

Preliminary Memorandum of Understanding

1. PREAMBLE A) The Westminster Foundation meets the definition of a nonprofit under 34 CFR 77.1(c) and is the eligible applicant as defined in the “Application for Grants Under the Promise Neighborhoods Program” issued by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Innovation and Improvement; B) The Westminster Foundation, M&T Bank, City School District of The City of Buffalo (“Buffalo Public Schools” or “BPS”), City of Buffalo, State University of New York at Buffalo (“UB”), United Way of Buffalo & Erie County (“United Way”), Catholic Charities, Buffalo Urban League, Read to Succeed Buffalo, John R. Oishei Foundation and Westminster Community Charter School (“WCCS”) (herein individually or collectively called “Partner” or “Partners”) work separately and together to focus, prioritize and implement services to improve the education, health, development and well-being of children and families in the City of Buffalo; C) The Partners aspire to promote a learning environment in which all children can learn and to provide early and on-going identification of and services for children with needs including, but not limited to, children with disabilities, medical, nutrition, academic and other social service needs; D) The Promise Neighborhood Program represents an outstanding opportunity for more effective collaboration among Partners and with other agencies and to significantly improve outcomes for children and families; and E) The Westminster Foundation has conducted a preliminary needs analysis of the proposed project neighborhood (and subsequent expansion) (“scale up”) and has concluded that this neighborhood meets the criteria of “Absolute Priority 1” as defined in the “Application for Grants Under the Promise Neighborhoods Program.”

2. NOW, THEREFORE, in return for the mutual promises contained herein, the Partners hereby agree to create a public/private collaboration named the **Buffalo Promise** initiative. The objective of **Buffalo Promise** is as follows:

1. The Westminster Foundation shall be the grant applicant and managing entity of the Buffalo Promise initiative.

2. The Westminster Foundation shall apply for a grant of up to \$500,000 and commits to match this grant with at least a 50% match in cash contributions in addition to in-kind services that will substantially surpass the 50% minimum matching contribution identified in the Promise Neighborhoods Program application
3. The Partners agree to collaboratively apply, via the Westminster Foundation, for a one year planning grant to serve the needs of families in the **Buffalo Promise Neighborhood**.
4. The Partners agree to the boundaries of the Phase 1 Neighborhood (containing the Bennett, Highgate, and Westminster school neighborhood), the Phase 2 Neighborhood (the entire 14215 zip code including five additional schools) and the Phase 3 Neighborhood (equivalently needy geographic area on the West side of Buffalo). The Phase 1 Neighborhood is in the east side of Buffalo bordered by Main Street (to the west), Winspear Avenue (to the north), Eggert Road (to the east) and Kensington Avenue/Parkridge Avenue/East Amherst Street (to the south) including the students attending WCCS, Highgate Heights School 80, and Bennett High School. The Phase 2 Neighborhood includes the Phase 1 Neighborhood and “scales up” or extends south to include the entire 14215 zip code which includes 5 additional schools (three PK-4, 1 K-8, and 1 High School). The Westminster Foundation agrees to create a sustainable model within the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Neighborhoods which can then be used to define and implement the Phase 3 Neighborhood in an equivalently distressed geographic area in the West side of Buffalo (or a second “scale up”).
5. The Partners agree to form a seamless continuum of solutions in accordance with the requirements of the Promise Neighborhoods Program to improve educational and developmental outcomes for children from cradle through college to career including, but not limited to, the following: parenting classes, early childhood education, Kindergarten to Twelfth grade education, college and career preparedness and employability for a 21st century-global workforce.

