

# Bentley Academy Charter School

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A Prospectus for a Horace Mann III  
Public Charter School in Salem, MA

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## **How will the school demonstrate faithfulness to the charter?**

### Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Theory of Change

The driving force and philosophy behind the founding group's desire to open Bentley Academy Charter School is an unyielding belief that every student deserves the chance and choice to live their educational life to its fullest, be that high school, college, or post graduate study. Regardless of the choice a student makes to pursue college or career, the road to educational and personal fulfillment begins with a strong elementary school experience.

#### *Mission*

Bentley Academy Charter School prepares all of its students for personal and academic success to and through college.

#### *Vision*

The scholars of BACS will gain an unmatched elementary school experience through the use of teacher chosen curricula based on student needs, data to drive differentiated instruction, intentional experiences that enhance and support students' vision of themselves as collegiate scholars, and a focus on self-improvement for the whole school community that will prepare them for the rigors of middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

Bentley Academy Charter School will become a flagship Salem Public School with students who understand the value of education and engaged in exciting and challenging work, teachers who are immersed in a culture of high expectations and continuous professional improvement, and a community that takes pride in their school and shares in the responsibility to maintain high standards. We believe the current scholars of BACS will thrive throughout their educational careers and will become role models for future scholars of BACS as important contributing members of their community.

The existing Bentley Elementary School will become Bentley Academy Charter School through a unique partnership of school leadership, Salem Public Schools leadership, and Blueprint Schools Network, a non-profit education management organization that specializes in school turnaround. This partnership is based on the belief that all of Salem's students deserve an elementary education that will prepare them well for the rigor of middle and high school and beyond and that some schools require a different set of circumstances in order to achieve this lofty goal. Beginning in school year 2014-15, this is the first partnership in Salem to take on the challenge of turning around an existing low performing school (see page 7 for student data). During the first year of the partnership and the third year of Bentley's original turnaround timeline, Bentley Elementary will be operated by a new leadership team and Blueprint Schools Network under the Restart Model of school turnaround.

#### *Core Values*

Our core values drive the mission and help us to achieve the vision. Scholars and staff members alike commit to exemplifying these values. The core values are used as the basis for our behavioral systems, are explicitly taught to our students, and drive everything we do at Bentley Academy Charter School.

**Grit:** We believe that challenges are a means to improvement. We are learners, first and foremost, and that we can improve by working hard. We show perseverance in everything we do.

**Integrity:** Integrity is the personal choice to do the right thing even when it may not be the easiest choice. Having integrity is always telling the truth and taking responsibility for our actions even when we make mistakes.

**Collaboration:** We believe that working together is essential to reaching our goals. We share ideas respectfully and listen to the perspectives of others. We respect all members of our community and appreciate the unique contributions of each member.

**Discipline:** We are focused on achieving our best. We take responsibility for our learning by keeping ourselves focused and engaged. We do the right thing the first time.

**Zest:** We show extreme enthusiasm toward learning and meeting our goals! We have fun while working hard.

The *theory of change* for BACS is as follows:

When an experienced *school leadership* team is able to hire and support its own staff, and when that staff consists of *teachers* who are dedicated to doing whatever it takes to get all students to and through college, and when they have the time to improve their practice, then *students* will experience an environment that both challenges and supports them, *parents* will feel welcome and engaged, and *student achievement* will rise and teachers' *instructional practices* will excel.

## Key Design Elements

### *Core strategies*

First and foremost Bentley Academy Charter School will strive ensure that students are on the path to college and have the knowledge and skills necessary to be able to get to and through.

Teaching students the importance of critical thinking, problem solving, entrepreneurialism, networking, leading by influence, collaboration, mental agility and adaptability, initiative, and curiosity and imagination; and developing and honing those same skills in young students is the core of the academic program at Bentley Academy Charter School. Without these skills and habits, students will not be as prepared as they need to be to thrive in an advanced academic setting.

To achieve the vision, Bentley Academy Charter School has designed a school around the following six strategies:

**1. Create a culture of achievement:** setting a culture that encourages and supports students to reach higher and achieve more is a key piece of student success. Clear and consistent standards applied throughout the school set the stage for better communication and productivity among teachers, between teachers and students, and among students themselves. A college focused school culture will encourage students to see themselves as collegiate scholars and will leverage the community to impart the importance of continued education for all students.

**2. Develop comprehensive and rigorous curricula:** allowing students to stretch their educational horizons is an important piece of college preparatory work. Students who feel supported are more comfortable pushing themselves and their understanding without fear of failure.

