Uncommon|2021 Project Narrative—Table of Contents

Introduction

In 2005, leaders from some of the nation's highest-performing charter schools—Roxbury Preparatory Charter School, Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter School, and Boston Collegiate Charter School in Boston and North Star Academy Charter School in Newark—founded Uncommon Schools with the mission of starting and managing outstanding urban charter public schools that close the achievement gap and prepare low-income students to graduate from college. In the decade since, Uncommon has grown to a network of 44 schools serving 14,000 students in six cities, all while maintaining a consistent record of outstanding academic results. According to a 2013 study by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) at Stanford University, "the positive findings for Uncommon Schools across their portfolios suggests that it is possible to simultaneously scale quantity and quality in charter schools."[1] With the Charter School Program's support of the proposed project—Uncommon|2021—the network will continue to successfully replicate and expand, creating 13 new schools and 5,500 high-quality seats. Uncommon|2021 will prove *conclusively* that it is possible to scale quantity and quality while maintaining cost effectiveness.

Absolute and Invitational Priorities

Absolute Priority 1: Uncommon currently operates 44 charter schools spanning grades K-12. Uncommon's experience is detailed in Section A; proposed plans for replication and expansion can be found in Sections B-D.

Absolute Priority 2: 83% of all students in the schools operated by Uncommon are individuals from low-income families, as detailed in Section A and *Appendix F.1*.

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[1] Woodworth, J.L. & Raymond, M.E. (2013). Charter School Growth and Replication Volume II. Available at http://credo.stanford.edu/research-reports.html

Competitive Priority 1(b): Uncommon|2021 was designed in partnership with local districts and includes three strategies for improving schools identified for improvement or closure under section 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). First, expansion and replication of Uncommon charter schools provides a high-quality alternative for families who would otherwise only have low-performing schools as their public school options. Second, Uncommon is partnering with districts to take over and turn around low-performing schools. Third, throughout the grant period, Uncommon will continue to use the lessons learned from its growing network to provide professional development to teachers and leaders in state-identified priority schools. This work will create a virtuous cycle of collective improvement. It will directly benefit district schools and their students, and within Uncommon, it will drive higher performance by giving Uncommon leaders more opportunities to develop and hone their professional development delivery skills. Providing professional development in priority schools also strengthens Uncommon's relationships with district partners and facilitates future collaboration around school turnarounds and charter expansion.

School alternatives. As of 2015-16, 9 in 10 Uncommon schools were located in neighborhoods where the local district school is a state-designated priority school, as shown in the following table. Uncommon will continue to select new school sites in areas of greatest educational need throughout the CSP grant period, providing viable alternatives for families to the low-performing schools their children would otherwise attend.

Proportion of Uncommon Schools that are Alternatives to State Priority Schools, 2015-16

	MA	NJ	NY	Total
Uncommon schools in neighborhoods where district school is on state priority list	4	9	26	39
Total Uncommon schools	4	12	28	44
Percent of Uncommon schools that are alternatives to state priority schools	100%	75%	93%	**89%**

Several of Uncommon's district partners are committed to charter expansion as a core strategy to provide families with alternatives to low-performing schools. For instance, New York City has aggressively pursued charter growth since the early 2000s. The expansion of high-quality charter seats, specifically in Uncommon schools, is particularly important to the current New York City Schools Chancellor, Carmen Fariña, as demonstrated by her letter of support in *Appendix C.8*. All but one of Uncommon's NYC schools are located in communities where the neighborhood school is on the state's priority list. In Newark, where more than 40% of district schools are on the state's priority list, the charter sector now serves almost one-third of all students in the city. In Camden, the district's strategic plan includes a formal commitment to growing its charter sector while improving traditional district schools, 75% of which are on the state priority list.[2]

Turnarounds. Uncommon created groundbreaking district partnerships in New Jersey to turn around schools identified by the State for closure or restructuring. In Uncommon's first turnaround, Alexander Street Elementary School in Newark, 4th grade ELA and math proficiency rates climbed by 42 percentage points each—in just one year. This early success in Newark was replicated in 2014-15 in Camden, where Uncommon partnered with the district to take over management of a district elementary school. At year's end, 88% of Camden Prep Bonsall Elementary's kindergartners tested on-grade level on the school's reading assessment, the STEP assessment, as compared to 0% at the start of the year. Uncommon is in regular conversations with New Jersey and New York districts to identify opportunities for additional turnaround work during the Uncommon|2021 grant period.

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[2] Camden Public Schools (2014). The Camden Commitment. Available at http://www.camden.k12.nj.us/pdf/Camden-StratPlan-Jan27.pdf.

Priority School PD. In New York and in Boston, Uncommon participates in a district-charter compact to facilitate the sharing of best practices between charter and low-performing district schools.[3] In 2013-14, Uncommon received a New York State Education Department Charter School Dissemination Program Grant to provide professional development to more than 300 principals and teachers in 17 New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) schools. The NYCDOE saw such profound impact from these efforts that it asked Uncommon to continue the partnership despite the expiration of the grant. The work continues at least through 2016-17 and is specifically focused on schools in Districts 19 and 23, which serve the low-income, high-minority communities of Brownsville and East New York and where a substantial number of schools are on the state priority list. At the end of 2015-16, Uncommon replicated this successful model of collaborative professional development to drive improved student outcomes in Newark Public Schools, where more than 40% of all schools are on the state priority list. By supporting Uncommon's replication, expansion, and impact evaluation within these regions, CSP funds would bolster the collaboration that is already improving teaching and learning in district schools identified for improvement under ESEA.

Competitive Priority 1(c): Uncommon|2021 will provide critical funding as Uncommon expands its presence in Camden, NJ, a federally designated Promise Zone, by an anticipated four new schools over the next five years.[4] A Certification of Consistency with Promise Zone Goals and Implementation and a letter of support from the Office of the Mayor, the lead Promise Zone applicant, are available in *Appendices C.1-2*.

Invitational Priority: Uncommon seeks to prove that it is possible to provide all students with an outstanding education that prepares them to graduate from college, and that it is possible

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[3] District-Charter compacts and progress updates are available at http://www.crpe.org/research/district-charter-collaboration/cities.

[4] Confirmation of designation available at https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/promise-zones/promise-zones-second-round-urban-designees/.

to do so on the public dollar—a financial model unique to Uncommon among large CMOs. Therefore, as part of the Uncommon|2021 project, Uncommon will contract with an independent evaluator to conduct a randomized controlled trial evaluating the impact of Uncommon's core education program (*Figure B.3* on p. 19) on student growth and other measures of student success on the path to and through college. The evaluation will include results from schools in three states, and it will meet the WWC standards for evidence without reservations. The evaluation plan is described in full in Section E.

A. Quality of the Eligible Applicant

Since its founding, Uncommon has consistently increased academic achievement and attainment for all students, closed historic achievement gaps, and outperformed state averages. Uncommon has achieved these results in new, established, and turnaround schools across all of its regions. For example, in 2014-15:

- Newark's North Star Academy College Preparatory High School (founded in 1997) had the highest average SAT score of any charter school in New Jersey and outperformed the state average for all schools. Over the past 5 years, North Star achieved the highest 4-year college enrollment rate among all high schools in the state.

- NYC's Leadership Prep Ocean Hill Elementary Academy (founded in 2010) tied for #1 on the New York state annual math exam and was the only non-selective school to have 100% of students pass the 3rd and 4th grade math exams, with 85% scoring at the Advanced level.

- Rochester Elementary Prep students passed the state math and ELA exams at six times the rate of their district counterparts.

- Troy Prep Elementary School 3rd graders ranked in the top 2% of all schools statewide in math and in the top 5% in ELA, reversing the economic achievement gap in both subjects.

- At Boston's Roxbury Prep Lucy Stone Middle Academy, the first class of 8th graders outperformed state proficiency rates on the PARCC exam for all subgroups of students in ELA and math. The school's Black students demonstrated proficiency in ELA at nearly twice the state average (81.3% v. 44.7%), and its Hispanic students more than tripled the state average in math (76.9% v. 22.8%).

- At Newark's Alexander Street Elementary School, 4th graders achieved proficiency rates of 60% in ELA and 70% in math. In the prior year before Uncommon took over management of this turnaround school, those rates were only 18% in ELA and 28% in math.

(1) Uncommon increases academic achievement for all students

Subpopulation data availability. The attainment and achievement measures described throughout the remainder of this section and in *Appendix F* are limited by the availability of data for special education (SPED) and limited English proficient (LEP) student populations. Uncommon invests substantial resources to recruiting students from these subpopulations, such as designing advertising campaigns that target them specifically and hiring bilingual recruiters. However, despite these efforts, fewer special education and LEP students enroll in Uncommon schools than their district counterparts. In many cases, the subgroups do not meet the minimum threshold for reporting in *Appendix F* in a given school or year (n≥5).

There are many reasons for lower enrollment in **special education** compared to local school districts, including: 1) students with moderate to severe disabilities often require services that are only available through highly specialized programs in district schools; 2) Uncommon makes IEP designations with great care, avoiding the over-identification that occurs in many district schools, while still providing IEP-like services such as small-group "pull outs" to about 10-15% of non-SPED classified students according to their individual needs; and 3) parents of students with

disabilities may be less likely to apply for charter lotteries due to regular accusations of student "creaming" in the press. Despite this, Uncommon works diligently to overcome these barriers to special education student enrollment through a number of strategies detailed in *Figure B.2*, such as highlighting students with disabilities in recruitment materials or providing transportation for students with disabilities even in cities where Uncommon does not offer comprehensive bussing and will continue to pursue additional strategies for increasing its SPED population.

Similarly, because Uncommon has historically located its schools in neighborhoods that do not have high proportions of LEP students but do have universally high proportions of racial minorities and low-income families, Uncommon's **limited English proficient** population is relatively small compared to its partner districts. For example, while 13% of New York City students are LEP, that rate drops to 4-5% in the local geographic districts where Uncommon schools are located. In NYC Local District 23, for instance, the vast majority of LEP students are concentrated in just two schools. More than half of the schools in the district have lower LEP representation than the 4% at Uncommon's Brownsville Collegiate. Beyond highly localized neighborhood geographies, Uncommon also has fewer LEP students than districts due to its lack of specialized language schools, the difficulty of recruiting in multiple languages, and Uncommon's success in promoting English language proficiency beyond the point of LEP classification (i.e., almost no Uncommon middle school students retain their LEP status by the time they reach high school). However, Uncommon is deeply committed to serving the students that need it most and seeks to improve its LEP enrollment rates by publishing recruitment ads and making enrollment applications available in multiple languages, hiring multilingual recruiters, providing teachers with PD around second language instruction, and other strategies detailed in *Figure B.2*.

Despite relatively low enrollment in these subpopulations, Uncommon's results for them are quite positive, as seen in *Figure A.1* and in the following highlights from *Appendix F*:

- Uncommon's 4th grade SPED students in New Jersey achieved math and ELA proficiency at rates of 87.5% in 2012-13 and 100% in 2013-14. Even after the state's transition to PARCC in 2014-15, Uncommon SPED student proficiency was triple the state average in math and double the state average in ELA.