6. The Partners agree to participate fully in the development of a Promise Neighborhood Plan (“Plan”) during the planning year including: conducting a comprehensive needs assessment, sharing and collecting data such as data on need indicators, performing a segmentation analysis, building on existing high-quality academic and family and community supports, developing an integrated continuum of solutions, adapting and modifying existing programs to that continuum, gathering and leveraging funding and other resources, building community support, and working closely with the DOE’s national evaluator.
7. To sustain and scale up the Plan, the Partners agree to develop five improvement platforms (coordinating structures and systems) for planning, managing, and evaluating program delivery as follows: an overall planning and coordinating platform for the Buffalo Promise initiative; an academic platform for all student learning and academic supports from early childhood to K-12 to college; a literacy platform for children and adults needing reading and writing, financial, computer, health, and workforce assistance; an employability platform to strengthen career pathways and opportunities from an early age through adulthood; and a community services platform for individuals and families to receive services pertaining to health, safety, stability, and community development.
8. Given the organizational capacity and breadth of experience of the partners, each Partner agrees to make a significant financial and/or programmatic commitment to the Buffalo Promise initiative and to the seamless integration of services envisioned in the Promise Neighborhoods program. The Partners plan to secure additional funding through corporate and private foundations. More specifically, the Buffalo Promise Partners will endeavor to raise an additional \$5 million to supplement the anticipated \$20 million from the Promise Neighborhood implementation grant. Notwithstanding anything contained in this MOU which could be construed to the contrary, The City of Buffalo and The City School District of The City of Buffalo are not hereby obligating themselves to formal financial or formal programmatic commitments. Only formal actions of the City of

Buffalo Common Council, The City School District of The City of Buffalo and, if applicable, the Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority would be sufficient to make financial commitments. Programmatic commitments will need to be specifically identified and considered on a case by case basis. Any data sharing or collecting is discretionary and subject to applicable rules of confidentiality/privacy.

3. EACH PARTNER’S VISION, THEORY OF CHANGE, THEORY OF ACTION, AND EXISTING ACTIVITIES ALIGN WITH THOSE OF THE BUFFALO PROMISE NEIGHBORHOOD AS FOLLOWS:

The Buffalo Public School District envisions working with the Partners to create plans to extend the full-service community school model used at the Westminster Community Charter School to the two other Buffalo schools specified below in Phase I (as well as additional district schools in phases II and III). The introduction of the model in these schools will entail significant changes as well as the setting of ambitious academic targets.

This commitment encompasses the District’s agreement to work with Buffalo Promise during the planning year to provide the authorities and conditions required for the Buffalo Promise initiative to fulfill the requirements of Priority 1 ¶ 2(a) of the Promise Neighborhood application as summarized below:

- a. Significantly improve Bennett High School, a persistently lowest-achieving school, by implementing the turnaround or transformation model described in Appendix C of the Race to the Top *Notice* Inviting Applications for New Awards for FY 2010, 74 FR 59836
- b. Significantly improve Highgate K-8 School, a low-performing school, by implementing ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive interventions to assist and improve student outcomes with elements that include addressing the effectiveness of teachers and leaders and the school’s use of time and resources, including increased learning time (ref: *Notice*)
- c. Support and sustain Westminster Community CS as an effective school (ref: *Notice*)

The Buffalo Urban League vision is for all individuals in the Buffalo Niagara Region to participate in higher levels of the economic and social mainstream community by building strong

and stable families to serve as the foundation for a successful community. The Buffalo Urban League provides services to help families to break the cycle of poverty in the community. The Buffalo Urban League's services address the educational, economic, family and social challenges faced by the youth and their families. Activities that align with Buffalo Promise include, but are not limited to, preventive health, financial literacy and youth service programs.

Catholic Charities of Buffalo's vision is to empower individuals, children and families to achieve and maintain meaningful, healthy and productive lives by serving as a community leader in providing quality, effective and efficient human services. As an all-inclusive human service provider, Catholic Charities advocates for those most in need and most vulnerable by employing best practices, quality improvement and staff development to attain the best outcomes for those being served. Aligning activities include, but are not limited to, family assistance, parenting skills and youth development programs.

The City of Buffalo vision is to increase educational attainment, provide pathways to jobs, foster economic opportunity and success, and build quality neighborhoods by engaging the community in a comprehensive and coordinated approach to reduce poverty. Jobs are the cornerstone of the Buffalo blueprint, buttressed by social, training and educational programs that support the ultimate goal of assuring that all residents have an opportunity to work and thrive. Activities in support of Buffalo Promise include, but are not limited to, education and workforce skills, financial literacy, neighborhood improvement, and youth crime prevention programs.

