

## **Description of the educational program.**

Appendix A contains the education program itself.

Our comprehensive curriculum meets and exceeds (in many cases) the New York State Education Department's *Learning Standards*. Following the philosophy of the Coalition of Essential Schools the curriculum is integrated to include all standards within the four core areas of Communication (ELA), Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science using thematic-based essential questions. Our curriculum has been designed in correlation with Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe's *Understanding by Design*, where students will use the essential questions to guide their deeper understanding of concepts that involve multiple content areas. One of the educational applicants, Mrs. Rotella, has extensive experience with this model having worked closely with the authors, Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins. Understanding by Design (UbD) is described by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe as a way of thinking purposefully about curricular planning and school reform, a set of helpful design tools, and design standards—not a program or recipe. This is in clear support of the Coalition of Essential Schools principles, to include:

- The end goal of UbD is understanding and the ability to transfer learnings- to appropriately connect, make sense of, and use discrete knowledge and skills in context.
- Evidence of understanding is revealed through performance- when learners transfer knowledge and skills effectively, using one or more “facets” (explain, interpret, apply, shift perspective, emphasize, and self-assess).

- Educators are coaches of understanding, not mere purveyors of content or activity.
- Planning is best done “backward” from the desired results and the transfer tasks that embody the goals.
- UbD transforms Content Standards and other goals into focused learning targets based on “big ideas” and transfer tasks.
- Design Standards guide self-assessment and peer reviews of curriculum, instruction, and assessment for quality control.
- UbD reflects a “continuous improvement” approach to design and learning. The results of our curriculum designs (i.e., assessment results, quality of student work, degree of learner engagement) inform needed adjustments.

For the purposes of this application, the Charter School has outlined the integrated curriculum into each learning standard, both elementary and intermediate. Following each learning standard, each specific key idea (and many times, performance indicators) are detailed by skills and content understandings that each grade level will teach toward that key idea.

The curriculum contains:

1. Communication: *Elementary and Intermediate grades K-8*
  - English Language Arts (ELA) as indicated in the NYS ELA *Learning Standards* and *Core Curriculum* **THIS IS CURRENTLY BEING REVISED TO INCLUDE NYS’s UPDATED ELA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS.**
  - Languages Other than English (LOTE) as indicated in the NYS LOTE *Learning Standards* and *Core Curriculum*

2. Social Studies: *Elementary and Intermediate* (SS) grades K-8 as indicated in the NYS Social Studies *Learning Standards and Core Curriculum*
3. Science: *Elementary and Intermediate grades K-8*
  - Science (S) as indicated in the NYS MST *Learning Standards and Core Curriculum*
  - Technology (T) as indicated in the NYS MST *Learning Standards and Core Curriculum*
4. Mathematics: *Elementary and Intermediate* (M) grades K-8 as indicated in the NYS MST *Learning Standards and Core Curriculum* **THIS HAS BEEN REVISED TO INCLUDE NYS's UPDATED MATH PERFORMANCE INDICATORS.**
5. Instructional Technology: (*K-8*) (IT) as indicated in the NYS MST *Learning Standards* as well as the National Standards for Technology Education (NSTE)
6. Technology Education: (*K-8*) (TE) as indicated in the NYS MST *Learning Standards*
7. Arts (*K-8*) (A) as indicated in the NYS Art *Learning Standards and Core Curriculum*
  - Theatre
  - Music
  - Visual
8. Health, Home and Careers, and Physical Education (*K-8*) (H, HC, and PE)

## Scope and Sequence

The Scope and Sequence documents for each Learning Standard will be integrated into themes at each grade level to foster thorough planning and integration of the many key ideas. Teachers will be able to locate each key idea and related interdisciplinary activities to create meaningful experiences for the students. Students will experience open-ended exploration and discussion with a focus in communication. They will demonstrate their understandings of real issues and authentic problems through meaningful tasks. A wide variety of sources will be used to support this curriculum including:

- Carolina Biological's Science and Technology for Children Program (STC) for grades K-8 where hands on science units are combined with Technology (both IT and TE),
- *Harcourt Trophies Reading Program which integrates Four Blocks literacy in grades K-6 where teachers utilize guided Reading, Read Alouds, Independent Reading as well as Shared Reading/ Writing in flexible groups, with a focus on Differentiated Instruction.*
- National Foreign Language in Elementary Schools (FLES) in grades K-8 where students in grades K-4 explore multiple foreign languages integrated within their Social Studies themes, then in *grade 5 a trimester focus on a more intense introduction into three languages so that in grades 5-8 develop proficient use of one foreign language in order to meet/ exceed the NYS Proficiency exam, and*

- extensive use of the literature throughout K-8 where children’s literature provides a skeleton for teaching content-based information as well as the material for skill-based development.

We accept that an essential question can drive instruction and inquiry and that the principles of a core curriculum as a foundation for teams of grade level and looping teachers. An essential question, around which investigation and debate continually occur, can address the major key ideas and performance indicators of any discipline.

Thoroughness, not just coverage, guides this approach to curriculum and instruction.

Throughout the content areas, New York State Learning Standards are referred to using the following code:

