

**Central Queens Academy Charter School  
The Expansion and Replication of CQA**

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## **I. Introduction**

Central Queens Academy Charter School, an independent public charter middle school serving a highly diverse, high-need school population in Queens, New York City, seeks funding from the Charter Schools Program to support its expansion to add grades K-4 to CQA's existing grades 5-8. Inside the same grant period of 2018-2023 ("Grant Period") CQA will also replicate our successful middle school model serving grades 5-8.

As a high-performing charter school whose academic outcomes, particularly for educationally disadvantaged students, have outpaced the city and state of New York for all testing years since inception, CQA provides rigorous preparation inside a supportive, warm school culture to advance our mission of college preparation and completion for all. We offer a literacy rich program designed to serve our focus population of recently immigrated and English Language Learner (ELL or EL, interchangeably) students. The relentless efforts of our teaching faculty and scholars have enabled CQA to out-perform our city, state and home district for all years between 2014-2017, in all tested grades and subjects. Our students and faculty have earned us the honor of being named a Reward School by New York State Education Department (NYSED) twice, in 2015 and in 2017. This distinction is awarded to the top 5% of public schools statewide in recognition of increasing student academic proficiency equally well for students at all abilities.

CQA's proposal has two goals. The first is to prepare and provide for our initial expansion to K-4, beginning with a planning phase to prepare for implementation in 2020. The second goal is to replicate our successful middle school program in the latter half of the grant period. We expect that by the end of the five-year grant period, we will have more than doubled our current enrollment of 400 students to serve 900 scholars in grades K-8 using CSP funds and begun the replication of our second 400 student middle school for a total of 1,600 students. At

full scale, we envision a full K-12 system serving a high-need, high-ELL population of more than 2,000 students inside one of the nation's most overcrowded public school districts, Community School District 24 in New York City.

## **II. Competitive Priorities**

### **Priority 1: Supporting High-Need Students by Increasing Access to High-Quality Educational Choice and Improving Academic Outcomes.**

Founded in 2012 and authorized by the State University of New York Charter Schools Institute, CQA has a special interest in improving academic and life outcomes for English Language Learners (“ELL”), the fastest growing public school student nationwide. Our mission is to prepare students for success in college, the workforce and the community through a school that integrates literacy, high standards-based academics, and culturally responsive supportive services.

CQA serves mostly low-income families living in and near the multi-lingual, multi-ethnic neighborhoods of Woodside, Corona and Elmhurst. These historic immigrant enclaves are located in New York City Community School District 24 (“District 24”), one of NYC’s most overcrowded public school districts. Elmhurst / Corona has been categorized as ‘moderate high risk’ and ranked 14<sup>th</sup> out of 59 community districts in New York City by the Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York (“Committee”), an independent child advocacy organization that analyzes city demographic data across a variety of issues, including housing, health, and education.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Keeping Track Online,” Citizen’s Committee for Children of New York, located at <http://data.cccnewyork.org/riskranking#?domain=1245&year=21&communities=10%7C17>.

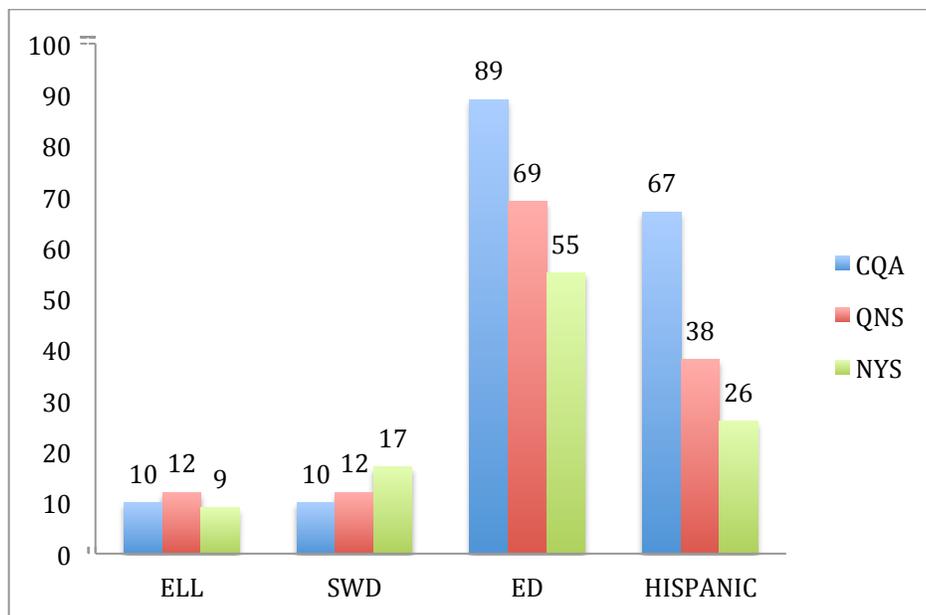
In focusing on ELL and recently immigrated student outcomes, particularly for young people from low-income households, CQA joins the wider community of educators working to improve results in this historically at-risk population. The New York State Education Department estimates that only 7% of ELL students can be classified as college and career-ready once they graduate from high school. Thus, many young people in this category who appear to beat the odds and graduate high school enter college unprepared for the rigor of college-level learning and life, or enter the workforce without sufficient preparation or skills.

CQA now serves 400 scholars representing more than 25 home countries across grades 5-8, with about 100 scholars per grade. Our school population reflects the tremendous diversity of our neighborhoods as well as high-need. About 89% of our students qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL). One of CQA's primary goals is advancing ELL scholars' achievement through the usage of intensive reading and writing instruction. Our admissions policy reserves a minimum of 30% of all 5<sup>th</sup> grade students, our intake class, for ELL students. Over our first charter term we have maintained an average of 15% classified ELL enrollment in our fifth grade, our intake year. This intake is lower than our surrounding district 24, which has about 20% ELL enrollment in its fifth grade. Beyond the technical classification of ELL status, however, our experience is that a very sizable percentage of students enter CQA in 5<sup>th</sup> grade who meet the definition of English Learner subject to ESEA Section 8101(2), but not classified as an ELL.

We believe our intensive literacy focus has proven successful for our ELL students. By the fall of 2015, when our first class of ELL students who entered our program in 2012 reached eighth grade, every one of them had transitioned out of ELL services into mainstream reading and writing instruction. This rate of re-classification greatly exceeded NYCDOE's rate, surpassing the city's re-classification pace by four times.

Proportionately, CQA serves a similar or higher percentage of educationally disadvantaged and English Learner (EL) students compared to our surrounding county, Queens County, and the state of New York. Our enrollment of economically disadvantaged students and Hispanic / Latino student subgroups notably exceeds that of Queens County and New York State. As Chart 1 shows, in 2017, 89% of CQA’s student population was categorized as economically disadvantaged and 67% were Hispanic / Latino. In the same year, New York State served 55% economically disadvantaged students and 26% Hispanic. Queens County, CQA’s home county, served a population that was 69% economically disadvantaged and 38% Hispanic / Latino. For all other years, CQA has consistently served on average a student body that is 88% FRL / Economically Disadvantaged and at least 65% Hispanic / Latino.

**Chart 1. Comparison of CQA, Queens County, and New York State Enrollment of ELL, SWD, ED, and Hispanic Subgroups**



CQA’s high-need population makes our overall academic performance results more noteworthy. For all testing years, CQA’s students have exceeded their local district, city, and

state peers on the New York State mathematics assessment. Starting in 2014, our students at all levels have also for the most part outperformed their peers in all state assessments, including annual New York State English Language Arts (ELA) and math assessments, New York State Earth Science Regents Exam, and the New York State English as a Second Language Test (NYSESLAT). As Table 1 shows, for all years from 2014 to 2017, CQA’s scholars have outperformed their city, district, and state peers in all standardized New York State exams.

**Table 1. CQA 2014-2017 Testing Data**

<b>CQA Annual Proficiency Percentages on NYS Math / ELA Assessments</b>																			
	<b>2013-2014</b>					<b>2014-2015</b>					<b>2015-2016</b>					<b>2016-2017</b>			
	<b>CQA</b>	<b>D24</b>	<b>NYC</b>	<b>NYS</b>		<b>CQA</b>	<b>D24</b>	<b>NYC</b>	<b>NYS</b>		<b>CQA</b>	<b>D24</b>	<b>NYC</b>	<b>NYS</b>		<b>CQA</b>	<b>D24</b>	<b>NYC</b>	<b>NYS</b>
<b>Grade 5 Math</b>	70	43	40	40		63	47	41	43		51	42	38	40		60	43	41	43
<b>Grade 5 ELA</b>	36	30	29	30		38	32	30	30		47	36	34	34		43	41	36	35
<b>Grade 6 Math</b>	64	38	35	35		75	39	36	39		67	41	37	40		60	39	36	40
<b>Grade 6 ELA</b>	32	26	26	26		55	31	30	31		57	37	35	34		46	35	32	32
<b>Grade 7 Math</b>						52	41	32	35		69	40	34	36		75	42	36	38
<b>Grade 7 ELA</b>						43	32	28	29		64	39	36	36		74	45	43	42
<b>Grade 8 Math</b>											54	31	25	24		69	29	24	22
<b>Grade 8 ELA</b>											73	44	41	41		76	51	48	45

Performance by all students enrolled at CQA has been similarly encouraging. In the most recent school year, 2016-17, certain results on standardized exams were especially notable when compared to CQA’s surrounding district, city, and state peers.

