

November 25, 2019

Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D.
Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Education
PO Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500

Re: Link Community Charter School Amendment Request

Dear Commissioner Repollet:

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve the students and families of Link Community Charter School as a New Jersey public charter school. For 50 years we have dedicated ourselves to bridging the opportunity and achievement gaps through a focus on middle school, but we continue to see significant gaps when students arrive in 5th grade. We seek to more deeply support student growth by amending our charter to include a Kindergarten through 4th grade program and to meet the demand from families in our 6th, 7th, and 8th grade application pool.

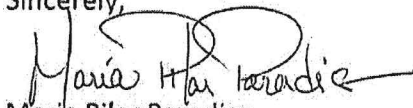
Pursuant to the Charter Amendment Guidelines, updated January 2019, enclosed, please find the following:

- Narrative Request to expand grade levels and increase enrollment
- Board resolution approving the request for amendment
- Original section of our approved charter
- Receipts certifying that copies of this request were also submitted to the Essex County Superintendent and the Superintendents of our region of residence districts-Newark, East Orange, Orange, and Irvington

As advised, we provided two options for the actual increase of enrollment. We also provided for a planning year but if we can be helpful in meeting the needs of families in our four districts, we are ready to launch the Kindergarten and 1st grade in September 2020.

With a 50 year legacy of excellence, delivering strong student outcomes and opening doors through enrichment and exposure, we are excited about the possibility to serve our students at an earlier age.

Sincerely,


Maria Pilar Paradiso
Head of School

cc:

Essex County Superintendent, Joe Zarra
Newark Public Schools Superintendent, Roger León
East Orange Public Schools Superintendent, Kevin R. West
Orange Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Gerald Fitzhugh II

Irvington Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Neely Hackett
Director, Office of Charter and Renaissance Schools, Julie Bunt
Deputy Chief of Staff, Colleen Schulz-Eskow



Request to Expand Grade Levels and Increase Enrollment
November, 2019

Current Mission

Link Community Charter School will provide an outstanding middle school education for learners of all academic abilities by developing the mind, body and spirit through a strong curriculum, experiential learning, immersion in the arts, and an enduring commitment to Core Values; this will allow them to be successful in competitive high schools and become responsible and resourceful citizens who give back to others.

1. Provide a brief descriptive summary of the proposed expansion of maximum enrollment and/or grades served. Provide a chart depicting the proposed change. The chart should not go beyond the school's current charter term.

Link Community Charter School (LCCS) seeks to expand grade levels and increase enrollment by adding Kindergarten through grade 4 and additional students to the existing 5th through 8th grade program. LCCS converted from a private school in 2014 with a strong foundation of 44 years of educational excellence in Newark. In converting to a public charter school, our aim was to serve more students more deeply. With our four-year middle school program, we harnessed our institutional knowledge and experience to strengthen student outcomes. The results have been very positive as we discuss in a later section of this application. Now, LCCS proposes to begin serving students in Kindergarten. The plan is to add Kindergarten and 1st grade in School Year 2021-22, after a one-year planning period, and then continue adding the subsequent grades, one grade per year until the school becomes a comprehensive Kindergarten through 8th grade elementary school, with the understanding that the request will be evaluated with LCCS's renewal year in mind.

To support this request, LCCS proposes two options, with both capturing LCCS's recent expansion to 80 students per grade. While option one (Table 1) allows LCCS to serve students immediately in a comprehensive way, option two (Table 2) allows for a more gradual increase by focusing on the K-4 program:

Table 1. LCCS Enrollment Plan: Option I			
Grade	2020-2021 Planning Year	2021-2022	2022-2023 Renewal Year
Kindergarten		100	100
1 st Grade		100	100
2 nd Grade			100
3 rd Grade			
4 th Grade			
5 th Grade	80	80	80
6 th Grade	80	100	100
7 th Grade	80	100	100
8 th Grade	72	100	100
Total Enrollment	312	580	680

Table 2. LCCS Enrollment Plan: Option 2			
Grade	2020-2021 Planning Year	2021-2022	2022-2023 Renewal Year
Kindergarten		100	100
1		100	100
2			100
3			
4			
5	80	80	80
6	80	80	80
7	80	80	80
8	72	80	80
Total Enrollment	312	520	620

2. Describe the rationale behind the charter school's request to increase maximum enrolment and/or increase the grade span. Please include the following in your response:
 - a. Family Demand (wait list information)
 - b. Staffing changes

Rationale: LCCS utilizes its 50 years of institutional experience to effectively deliver a middle school program that sets scholars on a path to and through college. In the five years since conversion to a public charter school, we have seen positive student outcomes, with respect to both performance and growth on the PARCC/NJSLA statewide assessment, as well as competitive high school placement and scholarships/financial aid for competitive high schools. But, we also have seen that students enter LCCS's 5th grade with major gaps in exposure and in knowledge/skills, as demonstrated in the 3rd and 4th grade statewide assessment results below (Tables 3, 4 and 5).

Table 3. 2018-19 NJ State Assessment Results										
Grades	Newark		Orange		East Orange		Irvington		New Jersey	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
3rd	28.5%	35.4%	32.1%	33.0%	37.7%	33.3%	23.4%	31.8%	50.2%	55.1%
4th	32.9%	32.0%	38.2%	35.5%	42.7%	20.7%	30.5%	21.1%	57.4%	51.0%

Table 4. 2017-18 NJ State Assessment Results										
Grades	Newark		Orange		East Orange		Irvington		New Jersey	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
3rd	29.8%	30.6%	30.0%	29.5%	37.0%	28.8%	23.9%	23.8%	51.6%	53.0%
4th	34.0%	27.7%	34.5%	27.2%	42.3%	23.0%	30.8%	16.4%	58.0%	49.4%

Table 5. 2016-17 NJ State Assessment Results										
Grades	Newark		Orange		East Orange		Irvington		New Jersey	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
3rd	26.5%	35.1%	27.8%	25.3%	36.2%	31.9%	22.9%	23.4%	50.4%	52.4%
4th	29.6%	26.0%	30.4%	23.1%	42.9%	29.2%	23.7%	11.3%	55.9%	47.3%

Now in our sixth year as a public charter school, we are eager to do more for our students. We recognize that by providing a Kindergarten to grade 8 elementary school, the impact we have on

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students will be deeper and the outcomes (standardized test scores, high school placement, and college graduation rates) will be much stronger, setting our students on an even greater trajectory to life-long success. Currently to remediate these gaps, we invite 5th grade families to participate in a privately funded four-week summer academy to build community and create common understandings of expectations. This work is necessary given that 5th graders come to LCCS from over 35 elementary schools throughout the region of residence – virtually all of which are low-performing. We have achieved much success with this model but we know that we can do even more if we begin in Kindergarten.

LCCS Enrollment Trends: LCCS, having been approved with a region of residence, draws its 300+ students from four historically underserved districts with the following overall contribution to school enrollment.

Table 6. LCCS Enrollment and School Choice		
City	% of Overall Enrollment at LCCS ('19-'20)*	# of Charter School Options K-8
Newark	38	15
Orange	6	0
East Orange	14	2
Irvington	34	1

* Balance from surrounding towns

With limited school options in Irvington, East Orange, and Orange, offering additional students the option to attend LCCS provides increased choice to families. Additionally, because Irvington and East Orange buses students to and from LCCS, families are able to exercise choice and seize the opportunity to send students to LCCS.

Family Demand for K4 Programs: Local demographic (Table 7) and district (Table 8) enrollment trends demonstrate that there is both a need and a demand for additional seats in the early elementary school years in Newark and the three neighboring districts LCCS serves.

Table 7. Local Demographics				
Children by Age	Newark	Orange	East Orange	Irvington
Under 3 years	12,163	1,534	2,534	2,387
3 and 4 years	8,937	886	1,659	1,881
Total under 5	21,100	2,420	4,193	4,268

Source: ACS 5 Year Estimate (2013-2017)

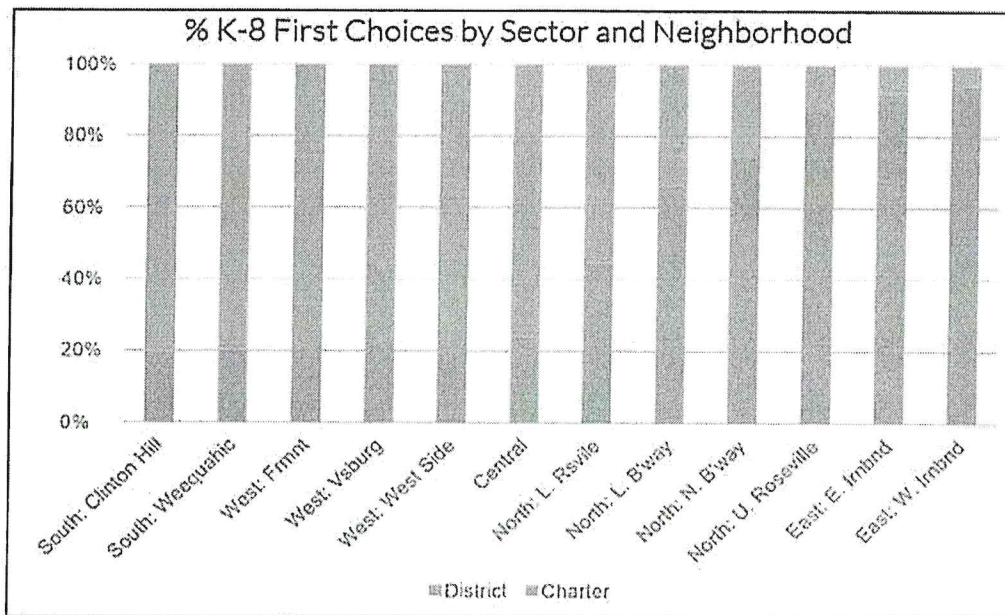
Table 8. Local Enrollment by Grade						
School District	Newark	Orange	East Orange	Irvington	Charters in 4 Districts	Total LCCS Districts of Residence
Pre-Kindergarten*	1767	320	664	608	352	3711
Kindergarten*	2287	389	666	558	1893	5793
1 st Grade	2517	401	655	580	2033	6186

*Full-day programs district-wide.

Source: NJDOE Enrollment District Data for 2018-2019

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In Newark, parent demand for K-4 charter seats is highest in the Central, West, and South Wards as demonstrated in the graph below— communities where traditionally LCCS families have hailed from (New Jersey Children's Foundation based on One Newark Enrolls Data 2018-2019). These communities also account for high rates of age 0-4 applicants (NJCF 2019).



LCCS first reached out to its own families to share the plan to grow and asked them to complete a survey, providing important information about family interests and needs around K-4 grade level spans. Below is an overview of the information gathered from over 100 families. A more detailed analysis is attached as Appendix A.

The survey responses from current LCCS families to add a K-4 program were positive.

- 81% of respondents would enroll their child at LCCS for K-4.
- Families enroll their K-4 children in charters (60%) followed by district (38%) and private (2%) schools
- The top 5 reasons families would select LCCS for K-4 are:
 1. Link Core Values and personal student development
 2. Positive school culture
 3. Rigorous academic program
 4. Keep siblings together in the same school
 5. Comprehensive K-8 elementary school and community
- Families would also like to see included in LCCS's K-4 program:
 - Comprehensive program similar to current grade 5-8 program
 - Play-based/experiential/real world learning
 - STEM/coding
 - Foreign languages
 - Arts programming, including music
 - Peer leadership program – connection across grade levels
 - Life skills/personal development
 - Smaller class sizes
 - Engaging and spacious learning spaces/classes
 - Outdoor play space

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- Parents also expressed the need to:
 - Provide free buses for K4 students
 - Continue legacy of hiring powerful and passionate teachers
 - Consider a second location – current building cannot accommodate K-8
 - Consider a second location nearby so parents don't have to travel across town or to multiple schools
 - Provide before/after care services

LCCS also reached out to the broader community to share our plans for the Kindergarten through 4th grade program and to listen to the feedback, questions, and ideas on the minds of families with young children. We were encouraged by the conversations and humbled by the strong support received.

After purchasing a list of households with young children in our four districts of residence, LCCS produced a postcard and mailed it to the list of over 6,200 to announce our plans for a K-4 program and the community meetings to garner feedback. A flyer, produced in both in English and Spanish, was also distributed to 15 neighborhood organizations. Table 9 captures the organizations we distributed to and Table 10 captures the actual forums held.

Table 9. Community Distribution of K-4 Plans	
Organization	Location
Haynes Park West	179 Boyd Street Newark, NJ
IFS: East Orange Family Success Center	132 South Harrison Street, East Orange, NJ
John F. Kennedy Recreation Center	211 W Kinney St, Newark, NJ
La Casa de Don Pedro	North and Central Newark locations
Leaders 4 Life	84 Clifton Place Newark, NJ
Local Neighborhood Bakery	Broad Street, Newark, NJ
Newark Emergency Services	982 Broad St, Newark, NJ
Newark One Stop Career Center	990 Broad St, Newark, NJ 07102
Newark School of the Arts	89 Lincoln Park, Newark, NJ
Pennington Court Family Success Center	190 South Street Newark, NJ
Shani Baraka Women's Resource Center	300 Clinton Ave, Newark, NJ
The Clubhouse	205 Spruce Street Newark, NJ
The HUBB	135 Prince Street, Newark, NJ
Valley Settlement House	33-41 Tompkins Street, West Orange, NJ
West Side Park	600 South 17th Street Newark, NJ

Table 10. Community Forums	
Date	Site
10/5/19	LCCS's 50 th Anniversary Block Party, Pennsylvania Avenue, Newark --LCCS set up a booth to share with attendees the plans to add Kindergarten to 4 th grade, materials were distributed and questionnaires completed. --Nearly 1,000 people attended the event-school families, partner organizations, alumni, and neighborhood residents.
11/18/19	The H.U.B.B./FP Youthoutcry Foundation, Newark --This is a community-based, multifaceted inter-generational program. --We met with families from the neighborhood and youth engaged in afternoon programs at the H.U.B.B. and heard their reactions to our plan for growth.

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Table 10. Community Forums	
Date	Site
11/20/19	Link Community Charter School, Newark --We met with families from the community and from LCCS in the school library to share our plans.
11/18/19 11/21/19	Valley Settlement House, West Orange (serving Orange and East Orange) --We visited VSH first to meet with the director to share our plan and then to meet with families. VSH provides a preschool program as well as afterschool, weekend, and summer programming. It is a center of activity for families from all of the Oranges. Many of the families attending VSH are recent immigrants, providing an important perspective on services for their children. --Of note, while visiting we ran into a Link alumna who is working as an aide at the preschool while attending Bloomfield College, where she studies psychology with a pre-nursing track.
11/23/19	Irvington Public Library --The Irvington Library is a center for the community. We met with families, mostly existing ones from LCCS who have young children.

During our community outreach, families told us they value and want to see the following in a K-4 Program:

- Strong school culture
- Joyful learning
- Supportive environment that helps transition children from day care and preschool to formal schooling
- Lower student to teacher ratio, particularly in Kindergarten
- Hands-on learning
- Full day Kindergarten
- Exposure to the arts, STEM, and foreign language
- Focus on math and literacy
- Meaningful homework
- Link's Core Values
- Transportation
- Uniforms
- Positive discipline
- Age-appropriate programs and systems
- Outdoor space

Feedback of Note:

- As we shared out the program we are developing, we received very positive responses to the Suzuki Method violin program to be implemented with the Newark School of the Arts and to the recent purchase of the playground adjacent to the current 5th to 8th grade program.
- We also received support for staggered start and end times as LCCS would have two facilities and families would need to drop off/pick up at two locations.
- We were humbled by families recounting how they value what LCCS offers, how confident they are in their decision to send their children to LCCS, and how eager they are for the opportunity to enroll their younger children in LCCS for K-4.

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- Many of our meeting attendees had a connection to LCCS – a relative, neighbor, co-worker, or friend who are parents of a current or former LCCS student – that led them to us when they learned of the possibility to enroll their child at LCCS for K-4.

