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Summary Sheet

Name of applicant:	TransCenter for Youth, Inc.
Address of applicant:	1749 N. 16 th Street Milwaukee, WI 53205
Phone number of applicant:	414-933-7895
Name of contact person:	Daniel Grego, Ph.D.
Whether applicant is an existing or new school:	new school under existing charter umbrella
Proposed grade levels to be served:	7-12
Proposed number of students to be served:	up to 150
Name and title of person authorized to bind the corporation:	Daniel Grego, Executive Director

Mission and vision:

TransCenter for Youth, Inc. was incorporated in 1973 with the mission to provide high quality educational programs that allow at risk students to obtain high school diplomas and prepare them to become productive adults and responsible community members. To realize this mission, TransCenter currently operates five schools specifically designed to meet the needs of at risk youth.

Section 118.40 (3)(d) of Wisconsin's Charter School Law reads: "A school board or an entity under sub (2r)(b) shall give preference in awarding contracts for the operation of charter schools to those charter schools that serve children at-risk, as defined in s.118.153 (1)(a)."

Since the Wisconsin Charter School Law gives this clear direction to charter school authorizers and since TransCenter has a long history of serving at risk youth well, in 2011, TransCenter proposed that the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee grant TransCenter for Youth, Inc. an "umbrella charter" that would allow us to enroll up to 800 students in up to eight schools operating under the "umbrella." The "umbrella charter" was approved by the Common Council on May 3, 2011 .

The first school to open under the "umbrella" was Escuela Verde, which is currently located at 126 E. Mineral Street, but is moving to 3628 W. Pierce Street next year. Escuela Verde has exceeded the minimum level of acceptable academic performance set by the CSRC in each of its first two years. (The final reports from the Children's Research Center for Escuela Verde's first two years are included in Attachment U.)

The second new school to operate under the umbrella will replicate Escuela Verde's model and would open in 2015-2016 with 64 students in grades 7-10 and would be designed to expand to serve 100 students in grades 7-12 by 2017-2018.

TransCenter will work with IFF to identify an appropriate facility on Milwaukee's north side for the new school. Since we hope to incorporate the community assets of the neighborhood surrounding the school into the school's program, the school will be named for the neighborhood in which it is located; for example: the Lindsey Heights Secondary School, Riverwest Secondary School, etc. Since the location of the second school has yet to be determined, in this application we will refer to it as TransCenter's New School, or TNS.

Brief description of the school:

TransCenter for Youth, Inc. has a long history of operating schools for at risk students. The agency currently runs two schools in partnership with the Milwaukee Public Schools under the Children At Risk statute: Shalom High School and Northwest Opportunities Vocational Academy (NOVA). El Puente High School for Science, Math, and Technology currently operates as a private school participating in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. Most of El Puente's students meet the at risk criteria. Escuela Verde, the first school to operate under our "umbrella charter" with the City opened in 2012. TransCenter chartered with MPS to open NOVA Tech, which enrolls students specifically interested in technical fields, including manufacturing and the trades, this year (2014-2015). All of our schools focus on providing the relationships, relevance, and rigor students need for success in the twenty-first century.

The common features of the schools TransCenter operates include:

- Small, personalized, and safe learning environments with student enrollments of no more than 150
- Low student-to-teacher ratios
- Site-based decision making
- Ongoing self-critical improvement process
- Teachers and students who have real power and responsibility
- Students who use their talents and energies to improve their communities
- Parents who are welcomed at all times and involved in all activities
- Involved community members who advise, assess, mentor, certify, and advocate for students

Like Escuela Verde, TNS will adapt the EdVisions model. The EdVisions model is designed to enhance relationships and build relevant learning environments that empower students, parents, and teachers to make choices. EdVisions schools utilize self-directed, project-based learning to build student autonomy through relevant learning opportunities; create student belongingness through full-time advisories; and empower teachers via teacher-led and democratically governed schools.

In order to adapt the model to the needs of at risk students in Milwaukee, the following components will be added:

- An intensive, on-going reading and math remediation program
- A mentoring program
- Possible participation in the Public Achievement program

Introduction

According to the U.S. Department of Education, the high school graduation rate in the United States peaked in 1969 at 77.1% and slowly, but steadily *declined* until by 2008, the national high school graduation rate was down to 68.8%. America's Promise Alliance estimates that every 26 seconds, a high school student drops out somewhere in the U.S. (The graduation rate has slightly increased in the last few years.)

Results from the schools in Milwaukee have contributed to this trend. The EPE Research Center recently reported the graduation rate for the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) was 47.5% in 2007, near the bottom of the fifty largest school districts in the country. The number of students struggling to finish high school remains high at the same time success in the economy has become increasingly linked to educational attainment. (The statistics quoted above come from Editorial Projects in Education and were published in the June 10, 2010 issue of *Education Week: Diplomas Count*, Volume 29, Number 34. Like the country as a whole, the graduation rate in MPS has improved slightly in recent years.)

Why do so many students drop out? A survey of the research literature conducted by Gary Wehlage et al identified three correlates of dropping out: social and family background factors, personal problems that tend to be independent of social class and family background, and factors that pertain to the structure of schooling. They concluded: "Reforms in teaching, curriculum and social relations between adults and students are needed before at-risk students are likely to be retained to graduation and to succeed in their quest for achievement. These changes, if broadly implemented, would require substantial restructuring of schools and a redefinition of teaching roles." (Gary Wehlage et al. 1989. *Reducing the Risk: Schools as Communities of Support*. Philadelphia: The Falmer Press, p. 27.)

Wisconsin was one of the first states to enact specific legislation to address the problem of high school failure. The Children At Risk statute (WI. s. 118.153) enacted in 1985 requires districts with large numbers of dropouts, or high dropout rates, to use research-based criteria to identify students "at risk of not graduating from high school," to inform them and their parents of their status, and to offer them options designed to keep them in school and increase their chances to earn diplomas.