- In math, CQA scholars exceeded their peers by a minimum of 17 percentile points (CQA’s 5<sup>th</sup> grade scholars compared to District 24 5<sup>th</sup> grade) and a maximum of 47 percentile points (CQA’s 8<sup>th</sup> grade scholars compared to NYS 8<sup>th</sup> grade).
- In ELA, the minimum / maximum gap was smaller but also pronounced. CQA’s 5<sup>th</sup> grade scholars exceeded District 24 5<sup>th</sup> grade by only 2 percentile points (43 / 41). CQA’s 8<sup>th</sup> grade scholars, however, widened the maximum gap to 28 percentile points when compared to their NYC peers (76 / 48).

**Table 2. CQA, CSD 24, NYC, NYS 2017 Math / ELA Assessment Results**

	<b>Proficiency Percentage for 2017 New York State Exams</b>			
	<b>CQA</b>	<b>D24</b>	<b>NYC</b>	<b>NYS</b>
<b>Grade 5 Math</b>	60	43	41	43
<b>Grade 5 ELA</b>	43	41	36	35
<b>Grade 6 Math</b>	60	39	36	40
<b>Grade 6 ELA</b>	46	35	32	32
<b>Grade 7 Math</b>	75	42	36	38
<b>Grade 7 ELA</b>	74	45	43	42
<b>Grade 8 Math</b>	69	29	24	22
<b>Grade 8 ELA</b>	76	51	48	45

Our results when compared to public schools serving similarly educationally disadvantaged school populations across New York State indicate a very significant advantage from CQA’s program. CQA’s comparative impact over time has met the criteria of “Higher than

expected to a large degree,” effect size, the highest comparative analysis category provided by our authorizer, the State University of New York Charter Schools Institute (CSI). Each year, as part of CQA’s charter accountability plan requirements, CSI analyzes CQA’s comparative performance against New York State public schools with similar enrollment and grades. For the last three consecutive years, CSI has rated CQA “higher than expected to a large degree” based on the effect size of CQA’s proficiency data when compared to expected academic results in each grade.<sup>2</sup> CQA’s actual effect size was 2.59 for our 2017 mathematics assessment results and 2.22 for our 2017 ELA results. This positive comparative performance assessment by our authorizer further supports our plan to grow and expand.

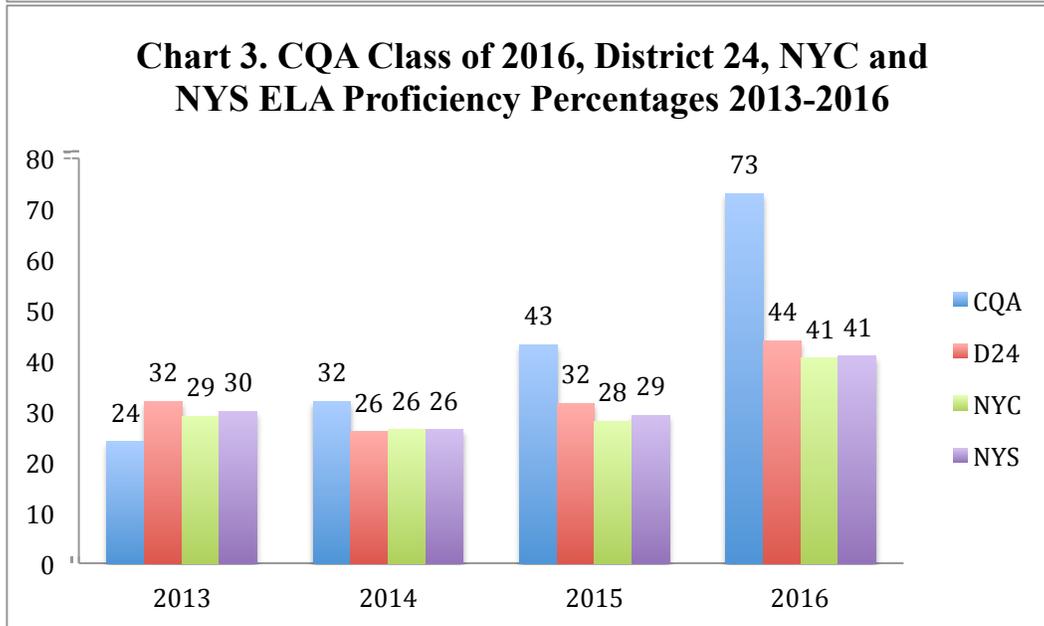
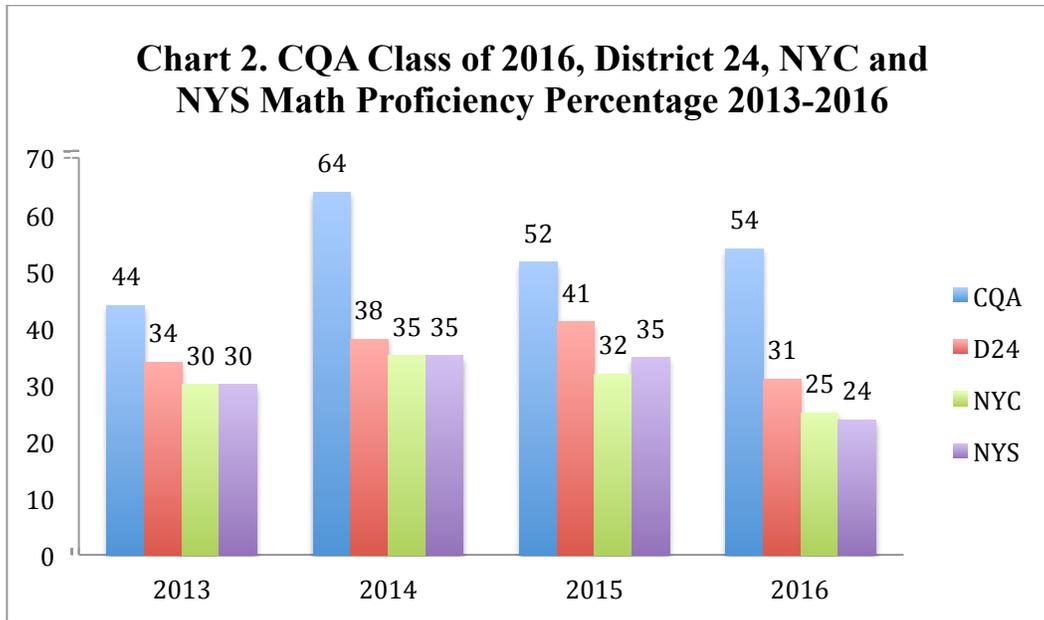
A closer review of academic proficiency data of our initial two cohorts, the classes of 2016 and 2017, indicates growth significantly outpacing our surrounding home district of NYC Community School District 24, New York City, and NYS, as measured by NYS ELA, Math, and science assessment data over four years in CQA’s program.<sup>3</sup>

For CQA’s inaugural cohort entering our program in 2012 and graduated in 2016, students experienced a gain of 10 percentile points in math (from 44% to 54%) between 2013 and 2016 testing years. In the same period of time, NYS students testing as 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in 2013 and as 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in 2016 experienced a decline in proficiency, moving from 30% to 24%. Growth in ELA for the same cohort was even more dramatic, with the CQA cohort making gains of 49 percentile points, from 24% to 73% proficiency between 2013 and 2016.