We reached out to a few of our organizational partners to share the plan and gather their input:

Table 11. Stakeholder Meetings –Organizations		
Date	Community Organization	City
Spring 2019 through Final Application	New Jersey Charter Schools Association --We met with the President and CEO to share our plan and seek guidance throughout the planning process.	Hamilton
Spring 2019 through Final Application	Rick Pressler Associates -- We met with the Director of School Services to share our plan and seek guidance throughout the planning process.	Roosevelt
11/18/19	La Casa de Don Pedro --We met with the Executive Director to share our plan and ask for support in sharing our plan to their preschool parents. La Casa distributed flyers to its families about our plan for growth and informational sessions.	Newark
Ongoing dialogue through 11/20/19	Newark School of the Arts --Ongoing conversations about plans for growth and further collaboration. --We had a call with the Assistant Director to share final plan and complete preliminary discussion on music program collaboration. A Letter of Support is attached as Appendix B.	Newark
11/22/19	New Jersey Children's Foundation --We met with NJ Children's Foundation leadership to share out the plan for growth and to gather input for LCCS's plan as well as on overall needs in the city of Newark and surrounding communities. A Letter of Support is attached as Appendix C.	Newark

We used social media and digital platforms to communicate with the community, including:

- LCCS Facebook Page (1,000+ followers) and Link Alumni Page (350 friends)
- LCCS Instagram (299 followers)
- TapInto Newark
- TapInto East Orange/Orange
- Newark Patch
- Local Podcasts – The HUBB Life Parenting Evolution (500 followers)

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We also reached out to several elected officials and appointees to discuss our planned growth:

Table 12. Stakeholder Meetings – Community Leaders	
Date	Meeting/Visit to Share Growth Plan
10/09/19	Jamel Holley, Assemblyman, 20 th District --Assemblyman Holley visited LCCS and met with parents. A Letter of Support is attached as Appendix D.
10/30/19	Gerald Fitzhugh, II, Ed.D, Superintendent of Orange Public Schools --Fitzhugh visited LCCS to experience morning circle and advisory, see the instructional program in action, and meet with students
11/26/19	Joseph Zarra, Executive County Superintendent, Essex County and Lisa Schnall, Education Program Specialist, Essex County --Mrs. Paradiso met with Mr. Zarra and Ms. Schnall in the county superintendent's office to share the school's plans for adding grade levels and to hear their feedback.
11/26/19	The Honorable Dwayne D. Warren, Esq., Mayor of the City of Orange --While Mayor Warren has been at LCCS a few times, Mrs. Paradiso met with him to share the plans to add grade levels K to 4 and listen to his feedback. A Letter of Support is attached as Appendix E.
11/27/19	M. Teresa Ruiz, New Jersey Senate District 29 (D) --Mrs. Paradiso met with her to share the plans to add grade levels K to 4 and listen to her feedback.

Family Demand for 5th to 8th Grades: LCCS families have consistently provided positive feedback in annual surveys and the school has filled every seat in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 early in the enrollment season, but we lose families once matches are made for other charter schools that have a K-8 program. Families tell us that they prefer keeping their children together and a K-8 program can support that preference. We then fill our seats with additional applicants.

In addition to wanting to keep children together in the same school, families also tell us that their decision to enroll in LCCS is impacted by:

- The school they attend prior to LCCS ending in grade 5
- Families not being ready to transition to middle school in grade 5

The grades where we see demand we cannot meet are grades 6, 7, and 8 as we only have up to 80 seats available in each grade level. Table 13 captures our current enrollment and waitlist.

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Table 13. Demand for LCCS's Current Program			
Grade Level	Approved Enrollment	19/20 Enrolled & Attending	Total Number of Applications Received
5	80	80	127
6	80	80	57
7	72	76	72
8	72	71	26
Total	304	307	

Staff changes: To deliver a developmentally appropriate high performing elementary school program, LCCS plans to add the following positions for Kindergarten through 4th grade:

- 1 Principal/2 Assistant Principals for the lower school
- 5 teachers and 5 paraprofessionals/aides for Kindergarten (total of 10)
- 4 teachers and 4 paraprofessionals/aides for 1st grade (total of 8)
- 4 teachers, each grade from grades 2 to 4
- 2 comprehensive health and physical education teachers
- 2 music teachers
- 2 art teachers
- 2 world language teachers
- 2 ESL teachers
- 2 special education teachers for Kindergarten
- 1 special education teacher per grade level, 1st through 4th grade (total of 4)
- 1 aide/paraprofessional (to support classified students with aides) per grade level (total of 5)
- 2 social workers
- 1 nurse
- 1 receptionist
- 1 school secretary
- 1 math specialist/instructional coach
- 1 literacy specialist/instructional coach
- 2 custodians
- 2 security officers at all times
- Cafeteria services staff

As Link did in its transition from private to public charter school, we are working with existing staff to fill some of these roles, thereby maintaining the Link culture throughout the entire school and providing opportunities for leadership from within. The resulting vacancies in the 5th to 8th grade program and all new positions for K-4 will be filled through recruitment. LCCS works closely with partners Teach for America and Relay Graduate School of Education, as well as attends college job fairs and advertises online and in print. A Hiring Advisory Board made up of teachers and staff supports the principal in the recruitment effort and evaluation of candidates.

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Due to increases in enrollment and staffing, LCCS also plans to add the following positions to its school operations team:

- 1-2 business office professionals to support HR and Accounts Receivables/Payables duties

Attached as Appendix F is the proposed organization chart.

3. Provide information on any changes to your school's current facilities (renovations, new location) based on this expansion request.

LCCS plans to transition its current facility to the elementary school (K-4) and to relocate the middle school (5-8) to a new facility.

Link Community Charter School is currently leasing 23 Pennsylvania Avenue in Newark, New Jersey for its 5th through 8th grade middle school program from Link Education Partners, a public charity that collaborates with LCCS to bridge the opportunity and achievement gaps and deliver strong student outcomes. Most recently, Link Education Partners purchased the playground/park adjacent to 23 Pennsylvania Avenue and plans to renovate the space before leasing it to LCCS. While the current facility has supported the middle school well, we believe with the adjacent outdoor space it will better support an elementary school grade level span. The park will be used for outdoor recess and physical education when weather permits. The current building is reflective of Link's commitment to quality space for learning. The building includes a library/media space, dedicated art room, music room, a guided reading library/resource room, and a science lab. Minor renovations will be made and furniture purchased to better support a Kindergarten through 4th grade program.

With this shift to elementary school at 23 Pennsylvania Avenue, LCCS will relocate the middle school (with a transition plan as noted in Table 14) to a new facility on the campus of St. Lucy's Church. Link has been in conversation with St. Lucy's Church, located at 118 7th Avenue in Newark, which has agreed to sell a separate lot, adjacent to the church that can serve as the second location for LCCS. This lot, currently housing 3 buildings, would be home to the 5th through 8th grade middle school. Upon securing NJDOE approval for the expansion, Link will complete the transaction and finalize facility plans. The pastor of St. Lucy's has provided a Letter of Support, attached as Appendix G. Architectural plans have been developed by DiCara/Rubino Architects. Link has also had substantial conversations with FARR Education, LLC to secure financing at favorable rates. See letter of support from FARR Education, attached as Appendix H.

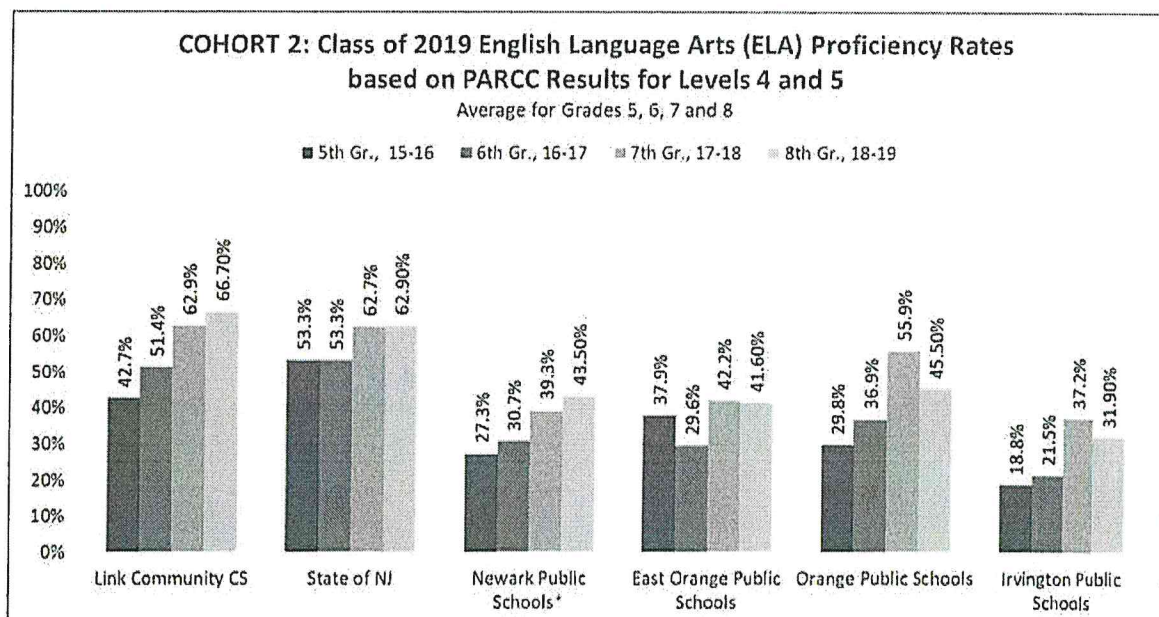
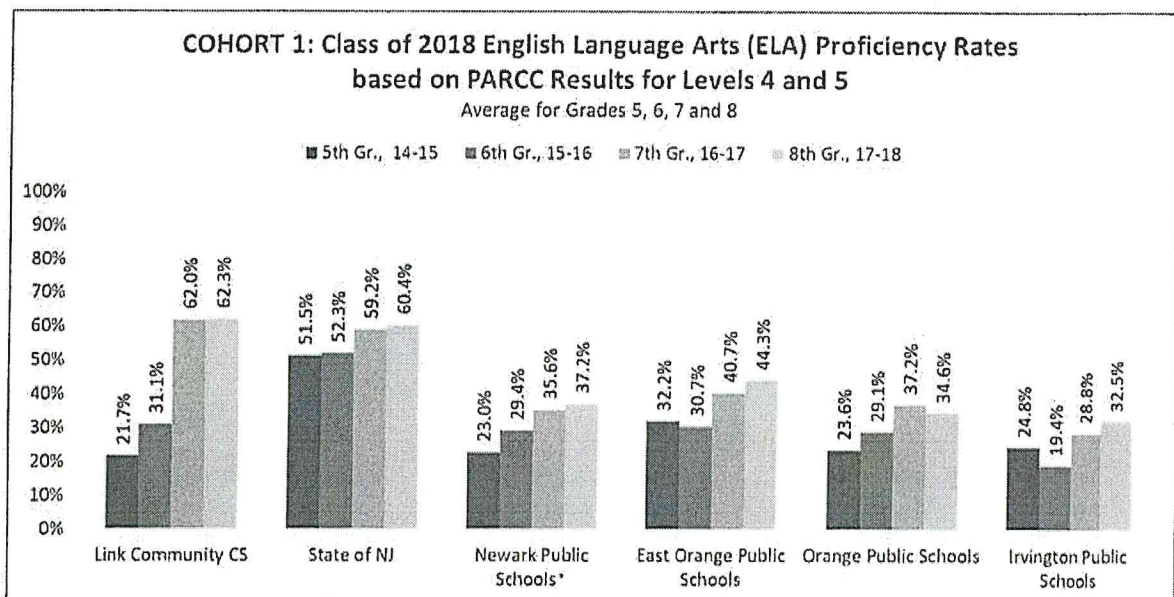
Table 14. Facility Transition Plan			
Locations	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023 Renewal Year
Existing: 23 Pennsylvania Avenue	5-8 320 students	K,1,7,8 400 students	K,1,2,8 400 students
Planned Second Location: St. Lucy's Church on 7 th Avenue	Planning Year	5,6 200 students	5,6,7 300 students

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- The Department will review the school's academic performance based on state-wide assessment data. Please explain any unique circumstances related to published school data, and corrective actions taken to address challenges in any of these areas of school performance within their request.

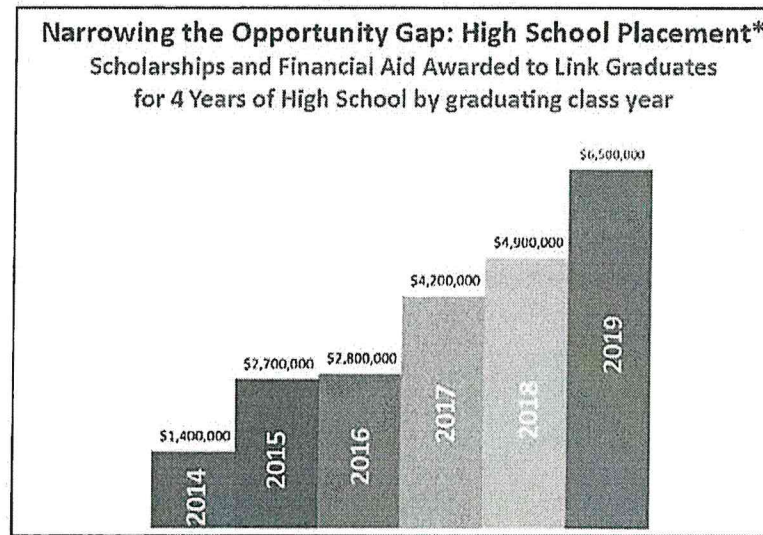
We are pleased with the progress our students make during the four years they are at LCCS as reflected in the first two graduating classes' NJPARCC/NJSLA scores and the total of scholarships and financial aid received by each class. Both metrics indicate the school is remaining mission-focused and results-driven:

Narrowing the Achievement Gap: Results for the Classes of 2018 and 2019 (2 cohorts of students)



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*Data for the Newark Public Schools does not include Newark Charter School numbers.



Attached as Appendix I is the list of the schools to which students in the Class of 2019 were accepted.

A review of the past three academic years (Tables 15, 16 and 17) also demonstrates strong performance in ELA and growth in math. In 32 total areas of comparison, Link moved from 30 areas of outperformance in 2016-2017 to 31 areas in 2018-2019. Link also outperformed the state average in 2019 in three areas – 5th, 7th and 8th grade ELA. Areas in which Link underperformed its resident districts are shaded blue. Areas in which LCCS outperformed NJ are shaded green.

Table 15. 2018-19 NJ State Assessment Results % Proficiency Level of 4 or 5												
Grades	Link		Newark		Orange		East Orange		Irvington		NJ	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
5 th	58.5	34.6	32.3	23.9	38.7	25.9	46.4	18.8	28.9	13	57.9	46.8
6 th	54.0	23.0	35.4	21.1	45.3	25.1	41.7	11.5	26.0	12.8	56.1	40.6
7 th	68.9	34.7	43.9	25.4	52.5	27.7	44.9	15.3	34.1	12.4	62.8	42.1
8 th	66.7	29.2	43.5	25.5	45.5	24.4	41.6	12	31.9	3.6	62.9	29.3

Table 16. 2017-18 2018-19 NJ State Assessment Results % Proficiency Level of 4 or 5												
Grades	Link		Newark		Orange		East Orange		Irvington		NJ	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
5 th	52.1	42.9	35.1	26.5	31.7	21.5	48.3	24.6	26.9	13.4	58.0	48.9
6 th	45.8	27.8	33.8	23.2	38.4	22.2	38.9	19	22.7	12.6	56.2	43.5
7 th	62.3	22.9	39.3	25	55.9	26.6	42.2	11.8	37.2	15.3	62.7	43.4
8 th	62.3	20.3	37.2	22.2	34.6	11	44.3	14.3	32.5	8.6	60.3	28.2

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Table 17. 2016-17 2018-19 NJ State Assessment Results % Proficiency Level of 4 or 5												
Grades	Link		Newark		Orange		East Orange		Irvington		NJ	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
5 th	54.2	36.1	35.8	23.6	30.7	17.8	47.4	24.5	24.3	8.4	58.9	46.2
6 th	51.4	26.4	30.7	26.3	36.9	17.7	29.6	14.6	21.5	9.5	53.3	43.6
7 th	62.0	14.1	35.6	20.0	37.2	16.9	40.7	12.5	28.8	12.6	59.2	39.6
8 th	61.3	33.9	37.3	24.9	35.9	9.4	31.9	12.1	27.4	8	59.1	27.7

There are three areas of continued focus at LCCS with respect to statewide assessment data. Below are some of the actions we are taking to continue to drive positive results:

1. Response to Discipline –LCCS has looked closely at our student discipline data, particularly suspension rates and unique incidents reported under EVVRS/SSDS. We acknowledge higher rates than other schools. We implemented the school’s discipline rubric (first developed in 2014) and reported incidents with fidelity. We value the NJDOE’s attention on discipline and suspension and are working to better support our students through several specific initiatives:
 - In 2018-19, we added a part-time assistant dean of students to work with students in grades 5 and 6 and we saw a significant downward trend in reportable incidents from 53 in 2017-2018 to 37 in 2018-2019.
 - For the 2019-2020 school year, we looked closely at the discipline rubric, and made some important changes to the consequences. See newly adopted Discipline Rubric and former Discipline Rubric attached as Appendix J.
 - We also removed the teaching responsibilities from the assistant dean to provide more support for grades 5 and 6. Just as 5th graders arrive with gaps in experience and achievement that impacts their academic performance, they also arrive with mixed behaviors without a strong understanding of expectations for scholars.
 - We continue to implement restorative justice practices and provided our deans with off-site training again this year. Our desire is to create an environment that is responsive to students’ needs and that sets high expectations but works to guide student behavior rather than serve punitive consequences. We have seen reduced suspensions for September, October, and November 2019 when compared with last year (Table 18). With the initiatives in place we are striving to achieve a reduction of 50% from last year’s suspensions.