- Uncommon's 8th grade SPED students outperformed state averages for math and ELA proficiency in all regions over the past three years except on Massachusetts' PARCC math exam in 2014-15 and New York's ELA exam in 2012-13.

- Uncommon's 8th grade LEP students, where data are available, outperformed state averages for math and ELA proficiency in all regions over the past three years except in New York in 2014-15, a year in which there were only 5 LEP students total.

- By high school graduation, 100% of Uncommon LEP students have tested out of LEP classification.

- All SPED Uncommon graduates of Uncommon high schools entered college last year.

- Uncommon's overall student attrition is not substantially different from available benchmarks, and its LEP students leave at even lower rates (4.7-8.4%).

- SPED attrition is on par with other subgroups and LEP attrition is significantly lower.

Disadvantaged student population. Uncommon consistently improves outcomes for all students. Nearly all Uncommon students are Black or Hispanic (94%) and from low-income families (83%), and 11% of students receive special education services. Therefore, all of the following results were achieved by a population of educationally disadvantaged students. The results are relatively consistent across regions and over the past three years, with the notable

exceptions of SPED and LEP populations with small sample sizes (and therefore higher variability) and of proficiency declines in Massachusetts and New Jersey after the transition to the PARCC exams in 2014-15. Uncommon welcomes the opportunity to learn from PARCC performance and to hold its educationally disadvantaged students to even higher assessments of college and career readiness.

Achievement on State exams. For each of the past three years (2012-13 to 2014-15), students in Uncommon schools consistently achieved proficiency on annual state exams at rates higher than the state average overall and the state averages for all subgroups with sufficient populations to report data. Across all Uncommon regions, overall proficiency rates through 2013-14 were above 80% with some regions approaching or achieving universal proficiency. Even with the adoption of more rigorous Common Core-aligned PARCC assessments in Massachusetts and New Jersey in 2014-15, Uncommon's proficiency rates remained significantly higher than state averages. State exam achievement data for all Uncommon schools, regions, and student subgroups are available in *Appendices F.4-7.*

AP Attainment and Achievement. For the past three years, Uncommon high school students consistently participated in AP exams at rates far exceeding national averages. Last year, 54% of all Uncommon high school students participated in AP courses, including 53% of Black students, 57% of Hispanic students, and 55% of economically disadvantaged students. Nationally, only 29% of Black and Latino students in schools that offer AP courses enroll in them.[5] Among Uncommon students who took AP exams, 66% of Black students and 68% of Hispanic students

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[5] US DOE Office of Civil Rights (2016). 2013-14 Civil Rights Data Collection: A First Looks. Available at http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-first-look.pdf.

received passing scores of 3 or higher. These rates far outperform those for Black (32%) and Hispanic students (50%) and close the achievement gap with white students (66%) nationally.[6]

SAT Attainment and Achievement. All Uncommon high school students take the SAT exam in their junior year. Therefore, 100% of underrepresented minorities in Uncommon schools take this critical step on the path to college. By comparison, even though they comprise more than half of all students, only one third of SAT takers nationally are underrepresented minorities.[7] The average SAT scores earned by Uncommon's disadvantaged student population since 2012-13 ranged from 1570-1690, comfortably exceeding the College Board's 1550 college readiness benchmark.[8] Across the country, only 16% of Black, 23% of Hispanic, and 53% of white SAT test takers met this benchmark in 2015.[9]

Attainment in high school and college. Finally, for each of the past three years, Uncommon high school students maintained 4-year graduation rates ranging from 89-95%, with no subgroup attaining a rate lower than 89% in any year. This far exceeds national averages for Black (73%), Hispanic (76%), low-income (75%), and special education (63%) students, exceeds the national average for all students (82%), and represents a closing of the attainment gap with white students (87%).[10] After high school, Uncommon students entered college at rates of 97-100% over the past three years, compared to 45% of low-income students nationally.[11] Uncommon alumni graduated from college within six years at six times the rate of their low-income peers nationally (51% v. 9%). Complete high school and college attainment results by subgroup for the past three years are available in *Appendices F.8-10.*

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[6] College Board, The (2016). Available at https://www.collegeboard.org/program-results/performance.
[7] Ibid.
[8] College Board, The (2014). The SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark User Guidelines. Available at http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/sat/12b_6661_SAT_Benchmarks_PR_120914.pdf.
[9] College Board (2016).
[10] US DOE (2016). ED Data Express. Available at http://eddataexpress.ed.gov/state-main.cfm?nostate.
[11] Pell Institute, The (2016). Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States: 2016 Historical Trend Report. Available at http://www.pellinstitute.org/downloads/publications-Indicators_of_Higher_Education_Equity_in_the_US_2016_Historical_Trend_Report.pdf.

(2)(i) Uncommon closes historic achievement gaps

   Rigorous external evaluations. Several independent evaluators have documented Uncommon's impact in closing historic achievement gaps. The resulting studies compared Uncommon schools to demographically similar schools. In 2010, Mathematica Policy Research found that "impact estimates after three years [in Uncommon and Achievement First middle schools] are not only statistically significant, but also substantively meaningful…. [They] translate to an estimated additional 0.9 years of accumulated growth in math and 0.7 years of accumulated growth in reading"[12]—extra learning time that is crucial for disadvantaged students who enter middle school below grade level. Three years later in 2013, Uncommon Schools won the Broad Prize for Public Charter Schools for demonstrating the best overall student academic performance among large charter school systems nationally. According to the Broad report, "Uncommon Schools outperform other traditional school districts that serve students with similar family incomes," and "Uncommon Schools students are outperforming their low-income and African-American peers in the states where they operate, and they have closed income and ethnic achievement gaps four times as often as other large charter management organizations across the country."[13]

   In 2013, the Center for Research on Educational Outcomes (CREDO) published a study of the academic achievement results in Uncommon schools. The CREDO study employed a quasi-experimental design that matched students in Uncommon schools with students of similar characteristics in demographically similar traditional public schools. The resulting regression analyses comparing the academic growth of these students produced results that meet the What

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[12] Teh, B., McCullough, M. & Gill, B.P. (2010). Student Achievement in New York City Middle Schools Affiliated with Achievement First and Uncommon Schools. Available at https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/publications/student-achievement-in-new-york-city-middle-schools-affiliated-with-achievement-first-and-uncommon-schools.

[13] Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, The. (2013). Uncommon Schools: Turning Urban Schools Into Springboards to College. Available at http://broadfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/1864-uncommonschoolswhitepaper.pdf.

Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards for evidence with reservations.[14] CREDO found that attending an Uncommon school had "large significant positive impacts on academic growth in both reading and math"—effects which were profound in their impact on closing historic achievement gaps for students in poverty, who are Black or Hispanic, who have disabilities, and with limited English proficiency, as detailed in *Figure A.1*.

Figure A.1: CREDO Study of Uncommon Effects on Closing Historic Achievement Gaps

Subpopulation	Impact on Closing Historic Achievement Gaps
Low Income	"Attending Uncommon Schools charters essentially eliminates the poverty/non-poverty learning gap…. Further, the positive effects in both math and reading are large enough that they <u>completely cancel out the negative effect associated with being a student in poverty</u>."
Black	"Black students attending Uncommon Schools have stronger growth than Black [traditional public school] students [in reading] and stronger growth than white [traditional public school] students [in math]."
Hispanic	"Hispanic students attending Uncommon Schools have stronger math [and reading] growth than white students attending [traditional public schools and] non-Uncommon [charter] schools."
Special Education	"These effects are almost as large as the negative effects associated with being a SPED student. The effect[s] of attending an Uncommon Schools charter for SPED students are 10 times larger than the effect from attending non-Uncommon Schools charter schools as compared to [traditional public schools] for SPED students."
Limited English Proficiency	"<u>ELL students attending Uncommon Schools charters have growth which is larger than that of non-ELL [traditional public school] students</u>."

Gap closing in the past three years. Since the publication of the CREDO study in 2013, Uncommon continues to make consistent progress closing historic academic achievement gaps. For example, in 2014-15, grade 3-8 Black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students in Uncommon schools in Newark closed the achievement gap with New Jersey white and non-economically disadvantaged students on both the ELA and math PARCC exams. Complete state

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[14] This is the highest level of evidence a quasi-experimental study can receive; only randomized controlled trials can meet standards for evidence without reservations.

exam results from all Uncommon schools, by subgroup and for the past three years, are available in *Appendices F.4-7*.

(3) Educationally disadvantaged students in Uncommon schools outperform state averages

State exams. Over the past three years, Uncommon students from all subgroups have consistently outperformed state averages for academic achievement on criterion-referenced exams. *Figure A.2* details significant outperformance on 4th and 8th grade state math and ELA exams in schools and years where data are available. *Appendices F.4-7* show complete 4th and 8th grade results for all Uncommon schools by subgroup and by year compared to state averages.

Figure A.2: Uncommon Subgroup Outperformance of State Average Proficiency Rates (percentage points)

State	Subgroup	Grade 4 Math			Grade 4 ELA			Grade 8 Math			Grade 8 ELA		
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
MA[15]	Econ. Dis.	–	–	–	–	–	–	+57	+41	+28	+34	+43	+21
	Black	–	–	–	–	–	–	+57	+37	+24	+32	+22	+16
	Hispanic	–	–	–	–	–	–	+55	+38	+39	+36	+9	+23
	SPED	–	–	–	–	–	–	+64*	+20*	–5*	+33*	27*	+1*
	LEP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	+35*	+2*	–	+74*	+10*
NJ[16]	Econ. Dis.	+31	+41	+61	+59	+55	+51	+37	+39	+46	+22	+43	+42
	Black	+39	+47	+66	+61	+58	+53	+45	+48	+48	+28	+34	+44
	Hispanic	+16	+37	+56	+59	+44	+47	+39	+33	+55	+24	+23	+14
	SPED	+29	+47	+35	+58	+68	+24	+28	+27	+16	+14	+10	+5
	LEP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
NY	Econ. Dis.	+17	+46	+49	+18	+32	+18	+36	+55	+51	+13	+20	+12
	Black	+24	+53	+58	+21	+35	+24	+36	+56	+57	+15	+24	+15
	Hispanic	+36	+43	+65	+37	+27	+18	+58	+71	+51	+12	+36	+17
	SPED	–4*	+33	+41	–5*	+11	+5	+21	+32	+38	–1	+16	+13
	LEP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
* Uncommon sample (n) size is less than 25 students													

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[15] Massachusetts transitioned from the MCAS to the PARCC exam beginning with the 2014-15 testing administration.
[16] New Jersey transitioned from the NJASK to the PARCC exam beginning with the 2014-15 testing administration.

Attendance. Over the past three years, Uncommon students, including educationally disadvantaged subgroups, consistently matched or exceeded average statewide student attendance rates. In the few instances in which this is not the case, they have trailed the state average by fewer than two percentage points. Attendance rates by school compared to state averages are available in *Appendix F.2*.

