**Uncommon Schools**

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**Abstract**

Uncommon Schools (Uncommon) is a nonprofit organization that starts and manages outstanding urban charter public schools that close the achievement gap and prepare low-income students to enter, succeed in, and graduate from college. Uncommon builds uncommonly great schools by developing and managing regional networks that are philosophically aligned and highly accountable. In addition to opening and managing high-performing schools, Uncommon is also committed to expanding its social impact by sharing best practices and advocating for policy changes that provide educational options to under-served families.

Uncommon currently manages 28 schools in New York City; Rochester, New York; Troy, New York; Newark, New Jersey; and Boston, Massachusetts. This fall the organization will serve 6,000 students across its current geographies. After several years of building a strong group of talented leaders and teachers, as well as proven, replicable systems, Uncommon is in the midst of an ambitious growth plan to ultimately encompass 44 schools, preparing 16,000 K to 12th grade students for college.

The shared mission of each Uncommon school is to prepare students to graduate from college by creating a rigorous, joyful school culture in which transformative college-prep opportunities are made available to low-income children. Uncommon has achieved outstanding academic results based on nationally-normed tests, statewide exams, and graduation milestones. Schools consistently outperform neighborhood schools, rank at the top of their cities, and are among their states' top-performing urban schools. In addition to academic results, Uncommon tracks the effectiveness of its instructional programs, management services, and operational practices in order to disseminate the systems that work best to schools outside of the Uncommon network. The most frequently cited example of this is the *Taxonomy of Effective Teaching Practices* (*Taxonomy*), a collection of 49 techniques high-performing teachers use to drive student achievement. To date Uncommon has shared the *Taxonomy* with over 5,400 internal and external teachers and leaders with an estimated benefit to over 300,000 students across the country. Uncommon Schools expects to systemize and disseminate additional tools and practices in an effort to influence and catalyze student achievement in schools across the country.

The focus of the following grant is a request for CSP funding to fuel the growth of Uncommon Schools in Newark, New Jersey, and Boston, Massachusetts, specifically. Uncommon's strong track record, talented leadership, and replicable systems uniquely position the organization for federal CSP funding. Although all Uncommon schools will be sustainable on the public dollar at full enrollment, supplemental public funding and private philanthropy is necessary in the start-up years during which the per pupil cost of running a school is higher due to many up-front expenses and initial low levels of enrollment. State laws in New Jersey do not permit an existing charter to apply for additional CSP grants when opening new, distinct schools; Massachusetts did not receive a CSP funding award in the most recent round of

allocation decisions. Due to the unavailability of state funding, federal support of Uncommon's North Star network in Newark, New Jersey, and Preparatory network in Boston, Massachusetts, would guarantee that over 3,200 additional low-income students in these cities have the opportunity for a high-quality education and the preparation necessary to succeed in and graduate from college. Uncommon respectfully requests $4.256 million in federal CSP funding to support the growth of nine new schools in Uncommon's North Star and Preparatory networks.