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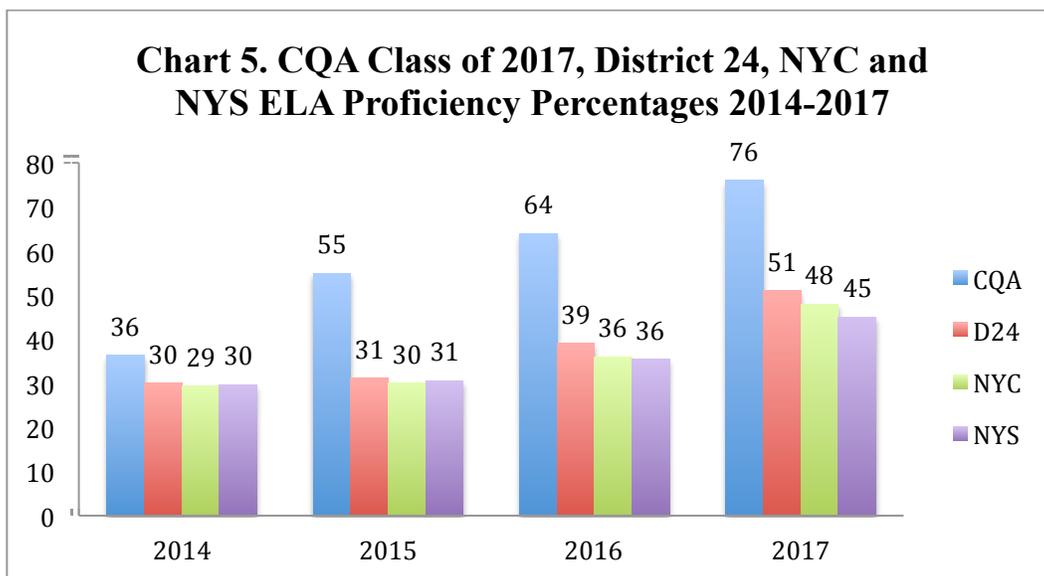
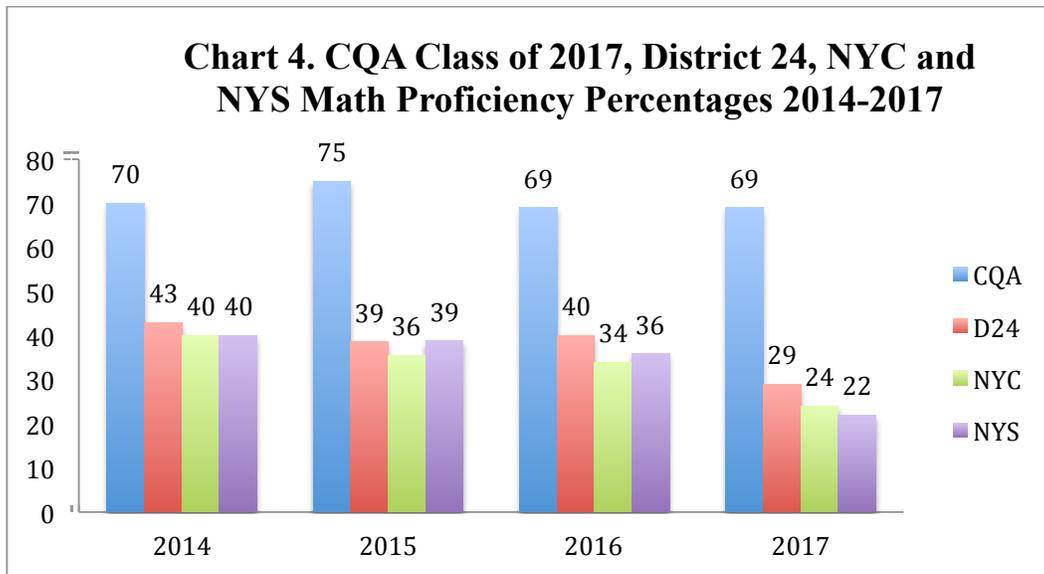
<sup>2</sup> Please see Appendix G, CQA Accountability Dossiers for schools years 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017.

<sup>3</sup> These results are not disaggregated to account for students who left or joined CQA at any point in time.



Performance by the 2017 graduating cohort, CQA’s second cohort with four full years in our program, shows pronounced gains in literacy, similar to the 2016 cohort. As measured by proficiency on the New York State mathematics, CQA students started at 70% proficiency in 2014 and decreased to 69% in 2017, losing one percentile point. By comparison, this cohort’s New York State peers declined by 18 percentile points over the same period. In ELA, the 2017

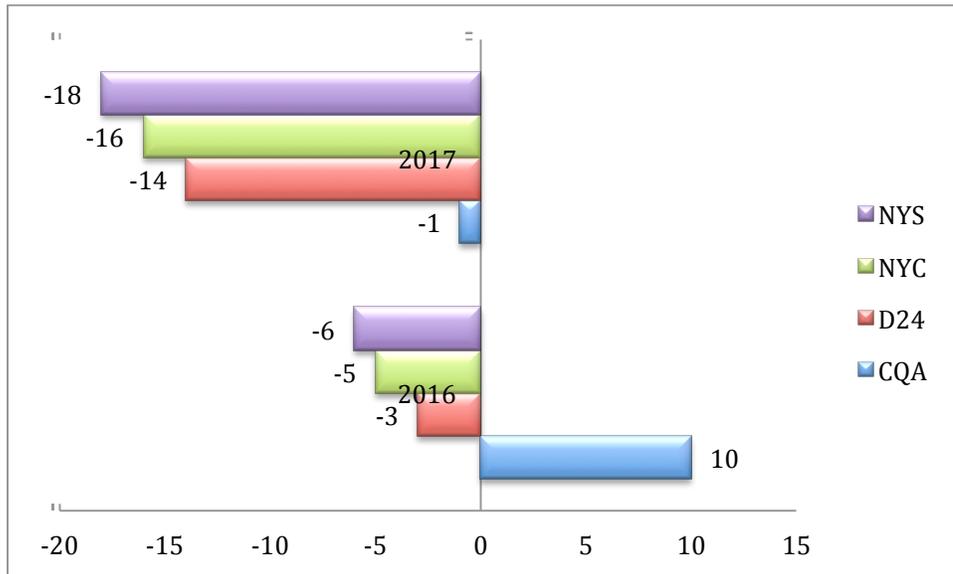
cohort made great strides, increasing in proficiency by 40% from 36% proficiency in 2014 to 76% proficiency in 2017.



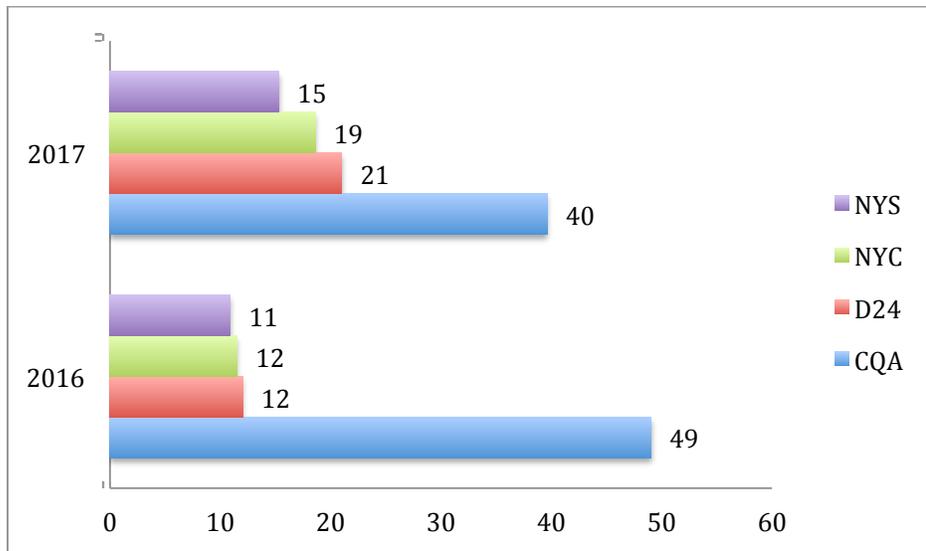
The growth in proficiency in both mathematics and ELA reflects the ability of our students and skill level of our teachers, as well as a validation of key principles in CQA’s program. In both mathematics and ELA, our scholars growth outpaced their local district, city, and state peers dramatically. During the time period in question, city and statewide math proficiency declined, with New York State student-wide proficiency dropping 18 percentile

points for the applicable testing cohort of 2017 and 6 percentile points for the applicable testing cohort of 2016. In the same time period, CQA scholars grew by 10 percentile points for the 2016 cohort, although the cohort of 2017 also experienced a decline, albeit of one percentile point, significantly lower than the comparative peer groups.