Table 18. Suspensions				
Month	In School Suspensions		Out of School Suspensions	
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2018-2019	2019-2020
September	0	1	1	0
October	0	0	18	2
November	1	2	16	4

2. Special Education – We saw a substantial improvement in achievement for our special needs students. Our special education team is providing strong support but we saw an increased need in 5th grade so we added a second special education teacher in that grade level—Link’s entry point for 2019-2020. With two special education teachers at the 5th grade level, we are able to provide expertise in both core areas - math and literacy.

Link Community CS - Request to Expand Grade Levels and Increase Enrollment - November, 2019

3. English Language Arts – While we are proud of the work of our 7th and 8th graders in ELA, we know we need to support our 5th and 6th graders more. We therefore increased the instructional coaching for grades 5 and 6 to support stronger instruction and increased results in those grade levels in 2018-2019.
4. Math – We acknowledge there is still much work to do in math. We are now in our 3rd year of our Math Initiative and are gaining traction with an instructional team that is more knowledgeable and confident, school-wide systems, family programs, and strong instructional coaching.
5. Provide a synopsis of the proposed educational program including key components of the education model and any unique or innovative features of the proposed expansion. Briefly explain the evidence base and performance record that demonstrate the expansion model will be successful in improving academic achievement for the student population. Highlight the following in your response:
 - Curricular choices
 - Educational approaches
 - Instructional strategies

Link has consistently made decisions that are informed by research, best practice and student needs. To that end, LCCS leadership took time this fall to research curriculum and visit several different schools (Table 19) that serve a diverse community of learners, with an eye on Kindergarten and 1st grade:

Table 19. K-4 Programs Visited	
Date	Program
9/29/19	Cresthaven Academy Charter School, Plainfield
9/29/19	Pace Charter School of Hamilton, Hamilton
10/07/19	Foundation Academies, Trenton
10/16/19	South Orange Maplewood School District-Seth Boyden Elementary School, South Orange
10/16/19	South Orange Maplewood School District-South Mountain Elementary School, South Orange
10/28/19	Benjamin Banneker Charter School, Willingboro
11/25/19	Great Oaks Legacy Charter School, Newark
11/25/19	Morris Township Public Schools, Morristown

We expect to continue school visits through the early winter as we finalize curriculum while we await the NJDOE decision.

Educational Approaches

During the fall, we identified the key components of the educational model for our Kindergarten to 4th grade program:

- Joyful learning: We want to support life-long learning by creating a love of learning; where we work hard and value growth and learning. We will bring joy and a positive spirit to all our activities.
- Developmentally appropriate programming: We will make decisions with our young scholars' developmental stages in mind. While the day will be filled with academic learning, we will also imbed a 40-minute period to allow students opportunities for creative/imaginative play, development of fine and gross motor skills/life skills (e.g. tying shoe laces, cutting paper), and development of social interaction and communication.

Link Community CS - Request to Expand Grade Levels and Increase Enrollment - November, 2019

- Inclusive environment for special needs students: We will provide strong supports for special needs students with an aim to push in and pull out where appropriate within an inclusive environment. Skilled special education teachers and personal/shared aides will provide the appropriate supports.
- Focus on literacy and numeracy (language and math): We will build a strong foundation of literacy and numeracy by using standards-based best practices that are developmentally appropriate.
- Exposure to arts, creativity and STEM: We will provide enrichment and exposure to help scholars develop their creative energies and STEM skills through a rich arts program (music and visual art), intentional play, and strong exposure to science, technology, engineering, art and math). The music and art programs will also support the many children who have experienced trauma. Every classroom will be equipped with Chromebooks for all students so that there is reliable technology available throughout the day for all content areas.
- Positive school culture and community: We will use systems and procedures throughout the school building and develop a positive growth mindset that builds a strong school culture. We will also employ a positive behavior system so that students make strong choices. We will continue to use restorative practices.
- Social Emotional Learning/Link Core Values and personal student development: Link's middle school morning circle will be implemented in the K-4 program thoughtfully in a developmentally appropriate way and with daily morning meeting in the classroom. This period will allow classroom teachers to build a strong collaborative community and offer a morning greeting, mindfulness, calendar conversations, activities, special messages, and the Pledge of Allegiance; all while violin music is playing in the background to reinforce the daily Suzuki Method Violin lessons. As the year progresses and our scholars move closer to 5th grade, our young scholars will occasionally attend a full morning circle with one or two grade levels. As they move up to the middle school, they will regularly experience morning circle (2 grade levels, 2 times per week)

Innovative Features of Proposed Expansion

- Art and Music Instruction at all grade levels
- Use of Suzuki Method Violin Program to enrich and to ameliorate trauma
- Daily Science or Social Studies lessons
- Incorporation of Social Emotional Learning and Life Skills
- Daily morning meeting/closing meeting in the classroom

We have developed a sample daily schedule for the Kindergarten and First Grade with the school day beginning at 8:10 am and ending at 3:40 pm, providing sufficient time for families who would have children in both the middle school and the elementary school to travel to both schools. Breakfast is provided after the bell so ALL students can participate. The schedule, attached as Appendix K reflects the educational approaches and key features of our program:

- Morning meeting in the classroom
- Math Instruction
- Writing, Reading, Phonics Instruction, Handwriting
- Science, Social Studies, STEM
- Creative Play/Life Skills Play
- Foreign Language
- Closing meeting in the classroom

Link Community CS - Request to Expand Grade Levels and Increase Enrollment - November, 2019

Use of Technology

- Every classroom will have a Chromebook for each student (20-25 units) to fully integrate in the learning so it will be a tool in all content areas. This technology will allow us to maximize individualized learning while tapping into content that is relevant.
- Every classroom will have an interactive Smart Board and document camera.

Instructional Strategies

A variety of instructional strategies will be employed, including:

- Student-centered instruction
- Accountable talk
- Analysis of student work
- Conferencing
- Activating prior knowledge
- Direct instruction
- Field trip/experiential instruction
- Hands-on learning
- Centers/stations
- Modeling
- Read-aloud
- Word wall
- Project-based learning
- Number talk
- Scaffolding

ESL/ELL Program

- Link has developed an ESL/ELL plan and, while it has no students currently receiving such services, anticipates that by starting to work with students in Kindergarten, we will see students who need ESL/ELL services. We have planned to hire two ESL teachers-the first immediately and the second as we add grade levels. We will adjust as we assess need and welcome the addition of students with ESL/ELL needs.

Special Education Program

- Link will continue to deliver a special education program under the same inclusion model currently used in the middle school program. Currently, approximately 11% of our student body is classified. One of the school social workers serves as the school caseworker. We secure a Child Study Team through New Jersey Educational Services Commission. We also secure services from behavioralist to evaluate and develop a plan for a student with such a need. We will have two Special Education teachers in Kindergarten and one in 1st grade. As we see increased need, we will provide additional supports. We have developed a positive relationship with the County Education Office and will continue to seek guidance and feedback, as well as address any questions or concerns as that are raised.

Curricular Choices: Proposed Curriculum that is Aligned to State Standards

Link Community Charter School has seen strong results with some of its curriculum and has identified some gaps in other curriculum. Armed with this experience, we could make preliminary selections on curriculum:

Table 20. Proposed K-4 Curriculum	
Content Area	Curriculum
English Language Arts	Comprehensive Literacy Model using the Readers and Writers Workshop, Foundations, Guided Reading Library, Units of Study Book Selection, Zaner Blosser Handwriting

Link Community CS - Request to Expand Grade Levels and Increase Enrollment - November, 2019

Table 20. Proposed K-4 Curriculum	
Content Area	Curriculum
Math	Eureka Math, with school developed supports to bridge gaps and to challenge
Science	Internally created scope and sequence using Foss Science, Studies Weekly, and EngageNY modules
Social Studies	Studies Weekly
Art	In-house created curriculum with scope and sequence in Visual Art
Music	Suzuki Method Violin Program
Morning Meeting/Closing Circle Personal Development	In-house created curriculum that includes: The Morning Meeting Book (K-8), Studies Weekly, Civil Rights Movement, and Cloud 9 (using the RULER Approach)
Foreign Language/World Language	Middlebury Interactive World Language Program, supplemented by internally created lessons

6. Describe the team's individual and collective qualifications for implementing the new school design successfully, including capacity in areas such as:
- School leadership, administration, and governance;
 - Staffing and recruiting;
 - Goal setting and performance management; and
 - Curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Link Community Charter School's team has led and supported the school's growth over the past six years and is poised to continue the growth of the school so that all its students can achieve success by starting with Link in the earlier grades. Mrs. Paradiso (School Leader/Head of School), Mrs. Baynes (Chief Operating Officer), and Ms. Hester (Principal) have demonstrated strong capacity for school growth, having led the successful move to a new building, application for conversion, and transition to a public charter school. The leadership team at Link has remained virtually the same since its conversion speaking to the commitment of the individuals and the culture of the school. They are poised to take the next step. There is strong collaboration across all positions and areas of responsibility as the school truly functions as a community. Expectations are high, but appropriately supported so that positive results can be achieved. The chart attached as Appendix L captures the leadership team at Link Community Charter School, with their respective areas of strength and priorities for planning for growth.

With an eye towards elevating existing teacher leaders and administrators, we first looked inward and identified four individuals who have demonstrated leadership skills and positively impacted Link's achievement and culture. They will each contribute to the launching of the K-4 and the transition of the 5-8 program.

Link Community CS - Request to Expand Grade Levels and Increase Enrollment - November, 2019

We plan to provide Mrs. Paradiso and Ms. Hester with the opportunity to continue the deep planning that they began nearly a year ago. Mrs. Hannah Kennedy, currently 7th grade History Teacher and School Culture Leader, will be named Assistant Principal during the planning year to further develop her skills and to provide exposure into all areas of day to day building leadership. When the Kindergarten/1st grade is launched, Mrs. Kennedy will move into the Principal of the Middle School role. Mrs. Kelley-Kemple, Ms. Perrotta, and Ms. DeNully will fully develop curriculum and professional development/training for all new staff. Mr. Silver will continue to forge and strengthen partnerships in the community for student recruit, enrollment and high school placement.

A Proposed Budget is attached as Appendix M.



**Request to Expand Grade Levels and Increase Enrollment
November 2019**

APPENDIX

- A. LCCS Growth Plan Parent Survey, Fall 2019
- B. Newark School of the Arts Letter of Support
- C. NJ Children's Foundation Letter of Support
- D. NJ Assemblyman J. Holley Letter of Support
- E. Mayor Dwayne D. Warren Letter of Support
- F. LCCS Proposed Organization Chart
- G. St. Lucy's Church Letter of Support
- H. Farr Education Letter of Support
- I. High School Placement Results, 2019
- J. LCCS Discipline Rubric – Current and Former
- K. Sample Daily Schedule, Kindergarten and 1st Grade
- L. LCCS Leadership Team
- M. Proposed Budget

LCCS Growth Plan Parent Survey (Fall 2019)
Paper Survey Response Summary

Response Rate: 43% (130 of 300)

1. What grade do your children currently at Link? (check all that apply)

- 5th Grade – 43 of 130
- 6th Grade – 35 of 130
- 7th Grade – 21 of 130
- 8th Grade – 30 of 130
- No response – 11 of 130

2. What did you select Link for your currently enrolled students? (check all that apply)

Ranked by number of responses

- 1) Link Core Values and personal student development
- 2) Connection to competitive high schools and scholarship programs / Positive school culture
- 3) Rigorous academic program
- 4) Wide array of exposure (STEM, outdoor adventure education, electives, yoga, centering practice, etc.)
- 5) Legacy of 50 years serving the community
- 6) Arts programming
- 7) Inclusive environment for special needs students / Other: Word of mouth/small class sizes

3. How satisfied are you with your experience at Link?

88% of respondents (114 of 130) are Very satisfied or Somewhat satisfied; 12 did not respond

4. Do you have children under the age of 3?

20% (26) responded yes with a total of 29 children in this age group.

5. Do you have children currently attending K-4 grades?

33% (43 of 130) responded yes with a total of 51 children in this grade range.

6. Of those that responded to #5, 41 of the 43 specified grade levels:

- Kindergarten – 20
- 1st grade – 6
- 2nd grade – 5
- 3rd grade – 9
- 4th grade – 8

7. What kind of school do these children (K4) currently attend?

Ranked by number of responses.

- 1) Charter School - 60% (31 of 52)
- 2) District School – 38% (20 of 52)
- 3) Private non-faith based - <1% (2 of 52)
- 4) Private faith based - <1% (1 of 52)

8. How satisfied are you with the school your child attends for grades K4?

71% (32 of 45) are satisfied or somewhat satisfied.

LCCS Growth Plan Parent Survey (Fall 2019)
Paper Survey Response Summary

9. Would you enrolled your child at Link in grades K to 4th if Link offered these grade levels?
81% (105 of 130) responded yes.

10. What would you select Link for your younger child? (check all that apply)

Ranked by number of responses

- 1) Link Core Values and personal student development
- 2) Positive school culture
- 3) Rigorous academic program
- 4) Keep siblings together in the same school
- 5) Comprehensive K-8 elementary school and community
- 6) Arts programming
- 7) Legacy of 50 years serving the community
- 8) Inclusive environment for special needs students
- 9) Other: dissatisfaction with existing K4 programs/small class sizes/sense of community

11. What would you like to see in Link's K4 Program?

Summary of response below. See appendix A for detailed responses

- Rigorous academics
- Comprehensive program similar to current grade 5-8 program
- Play-based/experiential/real world learning
- STEM/coding
- Foreign languages
- Arts programming, including music
- Athletics
- Peer leadership program – connection across grade levels
- Life skills/personal development
- Core Values
- Smaller class sizes
- Engaging and spacious learning spaces/classes
- Recess – better than current program
- Outdoor play space

12. Would you help Link spread he word about its plans to add the K4 grade levels?
55% (72 of 130) responded yes; 26 did not respond

13. How can you support Link in getting the word out?

55 responded

- Host a small gathering in my home, workplace, or house of worship – 20 responses
- Connect Link with community leaders in my network – 19 responses
- Lead a petition signing campaign – 14 responses
- Connect Link to a community organization or site – 13 responses

14. 36 provided their name and contact information.

LCCS Growth Plan Parent Survey (Fall 2019)
Paper Survey Response Summary

15. Would you recommend Link to family, friends and colleagues?

83% (108 of 130) responded yes.

16. Where do you currently live?

MPP - Could response be driven by where the need for quality K4/school options are most limited?

- Irvington – 47 respondents
- Newark – 39 respondents
- East Orange – 21 respondents
- Orange – 7 respondents
- Other – 9 respondents (all but 2 are Union County)

17. Please share any additional ideas/thoughts you have about Link adding a K-4 academic program that can assist us in planning.

Summary of response below. See appendix B for detailed responses

- Consider Pre-K
- Free buses for K4 students
- Better recess
- Table at summer event, and host another Block Party/community engagement
- Continue legacy of hiring powerful and passionate teachers
- Consider a second location – current building cannot accommodate K8
- Consider a second location nearby so parents don't have to travel across town or to multiple schools
- Provide before/after care services
- Offer piano, soccer and baseball (MPP soccer and baseball can be done in partnership with Just One Soccer and area Little Leagues)
- Have small class sizes

LCCS Growth Plan Parent Survey (Fall 2019)
Paper Survey Response Summary

Appendix A.

11. What would you like to see in Link's K4 Program?

Detailed responses.