Retention. Uncommon's three-year average retention rate is 88% across all schools. Attrition rates by school and subgroup are available in *Appendix F.3*. Few states or districts publish student attrition rates; the most recently available data from four of the six districts in which Uncommon operates range from 69% to 91%. These data suggest that, at a minimum, Uncommon performs similarly, if not outperforms, its comparison districts.[17]

High school graduation. Uncommon's high school graduation rates over the past three years consistently outperformed state averages for all subgroups. In most cases, the magnitude of this outperformance was at least 10-15 percentage points, as shown in *Appendix F.8*.

College attendance and persistence. Uncommon's graduating seniors are closing the college attendance and persistence gaps. Over the past three years, 100% of Uncommon's graduating seniors were accepted to college and 97-100% enrolled, compared to 68% of white students[18] and 82% of students from the top income quartile nationally.[19] Uncommon's overall college persistence rates exceeded 80% for the past three years, compared to 63% of white students[20] and 77% of students from the top income quartile nationally.[21] Full college attendance and persistence rates by subgroup and outperformance data are available in *Appendices F.9-10*.

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[17] Student mobility numbers for Newark Public Schools and Camden City Schools—21% and 31% respectively—were last published by the State for the 2010-11 school year and are available via the NJ Department of Education website. Boston Public Schools published a student mobility rate of 9% in 2014-15. Data for New York City Public Schools, with a rate of 15%, was obtained via WNYC through its reporting on NYC charter attrition rates.
[18] NCES (2015). Digest of Education Statistics. Available at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_302.20.asp.
[19] Pell Institute (2016).
[20] NCES (2015). Digest of Education Statistics. Available at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_326.10.asp.
[21] Pell Institute (2016).

B. Contribution in Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

Uncommon|2021 will make a substantial contribution in assisting educationally disadvantaged students. CSP funds will be used to support replication to 13 new schools and expansion in 4 existing schools, creating a total of 5,500 high-quality seats for students in three states. Uncommon will ensure that these schools 1) serve a similar population to current schools; 2) build upon Uncommon's proven educational model and deepen impact for educationally disadvantaged students as the network grows to scale; and 3) contribute to the broad impact Uncommon has on the education of disadvantaged students locally and nationally.

Continuing to serve disadvantaged students. Schools replicated or expanded with the support of a CSP grant will serve a similar educationally disadvantaged student population to Uncommon schools today. Across all regions, 83% of Uncommon students are economically disadvantaged, 94% are Black or Latino, and 11% receive special education services. Detailed demographic information by school is available in *Appendix F.1*. Continuing to serve an equally disadvantaged **student population** is a core metric for the Uncommon|2021 project, as detailed in *Figure C.5* (Project Measure #4). All new and expanded Uncommon|2021 **school locations** will be located within existing Uncommon regions, which include one Promise Zone recipient (Camden, NJ) and five Promise Zone round three applicants: Boston, MA's Dudley neighborhood; Newark, NJ; low-income, high-minority neighborhoods in New York, NY such as Bedford Stuyvesant, Brownsville, Canarsie, and Ocean Hill; Rochester, NY; and Troy, NY. *Figure B.1* demonstrates the diversity of these communities, and the letters of support in *Appendix C* demonstrate broad stakeholder support in these communities for the expansion of Uncommon Schools to improve educational and economic opportunity. Uncommon Schools'

comprehensive strategy for attracting and supporting educationally disadvantaged students in these communities is summarized in *Figure B.2*.

Figure B.1: Demographics of Local Districts in Uncommon|2021 School Locations[22]

City	Black	Hispanic	SPED	LEP	Econ. Dis.
Boston, MA	32%	42%	20%	28%	77%[23]
Camden, NJ	47%	51%	20%	9%	96%
Newark, NJ	51%	40%	15%	9%	84%
New York, NY	26%	41%	20%	13%	77%
Rochester, NY	60%	25%	21%	9%	86%
Troy, NY	32%	14%	22%	1%	75%

Figure B.2: Uncommon Efforts to Reach All Students

School Site Selection	Uncommon's efforts to reach disadvantaged students begin with school site selection. *Figure B.1* shows that Uncommon has chosen to work in cities with high concentrations of educationally disadvantaged students. Within these cities, Uncommon selects school sites in neighborhoods where they are needed most. For example, many of Uncommon's schools in New York City are concentrated in District 23, where 97% of students are Black or Latino and 89% are economically disadvantaged, compared to 67% and 77% city-wide, respectively.
Student Recruitment	Uncommon employs a wide range of tactics to aggressively recruit the most disadvantaged students in its regions, including but not limited to: ● Partnering with community organizations that serve Black and Latino populations, such as churches, community centers, and day care centers to host recruitment events and distribute recruitment materials ● Partnering with pre-K providers serving low-income families and students of color, especially Head Start ● Purchasing public ad space exclusively in high-need areas of each city ● Advertising in both English and Spanish on all platforms and offering all enrollment applications in both languages (online and in print) ● Targeting Spanish-language newspapers and websites, local websites, and websites with low-income user-bases for advertising purchases ● Featuring multiple students in all advertising materials, ensuring that male,

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[22] All data downloaded from the NCES ELSi database for school year 2013-14 (available at http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/elsi/), except Rochester and Troy economically disadvantaged numbers, which were provided by New York State.

[23] This number refers to Total Free and Reduced Price Lunch eligibility. It differs from the economically disadvantaged metric used by Boston Public Schools and Uncommon's Roxbury Prep in Appendix F.

	female, Black, and Latino students and students with disabilities are all represented ● Hiring bilingual family liaisons ● Canvassing door-to-door in low-income, Black, and Latino neighborhoods in and around Uncommon schools, especially public housing units.
Community Partnerships	In addition to student recruitment, Uncommon also partners with community organizations to identify and understand community needs, build local support for its schools, and broaden its impact for educationally disadvantaged students through initiatives like the distribution of thousands of English- and Spanish-language workbooks designed to help families prepare their students for kindergarten.
Services for Students with Limited English Proficiency	Uncommon supports its students with limited English proficiency by: ● Communicating with families in their native languages whenever possible ● Recruiting and hiring bilingual educators and staff members ● Providing instructional staff with professional development around second language instruction ● Adhering strictly to state and local requirements for measuring English language acquisition rates and monitoring rates of reclassification ● Holding English language learners to the same high, college-ready standards as all other students, with appropriate accommodations such as extra testing time or access to materials focused on developing content knowledge in their native language
Services for Students with Disabilities	Uncommon supports its students with disabilities by: ● Carefully evaluating, re-evaluating, and re-classifying students at regular intervals ● Collaborating closely with families and students themselves in the design and monitoring of their individualized education plans (IEPs) ● Providing all necessary and appropriate transportation to and from school ● Aggressively recruiting and hiring educators with strong track records of raising achievement for students with disabilities ● Providing all instructional staff with professional development around special education instructional strategies and accommodations ● Building close partnerships between special education teachers and other teachers so that students receive the accommodations they need in the least-restrictive environment possible ● Holding special education students to the same high, college-ready standards as all other students, with appropriate accommodations tailored to the individual student's needs
College Counseling	College is critical to improving life outcomes for disadvantaged youth. Uncommon supports all of its students on their path to and through college by building a college-going school culture that can be seen in nearly every aspect of the school environment, from the rigor of the instructional program to the

	classrooms named after teachers' alma maters. Uncommon's College Completion team, which includes college counselors at every high school and a central Director of College Completion, focus on ensuring that every student: 1) makes an appropriate college match; 2) plans for and has the tools and support they need to make college affordable; and 3) has developed the academic and non-cognitive skills necessary to succeed in college. Uncommon diligently tracks college acceptance, matriculation, persistence, and completion data. Uncommon high school graduates enter college at rates nearing 100% and, to date, have graduated at a rate six times the national average for low-income students.
Staff Diversity	Uncommon teachers and leaders are a diverse group of professionals, and Uncommon is constantly seeking to make that group even more representative of the communities in which we have schools. Uncommon engages in targeted recruitment efforts for educators of color. Its Summer Teaching Fellows program, a crucial pipeline for new teaching talent, is approximately 85% people of color. Uncommon also makes a concerted effort to retain its diverse talent. This past year, more than 70 teachers of color participated in a mentoring program designed to develop them into Uncommon's future leaders. A network-wide Diversity Working Group provides staff with opportunities to lead the development of community-building and ongoing professional education experiences. As a result of these efforts, 42% of Uncommon teachers are people of color, compared to 24% of teachers in New York State, 18% in New Jersey, and 3% in Massachusetts.[24]
Staff Development	By building schools that reflect and represent the communities we serve, we enhance the cultural competence of our scholars, preparing them for a multicultural, global future. All staff serving an educationally disadvantaged population, regardless of their own background, need ongoing professional development to provide the best possible learning experiences for their students. Assisted by its Diversity Team, Uncommon provides this development through regular cycles of teacher and principal observation and coaching, an all-school professional development series covering topics such as identity mapping and stereotype threat, and a diversity speaker series.

By enrolling, retaining, and supporting academic excellence for its diverse student body, Uncommon is already beginning to transform the college landscape. Nearly all graduates from Uncommon high schools (98%) have enrolled in college, more than double the national rate for low-income students (45%),[25] and 51% of Uncommon alumni graduated from college within six

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[24] Boser, U. (2014). Teacher Diversity Revisited: A New State-by-State Analysis. Center for American Progress. Available at https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/TeacherDiversity.pdf.
[25] Pell Institute (2016).

years, six times the rate of their low-income peers nationally (9%).[26] These results show real progress toward Uncommon's mission of closing the college degree attainment gap. Over the next five years, Uncommon will seek to improve upon these results by continuing to pilot, evaluate, refine, and scale innovations in its college preparation and college counseling frameworks. Even higher college completion rates will transform the lifelong economic opportunities available to the 23,000 students who will be enrolled in Uncommon in 2020-21.

Improve and Scale. Uncommon achieved the breakthrough results for low-income students of color described above and in Section A while growing from 5 to 44 schools in 10 years. Uncommon|2021 will improve upon these results while replicating and refining Uncommon's successful educational model, which embraces innovation at the school and network levels while adhering firmly to the six key attributes in *Figure B.3*.

<p align="center">**Figure B.3: The 6 Key Attributes of Uncommon Schools**</p>

Mission	A college preparatory mission
Standards	High standards for academics and character
Structure	A highly structured learning environment
Time	A longer school day and a longer school year
Data	A focus on accountability and data-driven instruction
Talent	A faculty of committed and talented leaders and teachers

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[26] Ibid.

Continuous improvement through data, feedback, and innovation. Uncommon relentlessly seeks to improve the implementation of its education model. Uncommon uses three key strategies to monitor and improve implementation. First, school leaders constantly monitor **student and teacher performance data** to design appropriately targeted interventions. These data are readily available through Uncommon's interim student assessment system, student attendance and behavior tracking systems, and its teacher observation and development platform. In 2015-16, principals documented 18,500 teacher observations with suggestions for improving classroom instruction, or an average of 13 per teacher.