Frustrated with the results of the schooling status quo, policy makers in Wisconsin, like those in other states, also passed legislation allowing for the creation of charter schools, which offer educators freedom to innovate in exchange for accountability for results. Wisconsin's charter school law, unlike those of other states, has the unique requirement that states that charter school authorizers, including the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, "shall give preference in awarding contracts for the operation of charter schools to those charter schools that serve children at risk, as defined in s. 118.153 (1) (a)."

These two reform strategies – the necessity to significantly change the structure of schooling to meet the needs of at risk students and the possibility to innovate offered by the charter school law – form the basis of this application. In 2011, we proposed that the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee award TransCenter for Youth, Inc. an "umbrella charter" that would allow TransCenter to enroll up to 800 students in grades 7-12 in up to 8 schools that would be located in the City of Milwaukee. These schools would be designed to serve students who meet the criteria of being "at risk of not graduating from high school" as described in the Children At Risk statute. Escuela Verde,

Section I: School Operations

Mission and Vision of the Charter School and the Persons Seeking to Establish a Charter School

TransCenter for Youth was incorporated in the State of Wisconsin in 1973 and granted 501 (c)(3) tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service in the fall of that year. TransCenter's mission is to provide high quality educational programs that allow at risk students to obtain high school diplomas and prepare them to become productive adults and responsible community members.

TransCenter opened Shalom High School during the 1973-74 school year. Shalom operated as a private, independent, alternative school for at risk students until the 1985-86 school year when TransCenter contracted with MPS under the Children At Risk statute (WI s. 118.153). Shalom was one of the first six "partnership schools" in Milwaukee. Partnership schools are similar to non-instrumentality charter schools, but are authorized by the Children At Risk statute and are focused on serving students who have been identified as being "at risk of not graduating from high school."

Shalom's success and the fact that the school always maintained a lengthy waiting list of students seeking enrollment led TransCenter to collaborate with MPS and the Northwest Side Community Development Corporation to create the Northwest Opportunities Vocational Academy or NOVA in 1993. TransCenter opened El Puente High School for Science, Math, and Technology in 1997. El Puente currently operates as a private school in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. In 2012, we opened Escuela Verde as the first new school to operate under our "umbrella charter" with the City of Milwaukee. At the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, TransCenter opened NOVA Tech as a non-instrumentality charter school authorized by MPS for students interested in going into technical fields, including manufacturing and the trades. Shalom, El Puente, and NOVA Tech serve students in grades 9-12. NOVA and Escuela Verde enroll students in grades 7-12.

While each of TransCenter's schools is unique, all five provide the relationships, relevance, and rigor students need for success in the twenty-first century. The common features of the schools include:

- Small, personalized, and safe learning environments with student enrollments of no more than 150
- Low student-to-teacher ratios
- Site-based decision making
- Ongoing self-critical improvement process
- Teachers and students who have real power and responsibility
- Students who use their talents and energies to improve their communities
- Parents who are welcomed at all times and involved in all activities
- Involved community members who advise, assess, mentor, certify, and advocate for students

TransCenter's schools have been visited and studied by educators from Russia, Japan, Germany, Great Britain, South Africa, as well as the United States. They have been featured in articles and books published by the National Center on Education and the Economy, Jobs for the Future, the Academy for Educational Development, the National Network for Youth, the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, the Carnegie Reporter, and Holistic Education Press. Independent evaluation of

TransCenter's schools by the Academy for Educational Development and the Center for Urban Community Development at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee have rated them as "excellent," with the latter stating that TransCenter's educational program is "one of the most successful models of its kind in the nation."

Because of TransCenter's history of running successful small high schools, the agency was selected to act as the intermediary for the \$17.25 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to promote A New Vision of Secondary Education in Milwaukee (2003 – 2010), an effort to add 50 new small high schools to the options available to students in the city.

Section 118.40 (3)(d) of Wisconsin's charter school law reads: "A school board or an entity under sub (2r)(b) shall give preference in awarding contracts for the operation of charter schools to those charter schools that serve children at-risk, as defined in s.118.153 (1)(a)."

Since the Wisconsin charter school law gives this clear direction to charter school authorizers and since TransCenter has a long history of serving at risk youth well, we proposed that the City of Milwaukee chartering authority grant TransCenter for Youth, Inc. "an umbrella charter" that would allow us to enroll up to 800 students, but with the understanding that these students may be enrolled in up to 8 campuses operating under the "umbrella" and that the campuses will be created over a five-year period from 2012-2017. Escuela Verde, which opened in 2012, was the first school to operate under the "umbrella."

TNS, the second new school to operate under the "umbrella", would open in 2015-2016 with 64 students in grades 7-10 and would be designed to expand to serve 100 students in grades 7-12 by 2017-2018. (Please see note in the Introduction above.)

TNS will adapt the EdVisions model and would be similar to Escuela Verde. The EdVisions model is designed to enhance relationships and build relevant learning environments that empower students, parents, and teachers to make choices. EdVisions schools utilize self-directed, project-based learning to build student autonomy through relevant learning opportunities; create student belongingness through full-time advisories; and empower teachers via teacher-led and democratically governed schools.

In order to adapt the model to the needs of at risk students in Milwaukee, the following components will be added:

- An intensive, on-going reading and math remediation program
- A mentoring program
- Possible participation in the Public Achievement program

Governance

TransCenter for Youth is registered as a nonprofit corporation in the State of Wisconsin and is recognized as a 501 (c)(3) tax exempt organization by the Internal Revenue Service. Attachment B includes our Articles of Incorporation, by-laws, and tax exempt determination letter.

TNS, following the EdVisions model, will be managed by its teachers working cooperatively and reporting to TransCenter's Executive Director who in turn reports to the TransCenter Board. Attachment C is our organizational chart.

Like TransCenter's other schools, TNS will have a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) made up of parents, graduates, and community members that will have five functions:

1. They will **review** the school's program and make suggestions for improvements.
2. They will come to school on certain occasions to help **assess** student progress.
3. They will **mentor** students.
4. They will **certify** graduates in the process described above.
5. They will **advocate** for students once they graduate. (And when necessary, they will act as advocates for the school.)