- Great academic program and life lessons
- Advance learning to prepare them for the next level with games and fun activities to keep them interested.
- A lot of hands-on activities, relating academics to real life situations, exposure to numerous social and academic avenues
- More space, playground, peer leadership program with upper and lower house, sports or clubs after school program
- yes it will be wonderful
- expansion and development in their program
- I want Link to maintain the standard of education which they are using now
- More structured technology curriculum i.e. coding and opportunities of different foreign languages. Recess activities that allow children to enjoy fresh air
- link does not really have a problem
- spacious classroom
- rigorous stem programs
- What type of work they are doing in class
- Better opportunity for children with IEPs. Have staff that may accommodate special education students
- not sure yet
- opportunity for growth and as a school setting
- same standards (maybe better) as the current program
- the same things already offered to 5th and 8th grades
- strong academic program, discipline and core values
- Ensuring that the education is just as competitive as some of the other schools that start at a younger age.
- the same comprehensive academic program as 5-8
- I'll like to see the students interacting with other grades in the school
- better education
- music classes, soccer, basketball
- shorter hours for the k-4 program
- Prep to 5th grade
- Extra-curricular activities
- Same core values and curriculum standards as upper grades
- rigorous academic programs
- A curriculum that will prepare students for middle school and beyond. Current Link parents have shared that they feel their children are a little behind because previous charter schools curriculum was lacking.
- Positive attitudes towards students with special needs
- Development of a strong foundation personally and academically
- Music program, art program, stem program, and I need at the end of kindergarten will like to see a step-up ceremony for them. 5th grade step up ceremony with cap and gown

LCCS Growth Plan Parent Survey (Fall 2019)
Paper Survey Response Summary

- I would like to see smaller classroom sizes and science included in the curriculum. Plus a foreign language infuse in the curriculum for the k-4 grades.
- Advance learning with fun games and activities
- Rigorous academic program
- Strong impact
- same core values as 5-8
- I would like a successful community
- I like to see smaller classrooms where students can benefit more by having one on one options in the class. Recess is also needed to younger children
- More music program and PE
- I would like to see the core values being introduced and developing a strong foundation for academic growth.

Appendix B.

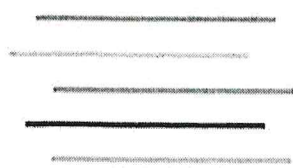
17. Please share any additional ideas/thoughts you have about Link adding a K-4 academic program that can assist us in planning.

Detailed responses.

- I think adding k-4 would be awesome. I would even suggest for the upper house to be mentors to help the little Links on their journey. Which would prepare them for what's ahead.
- Great idea
- Can Link consider adding a pre-school program as well?
- Consider doing street fair again. Push school spirit for entire family selling t-shirts, mugs, key chains, and pens. Also attend/vendor at community summer concerts. Also continue with legacy of selecting powerful teachers with love and passion for education.
- It will be okay and adding to their vision
- I spoke to my daughter Micah about adding k-4 and her thoughts were if you guys (link) are not adding more space, she doesn't think it will work, because there's not enough room NOW for the middle school
- The program should be in a separate building than where you are now. Have staff that will be able to teach all children. It's hard on parents when they have to take their children to different schools because your facility may not be able to teach all special education students. Children in k-4 need better recess than what the 5-6 are receiving now.
- I think it is a great idea, however I'm not sure the current site had the ability to house additional students. I would be in support of the idea if there is an alternate site.
- try to provide before/after care services
- Adding k-4 will be very good for parents who have children in different schools. Especially if they are working.
- piano, soccer, baseball
- I work in a school district where I have a great rapport with the parents and children, and they tend to listen to my advice.
- I have boys ages 3-4 and they're in pre-k right now. If Link were to add k-4, I will definitely enroll my boys there when the time comes.
- impacting strong student outcomes earlier
- I haven't given this deep thought as I don't have any younger children

LCCS Growth Plan Parent Survey (Fall 2019)
Paper Survey Response Summary

- Classroom size for each level/grade should be 18 students to 2 teachers. Please have something else in place for children with special needs. Example, my son has an IEP. What will you put in place to help him reach his full potential?
- Please consider a small classroom size with no more than 18 students per class
- I think adding k-4 would be awesome. I would even suggest for the upper house to be mentors to help the little Links on their journey. Also parents with more children in other schools will find it more convenient to make fewer trips in taking their children to school.
- It's a great and good idea!
- it will expand the school in terms of growth and development. It will also help many families to have all their children in a school but please include free school buses for the k-4
- Please have before/aftercare
- I really love the culture of the school and how community based/involved it is. I am looking forward to hearing it has k-4
- I'll love to see Link Community Charter School having grade 1 to 4 soon
- Would be a great addition to your already established school legacy
- For me Link is so special because it's work with me to educate my children. Whenever I call, I'm always satisfied for all the communication. Plus Link does not tolerate gossiping, fighting, bullying. I love Link so much.
- It would be great if Link added k-4 academic program. As an Irvington resident there are not many charter schools to choose. Therefore parents are forced to send their children to public or private schools. It would be excellent to have Link as an option.
- I would love for the k-4 academic program to go into effect. Being that I have a four year old now in Pre k 4 Abbot program. We are looking now for Kindergarden but not excited about the public school system. I would love to keep him on the strong program that he is in now. Then moving him to Link he would be on the same program and more!



NEWARK SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Music Dance
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November 25, 2019

Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D.
Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Education
PO Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500

Dear Dr. Repollet:

I am writing to express our support for Link Community Charter School's application for expansion to add Kindergarten to 4th grades to its existing 5th to 8th grade middle school program and to share Newark School of the Arts' commitment to ongoing collaboration in the delivery of high-quality arts education at Link.

As a teaching artist and leader in the Newark arts community, I advocate regularly for inclusion of the arts in our schools. In my role as the Assistant Director of Newark School of the Arts, I also work closely with schools to deliver strong programming. Newark School of the Arts provides access to quality education in the performing and visual arts to all individuals, regardless of age or talent and has served 46,000 students since its founding in 1968.

The Newark School of the Arts collaborates with Link Community Charter School through its impressive electives program. Every Friday morning, students explore everything from micro-gardening to photography, from boatbuilding to chess, from robotics to dance, and so much more. By offering its 7th and 8th graders opportunities to take an elective class each quarter (about 9 sessions each), Link is exposing students to a host of areas that they have never had access to before as well as exploring existing interests and talents. The electives program rounds out the students' middle school experience and prepares them to succeed at some of the best schools in the region.

We applaud this rich offering for students. We have witnessed first-hand Link's commitment to the whole child, developing mind, body and spirit to support lifelong success for our youth. Link's support for the arts stands out in our community. They collaborate with leading arts organizations in the city and the region and they commit time and resources to immersion in the arts. And, the impact on the students is clear as their creativity is nurtured, artistic talents are developed, and academic skills are enhanced; they graduate with confidence and maturity, ready to enter competitive high schools.

NEWARK SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Music Dance
Drama Visual Arts

Our eight (8) plus year partnership with Link Community Charter School has been strong and only continues to grow each year. We support Link's plan to add a Kindergarten to 4th grade program and will use our expertise and programming to deliver its music program with a focus on the Suzuki Violin Method beginning in Kindergarten. The research is clear that exposing students early to music not only supports overall development of the brain, but also delivers strong interventions where there is trauma. Our communities, and particularly our children, are experiencing trauma at alarming rates, and schools like Link Community Charter School recognize that they must leverage the school environment to include social emotional learning and positively impact our youth.

With a 50-year history of serving students from Newark, East Orange, Orange, and Irvington with impressive programming and strong results, I support Link's application for expansion so that it may achieve similar results by beginning to work with students at a younger age. A K-4 program will only benefit our youth and our community.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach me at 973-642-0133 or via email at carmen@newarkschoolofthearts.org.

Sincerely,



Carmen Santos-Robson
Assistant Director, Newark School of the Arts



New Jersey
Children's Foundation

November 19, 2019

Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D.
Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Education
PO Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500

Dear Dr. Repollet:

I am writing to express our support for Link Community Charter School's application to add grade levels Kindergarten to 4 and to grow its existing middle school.

At the New Jersey Children's Foundation, we strongly believe that education changes lives and communities. And, we believe that inequity will be addressed by creating and supporting high quality public education. We know that a strong public charter school sector has contributed to the gains made in Newark and those charter schools achieving positive results, such as Link Community Charter School, must be supported.

As we have watched Link Community Charter School develop over the past five years, transitioning from a private school serving the same neighborhoods, we have seen a strong school community, impressive programming and positive student outcomes. With a 50-year legacy serving the Newark community, Link Community Charter School has impacted the lives of over 3,000 young scholars and in turn benefitted the City of Newark, the state and the region. Their approach has always been innovative: a focus on social emotional learning, the arts, outdoor adventure education, and exposure; coupled with a strong core curriculum—all with an aim to prepare students for competitive high schools throughout the region and country.

We recognize that students arrive to Link in 5th grade with significant gaps in exposure and achievement, coming from a variety of schools in four different cities. By beginning in Kindergarten, Link can strengthen the students' experiences and achievement, making a meaningful difference in the lives of students and continuing its contributions to our community.

The New Jersey Children's Foundation strongly supports Link's application for expansion so that it may begin to work with students at an even younger age. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach me via email at kyle@njchildren.org.

Sincerely,

Kyle Rosenkrans
Executive Director



NEW JERSEY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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November 6, 2019

Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D.
Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Education
PO Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500

Dear Dr. Repollet:

I am writing to express my support of Link Community Charter School's application for expansion to add grades K-4 to its existing 5 to 8 middle school program.

As an elected official and lawmaker, I have advocated for social and educational equity and expanded opportunities for our state's most vulnerable populations. Link serves students from my legislative district as well as students from the Township of Irvington, where I work. On a recent visit to the school, I was able to hear first-hand from parents about Link's impact on its students and I was able to see the learning community they have built.

Since its founding in 1969, Link has demonstrated a deep commitment to social justice, public service and the creation of opportunities inside and outside of the classroom for its over 3,000 graduates. Link's impact with a four-year program is notable:

- Narrowing the achievement gap in English language arts for the Class of 2018
- Placing graduates on a path to college with the Class of 2019 earning \$6.5 million in scholarship and financial aid for competitive high schools

With a 50-year history of serving students from Newark, East Orange, Orange, and Irvington with strong results, I support Link's application for expansion so that it may achieve similar results by beginning to work with students at a younger age. A K-4 program will only deepen the strong results they are already experiencing.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach me at (908) 624-0880 or via email at asmholley@njleg.org.

Sincerely,

Best regards,

Jamel C. Holley, Assemblyman
New Jersey General Assembly - District 20
Roselle, Elizabeth, Union and Hillside



THE CITY OF ORANGE TOWNSHIP
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

29 NO. DAY STREET • ORANGE, NEW JERSEY 07050
PHONE: (973) 266-4005 • FAX: (973) 676-7458

November 25, 2019

Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D.
Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Education
PO Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500

Dear Dr. Repollet:

I have been invited to submit a letter of support for Link Community Charter School's application to grow its existing middle school and add grades Kindergarten to 4. I am pleased to submit this letter as I am informed that Link counts scores of Orange residents as part of its alumni base and currently enrolled up to 20 Orange residents. I was honored to be at their 2019 graduation to witness several Orange residents graduate from 8th grade.

As Mayor of the City of Orange Township and a strong advocate for education, I am committed to providing access to high-quality schools for our youth and to open doors for them so they may realize their full potential. We have made tremendous strides in Orange to become a high-quality district, from the opening of our STEM Academy to the improvements to our curriculum across the district. Orange seeks to fulfill the needs of every child.

In spite of our successes, some parents choose education options outside of Orange to educate their children. In almost every case where the issue of education was discussed in the public square, parents indicated that they make educational decisions based on what is best for their individual child. For that reason it is important that we have high-quality options like Link Community Charter School.

Based on my discussion with Orange Link families and my own observations, the school provides wonderful opportunities for students. Its holistic approach to education supports the development of young minds, bodies, and spirits. In line with the Orange school system offerings, students are exposed to a vibrant arts program, outdoor adventure education, STEM and a variety of electives.

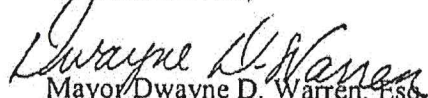
This innovative middle school experience helps to develop the knowledge, skills, experience, and character to excel in their own right and to compete with their peers across the region. We welcome the opportunity for Orange residents to Orange High or to the Orange STEM Academy to continue an enriched educational experience.

I have been informed of Links impressive achievements including:

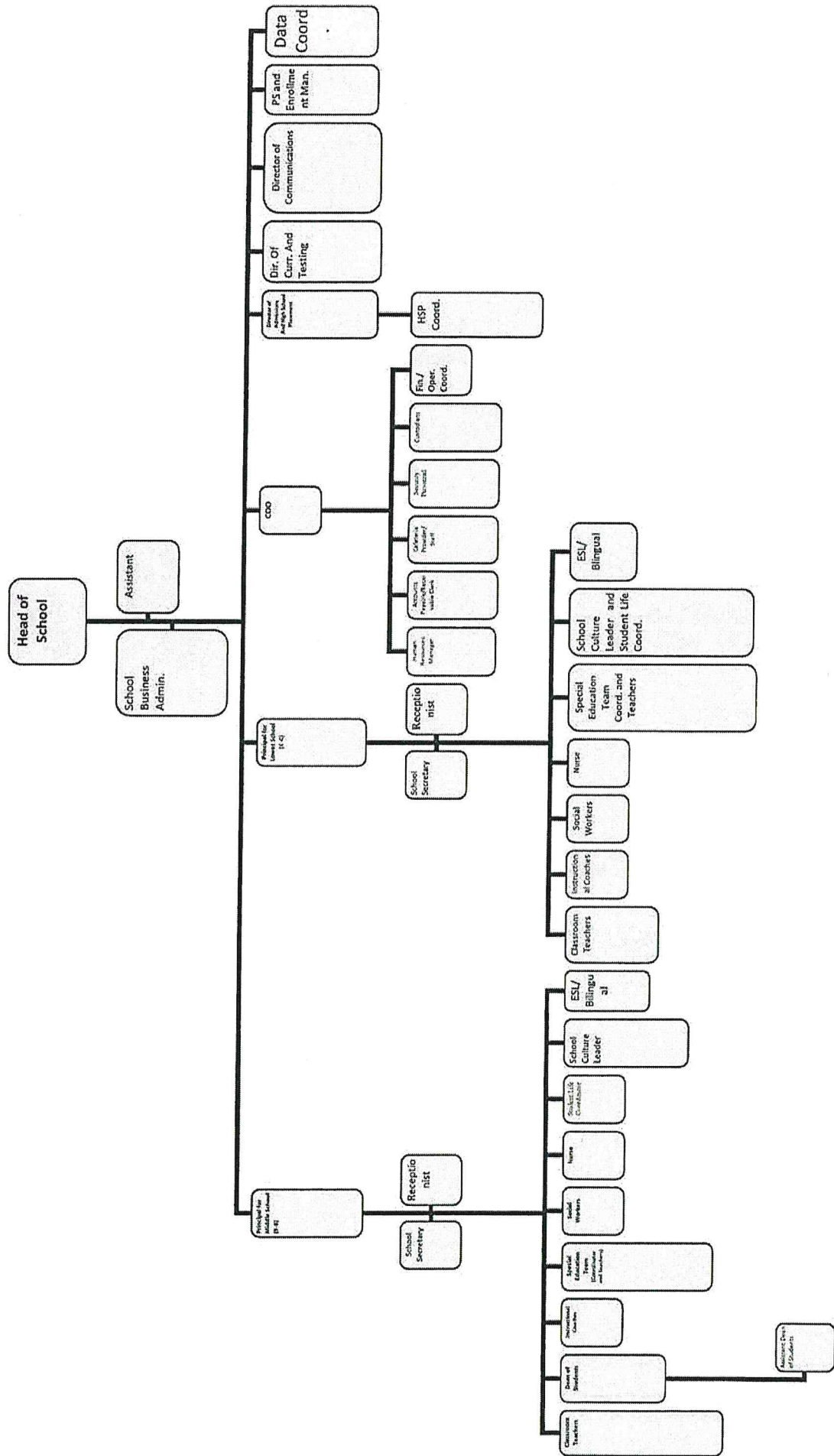
- The highly competitive performance on the PARCC/NJSLA in Link's English language arts and math.
- The scholarship opportunities to attend other competitive high schools in the region.
- The above-average college completion rate amongst its alumni.

In closing, as we work to increase physical capacity in Orange's high-performing school district, we respect the growth of education throughout the state. Stronger schools mean stronger, safer communities. With a 50-year legacy serving Newark, East Orange, Orange, and Irvington, I support Link's continued mission to provide a quality education so students can compete in the 21st Century economy.

Yours In Service,


Mayor Dwayne D. Warren, Esq.
City of Orange Township

Link Community Charter School Proposed Organization Chart (gradual phase-in) (Grades: K-4 and 5-8)



St. Lucy's Rectory

NATIONAL SHRINE OF ST. GERARD

118 Seventh Avenue

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07104

Ph (973) 803-4200 • Fax (973) 482-6575

www.saintlucy.net

stlucysnwk@yahoo.com

25 November 2019

Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D., Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Education
PO Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500

Dear Dr. Repollet:

I am writing to express my support for Link Community Charter School's application to grow its existing middle school to include grades Kindergarten to 4 and to further share my commitment to entering into a long-term lease or sale of property on St. Lucy's campus. As the pastor of a church in Newark, I am committed to social justice and educational excellence. I see first-hand the inequity that persists and I support efforts to bridge gaps for communities in need.