Second, Uncommon centrally monitors a wide range of student and school data and intervenes as needed to **improve school performance**. Weekly management dashboards track leading indicators of student achievement as well as critical information related to enrollment and wait lists, attendance, attrition, school culture, and teacher satisfaction. Chief Operating Officers, who manage school Directors of Operations, and Chief Schools Officers, whose teams manage school principals, use these dashboards to monitor school performance and offer tailored supports. All schools also participate in annual inspections, during which leaders from across Uncommon use a consistent protocol to conduct full-day school visits, document evidence, and provide feedback to help school leaders leverage best practices, expertise, and perspectives from across the network. Chief Schools Officers then lead each school through a reflection process that results in an actionable work plan with clear expectations for continued follow-up and feedback. A sample management dashboard and a school inspection protocol are available in *Appendices H.1-2*.

Third, Uncommon dedicates central resources to **innovations** that can improve school performance. A team led by the Chief of Innovation and School Operations identifies, codifies,

scales, and supports the implementation of innovations across the network. Some of these innovations originate from Uncommon classrooms or schools and quickly prove themselves to be promising practices, such as creating sub-separate classrooms for students with cognitive delays or using Google Classroom to organize and share instructional materials. Other innovations, especially those related to technology, are adopted from researchers, practitioners, and product developers external to Uncommon, such as the recent piloting of Kaltura as a platform for storing and sharing videos of classroom instruction to drive teacher development.

Uncommon is also actively pursuing a small number of "blue-sky" innovations designed to address fundamental challenges for our schools or their students. For example, to improve teacher training and diversity, Uncommon has offered 430 rising college seniors—approximately 85% of whom are people of color—the opportunity to teach and receive mentorship in Uncommon summer school classrooms through its Summer Teaching Fellows program since 2010. More than 200 Fellows received offers to join Uncommon full-time upon graduation; in 2015-16, Fellows comprised 14% of all teachers of color across Uncommon. Another summer innovation was designed to improve students' social-emotional learning. Beginning this year, Camp Uncommon will provide a joyful, enriching summer experience to 130 Uncommon middle school students who are otherwise unlikely to experience summer programming that supports their emotional and physical growth, builds confidence, and develops the courage and self-worth that are necessary for success in college and beyond.

Aligned college-ready curriculum and assessments. Uncommon is creating fully aligned, commonly implemented curricula and interim assessments for all core academic subjects. This is one of the network's most promising innovations for ensuring that all of its educationally disadvantaged students achieve at the highest levels. Centralizing the design of all lesson plans

guarantees that every Uncommon student has access to a learning experience conceived by a highly effective teacher with deep content expertise in every classroom, every day. This approach allows newer teachers to concentrate on planning for effective lesson delivery and responding to student needs (vs. creating the plans from scratch), focuses principal feedback on instructional technique, facilitates collaboration among teachers, compensates for any individual teacher's gaps in content knowledge, and makes a teaching career in high-need schools more sustainable by lightening teacher workloads. To date, Uncommon has created and trained teachers to implement common lesson plans and interim assessments for math and reading in grades K-8. During the CSP grant period, Uncommon will scale this innovation to all new and expanded schools, to the high school grades, and to history and science classrooms, further improving the quality of teaching and learning for disadvantaged students across the network.

Broader impact for disadvantaged students. Driven by the belief that *all* young people should have access to educational opportunities that will prepare them to go to and through college, Uncommon developed a multi-faceted approach for improving educational opportunity for disadvantaged students in schools not operated by the network. The activities described in *Figure B.4* will continue throughout the CSP grant period and will be enriched by the scale Uncommon will reach with CSP funding. Grant funds will support the evaluation and knowledge dissemination efforts described in *Figure B.4* and in Section E.

**Figure B.4: Uncommon's Impact for Educationally Disadvantaged Students**

Publish	Since 2010, Uncommon has published 7 books describing effective practices. Among them, *Teach Like a Champion* (2010) provided the field with a common language for effective teaching techniques and has quickly become a seminal text for teacher preparation and professional development programs.
Develop	Uncommon offers professional development workshops designed to give external teachers and school leaders the opportunity to practice and receive feedback on their implementation of the techniques used to drive achievement in Uncommon schools. Uncommon also offers professional development modules that schools can implement independently.
Share	The Uncommon Impact Team engages in direct district-charter collaborations in Newark and New York City that have been designed to improve teaching and learning in schools identified for intervention under section 1116 of ESEA (Competitive Preference Priority 1b). These collaborations include professional development for teachers, a year-long instructional leadership program for administrators, school visits, and resources that allow educators to turn-key the professional development in their own schools.
Advocate	Uncommon's External Relations Team develops strategic relationships with parents, the media, and community and government leaders to promote policies that support access to high-quality educational experiences for disadvantaged students.
Prove it's Possible	Uncommon's results speak for themselves. A CSP grant will support efforts to sustain and scale high levels of academic achievement for an additional 5,500 students by 2021. It will also provide funding for an independent evaluation of the impact of the core education model, which when published will prove conclusively that success for educationally disadvantaged students is possible, replicable, and sustainable on the public dollar.

Combined, Uncommon's efforts to continue serving a disadvantaged student population, replicate and improve upon its educational model that produces gap-closing results, and share promising practices with the broader field will ensure that the proposed CSP project will make a profound contribution to assisting educationally disadvantaged students.

C. Quality of the Project Design

Uncommon|2021 is a continuation of the successful model that consistently delivers the outstanding academic results for educationally disadvantaged students described in Section A.

Figure C.1: Uncommon|2021 Logic Model
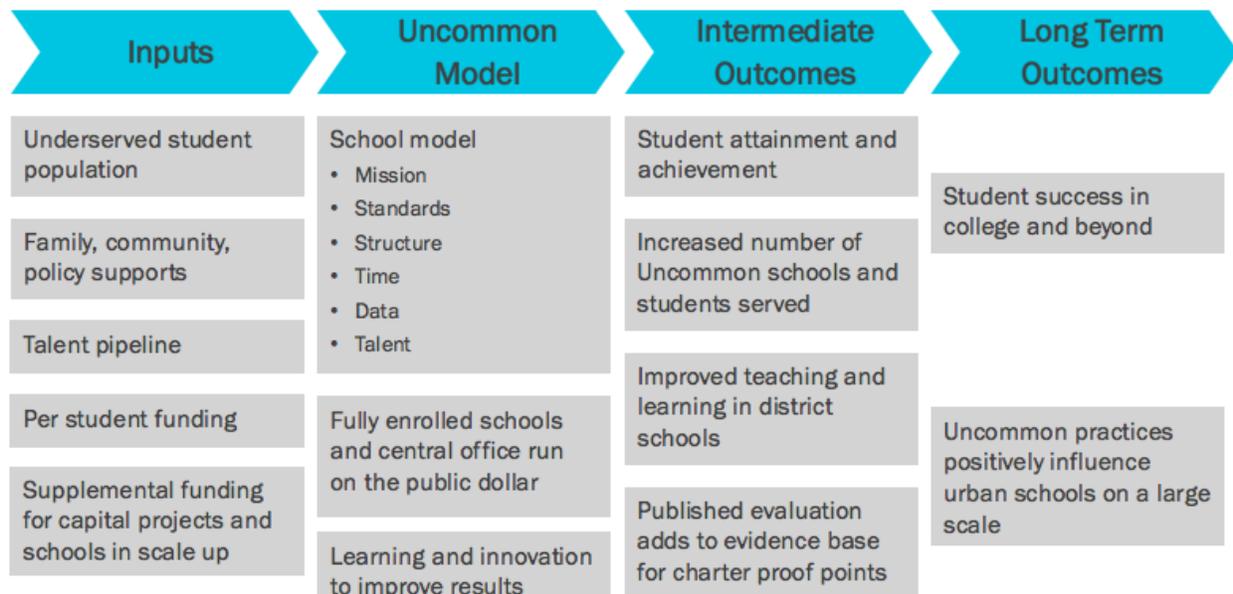
Goals and Objectives. Uncommon|2021 has one overarching goal: To demonstrate unequivocally that charter schools can scale while maintaining outstanding academic performance and cost efficiency. Uncommon|2021 has three specific, measurable, and ultimately attainable objectives:

1) *Open 13 new Uncommon schools and expand existing schools to create at least 5,500 new high-quality seats in educationally disadvantaged communities.* By the conclusion of this project, Uncommon will operate a total of 66 schools and serve over 23,000 students in six high-need regions. *Figure C.2* shows Uncommon's overall expansion by region, and *Figure C.3* details the schools to be opened or expanded with CSP grant funds as part of the Uncommon|2021 CSP project. *Figure C.4* shows enrollment growth throughout the grant period. These projections are the foundation of the Uncommon|2021 growth plan; they have been carefully evaluated by Uncommon's leadership and its Board of Trustees, who have found them to be ambitious but achievable given Uncommon's history of rapid growth and sustained outcomes.

Figure C.2: Uncommon's Five-Year School Growth Plan
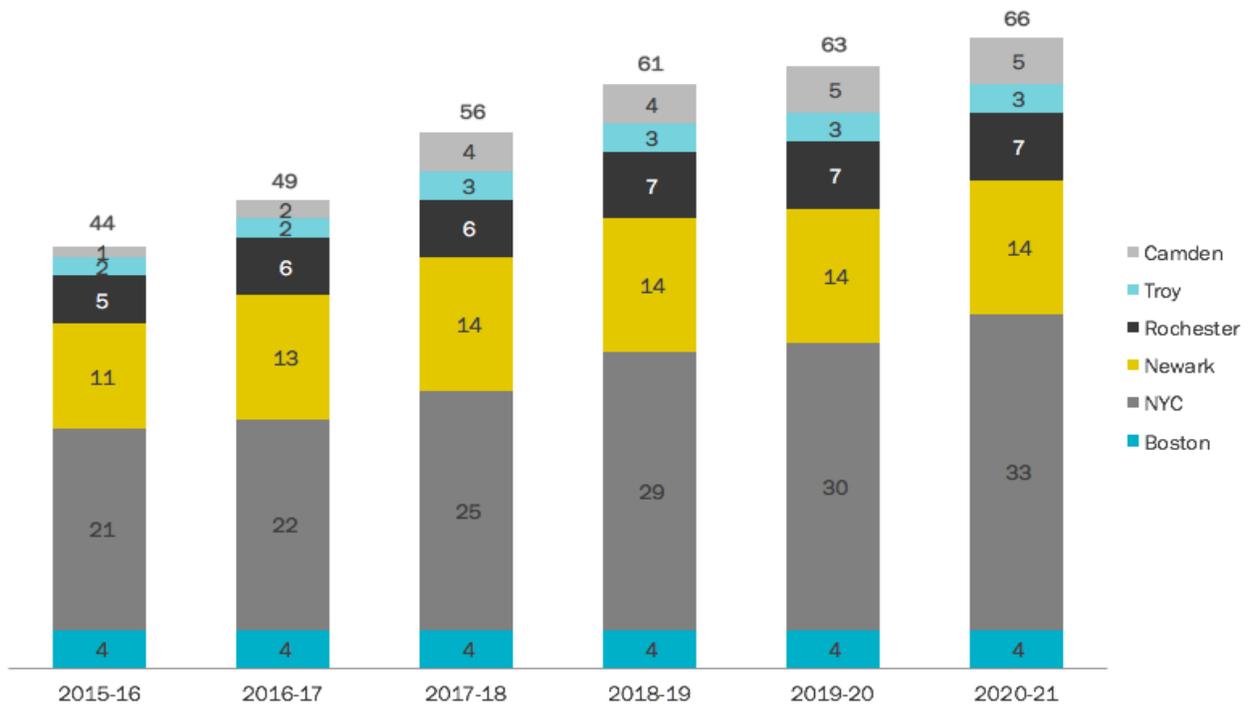
Figure C.3: Uncommon|2021 Replication and Expansion Schools[27]

Type	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Total
Replication Schools	1 Elem. (NYC)	3 Elem. 2 High	3 Elem. 1 Middle		3 Elem.	**13 schools**
Expanding Schools	3 High 1 Elem.	3 High 1 Elem.	3 High 1 Elem.	3 High 1 Elem.	2 High	**4 schools**

Figure C.4: Uncommon Projected Enrollment Growth through 2020-21

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
CSP-Funded Seats	570	1,139	1,359	1,172	1,262
Non-CSP Seats	15,440	16,911	18,704	20,617	22,226
Total	16,010	18,050	20,063	21,789	23,488

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[27] New schools are listed by opening year. Expanding schools are listed for all years when grant funds will apply.