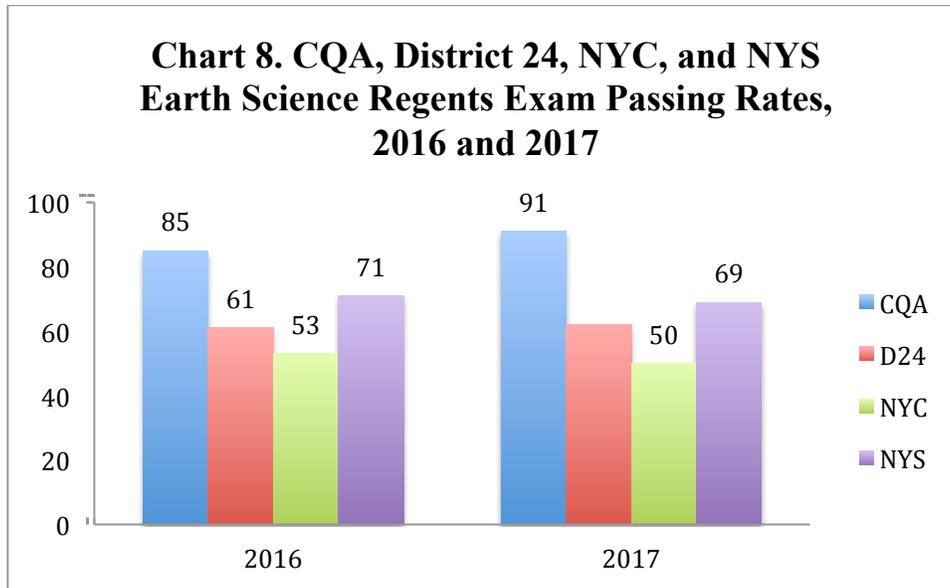
**Chart 6. Growth in CQA 2016 and 2017 Cohort Proficiency on the NYS Math Assessment, 2013-2016**



**Chart 7. Growth in CQA 2016 and 2017 Cohort Proficiency on the NYS ELA Assessment, 2013-2016**



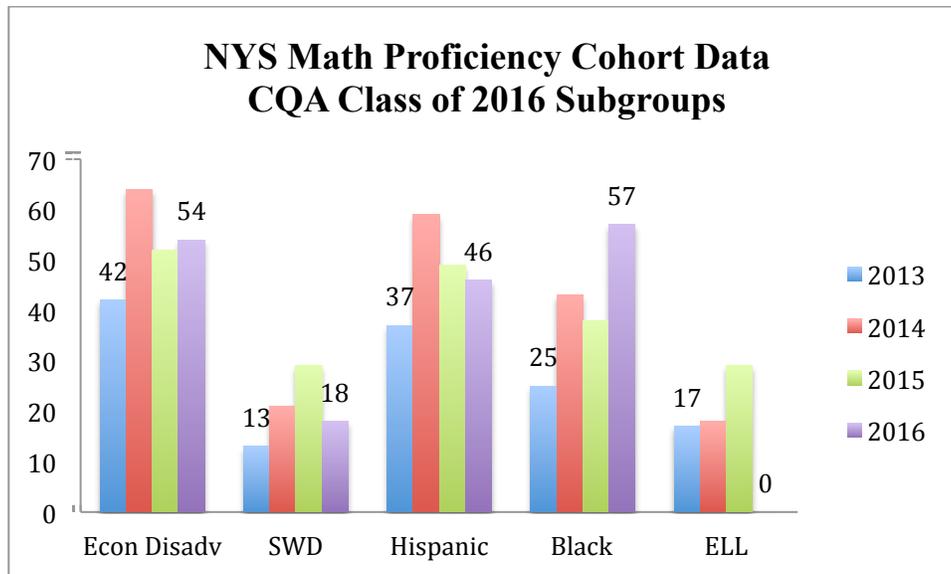
As a further measure of growth, beginning in 2016, CQA began offering the New York State Earth Science Regents exam to our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. All 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at CQA take the Earth Science Regents, including SWD and EL students. For both testing years, CQA 8<sup>th</sup> grade students significantly exceeded pass rates for District 24, New York City and New York State high school students.



As shown above, CQA has demonstrated success producing positive academic outcomes for all students. CQA’s program has also fostered growth for educationally disadvantaged subgroups of students as demonstrated by assessment data disaggregated for applicable subgroups of students described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA, as amended by No Child Left Behind (NCLB). These outcomes can be measured by student performance in all NYS ELA and Math examinations broken out by subgroup performance, year over year.

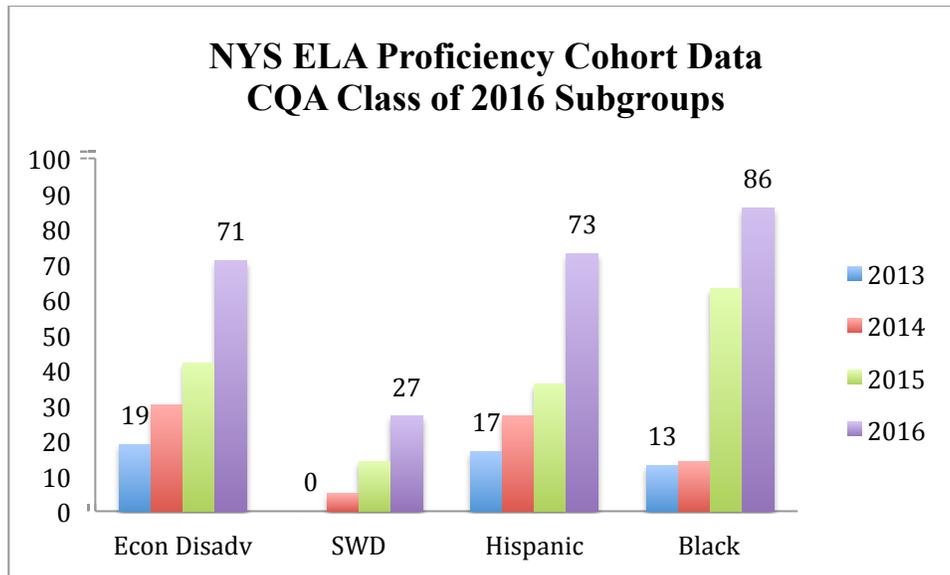
Our results for low-income students (using Economically Disadvantaged and FRL as proxies for income), students with disabilities (SWD), Hispanic / Latino, and Black students also show promise, once reviewed by our two graduating cohorts, the classes of 2016 and 2017.

**Chart 9. 2013-2016 Math Proficiency Rates for Economically Disadvantaged, SWD, Hispanic, Black, and ELL Subgroups in CQA Class of 2016**



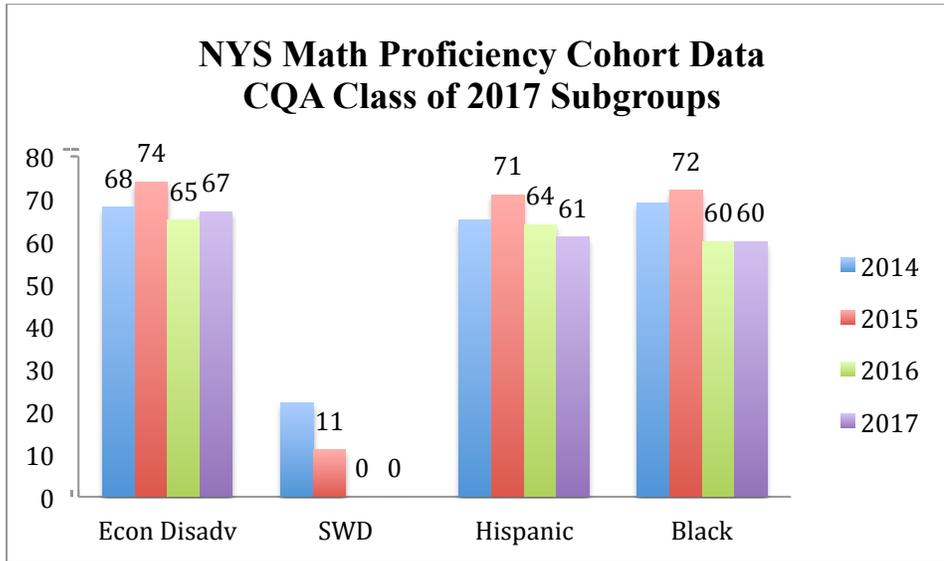
As evidenced in Chart 1, CQA’s inaugural class experienced positive growth across all accountability subgroups in math proficiency. Notably, black students more than doubled their proficiency, moving from 25 percent proficient in 2013 to 57 percent proficient in 2016, their final year at CQA. It should be noted that ELL students entering as 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in 2013 all transitioned out of ELL services by 2016, hence 2015 reflects the final testing year for the cohort of 2016 with ELL-classified students.