This past September, I became acquainted with Link Community Charter School through an introduction facilitated by the Newark Archdiocesan Facility Management Office. I have met with Maria Pilar Paradiso, the head of school, on multiple occasions and have discussed their facility needs as they pursue growth to add a lower elementary school. I recognize that Link has had positive long-term lease relationships with the Archdiocese throughout its 50 years of service and has been an excellent steward of its facilities and to the communities in which they are located.

We will continue the dialogue to work out final details once the New Jersey Department of Education has completed its review of the request. We will support Link purchasing or entering into a long-term lease of a plot of land with three older buildings that would be used for Link's middle school. Our campus provides other opportunities as well, including parking for teachers, staff, and families.

We believe Link Community Charter School delivers a high quality educational option for families in Newark, East Orange, Orange and Irvington. And, we are eager to support their expansion with a facility.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach me at via email at (973-803-4200 or dohohue@combonimissionaries.org.

Sincerely,



Reverend Paul Donohue
Comboni Missionary and Pastor

November 22, 2019

Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D.
Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Education
PO Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500



Dear Dr. Repollet,

I am writing to express my support of Link Community Charter School's application for expansion to add grades K-4 to its existing grades 5-8 middle school program, serving students from Newark, East Orange, Orange and Irvington.

As founder of FARR Education, LLC, I am committed to supporting educational excellence for underserved communities and believe that charter schools provide an important option for families. At FARR Education, we also recognize that charter schools are underfunded and have limited access to facilities funding in particular. We work with charter schools in New Jersey to create access to financing for purchasing or renovation of facilities to meet enrollment needs. We are proud of our work with a number of schools across the state, leveraging capital to help them with their facility needs.

Last spring, we began conversations with Link Community Charter School. We have visited and toured the school, meeting with Maria Pilar Paradiso, the head of school, and members of her leadership team. We have remained engaged with subsequent meetings and phone calls to make connections and stay abreast of their work in the area of school growth and facility needs. Throughout these communications and school visits, we have learned about the school's impressive 50 year legacy, strong record of positive student outcomes, wonderful school culture, organizational strength and capacity for growth as well as witnessed the mission in action. We remain engaged as they continue to plan because we have found the school is mission-centered and thoughtful about how it can best meet the needs of its students and the broader community. We believe Link Community Charter School delivers a high quality educational option for families in Newark, East Orange, Orange and Irvington. And, we are eager to make connections to financing as they move forward with a facility for an expanded program.

We are excited about Link's potential growth to serve more youngsters with their unique program by starting at an earlier age and we strongly support their application. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email at mary@farrededucation.com or call me directly at 908-612-8079.

Sincerely,

Mary R. Farrell
Founder, FARR Education, LLC

P.O. BOX 29
SUMMIT, NJ 07902
908-918-1286

INFO@FARR EDUCATION.COM
WWW.FARR EDUCATION.COM

MARY R. FARRELL
MICHAEL FARRELL
RON D. KAZEL
ROSE-MARIE LYGT



High School Acceptances, Class of 2019

Congratulations to the Class of 2019 for earning acceptances to competitive high schools and garnering over \$6.5 million in merit and financial aid awards.

Independent Boarding Schools

Buxton School (Williamstown, MA)
Christchurch School (Christchurch, VA)
The Darrow School (New Lebanon, NY)
George School (Newtown, PA)
Linsly School (Wheeling, WV)
Purnell School (Pottersville, NJ)
Salem Academy (Winston-Salem, NC)
St. Paul's School (Concord, NH)
St. Mark's School (Southborough, MA)
Stoneleigh-Burnham School (Greenfield, MA)
West Nottingham Academy (Colora, MD)

Independent Day Schools

The Hudson School, (Hoboken, NJ)
Kent Place School (all-girls Summit, NJ)
Montclair Kimberley Academy (Montclair, NJ)
Morristown-Beard School (Morristown, NJ)
Newark Academy (Livingston, NJ)

Catholic Schools (all-girls)

Benedictine Academy (Elizabeth, NJ)
Lacordaire Academy (Upper Montclair, NJ)
Mother Seton Regional High School (Clark, NJ)
St. Vincent Academy (Newark, NJ)

Parochial Schools (all-boys)

Don Bosco Preparatory (Ramsey, NJ)
Seton Hall Preparatory School (West Orange, NJ)
St. Benedict's Preparatory School (Newark, NJ)

Parochial Schools (co-ed)

Cristo Rey Newark (Newark, NJ)
Hudson Catholic High School (Jersey City, NJ)
Immaculate Conception High School (Montclair, NJ)
Marist High School (Bayonne, NJ)
Mount Saint Dominic Academy (Caldwell, NJ)
Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child (Summit, NJ)
Roselle Catholic High School (Roselle, NJ)
St. Mary's of the Assumption (Elizabeth, NJ)
Union Catholic Regional High School (Scotch Plains, NJ)

Magnet and Vocational-Tech Schools

American History High (Newark, NJ)
Arts High School (Newark, NJ)
Bard High School Early College (Newark, NJ)
Newark Tech (Newark, NJ)
Payne Tech (Newark, NJ)
Science Park High School (Newark, NJ)
West Caldwell Tech (West Caldwell, NJ)

NEWARK IS OUR HOME
EDUCATION IS OUR WORK
THE WORLD IS
OUR FUTURE

DISCIPLINE RUBRIC 2019-2020

Revised 09.03.19

CATEGORY 1	First Violation	Second Violation	Third Violation	Fourth Violation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public display of affection Inappropriate language Failure to return purple envelope/homework Minor Misconduct Eating food/chewing gum in school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal warning and inform student to change behavior Issue demerits Call home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Call home 5-minute reset/reflection Recess Detention (gr. 5&6) Teacher Detention (gr. 7&8) Call home when appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Call home Administrative Detention Level 1 Call home Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Call home Administrative Detention Level 2 Administrative Assignment Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference
CATEGORY 2	First Violation	Second Violation	Third Violation	Fourth Violation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cell phone possession or use in school Dress Code violation Disrupting the educational process (level 1) Cheating/plagiarism Dishonesty Electronic device/technology violation Forgery Insubordinate/disrespectful behavior Inappropriate behavior on a bus Minor Core Value violation Recess horseplay Slapping on back of neck, pushing, "milking" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Call home Recess Detention (gr. 5&6) Teacher Detention (gr. 7&8) 5-minute reset/reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Call home Administrative Detention Level 1 Parent Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Call home Administrative Detention Level 2 Administrative Assignment Meeting with Social Worker Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Call home Administrative Project Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference Meeting with Social Worker 1 Day ISS
CATEGORY 3	First Violation	Second Violation	Third Violation	Fourth Violation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupting the educational process (level 2) Slapping, kicking, punching Minor Threats/harassment Cutting class Skipping detention/conference Minor Core Value Violation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Call home Administrative Assignment Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference Meeting with Social Worker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Call home Administrative Detention Level 1 Administrative Assignment Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference Meeting with Social Worker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Call home Administrative Detention Level 2 Administrative Project Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference Meeting with Social Worker Conference with School Resource Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Call home 1-3 day ISS or OSS Administrative Project Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference Meeting with Social Worker Conference with School Resource Officer
CATEGORY 4	First Violation	Second Violation	Third Violation	Fourth Violation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Physical fighting and major hitting Bullying/cyber bullying* Inappropriate use of social media* Major Core Value violation Theft, vandalism, defacing school property Major threats/harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Call home Administrative Detention Level 2 Administrative Assignment Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference Meeting with Social Worker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Call home 1-3 day ISS or OSS Administrative Project Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference Meeting with Social Worker Conference with School Resource Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Call home 3-5 day OSS Administrative Project Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference Meeting with Social Worker Conference with School Resource Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Call home 5-8 day OSS Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference Meeting with Social Worker Conference with School Resource Officer
CATEGORY 5 **	First Violation	Second Violation	Third Violation	Fourth Violation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weapons possession Terrorist threats Drugs/Alcohol, use and/or possession Gang activity/violence Dating violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-10 day OSS Administrative Project Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference Police Notification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automatic 10 day OSS Meeting with Social Worker Parent Conference Police Notification Counseling 		

*Inappropriate usage/violations of social media outside the school but affecting any Link students are included as they impact the learning environment.

**Category 3, 4 and 5 violations may result in law enforcement intervention. Depending on the situation, more significant consequences than listed above may result.

Administrative Detention Level 1 – After school
Administrative Assignment – Essay

Administrative Detention Level 2 – Saturday
Administrative Project – Research project

OOS=Out of School Suspension
ISS= In School Suspension



COMMUNITY
CHARTER
SCHOOL

DISCIPLINE RUBRIC

CATEGORY 1	First Violation	Second Violation	Third Violation	Fourth Violation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public display of affection Inappropriate language Minor misconduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal warning and inform student to change behavior Call home when appropriate Issue demerits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Student Reflection Recess Detention Call home when appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Administrative Detention Call home Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative Detention In School Suspension/Out of School Suspension when appropriate Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference
CATEGORY 2	First Violation	Second Violation	Third Violation	Fourth Violation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cell phone possession or use of in school Dress Code violation Disrupting the educational process (level 1) Cheating/Plagiarism Dishonesty Electronic device/technology violation Forgery Insubordinate/disrespectful behavior Inappropriate behavior on a bus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Recess Detention Student Reflection Call home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits Administrative Detention Call home Parent Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call home In School Suspension Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call home Out of School Suspension Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference
CATEGORY 3	First Violation	Second Violation	Third Violation	Fourth Violation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupting the educational process (level 2) Physical fighting Hitting, slapping, kicking Bullying/cyber bullying* Inappropriate use of social media* Threats/harassment Theft/Vandalism Cutting Class Skipping detention/ conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits 1-5 day Out of School Suspension Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue demerits 3-10 day Out of School Suspension Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference Meeting with Social Worker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-10 day Out of School Suspension Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference Meeting with Social Worker Conference with School Police Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 day Out of School Suspension Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference Meeting with Social Worker Conference with School Police Officer
CATEGORY 4	First Violation	Second Violation	Third Violation	Fourth Violation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weapons Terroristic threats Drugs/Alcohol (Use and/or Possession) Gang activity/violence Dating violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automatic 10 day Out of School Suspension Restorative Justice Conference Parent Conference Police informed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second Violation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Third Violation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fourth Violation

*Inappropriate usage/violation of social media outside of the school but affecting any Link student is included, due to the impact on the learning environment. Category 4 violations may result in law enforcement intervention.

Depending on the situation, a more significant penalty than what is listed may result.

Sample Daily Kindergarten and First Grade Schedule
8:10 am - 3:40 pm

- 8:10 Arrival to community for breakfast (20 min)
 - 8:30 Morning meeting (20 minutes)
 - Greet
 - Share
 - Message
 - Calendar and other activities
 - Flag
 - Mindfulness
 - 8:50 Math (50 minutes)
 - 9:40 Art 1 day/Music 2 days/PE 2 days (50 min)
 - 10:35 Writing Workshop (35 min)
 - 11:10 Lunch/Recess (55 min)
 - With outdoor play, weather permitting
 - 12:05 Read Aloud/Shared Reading (15 min)
 - 12:20 Reading Workshop (45 min)
 - 1:05 Science/STEM/Social Studies (30 min)
 - 1:35 Foundations/Word Study (20 min)
 - 1:55 Snack and Play (40 min)
 - Creative Play
 - Blocks, forms, puzzles, gross and fine motor (buttons, laces, zippers, etc.)
 - Violin Music in the background
 - 2:35 Guided Math (30 min)
 - 3:05 Foreign Language 3 days/Handwriting (Zaner Blosser) 2 days (20 min)
 - 3:25 Closing Circle: Reflections and Pack up (15 min)
 - 3:40 Dismissal
- BRAIN BREAKS?**



Appendix ____ : LCCS Leadership Team

Link's Talented Team	School Leadership, Administration and Governance	Staffing and Recruitment	Compliance, Budgeting, and Financial Management	Goal Setting and Performance Management	Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	School Culture
<p>Maria Pilar Paradiso, J.D. Head of School Mrs. Paradiso has 5+ years of leadership at LCCS and 12 years at Link Community School, the charter school's predecessor. During her time at Link, she has successfully run a capital campaign, moved the school mid-year to a new and renovated facility, removed the existing limited tuition to transition to a free school, applied for and secured approval to convert to a public charter school, managed the growth from approximately 130 to over 300 students and from about 25 staff to over 50 staff, increased exposure for students and partnerships with organizations in the community, and raised student outcomes (statewide testing, high school placement, and scholarships/financial aid). Mrs. Paradiso has always worked closely with the board and maintains a strong partnership built on transparency, accountability, and collaboration.</p> <p>Mrs. Paradiso also brings legal experience working with underserved communities, multi-sector fundraising experience, and strategic planning experience; all of which contribute to Link's capacity to grow successfully.</p> <p>Priorities for planning: Facilities, Board Communications, Institutional Planning and Goal Setting, Fundraising, Planning</p>	X	X	X	X		X
<p>Bima Baje, M.S. School Business Administrator Ms. Baje serves as SBA in various NJ charter schools with a variety of structures and demographics, thereby bringing substantial knowledge and experience. During her tenure at Link, the school has had clean audits and</p>	X		X			



Appendix ____: LCCS Leadership Team

Link's Talented Team	School Leadership, Administration and Governance	Staffing and Recruitment	Compliance, Budgeting, and Financial Management	Goal Setting and Performance Management	Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	School Culture
has worked closely with her and accountants to ensure compliance and sound fiscal management. Priorities for Planning: Compliance and Financial Management						
Leslie Baynes Chief Operating Officer Mrs. Baynes delivers strong fiscal management and stewardship while meeting the needs of students and the school. She also oversees the daily operations of the food program, security team, and building maintenance. Under her direction, the building was initially renovated to create engaging and dedicated space for instruction. The facility remains welcoming and conducive to learning because of her attention to purchasing. Resources are purchased thoughtfully so that students and teachers have the tools they need to be successful. Mrs. Baynes has demonstrated strong planning and effective management of a budget of \$2 million (as a private school) and \$5 million (as a public charter school). She is poised to be equally effective in this role with the growth of the school. Priorities for Planning: Budgeting and Financial Management; Facilities			X			
Kathleen Hester, Ed.S. Principal Ms. Hester joined Link a year before Link converted to a public charter school and brought 17 years of classroom experience in a diverse, high performing NJ district, plus prior experience in an urban Catholic high school. With additional leadership experience at the middle school	X	X		X	X	X

Link's Talented Team	School Leadership, Administration and Governance	Staffing and Recruitment	Compliance, Budgeting, and Financial Management	Goal Setting and Performance Management	Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	School Culture
<p>level and as a school testing coordinator, she supported the entry for Link into statewide assessments and public school operations. Additionally her unwavering support and advocacy for the instructional staff has supported an environment of strong collaboration between administration and teaching/support staff. Ms. Hester is now ready to begin a one-year transition of middle school principal duties to an assistant principal who will then assume the middle school principal role in 2021-2022. This will provide deep exposure and gradual responsibility in the areas of supervision, instruction, parent relations, discipline, scheduling, assessment and much more.</p> <p>Priorities for Planning: Program development, Recruitment/Hiring</p>						
<p>Christine Kelley-Kemple, Instructional Leader and Coach</p> <p>Mrs. Kelley-Kemple brought over 25 years of classroom experience in underserved communities when she joined LCCS six years ago. Since then she has contributed to an ongoing strengthening of the instructional team, providing thoughtful coaching to improve instruction, student experiences and ultimately outcomes. LCCS provided intensive training through the New Teacher Center that she has used throughout her work with Link teachers. Her modeling and the relationships she builds have now spurred an interest from some of our strongest teachers to become coaches. In addition to her strengths in general instructional practices, she is highly skilled and experienced with science and social studies curriculum and provides leadership in both areas.</p>		X		X	X	X

Link's Talented Team	School Leadership, Administration and Governance	Staffing and Recruitment	Compliance, Budgeting, and Financial Management	Goal Setting and Performance Management	Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	School Culture
Priorities for Planning: Professional Development/Teacher Training, Curriculum Development						
Danielle Perrotta, M.A. Instructional Leader and Coach/Math Specialist Ms. Perrotta joined Link in 2019 in part-time status and is moving our math initiative forward with purpose, as well as using her extensive classroom experience and coaching work to support all teachers. Ms. Perrotta brings teaching experience from NY and NJ schools, including a nearby higher performing diverse district. She is ready to expand her work next year to build out the elementary school math program, support teacher recruitment, and train the new team of K-1 teachers. Priorities for Planning: Professional Development/Teacher Training, Curriculum Development	X			X	X	X
PROPOSED LEADERSHIP FOR K-4 Detra DeNully, M.A. Dean of Students Ms. DeNully is in her third year at Link and she brings 10 plus years of knowledge and experience as an educator to a variety of areas that impact the school's overall success, including student discipline and instruction. Armed with classroom and leadership experience, she sees the intersect between instruction and discipline and supports a positive school culture and student achievement. Priorities for Planning: Ms. DeNully will further develop her instructional coaching skills and provide additional training to the		X		X	X	X