The John R. Oishei Foundation's vision is to enhance economic vitality and the quality of life for the Buffalo Niagara region by serving as a catalyst for change. In addition to grantmaking, the Foundation is committed to: devoting time, people and networks to convening stakeholders around issues; initiating support and collaboration; sharing knowledge; building nonprofits' organizational capacity; and supporting the development of promising leaders in all communities and sectors. All of these activities would be used to support Buffalo Promise.

M&T Bank strives to be the best company employees ever work for, the best bank customers ever do business with and the best investment shareholders ever make. The Bank understands

that the vitality of the communities in which we do business is crucial to our continued success. That's why the Bank works in partnership with not-for-profit organizations that improve the quality of life and increase economic opportunities where our customers and employees live and work. Activities in support of Buffalo Promise include, but are not limited to, executive leadership, skilled volunteers, coalition building, and systems development.

Read to Succeed Buffalo's vision is 100% literacy for every child and adult in the city of Buffalo with 100% community participation. The organization believes that children and families excel when community and schools work together as equal partners in educating children to their full potential and Read to Succeed serves as a change-agent that undertakes large projects to improve student achievement. Aligning activities include, but are not limited to, kindergarten readiness, literacy success, and youth engagement programs.

The State University of New York at Buffalo ("UB") vision is to enlarge not only its school's enrollment from within Buffalo and outside, but also its potential to attract top-flight faculty and researchers in order to regenerate the economic future of the region. This will enable UB to address specific needs of the community and mobilize resources and opportunities that strengthen academic preparation and college access. UB is committed to accelerated learning opportunities that expose, excite, educate, and engage youth in the STEM pathways (science, technology, engineering, and math), college preparation workshops and resources including SAT prep, college application boot-camps, mentoring, tutoring, and related support. Other activities include neighborhood safety, adult education, and community services.

United Way of Buffalo & Erie County's ("United Way") vision is to become a world class organization transforming the quality of life in Buffalo & Erie County by using the Results Accountability methodology, a disciplined way of thinking and taking action to improve the quality of life in communities as well as the performance of programs, agencies, and service systems (Friedman, 2005). This step-by-step process helps children and families consider the desired end result and determine the means to achieve it. Activities in support of Buffalo Promise include, but are not limited to, family crisis service, preventive health and mentoring programs.

The Westminster Community Charter School (“WCCS”) vision is that all students graduate with the necessary foundation to be successful in high school and/or higher educational institutions and to become productive and contributing citizens in our society and community. A culture of learning and nurturing, which emphasizes the continuous development of the whole child, is achieved by creating and maintaining a successful partnership between students and their parents, the staff, the community and private industry. WCCS provides a challenging and rigorous instructional program utilizing various methodologies, including the Columbia Teachers College Reading and Writing project, a relevant and interactive math program, and the use of data to inform and drive instruction. Aligning activities include, but are not limited to, sharing best practices, professional development programs for educators, and youth service programs.

The Westminster Foundation’s vision is to coordinate and convene educational and social service agencies working collaboratively to provide academic, family and community supports to the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood. The Foundation provides financial support and administrative services as well as analyzing data and other inputs to help the partners make informed decisions around services for children, families and the community. The Westminster Foundation provides a number of the solutions from the continuum of solutions in the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood including after-school services and summer program services. Activities in support of Buffalo Promise include, but are not limited to, overall coordinating role, partnership grant writing, data planning and management, and youth service programs.

The Partners agree on a flexible approach to generating change. The approach is based on the belief that the challenges confronting distressed neighborhoods require the mobilization of informed partners to collectively identify and confront the problematic realities and create unprecedented and unique neighborhood-centered solutions. It is the shared belief of the Partners that such unprecedented solutions reside in the collective experience and knowledge of all the Partners and not within a single entity. The partners further agree that the implementation of solutions and actions must be based on a comprehensive assessment of the data. Residents

play a critical role in both the data (or needs) and the solutions. Collectively, the Partners and the residents will: A) Provide input into the solutions and actions taken, and B) Strategically implement the solutions and actions. The Partners also agree that once solutions and actions are implemented, a reassessment of the needs, solutions and actions must take place to determine which solutions and actions are effective and should be replicated and/or expanded throughout the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood. Activities will include many of the solutions listed above by each Partner and solutions that are further refined during the planning year after a comprehensive review of the data and needs.