The CACs not only increase parental involvement in the schools, but they also increase the social capital of our students.

Other aspects of parental involvement are described in the school handbook included in Attachment D.

The school handbook (Attachment D) and the employee handbook (Attachment D) describe the resolution of disputes and the due process afforded all students, parents, and staff.

TransCenter Board of Directors

Below is a list of TransCenter's board of directors for 2014-2015. In addition to reviewing the performance of the Executive Director and providing guidance to the agency's educational programs, each member brings additional skills and areas of expertise to the agency. The list includes each person's professional position, the year each person joined the board, and each person's area of expertise.

President: Luis Arroyo (2002) – Attorney – Michael, Best & Friedrich (legal advice)
Vice-President: Felita Daniels-Ashley (2013) – Program Service Administrator – Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council (former TransCenter principal)
Treasurer: Brian Dix (2007) – Financial Representative, Northwestern Mutual Financial Network (fundraising and insurance issues)
Secretary: Mary Clare Fagin (1973) – MC Strategies (political advice)
Members: Dr. René Antrop-Gonzalez (2011) – Professor and Goizueta Foundation Chair in Education, Dalton State College (education advice)
Dale G. Boehm (2013) President/CEO – Caspian Technologies (technical issues)
Dale Gilliam (2002) – President - GBG Insurance Agency (insurance issues)
Armando Ibarra (2002) – Senior Art Director - GMR Marketing – El Puente HS graduate (artistic and design work)
Gladys Manzanet (2013) – Principal – iPa'lante! Creative, LLC (community organizer)
Derek Mosley (2000) – Municipal Court Judge, City of Milwaukee (political advice)
Debra Ogston (2007) – Chief People Officer (CPO) – Schnuck Markets. Inc (human resource issues)
Antonio Riley (1993) – Midwest Regional Administrator – Department of Housing & Urban Development (fundraising and political advice)
Felicia Saffold (2014) – Associate Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UW. Milwaukee (education advice)

TransCenter's Executive Director

Since 1981, the director of TransCenter's educational programs has been Dr. Daniel Grego. Dr. Grego became the agency's Executive Director in 2002.

Dr. Grego has led workshops or has been a guest speaker for the Centre for British Teachers, the Academy for Educational Development, the National Network for Youth, the National Youth Employment Coalition, the American Youth Policy Forum, the National Council of State Legislatures, the Children's Defense Fund, the National Governors Association, the Buck Institute for Education, the American Educational Research Association, the Alternative Education Resource Organization, and at numerous forums and conferences focusing on education issues, particularly alternative education for "at-risk" youth, charter schools, and school choice.

He has taught in the Education Department at Alverno College and the Philosophy Department at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee. He has also been a guest lecturer at Marquette University, Cardinal Stritch University, National Louis University, and Antioch College, and an adjunct faculty member in the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare at UWM.

Dr. Grego's writings have appeared in *Encounter*, the *CYD Journal*, *Out of the Box*, the *Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel*, *America*, the *George Wright Forum*, *Life Learning Magazine*, *Education Revolution*, *Vitae Scholasticae*, *Visions and Voices against Apartheid* and other periodicals and anthologies. He recently contributed essays to *Everywhere, All the Time* edited by Matt Hern, and *Life Learning* edited by Wendy Priesnitz, *A Whole Which is Greater: Why the Wisconsin "Uprising" Failed* edited by Paul Gille and David Kast, and *Stay Solid: A Radical Handbook for Youth* edited by Matt Hern.

Dr. Grego has been a consultant for the Institute for the Transformation of Learning, the Helen Bader Foundation, and to Wisconsin's Governor and Legislature in the drafting and revision of Wisconsin's Children At Risk statute (WI. s. 118.153). He is a founding member of the Milwaukee Quality Education Initiative and the Alliance for Choices in Education (ACE).

Dr. Grego graduated *summa cum laude* from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. He earned his Ph.D. in Education and Environmental Philosophy from the Graduate School of The Union Institute & University in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Operational and Fiscal Management of School

TransCenter's Executive Director and Executive Assistant are responsible for financial management for the organization and all its programs. The Executive Director has been managing TransCenter operations since 1981. The Executive Assistant joined the organization in 1985. Day-to-day school operations are managed by the leaders of each school.

The Executive Director works with the school leaders to develop each school's annual budget. The final budgets are reviewed by the Treasurer of the board of directors and finally approved by the full board.

The Executive Assistant works with the school leaders on all human resource issues (enrollment in health insurance, 401K management, etc.).

TransCenter's financial operations are described in detail in the Accounting Policies and Procedures

Manual (Attachment D.) These procedures were developed in conjunction with our auditing firm and with Michael Koscinski, CPA. TransCenter is audited annually by Reilly, Penner, & Benton, LLC.

Attachment F contains a copy of the business plan for TNS and TransCenter for Youth. This plan was reviewed by Steve Volz of Reilly, Penner & Benton as described in his letter contained in Attachments S & T.

Like with Escuela Verde, in the operation of TNS, TransCenter will work with designees from the City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee to ensure that the school's financial reporting and procedures will be developed to comply with the requirements of the CSRC.

TransCenter's Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual will be amended to incorporate these requirements.

Budget

2014-2015 budgets for the existing schools are contained in Attachment L.

In creating our proposed budgets for TNS for the 2015-2016 school year and subsequent years, we used the projected State support for 2r charter schools, which for 2015-2016 is \$8225 per student.

Attachment H contains the estimated budget for 2015-2016 for TNS. The expense estimates are based on the actual expense history of our existing schools. We have also provided two alternate budgets for TNS based on 15% enrollment below projected levels and 30% below projected levels.