2) *Improve and scale Uncommon's record of outstanding academic performance and cost efficiency.* As discussed in Section A, Uncommon students—nearly all of whom are low-income students of color—consistently outperform their peers in district schools. They close historic achievement gaps, enroll in college at a rate nearing 100%, and graduate from college at a rate approximately six times the national average for low-income students. Uncommon|2021 seeks to improve upon these already high performance levels while expanding to serve more students through innovations such as its common curricula and assessments program (see pp. 21-22), which will facilitate rapid growth by reducing some of the lesson planning and content expertise burdens on individual classroom teachers. Similarly, innovations in social-emotional learning and iterative improvements to Uncommon's college counseling program (see p. 21) will allow Uncommon to improve its college completion rate to at least 60% over the course of the grant period. Uncommon will design all of the innovations driving improved results in a fiscally conservative manner, allowing Uncommon to continue funding its fully enrolled schools and its central office on the public dollar and meeting the cost efficiency expectations of the CSP program.

3) *Evaluate core elements of the Uncommon educational program and disseminate findings broadly.* Uncommon aims to transform public education beyond its own schools by serving as a proof point for low-income, minority student achievement and by supporting other schools to adopt the core ingredients of the network's success. By the end of the grant period, Uncommon's external evaluator will publish a randomized controlled trial study evaluating the impact of the core education program, contributing significantly to the evidence base around Uncommon's core educational model (*Figure B.3*) and the

performance of rapidly scaling CMOs. Uncommon will share these findings broadly, as it has done with all of its best practices to date, by publishing books like *Teach Like a Champion*, *Driven by Data,* and *Practice Perfect* and forming professional development collaborations with traditional public school districts . A complete description of the proposed evaluation and dissemination plan is available in Section E.

Performance and Project Measures. Uncommon will measure its success in achieving these objectives annually according to the performance and project measures in *Figure C.5*. Targets for student outcomes (Performance Measure 2 and Project Measures 2-4) are designed to be both ambitious and achievable; therefore, Uncommon will hold itself to these standards network-wide, even in schools that do not receive grant funds.

Figure C.5: Performance Measures, Project Measures, and Benchmark Data

(1) Performance or Project Measures & Performance Targets	(2) Baseline and Rationale	(3) Ambitious and Achievable Performance Targets	Data for CSP annual report				
			6/17	6/18	6/19	6/20	9/21[28]
Performance Measure 1: By the end of the grant period, Uncommon will create 13 new CSP grant-funded charter schools.	Uncommon has grown from 24 to 44 schools over the past five years.	As part of its 5-year business plan, Uncommon's Board of Trustees has approved replication to 3-5 new schools per year, on average—the fastest replication possible while maintaining quality.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Performance Measure 2: Throughout the grant period, all educationally disadvantaged subgroups of Uncommon students will consistently outperform state averages on criterion-referenced annual exams in grades 4 and 8.	*Figure A.2* and *Appendices F.4-7* show that all subgroups of Uncommon students outperformed state averages consistently for the past three years.	Continuing to achieve this level of outperformance is ambitious while scaling to 22 new schools (13 of which will receive CSP funding). Uncommon has a track record of improving its results while scaling over the past 5 years.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Performance Measure 3: Throughout the grant period, Uncommon will maintain CSP cost efficiency by spending ≤$3,000 of grant funds per student in new schools and ≤$1,500 of grant funds in expanding schools.	Uncommon has met these cost expectations while implementing its two previous CSP grants.	No other major CMO operates its fully-enrolled schools and its central office on the public dollar as Uncommon currently does and will continue to do throughout the grant period.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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[28] Assumes that the final CSP performance report will be delivered 90 days after the project period ends on 9/30/2021.

(1) Performance or Project Measures & Performance Targets	(2) Baseline and Rationale	(3) Ambitious and Achievable Performance Targets	Data for CSP annual report				
			6/17	6/18	6/19	6/20	9/21[28]
Project Measure 1: By the end of the grant period, Uncommon will expand its enrollment by at least 5,500 students in grant-funded schools—ultimately serving 23,000 students across the entire network.	Uncommon has expanded from serving 4,500 to 14,000 students over the past five years.	As part of its 5-year business plan, Uncommon's Board of Trustees has approved the expansion of existing schools to their planned full enrollment and replication to 22 new schools, including 13 new schools funded by the CSP project.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Project Measure 2: Throughout the grant period, Uncommon will continue serving a population that is at least 75% economically disadvantaged and 85% Black and Hispanic.	Across all schools, Uncommon's 2015-16 enrollment is 83% economically disadvantaged and 94% Black and Hispanic.	Maintaining current levels of student diversity is ambitious during a period of rapid scale-up. Uncommon has achieved such diversity as it has grown over the past 5 years.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Project Measure 3: Throughout the grant period, Uncommon will continue to achieve an overall annual student retention rate of 85% or higher.	Over the past three years, Uncommon's retention rates have averaged 88% for all students in all schools; no subgroup has had a retention rate lower than 85% in a single year.	Maintaining current retention rates is ambitious during a period of rapid scale-up, as new schools may experience higher attrition rates, but Uncommon's retention rates have shown minimal variation from year to year during prior expansions.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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(1) Performance or Project Measures & Performance Targets	(2) Baseline and Rationale	(3) Ambitious and Achievable Performance Targets	Data for CSP annual report				
			6/17	6/18	6/19	6/20	9/21[28]
Project Measure 4: Throughout the grant period, Uncommon will continue to achieve a college enrollment rate of 90% or higher and improve its college completion rate to 60% or higher.	With few exceptions, all subgroups of Uncommon students have achieved college matriculation rates of 95-100% for the past 3 years. Uncommon's six-year college completion rate is 51%, compared to only 9% of low-income students nationally.	College enrollment rates of 90% or higher across subgroups leave little room for variation. Six-year college completion rates above 60% would represent a significant improvement in an area where K-12 schools have a limited span of control, as well as thoroughly defying national trends.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Project Measure 5: Throughout the grant period, Uncommon and its independent evaluator will meet all evaluation data collection and analysis milestones.	Uncommon successfully managed external evaluations by Mathematica in 2010 and 2012 and by CREDO in 2013. Uncommon tracks and publishes a variety of achievement metrics on its website and in annual charter reports each year.	A randomized controlled trial is the "gold standard" of evaluation design. It is achievable through partnership with an experienced independent evaluator and use of common lottery systems shared by cities across Uncommon regions.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Project Measure 6: By the end of the grant period, an independent evaluator will publish a randomized controlled trial of Uncommon's impact that meets WWC standards for evidence without reservations.	Uncommon's previous three independent evaluations were quasi-experimental studies that relied upon similar data to those that will be collected for the new study.						✓

(4)(i-ii) Data Collection. Uncommon's central Data Analytics team will continue throughout the grant period to collect and report on reliable, valid, and meaningful performance data related to each of the CSP performance and project measures above, including data on school expansion, student enrollment, demographics, and achievement. Uncommon's Finance and Development teams will continue to track and report on federal grant expenditures, and its Data, Impact, and Executive teams will report to CSP on Uncommon's progress toward completing and disseminating the independent evaluation with the support of the evaluator. A complete description of Uncommon|2021 data sources, collection methods, analysis methods, and evaluators' prior success with large-scale research projects is available in Sections D and E.

(1) Uncommon|2021 is built upon a strong management plan to achieve project objectives

Uncommon Schools has a strong track record of opening and sustaining new charter schools that achieve breakthrough results for all students. The Uncommon|2021 project has (1) a management plan with clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones that will achieve project objectives on time and within budget; (2) a proven business plan for sustaining high levels of academic, operational, and financial performance at new and expanded schools; (3) a financial and operating model in which fully enrolled schools and Uncommon's central office are sustained entirely on the public dollar and with broad stakeholder support; (4) a plan for closing any schools that do not meet high standards of quality; and (5) an experienced team of highly qualified personnel.

Figure D.1: **Responsibilities, Timelines, and Milestones for Accomplishing Project Tasks**

Major Milestones & Project Tasks	Responsible[29]	Timing	GY1	GY2	GY3	GY4	GY5
Annual School Site Planning and Hiring for Replication/Expansion Schools							
Select and train principal and operational fellows who may open new schools	US	Jul-Jun	15-16	✓	✓	✓	
Recruit and train apprentice teachers and Summer Teaching Fellows	US, S	Jul-Jun	15-16	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recruit and hire teachers and other school staff	US, SP, DO	Feb-Jun	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Onboard and develop new hires	SP, DO, US	Jun-Aug	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recruit students	US, RT, S	Feb-Jun	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Set curriculum and assessment plan	SP, US	May-Jun	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Set financial plan and budget for approval by Boards of Trustees	US, DO	May-Jun	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Uncommon Schools Network Supporting Services to Ensure Quality and Sustainability							
Manage and coach school leaders	US, RT	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monitor school data dashboards	US	Weekly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Conduct school inspections and develop plans for ongoing improvement	US, RT, S	Annually	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Implement annual PD for all instructional staff	US	Aug	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Design and improve aligned curricula and assessments	US	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monitor and adjust school financial plans under supervision of Board of Trustees	US, RT, DO	Quarterly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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[29] Uncommon Schools network staff (US); School (S); School Principal (SP); School Director of Operations (DO); Uncommon Schools Regional Team (RT); Mathematica (MA).