Link's Talented Team	School Leadership, Administration and Governance	Staffing and Recruitment	Compliance, Budgeting, and Financial Management	Goal Setting and Performance Management	Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	School Culture
Assistant Dean; professional development, teacher training						
<p>Greg Silver Admissions and High School Placement Director Mr. Silver has used his experience from Link Community School (the predecessor to LCCS) and Pride Academy (which he helped found and where he worked for a few years) to share the story of Link with prospective families and increasing enrollment each year for the past 6 years. With an unparalleled passion and commitment to place students in the high schools that best challenge and meet their needs, Mr. Silver works tirelessly to open doors and support the high school application process. Results have increased dramatically with the Class of 2019 earning \$6.5 million in scholarships/financial aid, up from \$1.4 million in 2014. Currently, placing 70+ students annually, he is poised to increase the placement for 100 graduates annually because of the deep relationships he fosters and the constant exploration of new opportunities.</p> <p>During the planning year, Mr. Silver will develop a full plan for enrollment as Kindergarten, 1st and 5th graders will be enrolled for the first few years. He will also develop a plan to increase high school placement opportunities and train someone to support the program.</p> <p>Priorities for Planning: Advertisement, student registration, opening up doors to additional high schools.</p>		Student Enrollment and High School Placement			X	

Link's Talented Team	School Leadership, Administration and Governance	Staffing and Recruitment	Compliance, Budgeting, and Financial Management	Goal Setting and Performance Management	Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	School Culture
<p>PROPOSED MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: Hannah Marie Kennedy, M.A. Educational Leadership Current School Culture Leader Mrs. Kennedy joined LCCS our first year as a public charter school and has contributed immensely to Link's culture over the 5+ years. She is a 7th grade History teacher so she has built up strong classroom experience and is adept at classroom management and relationship building with students, colleagues and families. She possesses the passion and diligence to lead and completed her masters in educational leadership.</p> <p>Priorities for Planning During the planning year, Mrs. Kennedy will serve as assistant principal of the middle school, gaining hands-on experience while being trained to step in as principal of the middle school the following year.</p>	X			X	X	X

K-8 Expansion Budget

LINK COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL									
Line		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24			
1	Enrollments								
2	District of Residence	129	158	246	289	331			
3	Non-Resident District	175	214	334	391	449			
4	Total Enrollment	304	372	580	680	780			
5									
6	Beginning Fund Balance	621,753	400,706	1,334,868	991,164	1,217,670			
7									
8	Revenues								
9	General Fund								
10		0							
11	Equalization/Local Levy Aid - Local Share	674,507	887,509	1,331,264	1,553,141	1,775,018			
12	Equalization/Local Levy Aid - State Share	3,293,917	4,334,101	6,501,151	7,584,677	8,668,202			
13	Total Equalization/Local Levy Aid (Lines 11,12)	3,968,424	5,221,610	7,832,415	9,137,818	10,443,220			
14	Categorical Aid								
15	Categorical Special Education Aid	181,539	238,867	358,301	418,017	477,734			
16	Categorical Security Aid	145,730	191,750	287,624	335,562	383,499			
17	Total Categorical Aid (Lines 15 and 16)	327,269	430,617	645,925	753,579	861,233			
18	Other State Revenue	FICA 164,994	194,189	301,287	354,968	398,129			
19	First Year Nonpublic Student Aid								
20	Adjustment Aid	767,296	1,009,600	1,514,400	1,766,800	2,019,200			
21	Other State Revenue								
22	Total Other State Aid (Lines 19 through 21)	932,290	1,203,789	1,815,687	2,121,768	2,417,329			
23	Other Revenue								
24	Total General Fund (Lines 13, 17, 22, 23)	5,227,983	6,856,016	10,294,027	12,013,165	13,721,782			
25	Restricted - Special Revenue Fund								
26	Revenue from State Sources:								
27	Source:								
28	Other:								
29	Total State Projects (Lines 27, 28):	0							
30	Revenue from Federal Sources:								
31	Source: NCLB	154,845	189,481	450,273	515,318	656,054			
32	Other: IDEA	58,708	71,840	170,717	219,383	248,737			
33	Total Federal Projects (Lines 31, 32):	213,553	261,321	620,990	734,700	904,790			

K-8 Expansion Budget

Line		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
34	Revenues from Other Restricted Sources					
35	Source: Newark Charter School Fund					
36	Source:					
37	Other:					
38	Total Other Sources (Lines 35, 36, 37):	0				
39	Total Special Revenue Fund (Lines 29, 33, 38)	213,553	261,321	620,990	734,700	904,790
40	Total Revenues (Lines 24,39)	5,441,536	7,117,337	10,915,017	12,747,865	14,626,573
41	Expenditures-General Fund					
42	Instruction					
43	Salaries of Teachers	2,077,867	2,182,925	3,350,083	4,010,535	4,564,233
44	Other Salaries for Instruction	-	-	-	-	-
45	Purchased Professional/Technical Services	347,600	436,000	897,100	1,081,217	1,226,519
46	Other Purchased Services	0	20,000	97,000	134,200	199,701
47	General Supplies	67,500	68,990	223,893	174,908	179,734
48	Textbooks	45,700	65,700	106,900	261,800	286,798
49	Miscellaneous Expense	10,000	10,000	65,000	67,400	94,650
50	Total Instructional Expense	2,548,667	2,783,615	4,819,976	5,730,050	6,551,634
51	Administrative					
52	Salaries - Administration	666,181	681,683	890,316	936,123	1,086,245
53	Salaries of Secretarial/Clerical Assistants	182,630	226,283	465,808	520,125	530,527
54	Total Benefit Costs	724,053	758,412	794,671	820,087	842,918
55	Purch. Professional/Tech.Serv.(Consultants)					
55.1	Legal costs	40,000	40,000	115,000	121,000	126,000
55.2	Other Purch. Professional/Tech Serv. (Consultants)	85,600	85,400	129,770	164,634	176,724
56	Other Purchased Services	67,000	68,800	97,800	97,800	112,800
57	Communications/Telephone	34,585	34,585	50,085	50,085	50,085
58	Supplies and Materials	7,000	7,000	15,200	17,840	19,280
59	Judgments Against Charter Schools					
60	Interest on Current Loans					
61	Interest for Lease Purchase Agreements					
62	Mortgage Payments-Interest					
63	Miscellaneous Expense	2,400	2,400	4,800	4,800	4,800
64	Total Administrative Expense	1,809,449	1,904,662	2,563,451	2,732,493	2,949,378

K-8 Expansion Budget

Line		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
65	Support Services					
66	Salaries	323,450	379,135	785,613	847,939	1,019,678
67	Purch. Professional/Tech. Serv.(Consultants)	60,000	72,000	199,200	261,120	296,654
68	Other Purchased Services	164,100	164,820	332,822	347,960	389,266
69	Rental of Land and Buildings	328,000	328,000	1,128,000	1,128,000	1,128,000
70	Insurance for property, liability and fidelity	63,363	63,673	112,109	112,464	112,629
71	Supplies and Materials	20,500	22,050	44,560	53,622	59,360
72	Transportation - Other than to/from school	0		-	-	-
73	Reserved for future use					
74	Energy Costs (Heat and Electricity)	76,500	76,500	153,000	153,000	153,000
75	Miscellaneous Expense	25,000	25,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
76	Total Support Services Expense	1,060,913	1,131,176	2,830,304	2,979,105	3,233,567
77	Capital Outlay					
78	Instructional Equipment	20,000	92,500	387,000	308,250	310,750
79	Noninstructional Equipment	10,000	10,000	37,000	36,750	39,000
80	Purchase of Land/Improvements					
81	Lease Purchase Agreements-Principal					
82	Mortgage Payments-Principal					
83	Building Purchase other than Lease Purchase					
84	Miscellaneous Expense					
85	Total Capital Outlay	30,000	102,500	424,000	345,000	349,750
86	Total General Fund (Lines 50, 54, 76, 85)	5,449,029	5,921,654	10,637,731	11,766,658	13,084,349
87	Expenditures-Special Revenue Fund					
88	Restricted /Special Revenues Programs					
89						
90	State Projects:					
91	Source:	-				
92	Other:	-				
93	Total State Projects:	-				
94						
95	Federal Projects:					
96	Source:	154,845	189,481	450,273	515,318	656,054
97	Other:	58,708	71,840	170,717	219,383	248,737
98	Total Federal Projects:	213,553	261,321	620,990	734,700	904,790

K-8 Expansion Budget

Line			2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24
99	Other Restricted Expenditures:										
100	Source:										
101	Source:										
102	Other:										
103	Total Other Sources:		0								
104	Total Special Revenue Fund (Lines 93, 98, 103)		213,553		261,321		620,990		734,700		904,790
105											
106	Total Expenditures (Lines 96, 104)		5,662,582		6,183,176		11,258,721		12,521,358		13,989,140
107											
108	Ending Fund Balance (Lines 6 + 40 - 106)		400,706		1,334,868		991,164		1,217,670		1,855,103
	Fund balance change				934,162		(343,704)		226,507		637,433

Board of Trustees Resolution for an Amendment Request

Resolution #112519-03

*Link Community Charter School
23 Pennsylvania Avenue
Newark, NJ 07114*

Subject of Resolution:

It is hereby resolved that the Board of Trustees of the Link Community Charter School approves the following request for an amendment to its charter as detailed in the attached letter request to the New Jersey Department of Education, Commissioner (copied to the four district superintendents of Link's region of residence and the Essex County Superintendent):

Option 1: To add grade levels Kindergarten through 4th grade, with 100 students in each grade and to increase enrollment in grades 6 to 8 to 100 students in each grade level, beginning in September, 2021

Option 2: To add grade levels Kindergarten through 4th grade, with 100 students in each grade level, beginning in September, 2021

Motion made by: Richard Marshall

Seconded by: Denise Smith

Tally of Votes:

Names:

Regina Covington: Absent

Richard Marshall: Yes

Brenda Daughtry: Yes

John Petrillo: Yes

Shawna Ebanks: Yes

Frances Purefoy: Yes

Susana Holguin-Veras: Yes

Denise Smith: Yes

I, Board Recording Secretary, certify that the above resolution was passed by a majority of a quorum of this Board of Trustees, as indicated above.

Signature: *Sharon F. Mechem* Date of Board Meeting: November 25, 2019



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PO Box 500
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

KIMBERLEY HARRINGTON
Commissioner

January 11, 2018

Ms. Kiyana Glass-Miller, President
Board of Trustees
Link Community Charter School
23 Pennsylvania Avenue
Newark, NJ 07114

Dear Ms. Glass-Miller:

Link Community Charter School (Link) opened in 2014 and is currently in its 4th year of operation. Link submitted its Renewal Application on August 15, 2017, and has been evaluated by the New Jersey Department of Education (Department) on its academic performance, fiscal viability, and operational stability. Through the renewal process, Link requested to increase enrollment from 72 to 80 students in each grade level 5-8 to serve a total of 320 students.

After a comprehensive review, pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-17* and *N.J.A.C. 6A:11-2.3(b)*, I am pleased to inform you that I am renewing Link for a period of five years through June 30, 2023. A Renewal Summary Report, which contains findings gathered from the comprehensive review of Link, is forthcoming. As demonstrated in the Renewal Summary Report, over the course of the last charter term, Link moved from summative Tier Rank 3 to Tier Rank 2 in academic performance, and preliminary results suggest that Link's overall performance increased again in 2016-2017; met standard on all rated Measures in the Fiscal Performance Framework, and met standard on most Indicators in the Organizational Performance Framework. Over the next charter term, I anticipate that Link will implement improvements to ensure continual compliance with all Performance Framework measures and indicators.

Based on the findings of the comprehensive review, I am also granting Link's expansion request. The chart below confirms Link's maximum approved enrollment in grades 5-8 for the region of residence of East Orange, Irvington, Newark and Orange.

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Ms. Kiyana Glass-Miller, President
Page 2
January 11, 2018

Grade Level	2017-2018 current maximum	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
K						
1						
2						
3						
4						
5	72	80	80	80	80	80
6	72	72	80	80	80	80
7	72	72	72	80	80	80
8	72	72	72	72	80	80
9						
10						
11						
12						
TOTAL	288	296	304	312	320	320

Be advised that if this expansion requires an additional facility, then the Board of Trustees must submit to the Commissioner an amendment request to add the new facility. Additionally, prior to occupying the new facility, a certificate of occupancy with an "I" use, a fire inspection report and a sanitary inspection certificate must be obtained, and representatives from the County Office of Education must complete a health and safety inspection of the facility.

Please accept my best wishes as you continue to serve the students of New Jersey and provide a quality public school option for families.

Sincerely,



Kimberley Harrington
Commissioner

KH/CSE/KC/JB/O:Accountability/Renewals/2017-18 Renewals/ Renewal Letters/Link Charter School Renewal

c: Colleen Schulz-Eskow

Katherine Czehut

Kevin Dehmer

Nicole Kane

Joseph Zarra

Christopher Cerf

Neely Hackett

Kevin West

Paula Howard



CHARTER AGREEMENT

This agreement is executed on this ____ day of _____ by and between the New Jersey Commissioner of Education and the New Jersey Department of Education (the "Department"), as the Commissioner's designees, (collectively, the "Authorizer"), and Link Community Charter School (the "Applicant(s)") (collectively, the "Parties") to operate the **LINK COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL** (the "School"), an independent and autonomous public school under the New Jersey Charter School Program Act, N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-1 *et seq.*

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS the State of New Jersey (the "State") enacted the Charter School Program Act, (as amended, the "Act") codified as N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-1 *et seq.*; and

WHEREAS pursuant to sections 18A:36A-3 and 18A:36A-4 of the Act, the Commissioner of Education (the "Commissioner") has the authority to approve applications to establish charter schools in the State and thereafter to enter into agreements with applicants setting forth the terms and conditions under which a charter school is to operate; and

WHEREAS the applicant(s) ("Applicant(s)") submitted to the Authorizer an application for establishment of the School pursuant to section 18A:36A-5 of the Act (together with any addenda, the "Application"); and

WHEREAS the original application was approved by the Commissioner of Education on February 15, 2014; and

WHEREAS the School's charter will be renewed on June 30, 2018; and

WHEREAS the "Application" shall herein be defined as the initial School application, all renewal applications, and all subsequent modifications; and

WHEREAS the Commissioner granted final Charter approval on or before July 15, 2014;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants, representations, warranties and agreements contained herein, the parties hereby agree as follows:

SECTION 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOL

1.1 Charter. This agreement (the "Charter"), which explicitly incorporates the terms of, and content set forth in, the Application, attached hereto as Exhibit A, shall be binding on the School and the Commissioner and shall be construed in accordance with all laws, rules and regulations applicable to New Jersey charter schools.

1.2 Effective Date: Term. This Charter shall take effect upon, and only upon, its execution by the Commissioner (the "Effective Date") pursuant to section 6A:11-2.1 of the New Jersey Administrative Code (the "Regulations"), and subject to any limitations imposed herein and any provision to delay the effective date set forth in this Charter. The Charter shall expire on June 30, 2018, unless earlier revoked, surrendered or renewed. The Commissioner may grant a five year renewal following the initial four year charter.

1.3 Planning Years and Prior Actions. The School shall continue to provide instruction in conformity with the schedule set forth in the Application. Such an extension shall be identified in an Amendment to this Charter and any conditions under which an extension is offered shall be set forth there.

SECTION 2. OPERATION OF SCHOOL

2.1 Mission Statement. The School shall operate under the mission statement set forth in the Application:

Link Community Charter School will provide an outstanding middle school education for learners of all academic abilities by developing the mind, body and spirit through a strong curriculum, experiential learning, immersion in the arts, and an enduring commitment to Core Values; this will allow them to be successful in competitive high schools and become responsible and resourceful citizens who give back to others.

2.2 Age: Grade Range: Number of Students. The School shall provide instruction to pupils in such ages, grades and numbers in each year of operation under the Charter as is set forth in the Application (the "Projected Enrollment Structure") until Renewal, and shall obtain the prior written permission of the Authorizer for variances from those terms in grade range and total maximum approved enrollment.