**Chart 10. 2013-2016 ELA Proficiency Rates for Economically Disadvantaged, SWD, Hispanic, and Black Subgroups in CQA Class of 2016**

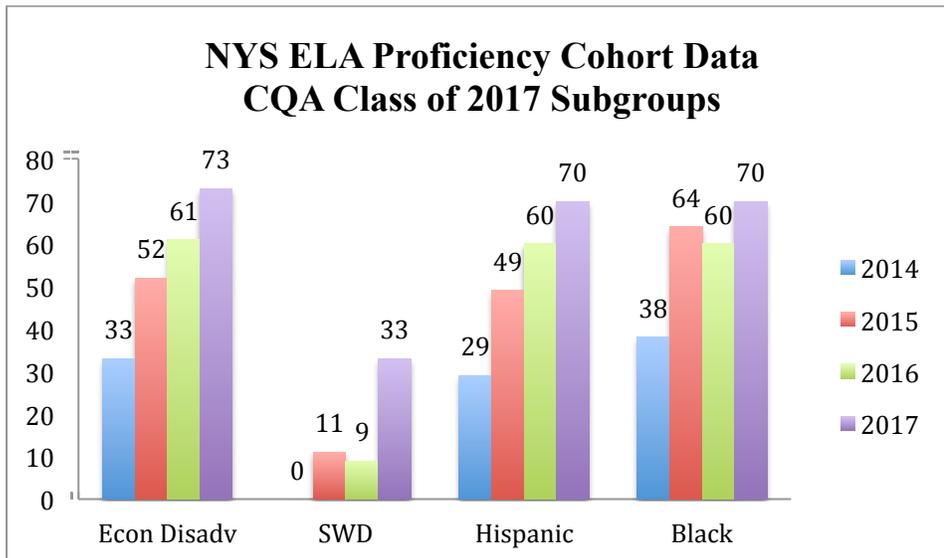


CQA student subgroup gains are more pronounced in ELA. The minimum growth for students in the 2016 Cohort across their four years at CQA was experienced by SWD, who grew by +27 percentile points. The maximum growth experienced was by Black students who started out at 13 percent proficient in 2013 and grew by 73 percentile points to reach 86 percent proficient in 2016. ELL students for this cohort did not experience significant growth as measured by testing. Nonetheless, the significant gains by Economically Disadvantaged, SWD, Hispanic, and Black subgroups reflects a strong academic program that facilitates powerful achievement and growth for all students.

**Chart 11. 2014-2017 Math Proficiency Rates for Economically Disadvantaged, SWD, Hispanic, and Black Subgroups in CQA Class of 2017**



**Chart 12. 2014-2017 ELA Proficiency Rates for Economically Disadvantaged, SWD, Hispanic, and Black Subgroups in CQA Class of 2017**



A final measure of student achievement progress is CQA’s high school placements. As we continue to expand toward a CQA high school, we are highly focused on helping enable

scholars and their families to pursue admission at the high school of their choice. Our two graduating cohorts of scholars have been accepted to highly selective private and public high schools in New York City, including:

- Bard Early College
- Beacon
- Bronx Science
- Brooklyn Technical
- Calhoun
- Dalton
- Hunter High School
- NYC Museum
- Queens High School for the Sciences at York College
- Peter Stuyvesant
- Townsend Harris

Based on the analysis of the performance of CQA scholars over time and against their peers both locally and statewide, as well as CQA graduate placement in selective high schools, CQA has attained a high degree of success in increasing academic achievement for all students and for the applicable accountability subgroups served.

### **Priority 2: Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs and Early College High**

CQA is not applying under this Priority.

### **Priority 3: Single School Operators**

CQA's CSP proposal is submitted pursuant to Priority 3, as CQA is currently a single school operator seeking to expand and replicate.

### **III. Selection Criteria**

#### **Contribution in Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students**

##### **Expanding educational opportunities for educationally disadvantaged students (Comparison to Surrounding Public Schools)**

With a proven track record producing positive outcomes for an educationally disadvantaged student population, CQA proposes to serve higher numbers through our expansion and replication plan. As described above, CQA serves substantially similar populations of SWD and ELL compared to neighborhood public schools and substantially greater concentrations of economically disadvantaged and Hispanic / Latino student subgroups. Our performance particularly compared with our peer district, city, and statewide schools demonstrate that CQA offers a high-quality learning environment in which students thrive.

In addition to the academic needs of our target community and population, CQA serves a fundamentally infrastructural need in that we are equipped to identify and prepare our own privately acquired buildings to house our programs. CQA's home neighborhoods have experienced severe overcrowding over the last 50 years and are expected to continue to grow in need over the next 10 years. Indeed, the City of New York projects that Queens will be the only borough of the City to increase in school-aged population through 2026 and will replace Brooklyn as the borough with the largest public school enrollment citywide.<sup>4</sup> While this growth along with the many positive attributes of Queens earns it the well-deserved moniker, "The Borough of Families," the acute overcrowding of schools near CQA puts numerous students and families at a significant educational disadvantage. While our facilities challenges have presented

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<sup>4</sup> "Enrollment Projections for the New York City Public Schools, 2016-2017 to 2025-2026," prepared by Statistical Forecasting for the New York City Schools Construction Authority, page 38. Available at <http://www.nycsca.org/Community/Capital-Plan-Reports-Data#Demographic-Projection-68>.

the greatest inhibitor our growth, we believe we can be part of the local solution for this infrastructural problem and a continued source of excellence for all.

Our proposal to grow new elementary grades and replicate our successful middle school program would add at minimum 1,200 new K-8 CQA seats, with at least 500 new seats funded by CSP opening by the end of the grant period. We believe our program combining rigorous academic in a small, nurturing and culturally responsive setting can be scaled sustainably and successfully.

### **Recruitment and Enrollment Plan**

CQA's mission of ELL success and consistent track record of serving significant proportions of ELL, SWD, and FRL populations reflect institutional values and policies that we will continue and expand in our future recruitment and enrollment, throughout growth. Our intention is to continue and build upon the culturally competent practices that have informed our "diverse by design" school culture and community.

Over time, through reputation and results, we have established CQA as a program of choice in our community. In our most recent lottery conducted April 16, 2018, CQA received more than 1,000 applicants for a total of 125 projected open seats across grades 5-8 in the 2018-2019 school year. We credit this interest in our school to the quality of our program and word-of-mouth reputation we have built through thoughtful recruitment over time.

At a compliance level, CQA's lottery, as is statutorily required in New York State, requires that we offer all seats first to our surrounding district, which necessarily means that current and future schools will draw from a highly diverse population with a large population of ELL, SWD, and FRL subgroups. Our 30% ELL lottery preference will also continue throughout our expansion.

Beyond compliance, to ensure higher-quality engagement with families and communities, we use the following strategies:

- Culturally and linguistically competent communications: CQA has bilingual leadership and staff members who are able to communicate in Spanish and a variety of Asian languages with both existing and prospective families. We also produce outreach materials translated into Spanish and dominant Asian languages (Tibetan, Chinese, Bengali) for lottery and admissions purposes.
- Targeted mailings: CQA uses direct mail as provided through the City of New York Department of Education's subcontractor to contact families living in and near our school with age-appropriate students.
- Open houses and school tours: At least twice a year, we open our school for prospective families to visit and learn about CQA's program and offerings. Families meet with instructional leadership and faculty directly and are able to ask questions in a comfortable environment.

To introduce new grades and school sites to prospective families, we will use all of the above methods as well as increased in-person efforts such as visiting early childhood and daycare institutions, houses of worship, youth development organizations, and other community-based organizations. We will also offer a sibling preference for existing CQA families.

### **Project Design**

CQA's CSP Project is designed to advance CQA's overriding mission of college preparation and success for all by expanding our program to add elementary grades and increasing our middle school seats via replication. At full scale beyond the Grant Period, we

hope to also add a high school to ensure a higher quality college acceptance and persistence experience for our scholars.

The following Logic Model shows CQA’s stated goals, outcomes (intermediate and long-term) and performance metrics for CQA’s proposed CSP project.

<b>Goal 1:</b> Increase educational opportunity by expanding CQA seats.		
Outcome 1: Open high-quality CQA elementary (K-4).	Outcome 2: Replicate CQA middle school program.	Outcome 3: Plan CQA High School.
<b>Intermediate Outcome:</b> Increase of CQA seats and beginning of CQA high school.		
<b>Long-term Outcome:</b> Continuous K-12 system that provides unique and high-value educational opportunity for high-ELL community.		
<b>Goal 2:</b> Prepare CQA scholars for success in college and beyond.		
Outcome 1: Meet and exceed charter accountability goals.	Outcome 2: Proficiency as measured by state assessments exceeds peers.	Outcome 3: Effect Size in comparative performance at least “performing higher than expected to a meaningful degree” according to the annual accountability report from SUNY CSI.
<b>Intermediate Outcome:</b> Strong student achievement gains		
<b>Long-term Outcome:</b> College preparation success for CQA students and alumni who have gained long-term and lasting benefits from a continuous rigorous school program.		

Over the course of CQA’s proposed CSP project, CQA will add an elementary program (“CQAES”) and replicate our middle school program for CQA Middle School II (“CQAMS II”). Our activities will commence with a planning period in which CQA will plan our elementary model using learning developed over time serving CQA middle school students. Using the same core principles and educational model components – intensive small group instruction where possible, literacy-rich practices, and a small school culture – we hope to build on the successes of our middle school program by studying other examples of strong elementary models in highly-diverse urban settings.

