body and educational work force that reflects the larger community we serve. Similarly, we will work closely with community agencies to recruit families to apply for grades 2-6.

Marketing outreach efforts will extend far beyond traditional approaches, such as ads in local newspapers, social media, and web based marketing to reach families that are considered hard to reach. Strategies will include disseminating information through area churches, child care

A National Model for Inclusive Education Promoting Academic and Social Success for All

centers, local businesses, etc. All materials will be provided in both English and Spanish. In fact, Meeting Street has already invested resources to develop a Latino specific targeted family outreach and engagement initiative for its other programs.

If more applications of eligible students are received than there are slots, entrants will be chosen by lottery as required by RIGL 16-77-4(b)10. All efforts will be made to ensure that the lottery is transparent for families. All students who enter the lottery will have an equal chance of being selected and The Grace School Academy will abide by lottery rules and regulations and enrollment procedures. At the same time, we request that siblings of students, children of Founders, and children of staff have admission preference.

In addition, The Grace School Academy seeks to include two pre-kindergarten classrooms as part of its charter if and when the State of Rhode Island funds pre-kindergarten in the future as part of the State funding formula for public education.

Families will be notified in writing whether or not their child was selected from the lottery for enrollment into The Grace School Academy. Upon notification, the family will be asked to confirm their intent to accept the enrollment by submitting a confirmation statement to the school.

During the summer, prior to the start of the school year, we will hold a family orientation at the school for all new families. During this time, they will meet their child's teacher, tour the school again, learn about school resources such as the PSO and other committees, meet the specialists, and learn again about the school model, our expectations of students and families, and our philosophy and educational approach.

ATTACHMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: Letters of Support

SECTION XIV – SCHOOL COMMUNITY

1) How do you envision the relationship of your school to the surrounding community?

Meeting Street has already developed a positive relationship with the surrounding community. By moving to our new location, we invested \$25M into Lower South Providence, created jobs, cleaned up vacant contaminated lots, and created an environmentally responsible campus that is 40% green space.

While Meeting Street relocated to South Providence in 2007, its commitment to the neighborhood spans more than three decades through its work with young children in our Early Intervention program. During the past decade, Meeting Street’s relationship with South Providence grew through the Children’s Network program, a wraparound program for low income families with preschool age children attending area child care centers. This program allowed Meeting Street to develop key relationships in the community and is the foundation of our recently awarded federal Early Head Start program. Since opening its new campus in 2007, Meeting Street has added to its relationships with the surrounding community through developing a youth soccer field in partnership with the City of Providence Parks and Recreation Department. The field is made available to local youth soccer organizations. Meeting Street’s Family Resource Center and school library offers pre-literacy activities for families with young children ages birth to three. In addition, Meeting Street also holds monthly parent education seminars that are open to the public and include topics ranging from sensory integration to child development. Over the past year, more than 40% of the parents and grandparents who attended these programs were not current clients but members from the community.

Given that Meeting Street’s school already draws from the surrounding community; we are confident that we will be able to increase the number of children from the South Providence neighborhood who enroll.

Finally, Meeting Street has a long history of working in North Providence. Over the past decade, children of all ages and abilities have been served by Meeting Street in home, school, and community based settings.

2) Do you plan to foster community involvement at your school? If so, briefly explain.

Meeting Street already benefits from more than 300 volunteers who dedicate their time and their talents to help us with our work. Volunteers assist in the classroom, at special events, and in other settings to support our work. We will continue to tap this pool of volunteers for their support and seek to expand our volunteer base as our school grows. In addition, we work closely with a number of area college and university student interns who work in our classrooms at Meeting Street.

3) Do you plan to foster family education programs? If so, briefly explain.

The Grace School Academy will contract with Meeting Street as its educational service provider in part because of its ongoing family education programs on a wide range of topics. Educational seminars for families of students are open to the public as well. Seminars are held on weekday

evenings and include dinner and child care. Recent topics have included Aspergers Syndrome, sensory integration, child development, and caregiver stress management. Meeting Street will continue to offer these seminars for families in the future. Topics will be based on parent interest and demand.

In addition, we will partner with community based agencies that support the parents of our students. For example, we will work with adult literacy, adult education, and ESL programs to help families obtain their high school diploma or GED, as well as offering a parent/child literacy program.

4) Do you plan to involve business and other community agencies? If so, briefly explain.

Meeting Street enjoys tremendous support from the business community. Local business leaders serve on our Board of Trustees and Board committees. Financial support from the business community enabled us to raise \$15M towards the construction of our new campus; these same businesses and others are helping to us to raise \$1.5M each year. Meeting Street also works with a wide array of community agencies that are concerned about neighborhood issues, education issues, and children's issues. We will continue to foster these partnerships and relationships to support The Grace School Academy.

ATTACHMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: None

SECTION XV – TIMETABLE

1) Provide a detailed timetable of projected activities and dates leading to the opening of your proposed charter school.

Activities	Timeline for Completion
Obtain RIDE Approval	Winter 2011-2012
Submit incorporation documents to establish The Grace School Academy as a Rhode Island not for profit corporation	Fall 2011
Finalize and execute agreements between The Grace School Academy and Meeting Street for school operations and space	Winter 2011-2012
Obtain Start Up Money	Winter 2011
Start planning for facility expansion at Meeting Street's 1000 Eddy Street location, including planning for capital campaign	Winter 2012
Hire Key Staff	Winter 2011-2012
Recruit Families	Winter 2011-2012
Complete plans for expansion and submit request for State Housing Aid	TBD
Recruit Teachers	Spring 2012
Student Lottery	March/April 2012
Enroll Grace School Academy Students	May/June 2012
Start School Year	September 2012
Start Construction on School Expansion	Spring 2013
Complete Construction on School Expansion at 1000 Eddy Street	August 2014

ATTACHMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: None

SECTION XVI - OPERATING BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PLAN

1) *Please complete the attached budget projection form, and provide a brief narrative of your expenses with the minimum amount of information necessary to understand your projections (e.g. For category “Instructional Teachers,” applicants should specify their basic assumptions: the number of teachers, salaries, and fringe benefit rate as a percentage of salary.)*

This information is included in the Appendix for this section.

2) *Construct a narrative that outlines the general financial plan for the entire term of your proposed charter school. Please include the following information:*

a. The structure and process for managing the school’s finances.

Meeting Street will be the fiscal agent for The Grace School Academy and maintain all financial records in accordance with the RIDE Uniform Chart of Accounts and in compliance with federal requirements. Meeting Street has a long history of managing funds from a variety of sources and has three full time staff accountants providing fiscal and cash management services for the agency. A business manager will be hired specifically to manage this account.

Meeting Street staff and procedures are organized to ensure segregation of duties and appropriate levels of checks and balances upon all activities involved with the receiving, expending and reporting of funds. The software system employed, Blackbaud, allows tracking all activity from the source document to the financial statements. These statements are shared with all managerial staff for review as well as our Board Finance and Audit Committee and the full Board of Trustees. A sample copy of financial information shared with the Board is included.

b. The fiscal controls and financial management policies the school’s governing body will employ to remain informed of the school’s financial position.

The Grace School Academy has engaged Meeting Street as its educational service provider in part due to its commitment to the highest standards of fiscal control. Meeting Street’s Chief Financial Officer (Lynne Malone) has worked in nonprofit financial management for 24 years. During this time, she has managed over one hundred federal discretionary grants and state contracts from numerous agencies, totaling millions each year. She also has experience with the RIDE Chart of Accounts system (UCOA) as the current Treasurer and former chair of the International Charter School.

As part of its contract with Meeting Street, The Grace School Academy will review and approve (with revisions as necessary) Meeting Street’s Accounting Manual that documents all of Meeting Street’s financial management procedures. A copy of this manual is attached.

The Board of The Grace School Academy will be responsible for approving an annual budget and monitoring financial performance on a quarterly basis (or more frequently if necessary).

- c. The process for tracking finances in its daily business operations in order to maintain needed cash flow.*

Meeting Street will monitor all financial information on a daily basis. All receivable and payable transactions are recorded in the Blackbaud financial system daily and monitored by several finance department staff.

Meeting Street operates a fully automated accounting system that separately identifies the receipt and expenditure of program funds for each grant/contract and allows for recording expenditures by project component and budget-cost categories. Meeting Street has strict policies regarding the use of purchase orders, the need to secure supervisor approval prior to making purchases, the capacity to make online purchases, and the use of credit cards. Meeting Street financial management practices are aligned with federal requirements and all Board and staff members complete an annual conflict-of-interest disclosure statement.

Meeting Street will maintain, track, and report on all Grace School Academy revenues and expenditures separately. Meeting Street and The Grace School Academy will work closely with the Rhode Island Department of Education to ensure that all Grace School Academy funds are accounted for in accordance with State and Federal requirements.

- d. If intending to build or expand a network of schools, the structures and processes for managing the school's finances in relation to the network of schools, including the level of site-based financial management the proposed school(s) will have.*

Meeting Street has a long history of operating multiple sites, including a satellite Early Intervention office on Douglas Avenue in Providence, an adult rehabilitation facility in East Greenwich, and the Children's Network program at the Genesis Center in the West End neighborhood of Providence. Meeting Street will align its Blackbaud Financial Edge accounting system with the UCOA framework and set up each school site as a separate corporation to track all receipts and expenditures in order to separately track the finances of each school site as well as to provide cross school comparisons to support financial performance and resource allocation analysis. Reports to The Grace School Academy will provide both individual school site detail as well as aggregate financial results.