As a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization, TransCenter receives contributions from foundations, corporations, and individual donors every year. However, we do not think it is wise to create budgets for our schools that *depend* on charitable donations. We also realize that eligible students at TNS will receive support from federal Title programs. These additional funds will be welcome and will be used for allowable expenses to enhance our program. However, until we know how many students will qualify for federal support, we thought it best not to include federal funds in our budgets. Therefore, the estimated budgets are based only on per pupil revenue from the state for charter schools. Start-up costs for TNS (professional development for the new staff, technology, etc.) will be covered by a Planning Grant, which has already been approved by the Department of Public Instruction.

Attachment I contains monthly cash flow projections for the first year of operation (2015-2016) for TNS. TransCenter has obtained a \$250,000 line of credit from Securant Bank. Please see Attachment K. Attachments S & T contain a letter from Steve Volz of Reilly, Penner, & Benton reviewing our long range business plan and the estimated budgets and cash flow projections for 2015-2016.

Projected enrollment for TNS for the 2015-2016 school year is 64 students in grades 7-10.

Staffing patterns for TNS are contained in Attachment J.

Facilities

We have yet to identify a facility for TNS. Heather Heaviland of IFF has agreed to act as a consultant on facilities issues. (Please see her letter from IFF in Section V.) In the fall of 2014, she

will work with TransCenter's Executive Director and board on initial strategy for deciding on the location for TNS. After reviewing IFF's mapping of the neighborhoods in Milwaukee's north side in greatest need of quality schools, TransCenter's board will choose the area of the city within which to locate TNS. Then, IFF will complete a site search and due diligence to identify potential facilities for the school. Once agreement has been reached on a building, IFF will be our representative in obtaining any zoning variances or permits necessary for TNS to occupy the facility and will manage any renovations that may be required to bring the site up to code. The school's name can then be changed to reflect the neighborhood in which it is located.

As we add schools under the "umbrella charter," we will attempt to locate the campuses in under-served areas of the city. One of the advantages of the EdVisions model we intend to implement at TNS is that classrooms are not required. We estimate that an open space of approximately 10,000 square feet would be adequate.

Insurance

TransCenter will provide the CSRC revised certificates for any schools operating under the "umbrella charter" within 30 days of final execution of the charter contract.

Please see Attachment Q for a letter from GBG Insurance, TransCenter's insurance agent.

Audits

TransCenter's most recent audit is contained in Attachment G. Attachments S & T contain a letter of engagement from Reilly, Penner, & Benton for future audits and a letter from Steve Volz of Reilly, Penner, & Benton reviewing our long range business plan and the first year budget for Escuela Verde, the first school to open under the "umbrella charter."

Section II: Educational Program

Description of Educational Program

TransCenter's mission focuses on providing quality educational programs for students "at risk of not graduating from high school." Our schools evolved in the context of responding to Wisconsin's Children At Risk statute and a large body of research describing effective programs for at risk youth.

What follows is a history and summary of this context:

The Children At Risk Statute and Wisconsin's Charter School Law

In 1985, the State of Wisconsin enacted the Children At Risk statute (WI s. 118.153) with the goal of reducing the dropout rate and increasing the graduation rate throughout the state. School districts with large numbers of (or a high percentage of) dropouts are required to use specific criteria to identify

students “at risk of not graduating from high school.” Once these students have been identified, the statute requires school districts to inform their parents of their status, to offer them options, and to enroll the students in the schools of their parent’s or guardian’s choice. The statute specifies that these schools be held accountable by measuring five student outcomes: retention (did the students stay in school?), attendance, growth in reading and math, credits earned, and diplomas awarded.

When the State government enacted Wisconsin’s charter school law, the clear intention was that the innovations made possible by charter schools be made available to at risk students. Section 118.40 (3)(d) of Wisconsin’s charter school law reads: “A school board or an entity under sub (2r)(b) shall give preference in awarding contracts for the operation of charter schools to those charter schools that serve children at-risk, as defined in s.118.153 (1)(a).”

What works for students at risk of not graduating from high school

There is clear research, decades of experience, and very specific program outcome data demonstrating what practices and types of schools work successfully with students who have dropped out of school or who are “at risk of not graduating from high school.” This research reveals that successful schools have the following characteristics:

- Small size (70 to 150 students) at a separate school site with a distinct identity;
- Specific performance-based goals and outcome measures for enrollment, attendance, skills, credits, graduations, and transition to college, training, and employment;
- Strong, experienced leadership and teaching staff who are provided with ongoing professional development;
- Voluntary enrollment;
- Positive peer culture with family atmosphere of cooperative support with respect and responsibility as key values for students, faculty, staff, parents, and community members;
- High standards for student learning, integrating work experience and education, including programs that link internships, work, and learning;
- Programs providing extensive support services;
- Small teams of students supported by full-time paid mentors who work to retain and help those students graduate;
- Comprehensive technology learning centers with Internet access and broad-based curriculum focusing on academic and career subject areas; and learning opportunities that incorporate action into relevant study.

These characteristics of effective schools serving at risk and out-of-school students come from the following studies, reports, and publications:

1. Ford Foundation Report on Alternative Schools 1974
2. *Alternative Schools for Disruptive Youth*, Robert Arnove, Indiana University 1976