4. THE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF THE WESTMINSTER FOUNDATION

INCLUDES A GOVERNING BOARD, ADVISORY BOARD AND MANAGEMENT TEAM.

The Buffalo Promise Advisory Board will serve as the entity primarily representative of the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood. The Advisory Board is made up of at least one third of a combination of residents, residents of the city who are low-income or public officials serving the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood (representing no more than half) – as noted in the Advisory Board chart below with an asterisk. The Advisory Board will have the power to inform and advise the Governing Board on all matters and programs serving the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood and the effectiveness of all services and programs. The Advisory Board shall work collaboratively to meet the families' academic, social, developmental and medical needs of the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood. *The boards and management team follow on the next page.* During the Planning Year, an emphasis will be placed on creating an even stronger network of Buffalo Promise Neighborhood residents, church leaders, block club presidents and others who represent the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood. Further, the Advisory Board shall provide an active role for residents of the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood by including residents on the board as well as reaching out to community leaders, block clubs, churches, community centers and other neighborhood assets.

Westminster Foundation Governing Board

1	Director	Dr. James Williams	Superintendent, Buffalo Public Schools
2	Director	Rev. Richard Stenhouse	President, Jeremiah Partnership
3	Director	Robert Gioia	President, John R. Oishei Fdn
4	Chairman	Mark Czarnecki	President, M&T Bank
5	Vice Chairman	David Chamberlain	Senior VP, M&T Bank
6	Director	John Carmichael	CEO, Westminster Community CS
7	Director	Dr. Yvonne Ragan	Principal, Westminster Community CS

Buffalo Promise Advisory Board

1	Buffalo Public Schools	Will Keresztes*	Assoc. Superintendent for Education
2	Buffalo Urban League	Brenda McDuffie*	President/Resident
3	Catholic Charities of Buffalo	Dennis Walczyk	CEO
4	City of Buffalo	Donna Brown*	Deputy Mayor
5	M&T Bank	David Chamberlain	Senior Vice President
6	Read to Succeed Buffalo	Helene Kramer	Executive Director
7	State Univ. of Buffalo	Mara Huber	Spec. Asst. to the President
8	State Univ. of Buffalo	Vincent Clark	Director Community Relations
9	United Way of Buffalo/Erie	Michael Weiner	President
10	University District	Bonnie Russell*	Councilmember/Resident
11	Westminster Community CS	Benjamin Willis*	Dean of Students/Resident
12	Westminster Community CS	Carlos Gordon*	Parent/Resident

Officers (Management Team)

1	Chairman	Mark Czarnecki	President, M&T Bank
2	Vice Chairman	David Chamberlain	Senior VP, M&T Bank
3	CEO	John Carmichael	CEO, Westminster Community CS
4	President/Project Director	Dr. Yvonne Ragan	Principal, Westminster Community CS
5	Treasurer	Patrick Mansfield	Vice President, M&T Bank

Memorandum of Understanding

In witness whereof, the parties have set their hands as of June 19, 2010:

Dr. James Williams _____

Buffalo Public Schools, Superintendent

Mara Huber _____

SUNY at Buffalo, Special Asst. to the Pres.

Brenda McDuffie _____

Buffalo Urban League, President

Michael Weiner _____

United Way of Buffalo/Erie County, President

Dennis Walczyk _____

Catholic Charities, Chief Executive Officer

The Honorable Bonnie Russell _____

University District, Councilmember

The Honorable Byron Brown _____

City of Buffalo, Mayor

Dr. Yvonne Ragan _____

Westminster Community C.S., Principal

Robert Gioia _____

John R. Oishei Foundation, President

Carlos Gordon _____

Westminster Community C.S., Parent

Mark Czarnecki _____

M&T Bank, President

Vincent Clark _____

WCCS, Parent & UB, Dir. Cmty. Relations

David Chamberlain _____

M&T Bank, Senior Vice President

Benjamin Willis _____

Westminster Community C.S., Teacher

Helene Kramer _____

Read to Succeed Buffalo, Exec. Director

John Carmichael _____

Westminster Foundation, CEO & WCCS, CEO