Each school location will have its own educational leader and site based management to ensure the academic and social success of all of students. This leadership position is responsible for developing and managing the school budget for that site, under the direction of the Director of School Age Services. Financial and other management reports will be produced on a monthly basis at Meeting Street's Eddy Street location for distribution to the school sites.

Administrative and back office functions, such as payroll, accounts payable/receivable, human resource benefits administration, etc. will be housed at Meeting Street's main location at 1000 Eddy Street, Providence. Meeting Street's Business Manager will be responsible for the financial management at each site and will spend time as needed week at each school site to monitor all financial processes and procedures. The school secretary will be responsible for

managing and maintaining all daily financial activity, including petty cash, in accordance with Meeting Street policies and procedures.

e. Plans for Proposed annual audit

The Grace School Academy will hire an independent auditor to conduct an annual audit of all school funds. Meeting Street has extensive experience with a wide range of audits and currently completes an independent audit each year with the results reported directly to its Board of Trustees. Meeting Street has never received any adverse audit findings from an OMB A-133 audit; a state, federal, or local government Inspector General; or U.S. GAO audit.

Similar to its current practice with the Meeting Street Board of Trustees, full financial statements will be provided monthly to The Grace School Academy's Board of Directors, which will review these financial statements on a bi-monthly basis or more frequently as needed.

Meeting Street will maintain Grace School Academy funds in a separate, auditable account that falls under the same internal financial controls as the overall agency budget while complying with the UCOA structure and requirements. Meeting Street has experience in managing multiple funding sources and segregating funding streams to meet varying financial regulatory requirements. Meeting Street is currently using these practices to manage and account for its federal Early Head Start funds. Meeting Street will include these funds and account as part of its annual audit, which will be separately audited by The Grace School Academy's auditor. Meeting Street has an updated and comprehensive accounting procedures manual that is attached.

3) Describe your plan to seek non-district (supplemental, private party) funding.

Meeting Street has a strong track record of and capacity to attract and manage thousands of individual donations, bequests, corporate and foundation gifts. Meeting Street annually secures more than \$2 million in private funds to support its operations. A successful \$15 million capital campaign concluded in 2006 was instrumental in the construction of a new 75,000 square foot facility located in South Providence.

Meeting Street currently has a six member development staff. One full time position is dedicated to seeking government, corporate and foundation grants. A second full time position is dedicated to the agency's annual campaign and major donors. A .80 FTE position is committed to special events, including the Meeting Street Annual Golf Tournament and the Meeting Street Annual Telethon. A part time database administrator and a part time gift processing specialist all work together with these other positions under the leadership of Meeting Street's Senior Director of External Relations. In FY 2010, Meeting Street raised over \$2M through more than 5,800 gifts and grants. More than 80% of Meeting Street employees and 100% of its Board members are donors to the agency, as well.

ATTACHMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: Budget and Budget Narrative, Sample Classroom Level Budget, Sample Financial Reports, Meeting Street Accounting Manual

BUSINESS BACKGROUND OF MEETING STREET, EDUCATIONAL SERVICE PROVIDER

Meeting Street currently operates a single school at 1000 Eddy Street, Providence. Meeting Street has operated a school for more than 50 years in Rhode Island.

Meeting Street was established in October, 1946 in the State of Rhode Island. In Meeting Street's earliest years, the agency worked with children who had cerebral palsy and, over time, our work broadened into childhood neurological research and education. By 1955, Meeting Street had expanded its services to focus attention on the early diagnosis and treatment of children with disabilities through our groundbreaking Early Intervention program. In 1957, Meeting Street entered a long-range Child Development Study with Brown University focusing on children with a cerebral dysfunction. Soon after, Meeting Street released The Meeting Street School Screening Test, the first tool for the early identification of learning disorders and delays. Meeting Street also launched a study to develop ways to identify potential learning challenges in pre-schoolers and trained teachers to use these techniques.