**3. Differentiate instruction:** using data to differentiate instruction is a powerful tool that teachers can use to rapidly increase student achievement.

**4. Attain excellence in leadership and instruction:** staffing the school with teachers, administrators, and staff who have strong instructional, collaborative, and management skills is an important pre-requisite for school success. Regular observations, high quality feedback, and professional development ensure that teachers are working smart, not just hard.

**5. Expand the learning day and year:** more time used well can make a significant difference for students and teachers. More time not only allows for more targeted instruction, but also more enrichment

and more opportunities for teacher collaboration. BACS will have a reimagined school day that takes into account the needs of both the teachers and the students.

**6. Partner with family and community:** a school's biggest allies are the students' caregivers. They have the ability to reinforce or negate any progress that student is making, so keeping them well informed and focused on the same college preparatory goals can be a factor in school and student success.

#### *Partnering for success*

As a turnaround school, Bentley Academy faces a specific set of challenges. To overcome these challenges, we have chosen to partner with Blueprint Schools Network, a Newton based non-profit with experience in autonomous turnaround schools. Blueprint is also highly aligned with the six strategies outlined above and is already involved in the Bentley Elementary School Restart plan. Continuing this partnership will allow the school to continue to provide the high quality tutoring program (the Math Fellows) for students at BACS and will help support administration's efforts to ensure the highest quality instruction, school leadership, and culture.

As has been said previously, the success of this effort depends in part on the active collaboration of the three parties involved. Salem Public Schools, Blueprint Schools Network, and Bentley Academy Charter School all shoulder partial responsibility for the school. As such, it is important that all parties have clear and regular communication to ensure that the school is meeting expectations, and that each of the partners understands their impact on the school. The systems for this kind of collaboration are already being developed and piloted in this coming school year (2014-15) and will continue throughout the life of Bentley Academy.

In initial plans, school leadership and Salem Public Schools leadership have agreed to have a monthly check in to make sure that processes and procedures are operating smoothly. Both sides understand that operating an autonomous school as a partnership with the district will require new ways of operating and are already gaining valuable insight into how to work together. At the school level, Blueprint will be conducting regular site visits to monitor the effectiveness of the administration's leadership, the overall tenor of the school, and to do general observations of instruction. These site visits always end with a sit down with school leadership to review the positive aspects as well as the areas where there can be improvement. An action plan is agreed to and used as the benchmark for the next visit. Additionally, all three parties (SPS, BACS, and Blueprint) have agreed to meet on a quarterly basis in a more formal meeting to address progress towards goals and data emerging from the school.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Measurable impact*

Based on these six strategies and the partnership with Blueprint, the changes at Bentley Academy Charter School will be immediate and palpable and will lead to a vastly improved educational experience for all students.

In the first month of school:

- All Bentley Academy scholars will have participated in a comprehensive orientation of academic and behavioral expectations and school cultural norms; completed both reading and math diagnostics and set rigorous academic goals based on the results; will have settled into a routine with their teacher and their peers that helps them focus each morning. Most importantly, Bentley Academy Scholars will be excited to come to school each day ready to learn, to challenge themselves, and to begin their path to college.
- Teachers will be working on developing, modifying, and personalizing curricula, lessons, and assessments to meet the needs of all their students including those who are English Language Learners and/or who have disabilities. Teachers will be in consistent and effective contact with

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<sup>1</sup> While the partnership with Blueprint is currently governed by a contract with SPS, a new contract will have to be agreed upon with the Board of Trustees of BACS.

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their students' families regarding both positive student performance and places where parents can help their children improve.

- All parents will have received multiple calls from a staff member directly involved in their child's education. The majority of the families will have already received a home visit from their child's teacher. Parents will understand that they are important to the learning process of their students and that the school values their contributions.
- Community members will see the positive changes at the Bentley Academy Charter School and will see the school as a source of pride for the Salem community. Visitors to the school will be impressed by the level of rigor in instruction and the excitement scholars show toward learning and achieving their goals.
- The Bentley Academy Board of Trustees will be actively engaged in helping guide the school for a successful future.
- The parent advisory council will have been chosen, and will have begun to plan for future meetings.