Major Milestones & Project Tasks	Responsible[29]	Timing	GY1	GY2	GY3	GY4	GY5
Sustain, improve, expand network infrastructure (Facilities, IT, etc.)	US	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Develop Boards of Trustees as community liaisons and fundraising advocates	US	Aug, Feb	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Program Evaluation, Planning, Design of the Education Program, and Knowledge Dissemination							
Set strategic plans and goals for all teams and central staff	US	Jul-Sep	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Administer state tests	S	Feb-May	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Administer interim assessments	S	Oct-May	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Collect attainment and achievement data	US, MA	Jun-Oct	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Establish data sharing agreements and collect initial data	MA, US	Oct-Jun	✓				
Collect, clean, and analyze data for independent evaluation	MA	Jul-Dec		✓	✓	✓	
Jointly monitor evaluation progress and troubleshoot issues	MA, US	Quarterly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Report interim impact estimates from randomized controlled trial	MA, US	Winter		✓		✓	
Publish/disseminate independent evaluation	MA, US	Jan-Oct					✓
Oversight and Management of the CSP Grant							
Project director and management team meet to monitor progress toward grant goals	US	Weekly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Train network and school staff in grant and financial administration	US, RT, DO	Oct-Dec	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Submit annual reports to ED	US	Jun	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

(2) Uncommon|2021 includes a business plan for sustainable expansion and improvement beyond the grant period

Facilities. Uncommon's Real Estate and Facilities team, under the supervision of the Chief Financial Officer, procures and maintains school facilities. The team handles site selection, construction and renovation project management, lease negotiations, financing services, and ongoing maintenance. This service contributes to improved school performance by freeing school leaders to focus exclusively on instruction and culture. Lease terms in buildings not owned by Uncommon are typically for periods of 30-40 years, fostering continuity for families and sustainability for replicated or expanded schools well beyond the grant period.

Financial Management. Uncommon's Finance and Accounting teams, also supervised by the CFO, support each school's Director of Operations in creating the school's annual budget, assisting the Director with the process of finalizing the annual budget and leading a biannual budget-to-actual analysis and budget revision process that results in close monitoring of variances and ensures that all schools remain on sound financial footing during and beyond the CSP grant period. The Finance and Accounting teams also manage all accounting systems, audits, revenue and expense reporting, and central office financial planning and management, further promoting post-grant sustainability by relieving school leaders of these burdens.

Central Office Supports. In addition to facilities, finance, academic achievement, governance, oversight, and HR, the Uncommon central office also provides direct support to schools in the following functional areas: student enrollment, marketing, government advocacy, IT, procurement of legal services, data analytics, and fundraising for schools that are not yet fully enrolled (typically for the first 3-4 years of operation) and for capital campaigns. These services

are fully funded by schools' management fees and are therefore sustainable beyond the grant period.

Student Academic Achievement. All Uncommon schools employ a dual leadership model, in which Directors of Operations manage administrative functions so that Principals can focus solely on teacher development and instruction to drive high levels of student academic achievement. As discussed in Section B, Principals use student performance data as well as regular observations (averaging 13 per teacher in 2015-16) to improve teacher performance over time. Principal performance is in turn managed by Chief Schools Officers through data monitoring, observation, and regular feedback, including annual school inspections (see *Appendices H.1-2*). At the network level, Uncommon provides regular, high-quality professional development to teachers and school leaders; builds and supports school staff to use technology to improve classroom instruction, such as video, teacher observation, and lesson sharing platforms; recruits qualified instructional staff; and runs several Fellows programs to train teachers and school leaders. As discussed in Section B, Uncommon's content development team supports schools by writing PD and training instructional staff to deliver lesson plans and interim assessments aligned to college-ready standards. This strategy has proven effective for increasing student achievement over the past two years, and it will continue to drive improved results throughout the grant period. All of these school- and network-level drivers of student academic achievement are long-term strategies that are central to the Uncommon organizational structure, educational model, and financial model of operating all schools as cost efficiently as possible while they scale and eventually achieve full enrollment and sustainability on the public dollar. They are therefore fully sustainable beyond the grant period.

Governance. Uncommon Schools is governed by a Board of Trustees comprised of experienced leaders in the education, philanthropy, finance, and business sectors. Each of Uncommon's six regions is governed by a Board of Trustees. Uncommon's Development, Finance, and Executive teams support regional Chief Operating Officers to recruit local Board talent, report critical information, manage relationships, and develop Board members as leaders. Throughout the grant period, Uncommon will continue to invest in developing regional Board members to be effective fundraisers for facility capital campaigns and to serve as "community connectors," liaisons to local groups whose insights will help Uncommon schools better serve families and whose long-term support will ensure sustainability as the political landscape for charter schools evolves over time.

Oversight. Uncommon schools are approved and overseen by charter-authorizing agencies. Relationships with these agencies are managed by regional Chief Operating Officers with the support of Uncommon's Data, Finance, and Executive teams. *Appendices E.1-8* demonstrate that all current Uncommon schools are in good standing with their charter authorizers. Uncommon has already received or is on track to receive approval from the following agencies for all schools slated to open or expand in 2016-17: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Boston), New Jersey Department of Education (Newark), and The University of the State of New York (New York, Rochester, Troy).

Human Resources. Committed and talented teachers and leaders are a core component of Uncommon's educational model (*Figure B.3*). Uncommon dedicates significant resources to attracting, developing, and retaining top talent for schools and the central office. The Recruitment team sources candidates, schedules interviews, conducts pre-screens, and processes new hires. The Human Resources team onboards new employees, administers benefits and

compensation, and manages legal compliance or disputes. Finally, the Diversity and Talent Development teams design professional development and culture-building experiences for all staff, manage employee evaluation processes, lead retention initiatives, and run the Summer Teaching Fellows program, a pipeline for diverse teaching talent. These centralized services minimize the HR burdens on school Principals and Directors of Operations. Uncommon's central office teams also run year-long Fellowship programs to train school leaders, which promote sustained school-level results and help Uncommon to avoid talent shortages by maximizing internal and external pipelines.

(3) Uncommon|2021 employs multi-year financial and operating model with broad stakeholder support

Financial Model. Uncommon is committed to maintaining its status as an educational and financial proof point—an unambiguous example of educationally disadvantaged students achieving at the highest levels and funded by the public dollar. Once fully enrolled, each Uncommon school is sustained by the same state and federal per-pupil funding available to district schools. For most schools, full enrollment and financial sustainability are reached 3-4 years after launch. To facilitate this scale-up phase for each of its schools, Uncommon executes its expansion plan in a disciplined manner and ensures that all schools receive appropriate and equitable shares of government grant funding. Uncommon secures private philanthropy to fill the funding gap for schools in their "start-up" years, when per pupil costs are higher as enrollment grows one grade at a time. Upon expiration of the CSP grant, scaled schools will be sustainable on the public dollar, no longer requiring private philanthropy for core operations. Annual budgets for Uncommon's schools include all operational and programmatic expenses, staff salaries, an 8-10% management fee for services provided by the Uncommon home office, and a

1-3% contribution to the school's own surplus fund to mitigate against unknowable future liabilities. The Uncommon central office is fully funded by the management fees paid by schools. A detailed view of Uncommon's financial model through SY20-21 and Uncommon's most recent audit statement are available in *Appendices G.1-3*.

Operating Model. The Uncommon operating model—i.e., its approach to people, processes, and technology—evolved over a ten-year period of rapid growth. It will continue to evolve incrementally as Uncommon seeks to deepen its impact for students.

- **People:** Through and beyond SY20-21, Uncommon will continue to prioritize building a faculty of committed and talented teachers and leaders who pursue a college-going mission and high standards for student performance. Schools will continue to operate under the dual leadership of Principals and Directors of Operations, who will drive staff development and innovation efforts within their buildings. Principals will continue to be managed and supported by experienced Chief Schools Officers, with the assistance of Associate Managing Directors. Directors of Operations will continue to be managed by the Chief of Innovation and School Operations, with the assistance of regional Chief Operating Officers. Uncommon's central office teams will continue to provide core services that lighten the load for school staff, such as financial oversight, lesson plan and assessment design, and IT and HR infrastructure. These teams will grow incrementally and seek economies of scale to maximize cost efficiency as the number of schools they serve increases.

- **Processes:** Uncommon believes in constantly evolving its business processes to reach higher levels of efficiency and effectiveness. The coming years will bring change to processes ranging from staff evaluation to financial management and IT procurement, depending on need, opportunity, risks, and resource availability. As Uncommon pursues

changes to business processes in schools or the central office, it will remain steadfast in its commitments to maximizing teacher and principal focus on student success and to maximizing long-term operational, financial, and organizational health.

- **Technology:** Similarly, the technologies that support Uncommon schools will evolve rapidly throughout and beyond the grant period. In the past year alone, Uncommon launched new video and teacher observation and feedback platforms. Uncommon is well-positioned to adapt to evolving technological needs: its Product Solutions team uses a well-honed protocol for identifying opportunities and risks, assessing possible solutions, managing vendor relationships, training school staff, supporting implementation and ongoing customizations, and codifying learnings to strengthen future deployments.

These approaches to refining the Uncommon operating model are oriented to constant learning and improvement—the core values that have enabled Uncommon to achieve the results described in Section A. They will ensure that Uncommon meets its CSP performance and project measures (*Figure C.5*) and sustains its impact beyond the grant period.

Stakeholder Support. Uncommon has a broad base of supporters who are deeply committed to the long-term success of the Uncommon|2021 project. Though fully enrolled schools and the central office are sustained on the public dollar, Uncommon has been fortunate to receive nearly $40 million in private philanthropy over the past three years to support schools that are not yet fully enrolled, capital campaigns, and standalone initiatives. These funds were donated by steadfast supporters of Uncommon's work, including major institutional funders like the Robin Hood, Kovner, and Gleason Foundations and NewSchools Venture Fund, as well as individual donors. Uncommon also joined forces with KIPP New Jersey, Mastery Charter Schools, Camden Public Schools, and Charter School Growth Fund to raise $39 million for a joint loan pool that

will invest in facility projects (including the renovation and construction of Uncommon schools) in Camden over the next 7 years. In addition to its network and regional Boards and its dedicated, long-term funders, Uncommon has strong relationships with its charter authorizers and with community, school district, and local and state government leaders. Letters expressing their ongoing commitment to Uncommon and their support of the Uncommon|2021 project are available in *Appendix C*.

(4) Uncommon|2021 includes a plan for closing schools that do not meet high standards of quality

School closure. In the historically unprecedented event of continued underperformance and

state education laws. This process includes notification to parents of children enrolled in the

.

(5) Uncommon|2021 is led by highly qualified personnel

    Project Director and Management Team. Brett Peiser, CEO of Uncommon Schools, will

serve as Project Director for Uncommon|2021. Mr. Peiser will meet weekly throughout the grant

period with Uncommon's Executive team, who will also serve as the Management Team for the

CSP grant. Weekly meetings will be used to monitor key metrics for the grant, such as student

enrollment and performance, and to actively manage the partnerships and infrastructure projects

necessary to open and expand schools. All team members have extensive experience managing

large-scale projects like Uncommon|2021, as detailed below and in *Appendix B*.

