NEW VISIONS CHARTER HIGH SCHOOLS

Beginning in 2011, New Visions embarked on a five-year endeavor to create 18 charter high schools serving low-income children in New York City. Our goal is to provide a quality education for nearly 10,000 historically underserved students each year, and to ensure that our students graduate from high school prepared to succeed in college and careers. New Visions is poised to become the country’s largest provider of charter high schools in one city. Most importantly, our schools will bring an unprecedented level of choice to parents who long to provide their children with a better future. With ambitious goals for student achievement, these schools will incubate innovations that can be used to improve public schools in New York City and beyond.

THE CASE FOR CHARTER: A MODEL BASED IN RESEARCH

One of the greatest challenges facing the country today is our public schools’ ability to prepare students, particularly the underserved, to graduate from high school ready to succeed in college and careers. Only New Visions has demonstrated a solution at scale: for over a decade, New Visions has been a national leader in developing, implementing and managing strategies for turning around chronically low-performing schools. Our flagship enterprise, the New Century High School Initiative—through which we created 99 small effective schools to replace large, failing schools—resulted in documented gains in student achievement and graduation rates for students, the vast majority of whom entered high school severely underprepared. This initiative sparked New York City’s successful small schools creation strategy, impacting the entire system of 1.1 million students. The effort remains unprecedented in the country in its intensity, scale, innovation, widespread engagement of multiple stakeholders and, most importantly, its impact on high school students.

Evaluations tell us that our work has made real progress in school reform. Our approach is validated by an independent study of 105 small schools – 70 of which are New Visions schools – commissioned by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The research finds that more 9th graders at these small schools are on track to graduate, and to graduate on time, than in larger schools, despite the fact that more of those same students represent the most underserved of the city’s young people. New Visions has the proven data, the roadmap and the capacity to ensure that, with the launch of our charter high schools, thousands more historically disadvantaged students will graduate from high school and succeed in college and careers.

OUR SCHOOL DESIGN IS AMBITIOUS

New Visions is committed to using everything we have learned as a leader in school reform to build a network of 18 charter high schools over the next five years. All will serve high-need communities in New York City.

In September 2011, the New Visions Charter High School for the Humanities and the New Visions Charter High School for Advanced Math and Science opened on the John F. Kennedy Campus in the Marble Hill section of the Bronx. In fall 2012, New Visions launched two additional charter high schools, also in the Bronx, and up to four more will be launched every subsequent year. Our structure employs a flexible approach not available to traditional public schools. Our schools:

- **Focus on College-Level Writing.** Every teacher, in every grade, shares the responsibility of assigning and reviewing writing assignments, ensuring that students master the range of writing skills needed to communicate effectively in college and beyond.
• **Engage Students in their Learning.** Across subjects, students undertake in-depth “anchor” projects focused on real-world issues.

• **Practice to Excel.** Every day, students learn to question, engage in research, produce materials, and present and defend their work. An extended school day and year gives students the depth of practice they need to achieve at a high level; and a partnership with the Lincoln Center Institute enriches learning throughout the year by drawing from the arts to support students in developing critical thinking skills.

• **Personalize Instruction.** Teachers work as teams to analyze individual student data, offer aggressive remediation for those at risk, and share responsibility for the success of all students.

For teachers, a career ladder and remuneration structure ensures that they are highly motivated and appropriately compensated for their achievements.

**WE EXPECT RESULTS**

In our schools’ first year, 75 percent of our entering students came to us with the lowest levels of standardized reading exam scores and higher socio-economic needs than the citywide average. Despite these odds, we held our students to high standards and saw strong results at the end of the school year:

- Average school attendance was over 92%, exceeding our five-year goal of 90%
- 85% of our students were promoted, approaching our five-year goal of 90%
- New Visions’ charter school students exceeded Regents passage rates of New Visions’ district students:
  - 63% of AMS students passed the Algebra Regents vs. 48% of New Visions’ district students
  - 53% of HUM students passed the Living Environment Regents vs. 42% of New Visions’ district students

Our goal is to ensure that 90% of our students graduate, register for, and successfully complete their first year of college.

**A PLAN FOR SUCCESS**

New Visions is seeking investors to fund start-up costs incurred over the schools’ first three years. Public funding for new charter schools is allocated based on the number of students enrolled in the school. As a new high school does not reach full student capacity until its fourth year, by design the per-pupil funding structure leaves a budget gap for the first three years. During these gap years, schools require direct support for start-up activities including the identification and hiring of the principal; hiring of new staff; teacher recruitment; student recruitment; and the development and implementation of a two-week summer bridge program. Each new charter high school also requires services provided by New Visions including curricula design; data-driven instruction; community partnership outreach, development and stewardship; and leadership development.

In order to provide the full range of supports necessary to run a successful school, New Visions must secure **$1 million per-school** in alternate funding. To date, we have secured approximately 40% of our $18 million goal. The individual and institutional donors providing major support to our charter schools include Roger Altman, Blair Effron, the Helmsley Charitable Trust, John Paulson, Merryl Tisch, and the Tiger Foundation.