2.3 Admissions: Enrollment: Attendance. The School shall have in place and implement comprehensive policies for admissions, enrollment and attendance, which such policies shall be approved by the School's governing board (the "Board of Trustees") and shall be consistent with applicable law. Such policies shall provide in detail the procedures and practices utilized by the School in regards to admission, enrollment, attendance and withdrawal, including, *inter alia*, the period in which applications for admission shall be timely, how to obtain an application for admission, the practices in operating the random selection process, the maintenance of a wait list, the implementation of the preferences required by law. Such changes must be consistent with applicable law and regulations, and the School must report such changes to the Authorizer, upon the Authorizer's request, and as part of its annual report as required by

section 18A:36A-16 of the Act, section 6A:11-2.2 of the Regulations, and further defined in paragraph 6.1 of this Charter. The School shall utilize reasonable outreach and marketing measures to make potential applicants aware of opportunities for enrollment at the School, including, but not limited to, seeking the enrollment of a cross section of the school-age population, consistent with the requirements of section 18A:36A-8e. The Authorizer, upon a finding that the outreach and marketing measures taken by the School are inconsistent with applicable law or the representations made by the School in the Application and/or other submissions to the Authorizer, may require the School to take further action, including but not limited to, requiring the School to extend its enrollment period, delay or void its random selection process, and/or conduct further specified outreach and marketing steps.

2.4 Educational Program. The School shall implement and provide educational programs that meet or exceed the performance standards of the Authorizer and the goals, and measures of progress towards those goals, of the School as set forth in the Application and in other submissions to the Authorizer.

2.5 Evaluation of Students. The School shall implement student assessment requirements applicable to other public schools and administer State examinations to the same extent such examinations are required of other public school students. In addition, the School shall supplement those assessment tools with any other assessment tools required by the terms of its program design, as set forth in the Application.

2.6 Performance Framework.

2.6.1 The Performance Framework shall be incorporated into the Charter as Exhibit B. The Performance Framework shall supersede and replace any and all assessment measures, educational goals and objectives, financial operations metrics, and organizational performance metrics set forth in the Application and not explicitly incorporated into the Performance Framework. The specific terms, form and requirements of the Performance Framework, including any required indicators, measures, metrics, and targets, are maintained and disseminated by the Authorizer and will be binding on the School. Material amendments to the Performance Framework shall require approval by the Authorizer.

2.6.2. The Authorizer shall monitor and periodically report on the School's progress in relation to the indicators, measures, metrics and targets set out in the Performance Framework. Such reporting shall take place at least annually.

2.6.3. The School's performance in relation to the indicators, measures, metrics and targets set forth in the Performance Framework shall provide the basis upon which the Authorizer will decide whether to renew the School's Charter at the end of the Charter term.

2.6.4 The parties intend that, where this Charter references or is contingent upon state or federal laws, that they be bound by any applicable modifications or amendments to such laws upon the effective date of said modifications or amendments. The specific terms, form and requirements of the Performance Framework may be modified or amended to the extent required

to align with changes to applicable state or federal accountability requirements as set forth in law or other circumstances that make assessment based on the existing Performance Framework requirements impracticable. In the event that such modifications or amendments are required, the Department will use best efforts to apply expectations for school performance in a manner as consistent as possible with those set forth in the Performance Framework.

2.7 School Calendar: Days and Hours of Operation. The days and hours of operation of the School shall be determined by the School at its discretion subject to the following restrictions:

- (a) The School shall implement the calendar and days and hours of operation as set forth in the Application. In no event shall the School provide less instructional time during a school year than is required of other public schools with instructional time to be divided in generally equal amounts over no less than one hundred and eighty (180) days.
- (b) To allow parents to determine whether the School's program is appropriate for their child(ren), the School shall, in each year of the Charter, determine the days and hours of operation of the School for the next school year by May 15 of the then current school year and shall make such information readily available to parents seeking to enroll their child(ren) in or return their child(ren) to the School and provide a copy of such material to the Authorizer. The School shall not thereafter for the next school year make any material changes to the days and hours of operation of the School from those determined on each May 15 date that have the effect of shortening the number of days of instruction or hours in which such instruction is provided without obtaining the prior written permission of the Authorizer, it being understood that such permission shall not be forthcoming except for good cause shown.

2.8 Student Disciplinary Code. The School shall maintain written rules and procedures for student discipline, including guidelines for suspension and expulsion, and shall disseminate those procedures to students and parents. Such guidelines and procedures must be consistent with applicable law including, but not limited to, requirements for due process, provision of alternative instruction and federal laws and regulations governing the discipline and placement of students with disabilities. In the first year of operation, the discipline policy must be consistent with the discipline policy outlined in the Application and adopted by the Board of Trustees following initial approval of the Application. Thereafter, if the School seeks modifications to the student disciplinary code, it will be required to notify the Authorizer of such change.

2.9 Code of Ethics. The School, its trustees, officers and employees shall abide by a code of ethics for the School, which must be consistent with the requirements of the School Ethics Act and include standards with respect to disclosure of conflicts of interest regarding any matter brought before the Board of Trustees regardless of whether the matter may involve for-profit or not-for-profit entity or transaction. The School shall disseminate the code in written form to each of its trustees, officers and employees.

2.10 Governance; Board of Trustees; By-Laws. The School shall be governed by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees of a charter school shall have the authority to decide matters related to the operations of the school including budgeting, curriculum, and operating procedures, subject to the school's charter, and shall have final authority for the academic performance of the School. Nothing herein shall prevent the Board of Trustees from delegating decision-making authority for policy and operational decisions to officers, employees and agents of the School but ultimate responsibility for and oversight of any such delegated authority shall remain at all times with the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall be established and operate pursuant to the following requirements and restrictions:

- (a) The Board of Trustees shall operate pursuant to the by-laws of the School whether such by-laws be those initially submitted to the Authorizer or as amended pursuant to subparagraph (b) of this paragraph 2.10 (initially or as amended, the "By-laws"), as well as the governance provisions of the Act, the Regulations and other applicable law.
- (b) The Board of Trustees shall have as its members such total number of Trustees and shall reserve seats on the Board of Trustees for such specified members or constituent groups in such numbers as is set forth in the Application and By-laws, as may be amended. Board of Trustees members ("Trustees") shall comply with the relevant provisions of the School Ethics Act, 18A:12-23, and related regulations, 6A:28.

2.11 Complaint Policy. The School shall maintain a complaint policy to receive and handle complaints brought pursuant to section 18A:36A-15 of the Act. . The School shall have the power to amend the complaint policy in any way it deems necessary and appropriate, so long as, such amendments are approved by the Board of Trustees and are consistent with applicable law and due process, and reported as part of the School's Annual Report as required by paragraph 6.1 of this Charter. A copy of the School's complaint policy shall be distributed to the parents and/or guardians of students enrolled in the School and made readily available to all others requesting a copy. Upon resolution of a complaint, the School shall provide to the complainant:

- (a) its written determination and any remedial action thereto; and
- (b) for complaints relating to the provisions of the Act, a written notice to the complainant that he or she may appeal the determination of the Board of Trustees to the Commissioner, who shall investigate and respond to the complainant; and
- (c) a copy of the School's grievance policies.

2.12 Health Services. The School shall provide such health services as are set forth in the Application or their equivalent, so long as the services provided meet applicable law.

2.13 Food Services. The School shall provide appropriate food services consistent with or equal to those outlined in the Application.

2.14 Facility; Location. The building(s) in which the School is to be located shall be known as the school facility (the "School Facility"). The School shall be located at 23 Pennsylvania Avenue, Newark, NJ 07114. The School shall take such actions as are necessary to ensure that the Facility Agreement, licenses and certificates are valid and in force at all times that the Charter is in effect.

2.15 Change in Location. To change the physical location of the School Facility or obtain additional buildings for the School Facility within the same school district or obtain additional space in a building it already occupies, the School must follow the Amendment process as described in section 6A:11-2.6 of the New Jersey Administrative Code.

2.16 Monitoring and Oversight. The School and the Board of Trustees acknowledge that the Authorizer, or its authorized agents, have the right to visit, announced or unannounced, examine into and inspect the School and its records. To permit the Authorizer to fulfill this oversight function under the Act and ensure that the School is in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations and the terms and conditions of this Charter, the School agrees to abide by the requirements and activities that the Authorizer will utilize to exercise its monitoring responsibility.

2.17 Establishment of an Escrow Account. The School and the Board of Trustees agree to establish an escrow account of no less than \$75,000 to pay for legal and audit expenses and any outstanding pension benefits that would be associated with a dissolution should it occur. The School may accrue the full amount of the escrow account over a five year period.. The School's failure to provide for the \$75,000 by the end of the five year period shall be deemed a material violation of the charter agreement.

SECTION 3. SPECIAL EDUCATION

3.1 Provision of Services. The School shall provide services and accommodations to students with disabilities as set forth in the Application and in accordance with the any relevant policies thereafter adopted, as well as with all applicable provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1401 *et seq.*) (the "IDEA"), the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101 *et seq.*) (the "ADA") and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794) ("Section 504") and all applicable regulations promulgated pursuant to such federal laws. This includes providing services to attending students with disabilities in accordance with the individualized education program ("IEP") recommended by a student's IEP team. The School shall comply with all applicable provisions

of section 18A:46-1 *et seq.* and section 6A:11-4.8 of the Regulations concerning the provision of services to students with disabilities.

3.2 Funding and Placement Outside the School. The School is authorized to receive from a local school district direct payment of any federal or state aid attributable to a student with a disability attending the School. Consistent with section 18A:36A of the Act, the fiscal responsibility for any student currently enrolled in or determined to require a private day or residential school shall remain with the district of residence. Within fifteen (15) days of the signing of an IEP, the School shall provide notice to the district of residence of any IEP which results in a private day or residential placement. The district of residence may challenge the placement within thirty (30) days in accordance with the procedures established by law.

SECTION 4. PERSONNEL

4.1 Personnel Policies; Staff Responsibilities. The School shall make available to the Authorizer in written form its hiring and personnel policies and procedures, including the qualifications required by the School in the hiring of teachers, school administrators and other school employees as well as a description of staff responsibilities.

4.2 Instructional Providers. The School shall employ, or otherwise utilize in, instructional positions only those individuals who are certified in accordance with the requirements applicable to other public schools, or who are otherwise qualified to teach under section 6A:9 *et seq.* of the Regulations, and applicable federal law including the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. For purposes of this section, "instructional positions" means all those positions involving duties and responsibilities that, if otherwise undertaken in the New Jersey public schools, would require teacher certification.

4.3 Paraprofessionals. Paraprofessionals employed by the School for instructional purposes must meet all credentialing requirements imposed under section 6A:9 *et al.* and by applicable federal law.

4.4 Background Checks: Fingerprinting. The School shall maintain and implement procedures for conducting background checks (including a fingerprint check for a criminal record) of, and appointing on an emergency conditional basis (if applicable), all school employees and prospective employees (whether part or full time) of the School, as well as any individual who has regular access to the students enrolled in the school (including, but not limited to, employees and agents of any company or organization which is a party to a contract to provide services to the School) to the extent required by applicable law, including sections 18A:6-7.1, *et seq.*, and 18A:30-19.1. Consistent with section 6A:11-2.1 of the Regulations, the School shall provide to the Authorizer in advance of final charter approval and on a rolling basis thereafter, an Authorization for Emergent Hiring Pending Completion of Criminal History Check form or Criminal History Approval letter for each employee of the School. The School may, but is not required to, conduct any and all other background checks permitted by law.

4.5 Collective Bargaining. In all cases when the School is a party to a collective bargaining agreement, the School must provide a copy thereof to the Authorizer including any extensions and side letters. In addition, the School will comply with the requirements of section 18A:36A-14 of the Act and other applicable law with regard to participation in collective bargaining units and agreements.

4.6 Leave and Pension Payments. Consistent with section 18A:36A-14(d), public school employees may request a leave of absence of up to three (3) years from the local board of education or State district superintendent in order to work in the School. Employees on a leave of absence shall remain in and continue to make contributions to, their retirement plan during the time of leave and shall be enrolled in health benefits plan of the district in which the School is located. The School shall make any required employer's contribution to the district's health benefits plan.

SECTION 5. FINANCIAL OPERATIONS OF SCHOOL

5.1 Management and Financial Controls. The School shall at all times maintain appropriate governance and managerial procedures and financial controls; including but not limited to the identification of a School Business Administrator, the resources and professional assistance needed to conduct an annual audit, and carry out the relevant requirements of section 6A:11-2.1(h) by June 30 in advance of opening, as part of the preparedness measures for new schools.

5.2 Funding and Timing of Payments. The School will receive payments as set forth in section 18A:36A-12 of the Act. Consistent with section 6A:23A of the Finance and Business Service Code, the district of residence and non-resident district(s) shall initiate payments to the School based on projected enrollment, as set forth in section 6A:23-9.4(a). Those districts shall pay directly to the School the local share per pupil for the specific grade level at the school rate pursuant to section 6A:23-9.1 and 9.4 in twelve (12) equal installments starting on July 15 and thereafter on the 15th of each month. The district of residence and non-resident district(s) shall also pay directly to the School additional categories of funds identified at section 6A:23-9.5(k)(3) on the schedule set forth there.

5.3 Financial Statements: Interim Reports. All financial statements that the School is required to prepare shall be in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. During each year of operation, the School shall prepare and submit to the County Offices of Education within thirty (30) days of the end of each quarter (except June 30th) of its fiscal year the Board Secretary's report for that preceding quarter.

5.4 Audits. The School shall retain an independent certified public accountant or certified public accounting firm licensed in the State to perform annually an audit of the School's annual financial statements. The independent audit of the School's financial statements must be performed in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, as well as any additional requirements and guidelines provided by the Authorizer. The audited financial statements must be submitted to the Authorizer by December 5 of each year. In addition, and

pursuant to the same timetable, the School must require its independent certified public accountant to issue a report on compliance with laws, regulations, contracts and grants and on internal controls over financial reporting, based on its audit of the financial statements. The School must submit this report to the Authorizer together with a corrective plan addressing any weaknesses or problems identified in the planning and performance of the audit. The corrective plan must address each suggestion for consideration of management contained in the compliance report and include a timetable that identifies the date by which each corrective step will have been completed.

5.5 Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the School shall begin on July 1 of each calendar year of the term of this Charter and shall end on June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.

5.6 Annual Budget and Cash Flow Projections. The School shall prepare and provide to the Authorizer a copy of its annual budget and cash flow projection for each fiscal year by no later than March 30 of the immediately preceding fiscal year. In the event that the October 15 enrollment count or other budgetary changes differs in any material respect from the budget provided, the School shall provide a revised annual budget and cash flow projection for each fiscal year in which it provides instruction. The annual budget and cash flow projection shall be in such form and electronic format as prescribed and disseminated by the Authorizer.

SECTION 6. REPORTS

6.1 Annual Reports. No later than August 1 following a school year in which the school is in operation, the School, pursuant to section 6A:11-2.2 of the Regulations, shall submit to the Authorizer, the respective county superintendent of schools, and the district board(s) of education or State district superintendent of the district of residence of a charter school, an Annual Report setting forth the academic program and performance of the School for the preceding school year. The School shall also make the Annual Report available to parents or guardians of the students enrolled in the School. The Annual Report shall be in such form as shall be prescribed by the Commissioner and shall, at a minimum, address the mission, goals and objectives of its charter as measured against the Performance Frameworks and provide evidence of the school's compliance with applicable statutes and regulations

6.2 Additional Documentation. The district board(s) of education or Executive County Superintendent(s) of the district of residence of the School may submit comments regarding the Annual Report to the Commissioner by October 1.

6.3 Financial Reports. The School shall provide the financial reports required by this Charter pursuant to the terms and dates specified therein.

SECTION 7. OTHER COVENANTS AND WARRANTIES

7.1 Compliance with Laws and Regulations. The School shall operate at all times in accordance with the Act and other applicable laws, rules and regulations and shall meet the same health and safety, civil rights, and student assessment requirements as are applicable to other public schools, except as otherwise set forth in the Act.

7.2 Nonsectarian Status. The School shall be nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices and all other operations. The School shall not be wholly or in part under the control or direction of any religious denomination.

7.3 Open Public Records Act and Open Public Meetings Act. The School shall maintain and implement policies in order to ensure that it is in compliance with the Open Public Records Act and the Open Public Meetings Act and any corresponding regulations.

7.4 Non-discrimination. The School shall not discriminate against any student, employee or any other person on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender (except with respect to single-sex schools), or disability or any other ground that would be unlawful if done by any other public school. It shall take all steps necessary to ensure that discrimination does not occur, as required by federal civil rights law.

7.5 Transactions with Affiliates. The School shall not, directly or indirectly, enter into or permit to exist any transaction (including the purchase, sale, lease or exchange of any property or the rendering of any service) with any affiliate of the School, any member past or present of the Board of Trustees or any employee past or present of the School, or any immediate family member of the foregoing individuals, unless:

- (a) the terms of such transaction (considering all the facts and circumstances) are no less favorable to the School than those that could be obtained at the time from a person that is not such an affiliate, member or employee or an individual related thereto; *and*
- (b) the involved Trustee, officer or employee must recuse him/herself from voting on or deciding any matters related to such transaction.