3. The U.S. Department of Labor *Youth, Knowledge, Development Reports* 1980
4. *Effective Programs for the Marginal High School Student*, Gary Wehlege, University of Wisconsin, Madison 1982
5. *Can We Help Dropouts?: Thinking About the Undoable*, Dale Mann, Columbia University 1986
6. *School Dropouts – Survey of Local Programs*, General Accounting Office 1987
7. *Reducing the Risk – Schools as Communities of Support*, University of Wisconsin 1989
8. *Effective Program Options for Serving Out-of-school Youth*, Center for Human Resources, Brandeis University, Cary Grove 1984
9. *Alternative Schools: The State of the Art*, Mary Anne Raywid, Hofstra University.
10. *Models of Reform: A Comparative Guide*, Herbert Walberg, University of Illinois, Chicago 1998
11. *Key Components and Characteristics for Effective Programs for Dropouts and At-Risk Students*. A Joint Statement to Congress by the following sixteen leading education and training researchers 1995. Their positions are listed as of that date:
 - Dr. Robert Taggart, Professor, Howard University; Director, Remediation and Training Institute; Former Director, U.S. Department of Labor National Youth Employment Programs.
 - Dr. Stephen F. Hamilton, Professor and Chair, Department of Human Development and Family Studies; Director of the Cornell Youth and Work Program, Cornell University.
 - Norm Fruchter, Co-director, Institute for Education and Social Policy, New York University; Program Advisor, Aaron Diamond Foundation.
 - Dr. Mary Anne Raywid, Professor of Administration and Policy Studies; Director of the Center for the Study of Alternative Education, Hofstra University.
 - Dr. Michelle Fine, Professor of Psychology, City University of New York; Graduate Center.
 - Dr. Gary Wehlege, Associate Director, Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools, University of Wisconsin – Madison.
 - William Spring, Member, Boston School Committee; Former White House Domestic Policy Advisor.
 - Dr. Alexandra Weinbaum, Co-Executive Director, School and Community Services, Academy for Educational Development, New York.
 - Dr. Donald Moore, Executive Director, Designs for Change, Chicago.
 - Dr. Richard Lacey, President, Lacey Associates; Former Program Officer, Ford Foundation.
 - Dr. Paul Osterman, Professor, Human Resources and Management, Sloan School Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
 - Dr. Tony Baez, Faculty, University of Wisconsin Center for Urban Community Development, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
 - Professor Andy Sum, Director, Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts.

- Dr. G. Alfred Hess, Jr., Executive Director, Chicago Panel on Policy.
- Dr. Joe Nathan, Director, Center for School Change, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota.
- Gary Walker, President, Public/Private Ventures, Philadelphia.

This research informed the creation of the educational programs of TransCenter's schools.

Academic goals

The minimum academic goals for every student enrolled in TransCenter's schools are consistent with the outcome objectives specified in the Children At Risk statute (WI s. 118.153 (4)(c)):

1. At least 70% of the students had attendance rates of 70% or better.
2. At least 70% of the students remained in school.
3. At least 70% of the students, if high school seniors, received high school diplomas.
4. At least 70% of the students earned at least 4.5 academic credits or a prorated number of credits if the student was enrolled in the school for less than the entire school year.
5. At least 70% of the students demonstrated, on standardized tests or other appropriate measures, a gain in reading and mathematics commensurate with the duration of their enrollment in the school.

Because TNS will be a replication of Escuela Verde, the academic goals will be similar to those outlined in Escuela Verde's Student Learning Memorandum included in Section V.

Below is a description of TransCenter's New School, which we plan to open in the 2015-16 school year.

TransCenter's New School

TNS would open with 64 students in grades 7-10 and will be designed to expand to 100 students in grades 7-12 by 2017-2018. (Please see note in the Introduction above.) TransCenter will be working with EdVisions Schools to design and implement the school. (Please see the letter of support from Kevin Kroehler, Executive Director of EdVisions Schools, in Section V.)

Curriculum and Instructional Practices

The primary focus of TNS will be to empower students through the development of advanced literacy, leadership, conceptual, and organizational skills by engaging them in interest-driven project-based learning and meaningful public work projects. The idea is to connect learning to community, make connections with a diverse group of individuals and organizations, and connect academics to individual interest. Self-directed projects will address these various student interests and student-identified social justice issues, which allow students to meet and exceed state academic performance standards. Furthermore, these interest-driven projects will allow students to take responsibility for themselves and their education by preparing them to make connections between self-interests and the

public's interests throughout their adult lives. In addition to these projects, students will address learning gaps in mathematics and reading skills through innovative and individualized programs. By building a solid foundation of basic skills necessary for project research, development, and execution, students will be able to connect learning to meaningful public work and community rebuilding. (A draft of the Project Proposal Form students will be required to use is included in Section V.)

TNS student projects will be overseen by Educational Advisors (Wisconsin certified teaching staff). Each member of the teaching staff will be responsible for 15-18 students, as well as integrating academic subjects such as math, science, English, reading, writing, public speaking, and foreign languages into projects.

In order to consistently meet the expectations of students, families, and the state, an adjunct faculty of community experts (members of the TNS CAC and others) will work with Educational Advisors (teaching staff) as needed for each project. By nourishing an active community of creative individuals who understand the importance of integrating academics with project-based education, an environment for personal, professional, and civic growth will be fostered. Through purposeful outreach efforts, students will make valuable connections with individuals along with local organizations, thus creating partnerships, and strengthening their communities. Frequently, it is the lack of available networking opportunities that creates obstacles for disadvantaged youth seeking to break through to more productive lives. By helping young people to build their own social capital (as well as academic and intellectual capital), TNS will be preparing youth for lifetimes of meaningful participation in society's power structure as well as connected them with possible career paths. The result of these efforts will produce well-connected young people who understand what active citizenship is, what power democracy holds, and how important it is to be a lifelong learner.

EdVisions Schools Model

EdVisions describes the design elements of its model as follows:

Small Learning Community: How do we connect with young people in a democratic learning community?

- Small learning communities of 150 students [to focus on the needs of at risk students, TNS will cap its enrollment at 100]
- Highly personalized setting; every student treated as an individual – No Child Left Unknown
- Positive, caring relationships; respect and responsibility modeled and practiced
- Multiage advisories in place; meet twice daily; advisors fully responsible for no more than 20 students
- Mentoring available to all students
- Restorative justice practiced
- Parents and community at large actively engage with students to support learning
- Democratic student government supports active engagement in decision making process
- Students experience value of citizenship as they contribute to greater community

Self-directed Project-based Learning: How do we facilitate the work of youth as self-directed producers and learners?

- Self-directed, project-based learning primary focus; driven by constructivist pedagogy

- Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) for all students emphasizing student needs and interests
- Personalized work space for each student; Internet access
- Technology-infused environment; technology used as tool
- Individual/group projects complemented by multiple teaching and learning approaches based on student needs and interests
- Achievement demonstrated publicly; highest work place standards are quality goal
- All students prepared for post-secondary education, workplace, and active citizenship
- All students and staff engage in quiet reading every day

Authentic Assessment: How do we know that we are achieving our intended results?

