

Foundation for a Greater Opportunity

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Abstract

Foundation for a Greater Opportunity has opened four charter schools in the Bronx in New York City. The first school, Icahn Charter School 1 (ICS 1), opened in 2001 and has reached its ultimate goal of 324 students in grades K-8. The scores the children received on the New York State testing results of ICS 1 have always been impressive—last year, the test results were 93.6% and 100% respectively for the English Language Arts test and the Math test (the 2010 results are still embargoed by the State). When the Foundation realized that its model produced such high testing results, it decided to open more charter schools using the same model. Icahn Charter School 2 in 2007; Icahn Charter School 3 in 2008; Icahn Charter School 4 in 2009. The two other schools that have testing grades have produced scores at least equal to ICS 1. The 2009 testing results for ICS 2 were 100% on both the ELA and the Math. The 2009-2010 scores for all charters schools are embargoed, but our ICS 1, ICS 2 and ICS 3 results are equivalent to previous years. Each of the schools is financially healthy, is in compliance and has no student safety issues. The Foundation plans to add a grade each year to ICS 2, ICS 3 and ICS 4 until they each reach K-8. The Foundation plans to open Icahn Charter School 5 in September 2011 with grades K-2, adding a grade each year through 8th grade. This grant money would be used to provide a finely-tuned, concentrated, year-long professional development program and the materials needed for the program for each of our schools. It is our goal to educate more educationally disadvantaged children so that their testing scores prove that our charter school model educates all children at the highest levels and that all children can learn.

Each of our charter schools is in the Bronx, New York. The Bronx is considered to be an area of educationally disadvantaged students because of the low income of its residents and its history of under-achieving children. We specifically chose the Bronx because we wanted to prove that all children can learn regardless of family income. We have proved that with our schools. In spite of the free/reduced lunch percentages at our schools being 85%, 77%, 84% and 87%, the children's results on the NY State tests range from 93% to 100%. We will replicate those results with the funding to continue to prove that educationally disadvantaged children can achieve at the highest levels.

Each charter school has state funds in the form of AOE. Each of the Icahn Schools will contribute 25% of the total needed for the school to this program. Every year in the Icahn Charter Schools' history, the schools have been financially healthy. In the first year of the first charter school, the Foundation advanced it money for its first year of operation (which was then repaid by the end of the charter), but the subsequent Icahn Charter Schools have been able to cover initial expenses with the AOE and the CSP grant.