As discussed above, the local environment’s facility challenges have presented the greatest inhibitor to CQA’s growth, since we have not had space to expand our program. In spring 2018, however, CQA entered into an agreement to lease a new building starting in 2020 that will allow us to add new grades and consolidate our existing grades, which are currently split between two campuses. The following student enrollment and school plan is built on two assumptions. First, that the new facility opens during school year 2020-2021 and that a middle school replication site is identified by 2022 for occupancy by CQAMS II.

**Table 3. CQA Student Enrollment Plan 2019-2023**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Total Seats</b>	400	400	600	700	900
<b>CSP-New</b>			200	300	500
<b>CQAMS</b>	5-8	5-8	5-8	5-8	5-8
<b>CQAES</b>			K, 1	K, 1, 2	K, 1, 2, 3
<b>CQAMS II</b>					5

**Proposed Timeline for CSP-Funded Project Activities**

<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Owner(s)</b>
<b>CQA Elementary School Expansion</b>			
Summer 2018	Elementary school curriculum, program, and hiring plan development	Instruction	School Director (SD), AP (Assistant Principal)
Fall / Winter 2018	CQAES / CQAMS I Building Design and Financing underway	Executive / Finance	Executive Director (ED), Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
Winter 2019	ES Program complete, hire CQAES principal	Executive / Instruction	ED / SD
Spring 2019	New site construction begins	Executive / Finance	ED / CFO
Summer 2019	CQAES Principal hired	Instruction	ED/ SD
	Develop building and purchasing plan for new grades	Operations	Operations Director (OD) / CFO
<i>For all new CQAES grades, the following timelines, milestones, functions, and owners will be repeated each subsequent year until full enrollment.</i>			
Fall 2019	CQAES Staff recruitment begins for grades K, 1	Instruction / Operations	SD / AP
Winter 2020	Student Recruitment Begins	Operations / Finance	OD / CFO
Spring 2020	Lottery for ES	Operations	OD
Summer 2020	Building prepared for instruction – purchasing, equipment	Operations / Finance	OD / CFO
	Staff preparation and professional development	Instruction	SD / OD
Fall 2020	CQAES grades K, 1 open		ED / SD
<b>CQA Middle School II Replication</b>			
Spring 2019	CQAMS II Site identification	Executive / Finance	ED / CFO
Summer 2020	Apply for CQAMS II Charter	Executive / Instruction	ED / SD
	Pre-planning for CQAMS II	Executive / Instruction	ED / SD
Spring 2021	CQAMS II Principal hired	Instruction	ED/ SD
<i>For all new CQAMSII grades, the following timelines, milestones, functions, and owners will be repeated each subsequent year until full enrollment.</i>			
Spring 2022	Lottery for grade 5 CQA MS II	Operations	OD / CFO
Summer 2022	Building preparation	Operations	OD / CFO
Fall 2022	CQAMS II Opens with Grade 5	Operations	Middle School II Principal (MSIIP)
	Staff preparation and professional development	Instruction	SD / MSIIP

## **Project Personnel**

### **Personnel from underrepresented groups**

Through intentional training and hiring practices, a sizable portion of our staff reflects the diversity of our families to build trusting and relatable connections with our students. About 15% of our staff identify as Hispanic / Latino, and 17% identify as African-American. Another 7% of our staff identifies as Asian American.

### **Qualifications of key project personnel**

*Executive Director and Founder*, Suyin So, will serve as Project Director. Suyin opened CQA in 2012 with a team of dedicated and visionary individuals interested in improving educational and life outcomes for children from non-English backgrounds. Suyin actively recruited and assembled the founding team and board and served as lead applicant for the charter process. Suyin works closely with the board of directors and all senior staff to advance CQA's mission through strategic planning and resource management, including capital planning and fund development. The daughter of Indonesian immigrants, Suyin is a former journalist and licensed attorney who graduated from Brown University and Georgetown University Law Center.

*School Director / Principal*, Ashish Kapadia. Ashish has been CQA's School Director since 2014 and previously served as a member of CQA's board of trustees. He is a lifelong public school teacher and administrator who began his career teaching social studies in the Bronx before founding University Prep Charter High School (formerly Green Dot New York Charter School) in 2008. He attended the University of Chicago, New York University, and Queens College.

*Chief Financial Officer*, Michelle Dalpiaz. Prior to joining CQA in 2014, Michelle was the director of finance and operations for the Riverhead Charter School. Michelle works closely with

the finance committee of CQA in all aspects of financial leadership of CQA, including annual budget development and management, audit, and long-range growth planning. During her tenure there, she oversaw the bond financing and construction of a new 48,000 square foot school building. Before stepping into the nonprofit world, Michelle managed the operations and financial administration for numerous Citicorp divisions. She is a graduate of Hofstra University.

*Director of Advancement, Melissa Kinsella.* Melissa has nearly two decades of fund development and advancement experience in the nonprofit sector, including high-impact special events and corporate partnership development. She comes to CQA from both well-established New York City institutions like The Frick Collection Museum, School of American Ballet, and the Central Park Conservancy as well as newer and smaller organizations, including international education and youth- focused institutions. Melissa graduated from State University of New York, Oswego.

*Glenn Liebeck, Assistant Principal.* Glenn has been with CQA since 2013. A lifelong educator who began his teaching career in Teach For America, Glenn opened CQA's 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade campus in 2014 and supervises its secondary leadership team. Glenn has been a teacher, school administrator, school start-up consultant, and leadership coach whose previous professional affiliations include Match Charter High School, Achievement First, and the New York City Charter Center. He received his Ed. M. from University of Massachusetts, Boston and his B.A. from Union College.

*Operations Director, Therese Paskoff.* Therese was part of CQA's founding team, starting in March 2012. Her responsibilities include oversight over all student services, human resources, technology infrastructure, and facilities management. Therese's career in education operations began at Peninsula Preparatory Academy Charter School where she served as the Director of Operations and Finance. There, she oversaw and managed all day to day operations and

compliance with the school's authorizer and NYSED. Prior to joining the nonprofit sector, Therese worked with The Wright Group, a division of McGraw-Hill after working in her family business.

### Quality of Management Plan

CQA has demonstrated the organizational ability to operate a high-quality, single-school charter school serving an educationally disadvantaged population over our initial six years. Our dual site operations have afforded CQA above-average competencies in preparing and maintaining new school sites. This skill set will be helpful as we continue to grow vertically to add K-4, and eventually 9-12, as well as horizontally to replicate our middle school program.

CQA has produced strong academic and organizational results despite unusually constrained facility constraints over our first charter period, and our success is attributable to an experienced and highly qualified senior management team. Having operated two separate campuses in privately leased building space for the entirety of CQA's existence, CQA possesses the organizational competencies to open school sites in rapid succession. Our instructional and financial functions work closely together to maximize student instruction by careful budgeting, financial management, and overall fiscal discipline. Furthermore, our operations and fundraising functions have grown over time to reflect the skills necessary to physically maintain a safe learning environment in suboptimal buildings as well as identify sources of support such as philanthropic and charitable benefactors. Our greatest challenge over time has been a lack of physical infrastructure to grow new grades, but we have identified a new facility project that will allow us to consolidate our current middle school and add grades K-4.

Our academic, financial, and operational functions have helped us manage a very challenging facility situation that has added great experience to us as an organization. CQA

maintains a sophisticated financial management function that has helped sustain a financially strong operation and led to consistent clean independent audits since inception in 2012. Our Chief Financial Officer, Michelle Dalpiaz, leads all financial management and business affairs of CQA and brings more than two decades of private and public sector financial management experience. In turn, our CFO reports to our Executive Director, Suyin So, who reports to the Board of Directors. CQA's Finance Committee meets at least quarterly to oversee budget management and review financial results and projections. Annually, following a recommendation from the Board committee, the full Board reviews and adopts a budget for the coming year. All grant monies will be fully integrated into our budgeting process and will be managed carefully and fully in keeping with our contract with SED. Furthermore, as a school receiving funds pursuant to Title I, CQA is fluent in the reporting requirements associated with federal title funding, and has met all requirements.

Programmatically, our educational and operational leadership are experienced in all aspects of managing and operating both educational and enrichment programs. For our enrichment program, our close trusting relationships with the scholars, and our warm and strong rapport with their parents and family members, position us to easily recruit and engage the young people and quickly engage them in programming. We also fully control the operations of both of our buildings and are able to competently manage all logistic matters.

### **Quality of CQA as Applicant**

The mission of the Central Queens Academy Charter School is to prepare students for success in college, the workforce and the community through a school that integrates literacy, high standards-based academics, and culturally responsive supportive services. CQA has sought and been approved by its authorizer to allow for CQA to expand from being a grades 5-8 middle

school to becoming a K-12 school in Community School District 24. This expansion was approved by the SUNY Trustees in our first charter renewal made effective July 27, 2017.

We attribute our successes to our **six key academic and non-academic design elements** that work together to support the mission of preparing all CQA students for success in high school, college, career, and community endeavors.