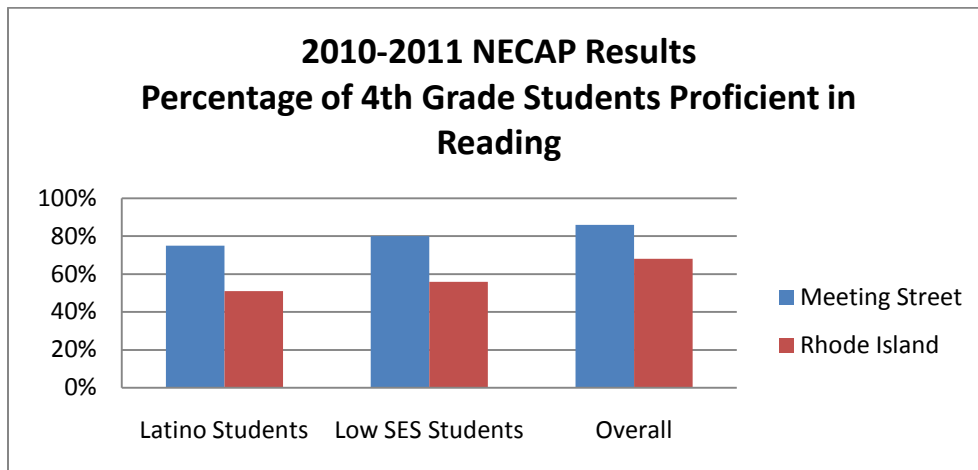
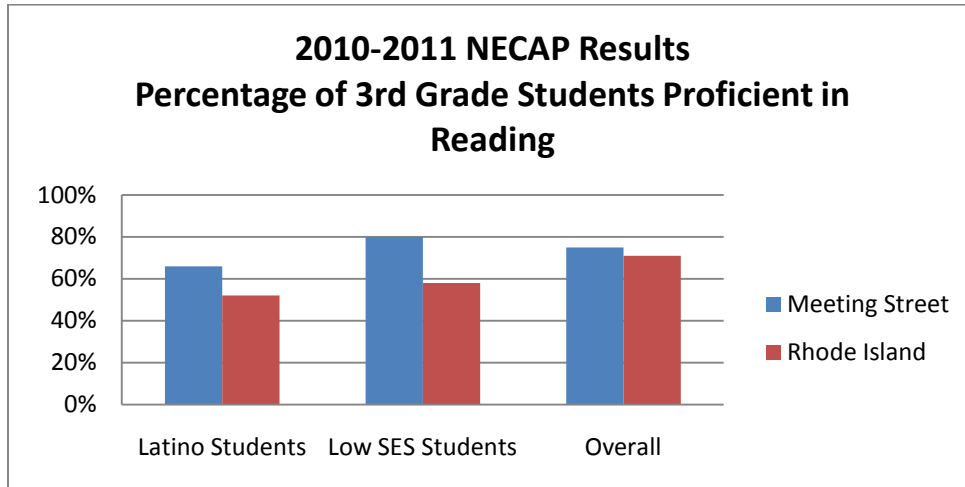
Innovation continued at Meeting Street in the 1970s and 1980s as Meeting Street's Dr. Eileen Mullen developed the Meeting Street Psychological Stimulus Response Test (subsequently known as the Mullen Scales), a new approach to the evaluation of children with severe and multiple disabilities. Based on the success of our own Early Intervention program and our growing national reputation, Meeting Street was chosen as one of five institutions in the United States to receive a federal grant to develop a comprehensive service delivery model to meet the developmental needs of children with disabilities under the age of two.

Meeting Street expanded its educational offerings in the 1990s, opening the Bright Futures Early Learning Center, the first fully inclusive early childhood center for infants and young children with and without disabilities or developmental delays. This program expanded to include full day kindergarten by the year 2000. In 2004, Bright Futures became the first fully inclusive early learning center to gain the prestigious national accreditation awarded by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Building on our success with inclusive education, Meeting Street School established one of first fully inclusive K-8 schools in the nation where children with severe/profound disabilities learn side-by-side – all day, every day – with peers who do not have disabilities. Meeting Street relocated in January 2007 and opened the doors to an innovative and pioneering approach to education that has been tremendously successful.

Meeting Street currently operates a single school at 1000 Eddy Street, Providence. Meeting Street has operated a school for more than 50 years in Rhode Island. Meeting Street has been licensed by the State of Rhode Island as a non-public school for several decades, as a 766 school by the State of Massachusetts for 11 years, and as a private school by the Rhode Island Department of Education since 2007.

In terms of student achievement, Meeting Street School launched its inaugural inclusive third grade in September, 2007. In the fall of 2009, this cohort of students took their first NECAP tests as third graders. The results exceeded our own high expectations as our students scored 100% proficient in both reading and math, with 40% scoring proficient with distinction.

The below charts depict our third and fourth grade NECAP reading results from the tests administered in the fall of 2010 as compared to the statewide results. Overall, as well as with students from low socio-economic status families (as documented by participation in the federal free and reduced lunch program) and by ethnicity, Meeting Street School's results exceeded the statewide averages.



Our third grade class in 2010-2011 included three Latino students, three African American students, and two students who were Caucasian. Our fourth grade class included four Latinos and two African Americans.

ATTACHMENTS FOR THIS SECTION: Meeting Street Audit and Annual Report