In the first 5 years:

- Eighty percent of Bentley Academy scholars will be scoring proficient and advanced in ELA and math as measured by MCAS (or PARCC).
- Two classes from the elementary school's original cohort will be enrolled in high school, excelling in academics, and will have begun preparing for college applications. These students will feel welcome returning to BACS and will active role models for the current student body.
- Salem Public Schools and the Bentley Academy Charter School will have created a professional learning community to share best practices and complete Instructional Rounds together to improve student achievement for all of Salem's students.
- Many community partnerships will be in effect and maximizing each student's elementary school experience. These partnerships serve to expose students to a variety of professionals, experiences, and opportunities to learn outside of the school walls. Additionally, these partnerships will allow the community exposure to the work happening at Bentley Academy and increase pride in and connection with the school.
- The Board of Trustees will have welcomed new members, and will still be an active part of strategic decision making for the school.
- The parent advisory council will have become a strong, guiding force for the school, helping to identify and address problems early and to recruit new families who might be not well served by the traditional school options.
- Bentley Academy Charter School will have a MA Board of Elementary and Secondary Education review and will have the charter renewed for another 5 years.

In the first 10 years:

- Ninety percent of Bentley Academy scholars will be scoring proficient and advanced in ELA and math as measured by MCAS (or PARCC).
- Two classes of the original cohort of students will be excelling in college with many returning to BACS to talk about their college experience and encourage current Bentley Academy scholars to remain focused on the college goal.

### Description of the Community to be Served

#### *Context*

Salem Public Schools, Blueprint Schools Network, and Empower Schools have been working together for over six months to create a plan that accelerates achievement for the students of the existing Bentley Elementary School. The collaboration is the first of its kind in Massachusetts. It uses available

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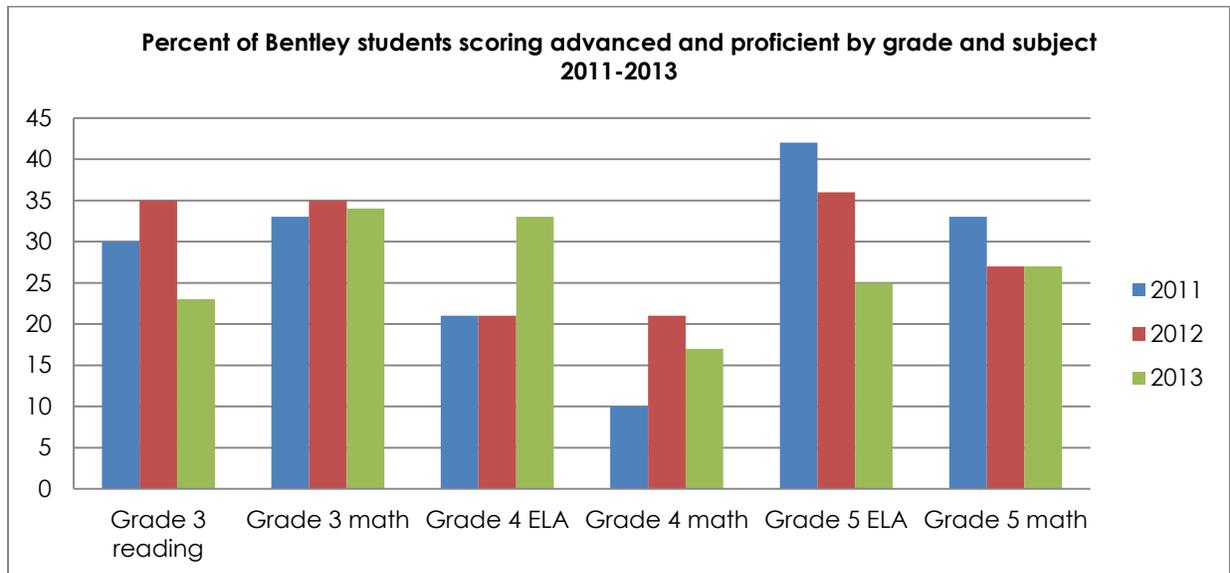
regulatory pathways to allow the school to access important autonomies that will enable it to implement the kind of changes necessary to improve student achievement.

During the 2014-15 school year, key members of Bentley Academy Charter School founding group will be involved in grades 3 through 5 in the last year of school turnaround efforts at the existing Bentley Elementary School. In the fall of 2012 a turnaround plan was implemented at Bentley, but unfortunately yielded results that did not meet expectations. In the third and final year of turnaround the Salem School Committee took bold action to put Bentley Elementary on a different path towards success. Their strategic vision and decision to partner with Blueprint Schools Network to manage grades 3 through 5 in the last year of turnaround as a Restart Model laid the ground work for this founding group to come together and pursue a Horace Mann Charter Application for the entire school.