Academic	Non-Academic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on Literacy</li> <li>• Rigorous Standards Based Academics and Frequent Assessments to Foster Growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on Social and Emotional support to Teach Character and Community</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on Teacher Development</li> <li>• More Time on Task, Longer School Day and Longer School Year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culturally Responsive Education, Enrichment, and Supportive Services</li> </ul>

These six key design elements ensure that CQA is a school that integrates rigorous academics and thoughtfully tailored & culturally responsive supportive services, and the school supports its core values of community, quality of character, & achievement through academics. Fundamental to implementing CQA’s key design is understanding from where CQA students are coming. The school is culturally sensitive, reflecting and incorporating the ethnic and cultural diversity of its student body by making their backgrounds relevant to what students learn.

**Focus on Literacy.** CQA believes that literacy is the key skill that all students, including our intended at-risk population of English language learners (“ELLs”), need to master in order to succeed in high school, college, and the workforce. Literacy is particularly important in middle school when students are transitioning to the academic rigors they will face in high school. CQA focuses on literacy as a tool of empowerment. Teachers are trained during the summers and

throughout the school year on how to incorporate literacy goals into their content areas and curriculum, and will learn how to assess mastery of those goals. As part of that training, teachers learn about student-relevant texts and materials and how they can be incorporated into lessons. The curricula for the four core content areas that we implement have been chosen because they lend themselves well to scaffolding instruction for literacy aims. We have also aligned our social studies and science curricula to the literacy goals set forth by the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts.

The school's schedule offers additional time through increased minutes of instruction daily, weekly, and yearly, and ample periods for teachers to plan, collaborate, and teach literacy in the classroom. The schedule also allows teachers to be observed by both other teachers who wish to learn from watching their peers, and school leaders who can provide formal and informal feedback to help teachers develop.

Moreover, CQA's general focus on literacy for all students dovetails well with our use of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, or SIOP, model of English language instruction for our ELL population. Since CQA is located in a school district (CSD 24) where there are a high number of ELLs, it is important that we offer an academic program where literacy and language is emphasized in every core classroom, not just in English Language Arts (ELA). All mainstream general education teachers integrate literacy in a way that is both culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate for ELLs to create a learning environment where students can find the material meaningful and relate to the subject matter.

By focusing on literacy, students will learn to become critical thinkers, learn how to communicate effectively in speech and in writing, and develop the confidence to work independently.

**Rigorous Standards-Based Academics and Frequent Assessments Foster Growth.** CQA's curriculum is rooted in the Common Core and New York State Standards. As discussed above, these not only include content standards, but the literacy standards that have been incorporated in the social studies and science frameworks of the Common Core standards. These standards will be made transparent to students at the beginning of every unit and every lesson in every classroom so that every student knows what they should be learning and on what they will be assessed. Middle school students need clear and consistent goals so that they can develop the study skills that they need to excel in high school. ELLs, in particular, will benefit from such clearly articulated standards, since they have more challenges with language comprehension than other students.

In order to measure whether students have mastered standards, CQA will administer purposeful assessments of various forms. We will administer state-mandated assessments to measure compliance with state standards. We will administer periodic interim assessments to measure students' progress throughout the school year. We will also administer formative and summative assessments that are regularly and logically integrated into the curriculum including, but not limited to weekly quizzes, homework, essays, projects, and teacher-created tests. These can come in the form of authentic assessments like using geography to map out the expansion of the Roman Empire or using math and statistical analysis to tracking batting averages. Unit tests will be administered at the end of a given unit.

These assessments as well as interim assessments, Fountas and Pinnell testing, and the Scholastic Reading Inventory help students, teachers, and parents understand what math or reading level or lexile the students are currently at and how much they have grown.

**Focus on Teacher Development.** Teachers are critical to the success of CQA to provide a supportive learning environment and model the values of the school. CQA strives to hire not only highly qualified teachers who are capable of turning any ordinary curriculum into an extraordinary learning experience, but who are also capable of modeling each of CQA's core values of community, quality of character, and achievement through academics. Teachers also understand that the middle school years are particularly difficult because of the transitions and growth that students undergo during this period between childhood and young adulthood.

Teachers develop as professionals individually and in collaboration with their colleagues. CQA provides teachers with professional development opportunities both in-house and externally for teachers to learn: how to develop and increase their pedagogical repertoire; how to integrate literacy into their unit and lesson plans, how to use the SIOP model for teaching ELLs, and how to be strong advisors so that they can adequately mentor and support their students. Teachers regularly share best practices and new pedagogical methods by preparing and providing periodic in-service trainings for their colleagues throughout the school year. They also participate in annual summer staff development training.

In addition, all teachers are supported and coached by an administrator. Teachers receive feedback on curriculum planning, lesson planning, and lesson implementation. They are held accountable for what is discussed during professional development sessions through the evaluations by school administrators.

**More Time on Task, Longer School Day and Longer School Year.** CQA is a place where students are supported by teachers and staff throughout a longer school day and a longer school year in order to provide middle school students with more structure in their day to develop their academic and social skills, and more time with consistent adult role models for support. The

longer school day will include periods for every subject of 60 minutes. English Language Arts will have two periods (120 minutes) per day. This means that from the beginning of grade 5 to the end of grade 8, students at CQA will have completed well above the requirements of Part 100 Regulations.

In addition, built within the daily schedule is time set aside for additional enrichment and/or remediation. Students have the opportunity to further explore topics of interest like art, music, physical education or technology, or teachers may have that time for remediation for certain students. Through the use of frequent assessments, teachers are able to accurately gauge the needs of individual students that may need more reading, math, or other academic supports.

CQA provides a longer school year of 185 days by starting the school year before Labor Day. CQA also provides summer school for all students who do not make adequate academic progress during the school year and who need additional academic support services. CQA wants all students to be academically, artistically, and socially enriched over the summer, not just those who may be in academic need. The school offers enrichment programs or helps match students to some summer programs. Additionally, CQA offers vacation and weekend remediation and test prep throughout the year depending on the needs of our students.

**Emphasis on Social and Emotional Support to Teach Character and Community.** To teach the core values of character and community, CQA has a school culture that emphasizes social and emotional support. Studies have shown that social and emotional support increases academic performance. Middle school students need more support since they are going through a period of transition from childhood to adolescence, and may need to be taught the skills necessary to be successful young adults in today's global environment. With students coming primarily from Elmhurst, Corona, and Woodside, CQA reflects Central Queens in its rich diversity – ethnically,

culturally, linguistically, and creatively. Students are shown how to interact with and appreciate their peers in school, regardless from wherever they may originally come. By equipping our students with effective social and emotional support tools, they are able to grow into educated, self-assured, empathic teenagers. ELLs, in particular, benefit from social and emotional support because of the opportunities to help integrate them into the school culture, and the skills that they can use to communicate and feel more empowered in the school. At CQA, we integrate social and emotional support school-wide to set the culture of tolerance, civility and personal growth through advisory lessons and through the exhaustive work of our guidance counselors & administrators in charge of culture.

Most importantly, students develop a language and a culture for dealing with conflict and relationships in a peaceful and restorative way. Not only does this help all students, but it can be particularly beneficial to ELLs who need more interactive models of communication in order to develop their English language skills. Students at CQA learn that each of these values of character and community, work hand in hand to help create the kind of community that can handle the difficult issues confronting our increasingly interconnected global world. Teachers are equipped to incorporate this learning into their daily practice through workshops and trainings in the summer and throughout the year.

In order to help students to navigate the rigorous academics and develop the skills needed to embrace the school culture, CQA created an advisory system where each student is assigned to an adult advisor to be his/her mentor. Each advisor also communicates with the family of the advisee through phone calls, distribution of progress reports, and parent-teacher conferences.

**Culturally Responsive Education, Enrichment, and Supportive Services.** CQA provides a culturally responsive education for all students from an institutional level and an instructional

level. CQA recognizes that students come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and that adjustment to school culture may take additional supports. To that end, the school embraces diversity by ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to cultural sensitivity, that school policies and procedures minimize adverse impacts to students from diverse backgrounds, and that the school approaches the community for support and engagement.

In addition, teachers teach in a culturally responsive way by: acknowledging the differences between groups as well as commonalities; validating students' cultural identities in the classroom, through the curriculum, and through instructional materials; teaching students about different cultures and their experiences; creating a supportive atmosphere of mutual respect among students; and helping students to become socially and politically conscious about the world around them and the leading role they can take to make it better.

One of the ways in which CQA does this is by providing additional culturally responsive enrichment and supportive services to students is through our lead community partner, SAYA!, which provides Enrichment program design and implementation services, focusing on meeting both personal and academic needs of CQA's students. These in-school supportive and enrichment services are for all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students of CQA. Middle school students, especially as they get older, need outlets for individual expression and to build confidence outside of pure academics, and the Enrichment program can provide some of those experiences.