SECTION 8. RENEWAL; REMEDIAL PLANS; TERMINATION

8.1 Renewal Notice. No later than October 15 in the calendar year prior to expiration of the Charter, the School may provide to the Commissioner, the respective county superintendent of schools, and the district board(s) of education or State district superintendent(s) of the district of residence of the charter school, an application to renew the Charter in accordance with section 18A:36A-17 (the "Renewal Application"). The Renewal

Application shall conform to the Authorizer's requirements, including those set forth at 6A:11-2.3 of the Regulations.

8.2 Denial of Renewal. In the event that the Renewal Application is not approved, then the parties to the Charter shall fulfill their respective obligations hereunder to the end of the term of this Charter, and the School shall follow the procedures for dissolution established by the Authorizer.

8.3 Grounds for Termination or Revocation. The Commissioner may revoke the Charter pursuant to any and all statutory and regulatory authority conferred upon the Commissioner.

8.4 Appeal Process. Consistent with section 6A:11-2.5 of the Regulations, the School may file an appeal according to section 6A:4-2.5 of the Regulations.

8.5 Dissolution. In the event of termination of the Charter, whether prematurely or otherwise, the School shall establish and follow procedures consistent with those articulated by the Authorizer as set forth in the New Jersey Charter School Dissolution Plan attached as Exhibit C.

SECTION 9. MISCELLANEOUS

9.1 Disclaimer of Liability. The Parties acknowledge that the School is not operating as the agent, or under the direction and control, of, the Authorizer except as required by law or this Charter, and that the Authorizer does not assume any liability for any loss or injury resulting from:

- (a) the acts and omissions of the School, its directors, trustees, agents or employees; or
- (b) the use and occupancy of the building or buildings, occupied by the School, or any matter in connection with the condition of such building or buildings; or
- (c) any debt or contractual obligation incurred by the School.

The School acknowledges that it is without authority to extend the faith and credit of the Authorizer to any third party.

9.2 Governing Law. This Charter shall be governed by, subject to and construed under the laws of the State of New Jersey without regard to its conflicts of laws provisions.

9.3 Waiver. No waiver of any breach of this Charter shall be held as a waiver of any other or subsequent breach.

9.4 Counterparts; Signature by Facsimile. This Charter may be signed in counterparts, which shall together constitute the original Charter. Signatures received by facsimile by either of the parties shall have the same effect as original signatures.

9.5 Revision. This Charter may be revised only by written consent of the parties hereto and, in the case of material revisions, only pursuant to section 6A:11-2.6 of the Regulations.

9.6 Assignment. This Charter may not be assigned or delegated by the Applicant(s) without the Authorizer's express written approval.

9.7 Notices. Any notice, demand, request or submission from one party to any other party or parties hereunder shall be deemed to have been sufficiently given or served for all purposes if and as of the date, it is delivered by hand, overnight courier, facsimile (with confirmation), by electronic mail as an attachment thereto with an valid electronic signature or an electronic image of a physical signature (.pdf format) or within three (3) business days of being sent by registered or certified mail, postage prepaid, to the relevant parties.

9.8 Severability. In the event that any provision of this Charter or the Application shall be determined to be invalid, unlawful, or unenforceable to any extent, the remainder of this Charter and the application of such provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is determined to be invalid, unlawful or unenforceable, shall not be affected thereby, and each remaining provision of this Charter shall continue to be valid and may be enforced to the fullest extent permitted by law.

9.9 Entire Charter. The Charter supersedes and replaces any and all prior agreements and understandings between the Authorizer and the Applicant(s). To the extent that any conflict or incompatibility exists between the Application and the other terms of this Charter, such other terms of this Charter shall control.

9.10 Construction. This Charter shall be construed fairly as to both parties and not in favor of or against either party, regardless of which party prepared the Charter.

9.11 Ratification. The Board of Trustees of the School shall pass a board resolution acknowledging the terms and conditions of this charter as agreed to by the signature of the Board President.

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION

Date

By: David C. Hesse

Title: Acting Commissioner

LINK COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

Ad D Lacey 11/14/14
Date

By: Andrew D. Lacey

President, Board of Trustees:

Date of Board resolution: 11/10/14

Link Community Charter School
Delivery Confirmation

Re: Submission of Request for Amendment to Charter

Delivered to:

Roger Léon
Superintendent
Newark Public Schools
765 Broad Street
Newark, NJ 07102

Recipient

Name (print):

Signature:

Date Received: 11.27.19

Time:

Joan Harvey
Joan Harvey
12:31pm

Link Community Charter School
Delivery Confirmation

Re: Submission of Request for Amendment to Charter

Delivered to:

Dr. Kevin R. West

Superintendent

East Orange Public Schools

199 4th Avenue

East Orange, NJ 07017

Recipient

Name (print): Mary Fayton

Signature: Mary Fayton / Supt. office

Date Received: 11/27/19

Time: 4:20 pm

Link Community Charter School
Delivery Confirmation

Re: Submission of Request for Amendment to Charter

Delivered to:
Mr. Gerald Fitzhugh II
Superintendent
Orange Public Schools
451 Lincoln Avenue
Orange, NJ 07050

Recipient

Name (print): Gerald Fitzhugh II, Ed. D.
Signature: Gerald Fitzhugh II, Ed. D.

Date Received:

11/27/19

Time: 1:02

Link Community Charter School
Delivery Confirmation

Re: Submission of Request for Amendment to Charter

Delivered to:

Dr. Neely Hackett

Superintendent

Irvington Public Schools

One University Place, 4th Floor

Irvington, NJ 07111

Recipient

Name (print): BRENDa Anderson

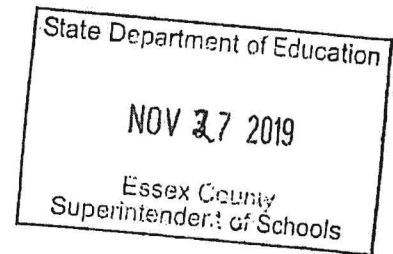
Signature: 

Date Received: 11/27/19

Time: 1:22 PM

**Link Community Charter School
Delivery Confirmation**

Re: Submission of Request for Amendment to Charter



Delivered to:
Joseph Zarro
Interim Executive County Superintendent
Essex County Office of Education
Leroy Smith Public Safety Building
60 Nelson Place, 1st floor South
Newark, NJ 07102-1501

Recipient

Name (print): JOSEPH ZARRO

Signature: 

Date Received: 11/27/19

Time: 12:55

Re: Request for Amendment of Charter, December 2019 Submission

Dear Ms. Bunt,

I am grateful for the opportunity to consider another enrollment option to support the charter amendment request submitted by Link Community Charter School on December 1, 2019. We have taken the time over the past four days to closely examine multiple enrollment plans and multi-year projections, as well as to continue to reach out to the districts we serve. I am pleased to share a third option for an increase in enrollment and to provide an update on communications with our largest sending district.

After reaching out to both local officials and the Superintendent of Newark Public Schools (NPS) regarding our plans to launch a Kindergarten to 4th grade program, we are pleased to share the attached communication capturing the Superintendent's position to NOT oppose our application for amendment. We will continue to communicate with Newark Superintendent Roger León over the coming weeks and months to further opportunities for collaboration.

I respectfully ask the Office of Charter and Renaissance Schools and the Commissioner of Education to consider an additional enrollment plan (option 3) for Link Community Charter School:

Table 1. Link Enrollment Plan: Option 3			
Grade	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023 Renewal Year
Kindergarten		100	100
1 st Grade	100	100	100
2 nd Grade		100	100
3 rd Grade			100
4 th Grade			
5 th Grade	80	80	80
6 th Grade	80	80	80
7 th Grade	80	80	80
8 th Grade	72	80	80
Total Enrollment	412	620	720

Option 3, as outlined above, allows us to meet our goal to serve students at a younger age in order to significantly reduce the gaps in achievement and exposure that we observe with our 5th graders as they currently enter Link Community Charter School. Option 3 also allows us to lighten the impact in year one of an increase in enrollment to the districts we serve while maximizing our current facility, before fully building out a second school facility to meet the needs of additional new grade levels.

We value the Department's review of Link Community Charter School's request as Link stands apart in Newark's educational landscape:

1. 50 Year Partnership with NPS and Commitment to the Community-Founded in 1969 as a community school, Link is the charter school with the longest tenure in Newark, demonstrating a relentless commitment to the youth of the city and surrounding urban communities. Throughout its 50 years (comprising both private and public educational structures), Link has partnered with Newark Public Schools through countless principals, guidance counselors and teachers to offer young people an

alternative to a traditional district school. We look forward to continuing our partnership and strengthening collaboration.

2. *Positive Student Outcomes*-Link has proven its commitment to results for all learners:
 - a. Upward trajectory demonstrating stronger growth with PARCC/NJSLA English language arts (ELA) and math, year over year, as compared to both sending districts and the state
 - b. Positive trajectory for both graduating cohorts to date who completed Link's four year program (Classes of 2019 and 2018), setting them on a path for future achievement
 - c. Strong achievement in ELA, outperforming districts and exceeding the state in multiple grade levels as well as middle school average (grades 5-8)
3. *Opening Doors for Students to Exemplary/Competitive High Schools*-Link is proud to deliver strong options to families for both Newark Magnet High Schools and Private High Schools throughout the Northeast through decades of strong admissions and a remarkable record of high school scholarships/financial aid reaching \$6.5 million in 2019. Link graduates enter Newark Magnet High Schools, as well as other competitive high schools, confident and academically ready to succeed and positively contribute to and enrich their new school communities.
4. *Alternative Educational Environment that Meets Student Needs*-Recognizing that one school setting does not fit all students, Link delivers a community school with a small school environment and a positive, supportive culture. Students feel connected to one another and to the teachers and staff. Parents are involved and supportive. All learners are successful.

Furthermore, Link's enrollment reflects a diverse representation from our four sending districts-Newark, Irvington, East Orange and Orange, thereby limiting the impact on our largest district of NPS considerably. With less than 40% of Link's students currently living in Newark and the real prospect of continuing increases in enrollment from the three other districts where there are fewer choices for families, Link's phased-in enrollment options can be implemented with limited impact on Newark's overall enrollment and financial outlook.

Link Community Charter School is grateful for the opportunity to serve our families and looks forward to the possibility of strengthening outcomes through expansion to lower grades. Please contact me if you have any questions or wish to further discuss our proposed enrollment plans.

February 18, 2020

Mr. Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D.
Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Education
PO Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500

Re: Request for Reconsideration, Amendment of Charter, December 2019 Submission

Dear Commissioner Repollet,

Thank you for responding to our request for amendment of the Link Community Charter School (LCCS) charter. As you are aware, we are pursuing school growth in order to begin the journey with our students during the critical foundational elementary school years. We have reviewed your response and appreciated your encouragement to submit a request pending changes to the fiscal impact on the district. We have identified a new plan that significantly reduces the fiscal impact from our initial enrollment plan options while continuing to support LCCS' goal to begin the Link educational journey in kindergarten. We are therefore pleased to submit this request for re-consideration.

I respectfully ask the Office of Charter and Renaissance Schools and the Commissioner of Education to consider the following revised enrollment plan for Link Community Charter School:

Grade	Table 1. Link Enrollment Plan (Revised)		
	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023 Renewal Year
Kindergarten	50	50	50
1 st Grade	50	50	50
2 nd Grade		50	50
3 rd Grade			50
4 th Grade			
5 th Grade	50	50	50
6 th Grade	80	50	50
7 th Grade	80	80	50
8 th Grade	72	80	80
Total Enrollment	382	410	430

Link Community Charter School is currently approved to have 80 students in each grade level for a total school enrollment of 320 by school year 2021-2022. The new plan captured above seeks to gradually add grade levels with 50 students in each grade, while gradually reducing the size of the existing middle school grades. As the

previously submitted plans sought to maintain current grades at a minimum of 80 students each, the addition of Kindergarten to grade 4 necessitated a second facility. Grade sizes of 100 were necessary to maintain the second facility and meet the needs of all learners. By decreasing the middle school grade levels to 50 (over four years), LCCS can add the Kindergarten to 4th grade program in the current facility, providing a sustainable plan for growth for Link. This new plan was arrived at after very careful consideration of the school's mission, long term strategic goals and student need. Reducing the current middle school enrollment was frankly a difficult decision and was ultimately selected after consideration of various models.

With approval for this new plan, Link would ultimately have 50 students in each grade level, Kindergarten through 8th, for a total of 450 students at full K-8 enrollment. This would mean an additional 130 students over the course of four years as compared to our initial plan to add 500 students during the same time period.

In light of the financial impact on the District of Newark and concern around enrollment saturation, we have taken time to reevaluate growth in keeping with our primary objective to add an elementary school. Our revised enrollment plan addresses both areas raised in your response and mitigates any impact. While this request is specifically for growth up until LCCS' next renewal, given the concerns raised, we thought it prudent to look both to the short term (up to renewal) and the long term (at full enrollment) to determine such impact on Newark. Below is what we found.

Impact at full enrollment (130 additional students)

- At full expansion (SY2023-2024), we would have a total of 450 students, adding 130 seats to our approved max enrollment of 320.
- At most, the proposed full expansion of 130 seats (with the possibility of 100% coming from Newark) would amount to less than 0.5% of the 27,000 allocated charter seats in Newark. This is a negligible amount of growth with limited impact on charter enrollment overall. Even with all 130 additional students coming from Newark, the financial impact would be less than the first proposed plans and it would be gradual.
- The reality is that LCCS' enrollment is spread primarily over four (4) sending districts (Newark, Irvington, East Orange and Orange) so the impact on Newark (and each of the other districts) would be much lower. Using our current district allocation, we can project that the makeup of our additional seats would be as follows:

Districts' Current % of Total Link Enrollment	Table 2. Projected Enrollment by district			
	Current (2019- 2020) Enrollment of 304	2020-2021 Total Approved Enrollment of 382	2022-2023 Renewal Year Total Approved Enrollment of 430	2023-2024 Full Growth Total Approved Enrollment of 450
Newark (39.5%)	120	151	170	178
Irvington (32.5%)	99	124	140	146
East Orange (15%)	45	57	65	68
Orange (7%)	22	27	30	32
Other Districts (6%)	18	23	25	27
Total	304	382	430	450

As the chart on the previous page demonstrates, the increase in enrollment for the District of Newark will be minimal, thus limiting the financial impact and saturation impact. The same is true for the other three sending districts.

Impact at renewal (110 additional students)

- At the time of LCCS's next renewal (SY2022-2023), we would have a total of 430 students, adding 110 seats above our current approved max of 320.
- Using our current residential ratio, under this new enrollment plan, approximately 170 students would come from Newark Public Schools, across multiple schools, at renewal in 2022-2023; this is an increase of 50 students from Newark Public Schools (NPS) over the current enrollment.
- In the first year of growth (2020-2021), approximately 151 students would come from Newark (only 31 more than our current enrollment).

As a mission driven school for 50 years, we are uniquely committed to placing students in competitive high schools. We work to prepare students for challenging and supportive high schools in and around Newark. Therefore, Link does not intend to continue growth into the high school level. We will continue to nurture students who will enter Newark's magnet high schools (approximately 25% of graduates annually) as we have for decades, and we welcome additional ways we can collaborate with the district.

We also wish to update some information in the Public Comment and Demand section of the response to our request. Please note that Link Community Charter School submitted letters of support from NJ Assemblyman Jamel Holley, Township of Orange Mayor Dwayne D. Warren, Newark School of the Arts, FarrEducation, and NJ Children's Foundation. We also received positive feedback from Orange Superintendent Gerald Fitzhugh, II and New Jersey Senator Teresa Ruiz during meetings with them. Finally, we shared a letter capturing a communication from Superintendent Roger Leon that he would not oppose Link's planned growth.

We understand and respect the financial position that the Newark Public Schools District is in and worked hard to find a plan that allows us both to grow and meet our school's goals, while supporting the District.

Link Community Charter School is grateful for the opportunity to submit an additional plan that changes the fiscal impact on the district. Please contact me if you have any questions or wish to further discuss our proposed enrollment plan at mparadiso@linkschool.org or 973-642-0529.

Sincerely,

Maria Pilar Paradiso
Head of School

Enclosures:
Confirmation of Receipt from Superintendents and NJDOE Staff

Cc: Director of Office of Charter and Renaissance School Julie Bunt
Deputy Chief of Staff Colleen Schulz-Eskow
Superintendent, Essex County, Joe Zarra
Superintendent, Newark Public Schools, Roger León
Superintendent, Irvington Public Schools, Dr. Neely Hackett
Superintendent, East Orange Public Schools, Kevin R. West
Superintendent, Orange Public Schools, Dr. Gerald Fitzhugh, II