- Plan for how projects will be assessed by more than one adult, with opportunities for students to improve products to meet quality standards
- Demonstrated achievement, with plan for public presentations including community involvement
- Electronic standards tracking/reporting system and electronic student portfolios
- Standardized testing; results inform Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs) and continuous improvement
- Value-added measures including assessment of life skills and results from Hope Study enhance PLPs and continuous improvement
- Post-secondary plans for all students beginning at ninth grade
- Graduation includes standards met as well as project credits, life skills gained, and a senior project

Teacher-Ownership/Democratic Governance: How do we engage “Teachers as Owners” of a democratic learning community?

- Autonomous school management with control over budget and staffing; individual responsibility and accountability for school finance and educational success
- Teachers model ownership and demonstrate democratic leadership; inspire students, parents and community to take ownership and actively engage in decision making; incorporate consensus model
- Teacher evaluations by peers, students, and parents; performance-based pay, at-will employment (if applicable)
- Evaluations inform individual Professional Development Plans; focus on self and school improvement
- Coaching/mentoring plan for incorporation of new members and continuous improvement

We would like to highlight the following elements and note our intended modifications:

1. Like TransCenter's other schools, TNS will be small with a total enrollment when finally implemented of 100 students. This decision is researched-based as noted above. TNS will create opportunities for students to develop the strong relationships with adults that are necessary for success when working with at risk youth. TNS will have multiage advisories of 15-18 students each guaranteeing a personalized approach to each student. Mentoring will also be provided for all students.

2. Every student will have his or her own I-Pad and access to more powerful computers. Students will be able to use school phones throughout the day as needed for aspects of a given project. Small meeting rooms, presentation areas, and communal gathering spaces will also be provided.
3. Wisconsin's eighth grade and high school graduation standards will be met by each student mainly through self-directed, project-based learning. The standards that will be met at TNS will be similar to those the CSRC requires at Escuela Verde. (See the EV Student Learning Memorandum included in Section V.) If the State of Wisconsin or the CSRC modify required standards, TNS will incorporate those modifications.

Each student will develop with his or her adviser a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) that will allow the student to address the standards by pursuing his or her personal interests and that will be continually reviewed and modified to meet each student's individual needs. Students will work individually and in small groups, depending upon the given project. The staff and students at TNS will create a structure of daily practice that includes a process leading students from brainstorming to collecting resources to embedding standards to developing products to being assessed. (A draft of the PLP form is included in Section V.)

The Student Project Protocol

There are three main components of each student-chosen project:

- A) Proposal: Working with their Educational Advisors, students will draw upon their own interests to develop their projects. Once a problem or issue has been chosen, students will complete a Project Proposal Form identifying the questions their projects will answer, the standards their projects will address, their planned activities, the resources that will be used to implement the projects, and the methods by which the projects will be evaluated. Every student's Project Proposal Form will have to be approved by his or her Educational Advisor.
- B) Project: The project is the measurable work completed by students. Projects will be closely assessed and charted daily by each student's Educational Advisor to ensure students are acquiring the knowledge and skills they will need to meet standards and achieve academic growth. Students will be required to evaluate their work and give feedback to their advisors on their progress. Goals will be set for each day's work and expectations will be documented.
- C) Presentation: The final requirement for the completion of any project will be a public presentation judged by a team of teachers, peers, community experts, and parents. Approximately every six weeks, TNS will hold a presentation night where family and community members will come to the school to observe, watch, and listen to students present their learning. As a result, students will get valuable practice speaking in public, the parents will better understand the learning process embodied in TNS, and the community will be more engaged in the school.

Because proposal, project, and presentation work will be integral to the TNS curriculum, students will have an opportunity to develop advanced literacy skills. Through interest-driven research, students will write proposals integrating academic standards. In this context, students will internalize the literacy skills they are gaining. Literacy skills further become meta-cognitive when students take action on their project and present the results to the larger community. The second and third components to student projects require students to interact

with their peers and network within the larger community, allowing them to demonstrate in writing and verbally what they have learned.

4. TNS will modify the EdVisions model to adapt it for at risk students by including an intensive skills remediation program in reading and math for all students who require it.

In addition, we will explore the possibility of including the Public Achievement program, developed by the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, in TNS to increase student engagement in the community. Public Achievement is a youth civic engagement initiative focused on the most basic concepts of citizenship, democracy, and public work. It gives young people the opportunity to be producers and creators of their communities, not simply customers or clients. Public Achievement has been recognized as one of the best youth citizenship education efforts in the world. In 2007, it was named one of 15 finalists for the prestigious [Carl Bertelsmann Prize](#). Awarded annually since 1981, the international award recognizes "innovative approaches and outstanding ideas that help shape and further develop democratic societies."

TransCenter has a history of working with the Center for Democracy and Citizenship on Public Achievement in Milwaukee. We believe that linking the EdVisions model – where students meet academic standards through individual self-directed projects – and the Public Achievement program – where groups of students work together to improve their communities through projects of their own design – will allow TNS students to grow both as individual learners and as community members. The goal will be to prepare all students for post-secondary education, the workplace, and active citizenship.

5. Multiple assessments will be in place to measure student progress and TNS effectiveness. In addition to authentic assessments of student projects in public presentations that will be evaluated using a performance rubric, all students will be assessed using the measures outlined in CRC Student Learning Memorandum, which will be similar to the one used at Escuela Verde. (See Section V.) All students will participate in the Hope Survey, which examines the following characteristics: autonomy, belongingness, goal orientation, academic press, engagement, and hope. (A sample Presentation Rubric and Presentation Evaluation Sheet are contained in Section V. A description of the Hope Survey is included in Section V. and in the “other accountability measures” section of the narrative below.)
6. All staff will be empowered to take responsibility for the TNS culture and climate and the success of its students. EdVisions and TransCenter will work together with the staff to create individual professional development plans and to provide ongoing professional development. (A sample Staff Professional Development and Assessment Plan is contained in Section V.) EdVisions will provide a coach to the school to help guide it through the first years of implementation.