With grades 5 through 8, Central Queens Academy Charter School requires all students to take math, science, social studies, and a double period of ELA. All English and math courses are aligned to the Common Core Standards. All social studies courses are aligned to the New York State Social Studies Framework adopted by the New York State Education Department two year ago. The science courses build a foundation of spiraled topics and skills towards 8<sup>th</sup> grade

where all students take Earth Science to prepare for the New York State Regents Exam. All students participate in an Advisory class and they take Enrichment at the end of the school day. Enrichment is a period devoted to physical education, art, or music in order for CQA to be in compliance with New York State regulations. These classes could include fitness, yoga, martial arts, dance, chorus, drama, or more traditional physical education, art, or music.

Most CQA students take a 6<sup>th</sup> class called Interdisciplinary Studies. This course is a combination of English and math instruction in grades 5 & 6 where teachers look to have students make connections between the core subjects. In grades 7 & 8, teachers combine English with STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) topics. Some special education students take SETSS (Special Education Teacher Support Services) instead of Interdisciplinary Studies. Most special education students receive instruction in an Integrated Co-Teaching setting. Some ESL students and some students who struggle with literacy take Intervention instead of Interdisciplinary Studies. Intervention is an ESL and literacy skills course that caters to the needs of recent immigrants and those who struggle to acquire English. In this course, teachers use Fountas & Pinnell's Leveled Literacy Intervention as well as basic reading & writing intervention.

CQA students are currently in school from 8:30am to 4:30pm four days per week and from 8:00am to 2:00pm one day per week. The shortened day allows for faculty members and administrators to hold professional development sessions, grade level meetings, department meetings, and committee meetings.

At the high school level, District 24 had a graduation rate of only 60% in 2014 and an Advanced Regents Diploma rate of only 13%. In 2015, the graduation rate rose to 68% in 2015 and an Advanced Regents Diploma rate of 16%. Among the neediest groups, the graduation rate

was significantly lower. For students with disabilities, only 35% graduated in 2015 and only 40% of English Language Learners graduated. Beyond the Grant Period and once our initial K-8 expansion is complete, CQA looks to expand to high school to produce a high quality education so that students have a greater chance to graduation high school and be successful in college.

Further, District 24 is considered either the most or second-most overcrowded school district in New York City depending on which independently-research report one wishes to believe. It is estimated that the district needs 8,000 additional seats in the district to meet the demand caused in part by large-scale immigration in the district. With immigrant enclaves in Elmhurst, Corona, Woodside, Jackson Heights, Middle Village, Maspeth, and Rego Park, the demand for seats in school is likely to remain quite high. Operating in private space, CQA hopes to expand to alleviate part of that demand.

### **New Building Opening in 2020**

CQA is preparing to lease a building that will open in 2020. Currently occupying two buildings, CQA is already split with grades 5 & 6 in Elmhurst and grades 7 & 8 in Glendale. The Elmhurst building is a converted apartment building that later became a Montessori school before CQA leased it. The building is quite small with about 10,000 square feet for just over 200 students. It has one narrow staircase and only 20 feet of hallway. While the Glendale building is certainly suitable for instruction, it is located at least 30 minutes away from CQA families. Most CQA scholars in grades 7 & 8 commute between 45 and 75 minutes by multiple buses to the building in Glendale.

Working in partnership with Civic Builders, the nonprofit charter school developer, CQA currently plans to construct and build a customized 63,000 square foot building that will replace both of the rental buildings currently in use. The new building is located advantageously to

Elmhurst / Corona families and is about a 15 minute walk from our existing Elmhurst campus and will feature state-of-the-art technology and educational spaces, suitable for 900 students in two schools, K-4 and 5-8. The location's proximity to our existing and targeted families means that most families will be able to walk or take a brief public transportation bus ride from their home to the school. We also anticipate offering yellow school bus service to our families through the Office of Pupil Transport of the Department of Education for the City of New York. CQA currently offers bus services through OPT for grades 5 and 6.

Planning is currently underway with an expectation that the building will be ready for occupancy by CQA in the fall of 2020, at which point we will introduce grades K, 1 for our elementary grades and consolidate our middle school grades of 5-8 in the building.

### **Continuation Plan**

Following the end of the grant period, CQA intends that all fully enrolled school programs will be sustainable using public funds, including additional CSP funds, the NYS per-pupil reimbursement for general and special education, federal consolidated Title funds, IDEA funding, e-Rate, NYSTL, NYSSL and other government sources of funding. Thus, all private fundraising CQA conducts supports early-stage growth years as well as special initiatives such as facility planning and capital campaigns.

For facility planning, our financial projections assume that all new facility acquisitions, whether rental or purchase, must be sustainable using the New York State charter school facility subsidy introduced by legislative act in 2014. The subsidy provides the lesser of amount between contractual rent for each eligible charter school or 30% of per-pupil total for subsidy-eligible students (defined as grades or students newly served as of 2014). While CQA's existing grades 5 and 6 are ineligible for the subsidy, all future expansion grades and any students served under a separate charter such as the planned CQAMS II would qualify for the facility subsidy.

To ease the facility strain and also build a strong foundation for CQA’s early years, fundraising has been integrated into CQA’s culture from our founding. Our young fund development program has raised an aggregate of \$4.5 million+ over our initial six years through a variety of sources, including competitive government programs, individuals, institutions, and special events. Our board of trustees participates 100% in fundraising to help us meet our goals.

We have been fortunate to have support from a strong network of individuals and institutions who share our interest in expanding educational opportunities for immigrant and EL young people:

- Our lead donor since inception, the Ong Family Foundation, funded our pre-inception activities and provided multi-year annual operating funds amounting to more than \$1.4 million. Additionally, the foundation has made a \$1,000,000 pledge toward the new K-8 building.
- We have also had the support of significant philanthropic institutions, many of whom we will approach for additional expansion funding:
  - Walton Family Foundation
  - Tang Family Foundation
  - Carson Family Trust

## **IV. Application Requirements**

### **(a) Roles of CQA and partners**

Please refer to Appendix E “Schools Operated By CQA.”

### **(b) Performance Agreement between CQA and authorizer**

Please refer to Appendix E “Schools Operated By CQA” as well as Appendix G,

“Accountability Dossiers.”

**(c) Parent and Community Input**

Please refer to “Quality of Applicant” for a description of CQA’s plans to engage parents, families and the broader community to inform our practices and procedures.

**(d) Planned Activities and Expenditures and Continuation**

Please refer to the timeline of milestones provided above and “Continuation Plan” section.

**(e) Parent, Family, Community Engagement**

Please refer to “Quality of Applicant” for a description of CQA’s plans to engage parents, families and the broader community to inform our practices and procedures.

**(f) Student Transportation**

Please refer to “Quality of Applicant” for a description of CQA’s plans to continue using Office of Pupil Transportation of the City of New York Department of Education for student transportation.

**(g) Student Retention and Behavior Management**

Student Attendance for school year 2016-2017 was 97%.

CQA has not suspended or expelled any students in the last three consecutive years.

**(h) Budget and Operational Autonomy**

**(i) Student Recruitment and Retention of Subgroups**

Please refer to Selection Criteria Priority I for a description of CQA’s enrollment of ESSA accountability subgroups.

**(j) Compliance with IDEA**

CQA offers a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to all students with disabilities (SWD) who enroll in our school and is fully compliant with all federal, state, and local regulations regarding the education of SWD. As with all charter schools located in New York

City, CQA is considered to be part of each student's district of residence for IDEA purposes.

CQA does not discriminate in our admissions or enrollment policies based on known or suspected disabilities.

We strive to provide the most inclusive learning possible to all students and particularly SWD to the extent permitted in accordance with each student's Individualized Education Plan as set forth by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) of each student's district of residence. Under the direction of our Special Education Coordinator, our certified teachers collaborate with guidance counselors and other staff to provide all programs and services pursuant to the IEP throughout school hours. When outside contracted services are deemed necessary, CQA's Special Education Coordinator coordinates with the outside provider to come to CQA to provide all IEP-mandated support. CQA's Special Education team coordinates with relevant stakeholders, including families, CSE, and outside providers, for all initial evaluations, re-evaluations, revisions of IEPs and other compliance matters such as testing accommodations.

**(k) Definition of Charter School**

CQA was incorporated as an educational corporation by the State Education Department in September 2011 and meets the definition of a "charter school" for all applicable federal, state, and local legislative and regulatory authorities.

**(l) Single-sex program educational program.**

CQA is not proposing a single-sex program.

**(m) Waivers**

CQA is not requesting any waivers of federal legal requirements.

**(n) Logic Model**

Please refer to "Project Design" above.

**(o) Most Recent Audited Financial Statements**

Please refer Appendix F for a copy of CQA's most recent audited financial statements from tax year 2017.