Figure D.2: Uncommon|2021 Management Team Org Chart
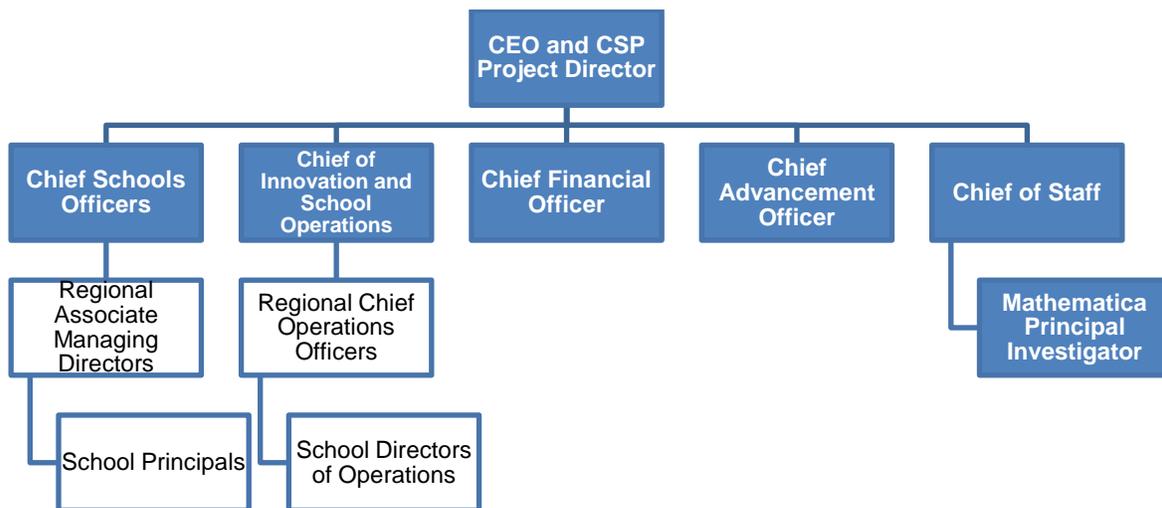
Brett Peiser, CEO since July 2012, has throughout his tenure overseen projects of similar size and scope to Uncommon|2021, including opening 14 new schools, managing fully enrolled schools and Uncommon's central office to sustainability on the public dollar, and overseeing the CREDO evaluation. He previously served as Uncommon's Managing Director of Schools in New York City and was the Founder and former Principal and Executive Director of Boston Collegiate Charter School, one of Massachusetts' highest performing public schools. Over Mr. Peiser's last four years, Boston Collegiate was the only public school in Boston with 100% of 10th graders passing both the Math and English MCAS exams, a statewide graduation requirement. Mr. Peiser is a recipient of the Broad Fellowship for Education Leaders and Aspen Institute Pahara Fellowship. He received an MPP degree from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Julie Jackson and Paul Bambrick-Santoyo, Chief Schools Officers for K-8 and 9-12 schools, respectively, assumed their current roles in 2015, after helping launch and develop North Star Academy and Uncommon Schools. They have led the alignment of curricula and assessments across Uncommon schools and the professional development of instructional

leaders. Both have long histories at Uncommon. Ms. Jackson joined North Star Academy's original school in 1998 as a math teacher. She taught math for 10 years and has also been a Dean of Students, High School Principal, and founding Elementary School Principal. Ms. Jackson serves on the Board of Trustees for the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls. She has received numerous honors, including New Jersey Teacher of the Year, the Dodge Leadership Award, Teach For America's Peter Jennings Award for Civic Leadership, and an Aspen Institute Pahara Fellowship. She holds an M.Ed. in Educational Administration from William Paterson University. Mr. Bambrick-Santoyo joined Uncommon as Managing Director of North Star Academy in 2003. During his 12-year tenure, North Star schools made dramatic gains in student achievement, making them among the highest-achieving urban schools in New Jersey and winners of multiple recognitions, including the US Department of Education's National Blue Ribbon Award. Author of *Driven by Data*, *Leverage Leadership*, and *Great Habits, Great Readers*, as well as the forthcoming *Get Better Faster,* Mr. Bambrick-Santoyo has trained over 10,000 school leaders worldwide in instructional leadership, including multiple schools that have gone on to become the highest-gaining or highest achieving schools in their districts. Prior to joining North Star, Mr. Bambrick-Santoyo worked for six years in a bilingual school in Mexico City, where he founded the International Baccalaureate program at the middle school level. He earned an M.Ed. in School Administration via New Leaders from the City University of New York—Baruch College.

Josh Phillips, Chief of Innovation and School Operations, will oversee all school and regional operations for the Uncommon|2021 project. Mr. Phillips joined Uncommon in 2000 after receiving his Ed.M. in Teaching and Curriculum from Harvard University. He served as a classroom teacher and Co-Director for Operations and Finance at Uncommon's Roxbury Prep

before taking on network-level leadership roles as Chief Operating Officer and Managing Director of Uncommon's schools in Rochester and Troy. He holds an Ed.M. in Teaching and Curriculum from Harvard University.

Diane Flynn, Chief Financial Officer, will oversee all financial and real estate aspects of the Uncommon|2021 project. As CFO, she has successfully managed Uncommon's prior CSP grant awards as well as approximately $16.5M in block and categorical funding for Uncommon's schools. Prior to joining Uncommon, Ms. Flynn was the founder and President of a consulting firm specializing in real estate finance nonprofit business strategy. She has also worked at a major philanthropic foundation, where she analyzed and underwrote real estate grants, as a tax and business lawyer, and as an adjunct professor in the graduate tax program at Farleigh Dickinson University. She holds a J.D. from the Seton Hall University School of Law and an LL.M. in Taxation from the New York University School of Law.

Laura Lee McGovern, Chief of Staff, manages Uncommon's Data Analytics team (among her many org-wide responsibilities). She will oversee all internal data collection, analysis, and reporting and manage the relationship with the independent evaluator for the Uncommon|2021 project. Ms. Lee McGovern joined Uncommon in 2006 as the Founding Co-Director of Operations at Kings Collegiate Charter School, Uncommon's second Brooklyn middle school. She spent four years as Chief Operating Officer of Uncommon New York City's middle and high schools, eventually overseeing operations for ten schools. Previously, Ms. Lee McGovern worked as a management consultant and also served as the founding Director of Analytics in student enrollment at the New York City Department of Education. She received her MBA from Harvard Business School, where she was a Baker Scholar and co-leader of the Education Leadership Group.

Moira McCullough, Researcher at Mathematica, will serve as the principal investigator for the independent evaluation of the Uncommon|2021 project. Ms. McCullough has played leadership roles on multiple evaluations of charter school impacts and practices conducted by Mathematica. She led a quasi-experimental impact analysis of The Equity Project charter school, which included securing student-level administrative data from the New York City Department of Education and overseeing the cleaning and formatting of these data. For the National Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Charter Management Organizations (CMOs), which included Uncommon, she collected school lottery records from multiple sites across the country, conducted quasi-experimental impact analyses of CMO schools in New York City, and contributed to correlational analyses examining the relationships between CMO impacts and CMO practices. Ms. McCullough is also the deputy project director for the Evaluation of District-Charter Collaboration Grants funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, for which she has worked with district and charter leaders and collected data in seven cities, including Boston and New York. In addition, Ms. McCullough will leverage Mathematica's institutional experience conducting a five-year i3 Scale-Up Grant Evaluation of KIPP schools. Ms. McCullough holds an MPP in Education, Family, and Social Policy from Georgetown University.

Samantha Tweedy, Chief Advancement Officer, will partner with Ms. Lee McGovern and Ms. McCullough to manage the dissemination of any research findings from the evaluation of the Uncommon|2021 project. She will also be responsible for managing Uncommon's relationships with donors, school district and other government partners, and the media. Prior to becoming CAO, Ms. Tweedy served as Uncommon's Senior Director of External Impact, Head of School of Excellence Boys Charter School, Co-Founder and Co-Director of Excellence Girls

Elementary Academy, and Director of the Summer Teaching Fellows Program. She was previously a litigation associate at the law firm of Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP and holds a J.D. from Yale Law School.

E. Quality of the Evaluation Plan

The Uncommon|2021 CSP project will be independently evaluated by Mathematica Policy Research. Interim reporting will be completed by Uncommon's Data Analytics team. *Figure E.1* details the research questions for the evaluation and their alignment to both the project objectives and the CSP performance and project measures.

Figure E.1: Uncommon|2021 Project Evaluation Research Questions

Research Question	Project Objective	CSP Performance or Project Measures
RQ1: What are the demographics of the student population served by Uncommon?	1	Project 2
RQ2: What are the impacts of Uncommon schools on student attrition?	1	Project 3
RQ3: What are the impacts of Uncommon schools on student attainment and achievement?	2	Performance 2; Project 4
RQ4: Do the average impacts on student achievement or the extent of variation in impacts on student achievement across Uncommon schools change as the network scales?	2	Performance 2; Project 4
RQ5: Is Uncommon meeting expectations for network growth?	2	Performance 1
RQ6: Is Uncommon|2021 meeting cost efficiency expectations for the CSP program?	n/a	Performance 3

Independent Evaluation. Mathematica will address research questions 1-4 via the collection and analysis of comprehensive lottery records and administrative data records to estimate the impacts of Uncommon's core educational model on student achievement and attainment. Specifically, each fall from 2016 to 2020, Mathematica will collect the following student-level data:

- Lottery data from SchoolMint, the city-wide application and lottery system used in Boston, Camden, Newark, and New York City, and Uncommon's vendor for lotteries in Rochester and Troy

- Longitudinal enrollment and demographic data from Uncommon, district partners, and state DOEs

- Longitudinal attainment and achievement data (i.e., state exams, high school graduation) from state DOEs

- College enrollment, persistence, and graduation data from the National Student Clearinghouse

Mathematica will collect these data for all Uncommon schools. To estimate the impacts of Uncommon's core educational model on student achievement and attainment, Mathematica will use an experimental approach in Uncommon schools that are sufficiently oversubscribed, comparing outcomes for students randomly admitted in the lottery to those that are randomly placed on a waiting list and do not receive an offer of admission. This type of random assignment design is eligible to meet WWC evidence standards without reservations.

RQ1 analysis. The random assignment of students to treatment and control conditions via a lottery is advantageous because it ensures that there are no systematic differences between treatment and control group students in terms of key baseline characteristics like demographics and prior achievement. To confirm the random assignment of students to treatment and control conditions, Mathematica will examine and compare the baseline characteristics of students receiving offers of admission and students not receiving offers of admission in the lotteries.

RQ2 analysis. Mathematica will use student-level enrollment data with unique identifiers to follow lottery participants from year to year and to calculate and compare overall and subgroup

attrition rates among lottery winners offered admission to Uncommon schools and lottery losers who were denied admission and go on to attend other schools.

RQ3 analysis. To evaluate Uncommon's impacts on student attainment and achievement, Mathematica will use a research design that uses school admissions lotteries as randomized experiments. This type of randomized design is the "gold standard" for research measuring the impacts of schools on student achievement. Students offered admission via the lottery are included in the treatment group; those not offered admission through the lottery are included in the control group. This design ensures that treatment and control group students are similar on average at baseline in terms of demographics and academic preparation, as well as key factors such as motivation and parental support, and only differ in whether or not they received an offer of admission. As such, Mathematica can causally attribute any differences between the treatment and control group in student outcomes to the lottery offer of admission to an Uncommon school. To calculate overall impact estimates for Uncommon schools on student achievement on state standardized assessments in grades 4, 8, and 10 or 11, Mathematica will compare average outcomes for students in the treatment and control groups using a regression analysis that accounts for the baseline characteristics of sample members. Mathematica will compare outcomes of treatment and control groups separately for students entering in the elementary, middle, or high school grades, which will also allow for estimation of impacts on attainment outcomes such as high school graduation.