Educational Results

Education results will be assessed using the measures described in Appendix A of the Charter School Application and in the Student Learning Memorandum that will be developed by the TNS staff with the Children’s Research Center. Since TNS will be replicating the model used at Escuela Verde, we anticipate this Student Learning Memorandum to be similar to the one used at Escuela Verde, which is included in Section V.

Like at Escuela Verde, TransCenter will explore the possibility of using Project Foundry to keep electrical data on academic achievement and other information. (Please see the letter from Shane Krukowski of Project Foundry in Section V.)

Results of EdVisions Schools

EdVisions schools, despite having significant numbers of students categorized as minorities (25%), low SES (32%) and Special Education (22%), none-the-less produce higher than average results on many measures. The overall ACT average for EdVisions schools in 2008-09 was 23.6 (as opposed to 21.2 national average), and an SAT average of 1844 (as opposed to a national average of 1518). EdVisions schools have averaged higher than the national average on College Entrance exams for the past five years. The following table provides results from an alumni survey of Minnesota New Country School, the first EdVisions charter school. Clearly EdVisions schools can and do prepare students for a successful college and life career.

Results from an alumni survey of Minnesota New Country School graduates:

Alumni in Post-Secondary (Two or Four Year Degrees)	Percent Enrolled	Percent of Enrolled Completed Degree	Percent Currently Enrolled	Percent Did not Enroll or Dropped
Total	96%	69%	22%	9%
Did MNCS give you an advantage over college classmates?			92% Yes	
Did MNCS give you an advantage over your peers in a career?			83% Yes	
Did MNCS give you an advantage over your peers in life?			75% Yes	
Did MNCS prepare you to reach your goals?			92% Yes	
Did MNCS fulfill its mission?			100% Yes	

Other Accountability Measures

Convincing studies now exist that demonstrate that the variables assessed in the EdVisions Hope Survey powerfully correlate with student secondary and post-secondary success. (Please see *Assessing What Really Matters in Schools* by Ronald J. Newell and Mark J. Van Ryzin. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2009.)

EdVisions has been carrying on a long-range study of school climate that has indicated that their model has a significant impact on positive attitudes that affect one's future. The Hope Study has shown that adolescent developmental needs such as autonomy, belongingness (adult and peer support), mastery goal orientation (intrinsic motivation), academic press (press for understanding) and engagement are higher in an EdVisions school than in traditional schools. The study showed a significant correlation between higher autonomy, belongingness, mastery goal orientation and levels of engagement. Engagement showed a high correlation to dispositional hope as measured by the Hope Index.

Young people who have high levels of hope on the Hope Index have been shown to be more successful in college and careers than those with lower levels of hope. The study showed that students

who attend an EdVisions school for any length of time will increase engagement and growth in dispositional hope, therefore giving them a better chance for success beyond high school.

The Hope Study has shown that the typical EdVisions student will raise his or her hope level each year while enrolled in an EdVisions school. The average student will raise his or her hope level 0.88 points on the Hope Index in one year, 1.29 in two years, 2.96 in three years, and 4.56 points in four years (on a scale of 1-64). Clearly, the longer a student attends a school using the EdVisions model, the more dispositional hope is gained, giving those students the agency and perceived pathways to success in college and life.

The data from the Hope Study appears to be corroborated by the recent alumni survey done of graduates of Minnesota New Country School (MNCS). We believe that graduates of other EdVisions Schools, including TNS, will show similar data in years to come.

In addition, EdVisions schools cater to the development of thinking skills and personal skills needed for success in college and work. Each site develops a rubric to score students on 21st Century Skills such as problem-solving, time management, decision-making, responsibility, leadership, and presentation skills. Although such skills are not aggregated across sites, the recently completed survey of MNCS alumni shows that such skill development can be quite dramatic.

Another limited research project done on alumni of some EdVisions schools in Minnesota showed that hope was continually developed after graduating from an EdVisions school with the average graduate of an EdVisions school scoring 56.19 points on the Hope Index, whereas the average population averages 49.0 points.

Like we do at TransCenter's other schools, we intend to administer the Hope Survey at TNS to measure autonomy, belongingness, goal orientation, academic press, engagement, and hope. A more detailed description of the Hope Survey and what it measures is contained in Section V. Escuela Verde's Hope Survey results are also included in Section V.

Parental involvement will be addressed in the TNS handbook modeled on Escuela Verde's (Attachment D) that will be further developed during the planning year. A Sample Personalized Learning Plan form (including post secondary planning) is contained in Section V.

Graduation requirements for TNS are described in Section V, and will be incorporated into the school handbook modeled on Escuela Verde's (Attachment D) as it is revised and developed.

Qualifications of Teaching Staff

Background checks are conducted for all TransCenter employees. Individuals with convictions can be considered for employment as long as their offenses are not "substantially related" to their job duties.

TransCenter's personnel policies and employee handbook, including evaluation and conflict resolution procedures, is contained in Attachment D.

These same policies will be applied to the staff of TNS. When TNS opens in 2015-2016, we anticipate hiring four teachers: one licensed in math, one in language arts, one in science, and one in

social studies. In addition, we anticipate hiring an administrative assistant. Attachment J contains the projected staff positions for TNS.

EdVisions Schools has agreed to partner with TransCenter for Youth in the planning and implementation of TNS. (Again, please see the letter from Kevin Kroehler in Section V.) EdVisions works nationally with a network of schools engaged in replicating their model. Professional development for staff is critical for any school's success, but especially when they are implementing a model that is as challenging to the status quo as that of EdVisions. EdVisions has significant experience in providing ongoing professional development. Expectations for the staff at TNS and staff evaluation procedures are addressed in the EdVisions Staff Development and Staff Assessment document contained in Section V.