RQ4 analysis. Mathematica will calculate its impact estimates for RQ3 by school and by year, comparing results between buildings and over time. First, the study team will examine whether the average impact across Uncommon schools changes during the scale-up period. Next, the study team will examine the distribution of impacts across Uncommon schools by year to

determine whether the consistency in impacts at a school level changes as the network scales through the grant period. Mathematica will isolate and report separately the impacts in schools receiving grant funds as part of the Uncommon|2021 project.

Independent Evaluation Reporting. Mathematica will report to Uncommon at least quarterly throughout the grant period on its progress collecting, cleaning, and analyzing data for the independent evaluation. Mathematica will produce annual interim impact estimates for each school year/every other school year from 2016-17 through 2019-20 to share with Uncommon. These interim reporting mechanisms will ensure that Mathematica will collect final data in fall 2020. In spring 2021, Mathematica will write and publish on its website the evaluation of Uncommon's impacts and of the Uncommon|2021 project. Through these quarterly, annual, and summative reports, Mathematica and Uncommon will ensure that Project Measures 5 and 6 (*Figure C.5*) for the Uncommon|2021 grant are met.

Uncommon Internal Evaluation. Throughout the grant period, Uncommon's internal Data Analytics team will also collect, analyze, and report data from its schools related to RQ1-4. Uncommon will continue to use its existing student information systems to track enrollment, demographics, attendance, retention, state exam performance, high school graduation, and college attendance, persistence, and graduation. Uncommon will use descriptive statistics to analyze these outcomes by subgroup, by school, and by year for grant-funded schools. Uncommon will report comparative district, state, or national data by subgroup and by year as appropriate and depending upon data availability.

Uncommon will be solely responsible for tracking data related to RQs 5-6. Progress toward school expansion and cost efficiency goals for the Uncommon|2021 project will be monitored by the Finance team using existing student enrollment and financial data systems. The processes

Uncommon uses to track federal spending are summarized in response to grant requirements F(c) and F(i) on pages 52-53.

Outside the scope of the grant evaluation, Uncommon also collects a wide variety of data that allow the network and individual schools to track progress toward meeting the Uncommon|2021 objective of improving student performance as the network grows. These include but are not limited to interim assessment, discipline, grade promotion, AP participation and exam pass rate, SAT participation and score, college application, and college acceptance data at the individual student level. Student results are analyzed for each school and region on a weekly basis. Uncommon also evaluates the health of each school through its annual school inspection process (*Appendix H.2*). Finally, Uncommon collects a variety of internal data related to organizational health, such as teacher observation data (tracked in real time) and school and central office staff evaluation data (annually).

Uncommon Evaluation Reporting. Uncommon will meet all CSP annual reporting expectations for progress toward the CSP objectives, performance, and project measures. Uncommon also reports a variety of school and student achievement metrics by subgroup on its website and in reports to its charter authorizing agencies each year.

Knowledge Dissemination. Results from the evaluations of Uncommon|2021 will be made widely available to charter and district schools, networks of schools, and policymakers. In addition to publishing results annually, Uncommon will periodically present new insights from scaling its network in venues such as the National Charter Schools Conference or conferences sponsored by NewSchools Venture Fund, America Achieves, or the National Governors Association. As discussed in response to Competitive Preference Priority 1b (p. 4), Uncommon will also share lessons learned from scaling effective instruction through the Uncommon|2021

project by delivering professional development to district schools, with a special focus on state-identified priority schools. Uncommon will share these lessons even more broadly by continuing to publish books that are read widely throughout the sector, such as *Teach Like a Champion* and *Driven By Data*. Finally, Mathematica's published evaluation of Uncommon|2021 will contribute significantly to the evidence base for charter performance as networks grow to scale. It will be the only evaluation of a major charter provider committed to running fully enrolled schools on the public dollar—proving conclusively that it is possible for educationally disadvantaged students to reach the highest levels of academic performance without additional resources.

Evaluation Resources. The primary investigator for the Mathematica evaluation will be Moira McCullough, who has played leadership roles on multiple evaluations of charter school impacts and practices conducted by Mathematica. Her biography is included in Section D (p. 45), and her resume is available in *Appendix B.8*. Ten percent ($1.1M) of the Uncommon|2021 budget will be dedicated to the Mathematica evaluation, a reasonable amount over the five-year period given the existing data systems and analytical methodologies Mathematica has already developed for prior studies of charter networks. Because Uncommon is committed to sustaining its central office staff on management fees paid by schools, the network neither needs nor intends to use any portion of CSP funds to pay for the staff or systems used for the internal evaluation and knowledge dissemination.

F. Response to Application Requirements from the Final CPS Priorities
(a) Project objectives and methods by which progress will be determined
See Section C and *Figure C.5* on pages 28-30.
(b) How Uncommon operates current & planned charter schools and responsibilities of consortium members
Uncommon is applying as a single charter management organization. See Section B for a description of the educational program in current and planned schools and Section D for the operational and financial model.
(c) How Uncommon will ensure that each new or expanded school receives its share of Federal funds
On behalf of its schools, Uncommon will ensure that each school outlined in this project plan will receive its commensurate share of annual federal education funds allocated by the formula programs by obtaining all necessary enrollment amendments from authorizers and by submitting accurate enrollment counts to the appropriate governmental entity. Uncommon has previously demonstrated successful administration of CSP funds to Replication and Expansion schools by adhering to internal Fiscal Policies and Procedures for its 2010 and 2011 grant programs. Specifically, Uncommon utilizes the CSP grant budgets, which account for enrollment growth, to ensure the appropriate amounts of funds are allocated to each school. Uncommon also follows procedures to guarantee that only allowable expenses are reimbursed with grant funds and that expenses are not funded by any other source. All expenses charged to federal grants are reviewed by two members of Uncommon's Finance Team and the school's Director of Operations before invoices are submitted for reimbursement. Uncommon's financial structure, in which all 44 schools manage separate budgets, ensures that only Replication and Expansion schools will receive CSP funding based on the growth plan outlined in this application.
(d) Uncommon's educational program, grade levels, and curriculum and instructional practices
See Section B.
(e) Relationship between Uncommon schools and their authorized public chartering agencies
Uncommon Schools maintains strong relationships with the charter authorizers in each of its six regions, as demonstrated by the letters of support in *Appendix C* and the authorizations in *Appendix E*. A summary of authorizers is available in *Appendix E.1*.
(f) How Uncommon will sustain expansion after the grant has expired
See Section D(2) on pages 34-37.

(g) How parents & community are involved in Uncommon|2021 planning, program design, & implementation

Strong collaborations with families and community members have been and will continue to be essential to Uncommon's success. Parent and community involvement begins with student recruitment, as described in detail in *Figure B.2* (pp. 16-18). It continues through and beyond students' time in an Uncommon school. Each school:
- Meets one-on-one with each entering student's family before they enroll in school
- Hosts summer orientations and Back-to-School Nights
- Sends home a weekly newsletter of classroom and school-wide news and information
- Meets with families for at least three conferences each year to discuss their child's progress
- Maintains an "open door" policy, encouraging families to visit and observe the school regularly
- Implements supplemental Title I Parent Involvement programming, in many cases allocating federal funds made available under Title I of ESEA
- Provides periodic evening and weekend workshops designed to help families support their children's education
- Creates regular events in which families are invited into the school to celebrate student achievement
- Solicits formal feedback from parent liaisons and community partners who sit on the regional Board of Trustees

Schools have also included families in non-traditional ways. For example, Uncommon Charter High School invites parents to participate in college-preparatory studies with students. Customizing involvement based on the needs and interests of families provides an opportunity to share goals and reinforce academics and character inside and outside the classroom.

(h) Uncommon Schools declines to request any waivers from Federal statutory or regulatory provisions

(i) How Uncommon|2021 will use grant funds in conjunction with other Federal programs

Grant funds will be used for allowable, reasonable, and necessary expenses for the replication and significant expansion of Uncommon schools, as defined in the CSP NIA. If awarded, the 2016 CSP grant will be administered separately from any other federal programs, including Uncommon's previous CSP grants. The CSP award will only be applied to costs for replicating or expanding and related expenses identified in the Budget Narrative. Uncommon uses an annual budgeting process to plan for any expenses that may be charged to federal grants, ensuring that no expenses are double counted. Throughout the year, progress toward implementing this initial plan is monitored through Uncommon's accounting system.

Uncommon will continue to receive and appropriately administer federal funding from Title I, Title II, IDEA, Child Nutrition, E-Rate, and other grant programs.

(j) How Uncommon will inform all students about expanded schools and provide equal opportunity to attend
See *Figure B.2* on pages 16-18.
(k) How Uncommon will comply with IDEA
All students with disabilities enrolled at Uncommon schools can and should achieve the school's goals. Each school works to ensure all special education programs and services are provided in accordance with State and federal special education laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This means students will: 1. Have access to a free appropriate public education (FAPE); 2. Be appropriately evaluated; 3. Receive an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment; 4. Be involved, with their parents, in the development of their individualized education plan (IEP); and 5. With their parents, have access to the appropriate procedures and mechanisms to resolve any disputes or disagreements related to the school's or school district's provision of FAPE. Uncommon schools are required to admit students based on a random public lottery and do not discriminate on the basis of a student having or being suspected of having a disability. Students with disabilities will be expected to participate in and receive credit for non-academic, extracurricular, and ancillary programs and activities with all other students to the extent allowed by the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Every Uncommon teacher of a student with a disability receives a copy of that student's IEP. The school's special education staff provides training to ensure that classroom teachers are knowledgeable about the needs of students with disabilities and their responsibilities related to the student's IEP. Each school's special education staff works with classroom teachers to ensure parents are informed of how their children are progressing toward their IEP goals and with the general curriculum. In rare cases where the school is unable to directly provide services to the extent necessary, Uncommon works with the school district of the student's residence to ensure the student receives services. If necessary and feasible, the Uncommon school will also contract with appropriately certified or licensed individuals to provide services under the school's direction.
(l) Uncommon Schools has not experienced any significant compliance issues in the past three years

(m) Data on Uncommon's current charter schools
- See *Appendix E.1* for the following data on each current Uncommon school: the year founded, the grades currently served, the number of students, and the address. See *Appendix F.1* for the percentage of students in each subgroup of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA   - See *Appendices F.4-7* for the results on the State assessment for the past three years (if available) by subgroup.   - See *Appendix F.2* for attendance rates for the past three years.   - See *Appendix F.3* for student attrition rates for the past three years.   - See *Appendix F.8* for 4-year high school graduation rates.   - See *Appendix F.9* for college enrollment rates.   - See *Appendix F.10* for college persistence rates.
(n)(1) Objective data on Uncommon school performance
See Section A and *Appendices F.4-7.*
(n)(2) Objective data on Uncommon's student attendance and retention rates
See *Appendix F.2* for student attendance rates and *Appendix F.3* for student retention rates.
(n)(3) Objective data on Uncommon's high school and college performance measures
- See *Appendix F.8* for 4-year high school graduation rates.   - See *Appendix F.9* for college enrollment rates.   - See *Appendix F.10* for college persistence rates.
(o) Assurances requested by the Secretary for the CSP program are available in Appendix A