Admissions Procedures

Non-discrimination Policy

TransCenter does not discriminate against students on the basis of sex, race, religion, national origin, national ancestry, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation or physical, emotional, or learning disability. This same policy will apply to TNS in all of its programs and activities, including employment and admissions.

TransCenter has a long track record of meeting the needs of at risk students as our mission and history clearly indicate. As a charter school, TNS will be open to any student in grades 7-12 who resides in the City of Milwaukee. However, it has been our experience that the vast majority of students who are seeking alternatives from the traditional schools are students not achieving success in that system, or in other words, students who are "at risk of not graduating from high school." Since TransCenter's other schools all have waiting lists, many of these students may decide TNS is the best program for them. Therefore, we anticipate the majority of the students who enroll in TNS will meet the Children At Risk criteria.

We plan for TNS to open in 2015-2016 with 64 students in grades 7-10, with 16 students in each grade. (Please see note in Introduction above.)

Below is a draft of the Admission Procedures for TNS:

Admissions Policy

Any student is eligible for admission to TNS as long as the student's needs are served by the neighborhood sustainability focus of the school, and given the family resides within the City of Milwaukee. Prospective students and parents must understand and commit to the school's mission and educational philosophy. Because our educational work and activities are a direct part of the surrounding community, we expect that most students will come from residences located in the target area.

Once a prospective student informs TNS of an intent to enter, or a referral is made on the student's behalf, an interview is scheduled. The interview is conducted among TNS staff, the prospective student, and his or her family to build a better understanding of the unique features of TNS. If the student and family decide that the student wants to attend TNS, and the program meets the student's needs, then the student and parent begin the enrollment process.

TNS will announce open enrollment periods throughout the Milwaukee community. If the number

of students who apply exceeds the TNS enrollment capacity, students will be enrolled through a public lottery, thereby assuring equal access for all applicants regardless of gender, race, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

Disciplinary Procedures

The disciplinary procedures for TNS will be developed during the planning year, but will be consistent with the procedures at TransCenter's other schools, especially Escuela Verde.

Below is a draft of the Disciplinary Procedures for TNS:

Disciplinary Procedures

Simply put, students at TNS are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner. To conduct oneself in a respectful manner, students are to behave appropriately toward other students at TNS and the school staff, and the TNS facility and grounds. Appropriate behavior is defined as but not limited to the following:

- Doing the work you need to do on a daily basis without disrupting other students who are doing the same
- Using language that is not vulgar or offensive to any other individual
- Respecting (not damaging) books, furniture, computers and technology, and all other inanimate objects within or around TNS
- Containing any mess you make and keeping the school clean
- Interacting with other students and staff respectfully, appropriately, and treating other students and staff as if they are important people in your life

Furthermore, TNS will enforce the following:

- No drugs, alcohol or tobacco
- No weapons
- No fighting, stealing, physical or verbal abuse, threatening behavior, or harassment of any kind toward other students or staff
- No defacing school property
- No gambling
- No beepers or cellular phones should be brought to TNS or any TNS activities without prior arrangement with an TNS staff member
- No obvious gang-related signifying such as tilted hats or hand signals allowed at any TNS activities

Any student who fails to conduct him or herself in a respectful, appropriate manner will be given an initial verbal warning. Possible consequences for continuing such behavior will be discussed immediately with the student. Students who continue to violate expectations of appropriate behavior and respect will be asked to leave TNS for the day at the discretion of the student's Educational Advisor. Students may return on the next school day with the intent of conducting oneself in an appropriate, respectful manner. There are some behaviors that will require a CAC hearing in order to return to school. Those behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Fighting, stealing, physical or verbal abuse, threatening behavior, or harassment of any kind towards other students or staff
- Defacing, destroying, or otherwise defiling school property
- Continued disrespect toward other students or staff

TNS CAC hearings consist of the student in question returning to school with a parent or guardian (if the student's parent or guardian chooses to attend the hearing) to appear before three peers and two TNS staff members who will decide through consensus what action/s should be taken before the student is allowed back in school. The student will have the opportunity to state his or her case regarding his or her behavior and will be accompanied by a staff member who will serve as his or her advocate. All individuals involved will likewise have the opportunity to state their case/s as well.

A decision of action will be reached by the three students and two staff members which must be followed by the student in question as a condition of return to TNS. Failure to follow the decided action/s will result in TNS staff working with the student's family to find another school to attend.

Students have the right to appeal the CAC hearing decision of action. If a student chooses to appeal the decision of the CAC hearing, the student may present his or her case to two TNS students, two TNS staff members, and two TransCenter for Youth board members. Action will be decided by the group of above mentioned individuals. Failure to follow the decided action/s will result in TNS staff working with the student's family to find another school to attend.

Students have the right to a final appeal if the student and the student's parent and guardian feel that the decided action/s are unfair. Such an appeal will be heard by the entire TransCenter Board of Directors. Decisions reached by the TransCenter Board of Directors are final and must be accepted without dispute.

Please note that in the case of Special Education students, an IEP meeting will be held in addition to the hearing to determine how TNS will integrate the results of a hearing with the student's specific needs at the school.

Plan to Educate Children with Disabilities

We realize that TransCenter will have responsibility to ensure that all the schools operating under the "umbrella charter" comply with the Individual Disability Education Act (IDEA). TransCenter is fully committed to ensuring that the students in all of its schools with special education needs receive the services as determined by Individual Education Program Teams and as specified in their Individual Education Plans.

Escuela Verde has developed a strong relationship with CESA #1 to meet the needs of students with specific needs. During the 2014-2015 planning year, TransCenter will work with CESA #1 to create the same working relationship at TNS.

We believe the EdVisions model that will be implemented in TNS can be particularly effective with students who have special education needs since every student enrolled will have a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP). Creating a school culture where every student is treated as a unique individual with special interests and aptitudes means that no student will be stigmatized.

A policies and procedures manual specifically describing compliance with IDEA at TNS will be developed during the planning year. As a guide, we will use the document Escuela Verde uses to assess its provision of special education services, which is contained in Attachment W.