Unlike a charter school that begins from scratch, Bentley Academy will be a Turnaround school and as such will serve the existing student population. In August, 2015, Bentley Academy Charter School will open its doors as a Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade school serving approximately 250 students. Every student enrolled in Bentley Elementary School in school year 2014-15 will have the opportunity to continue their education at Bentley Academy if they so choose.<sup>2</sup>

### *Student Needs and Demographics*

The most pressing issue facing Bentley Elementary, and one of the reasons why a Restart Model and Horace Mann Charter School are being pursued, is the decline or stagnation of student achievement over the last 3 years.<sup>3</sup> After the first year of the Transformation model (school year 2012-13) it is clear that the trend of decreasing student achievement has not been reversed.



As the graph above shows, there was only one subject that made significant progress with respect to student achievement in the past three years. Overall, the percent of students scoring advanced and proficient in ELA decreased by 4% between the years 2011 and 2013 and the percent of students scoring advanced and proficient in Math saw no change. In both ELA and Math, the percent of students in the warning/failing category increased by several percentage points. The absolute numbers are also worth noting: Less than 30% of Bentley students are proficient in ELA and Math. Research shows that third grade reading is an indicator of a student's future academic performance, with effects still being felt in

<sup>2</sup> MA law allows for priority enrollment for the students in the traditional school that will be closed and turned into a charter school.

<sup>3</sup> As of this submission, MCAS results for school year 2013-14 are not yet available. Though preliminary reports do not show significant change, the final application will have updated student achievement data for the most recent year.

college.<sup>4</sup> In order to prepare the students of Salem to succeed in middle school, high school, college and beyond, this trend must be reversed.

As mentioned above, Bentley Academy Charter School will prioritize enrollment for the students who are enrolled in Bentley Elementary during this academic year. Currently, Bentley Elementary School enrolls Salem's highest percentage of low income students, highest percentage of special education students, and highest percentage of English language learners (not including a dual language program at a different school) and data show that these students have significant progress to make in order to be prepared for a middle school experience. However, the district wide student achievement for elementary students in these same categories is equally discouraging. By fifth grade, only 2 of Salem's 7 elementary schools have more than 50% of low income students scoring proficient and advanced in either ELA or math. Based on this data, the founding group believes there is a clear need for a college preparatory program focused on the needs of Salem's at risk student population.

In future years, BACS will aim to recruit and retain Salem students who would most benefit from a rigorous, challenging, and supportive college preparatory program while still abiding by all legal enrollment procedures for charter schools in MA. Additionally, the school will aim to mirror district demographics with respect to demographics and learning needs. The district and the founding group have thus far explored several possible enrollment procedures:

- Traditional lottery: the school markets itself and handles its own enrollment and lottery procedure if there are too many applicants for available seats.
- Opt-out lottery: all families in the district would automatically apply to the school and be entered into the random lottery. Parents who did not want their child attending Bentley Academy could opt-out of the process.
- One application process: Bentley Academy would be involved in the current Salem choice enrollment process and would hold a lottery when there were too many applicants for available seats.

No final decisions have been made, but each party understands the importance of finding the enrollment procedure that is legal, fair to the school, fair to the district, and aligned with the mission of the school to provide a college preparatory program to Salem's at-risk students.

#### *A proven track record*

The founding group understands how hard it is to turn around an underperforming school and the importance of knowledgeable and capable partners because many of them have experience in and proven track records with turnaround schools.

Blueprint Schools Network, under the direction of founding group member Matt Spengler, has seen tremendous success in their longest standing partnership- Denver Summit Schools Network. In 2010, the Denver Public Schools created the Denver Summit Schools Network (DSSN), a group of ten chronically underperforming schools in the far northeast community of Denver. Blueprint was asked to help plan and implement a comprehensive turnaround plan for all 10 schools. Four years after the establishment of DSSN, the results are clear.

Within one year of Blueprint's involvement student achievement in these schools was not only on the rise, but was outpacing the district in both reading and math. In addition, all of the schools that implemented all 5 of Blueprint's core strategies were in the top 13% of schools for student growth state-wide in math after one year of implementation. Student achievement continued to improve in the second year after implementation as well. The elementary schools that implemented Blueprint's 5 strategies also saw significant growth, jumping from 32% to 50% proficient and advanced in Math, 32% to 43% in Reading, and 20% to 30% in Writing.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Lesnick, J., Goerge, R., Smithgall, C., and Gwynne, J. *Reading on grade level in third grade: How is it related to high school performance and college enrollment?* Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. 2010.

<sup>5</sup> See <http://blueprintschools.org/our-approach/results> for Blueprint Schools Network's student achievement data.

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Justin Vernon, currently the principal of the Bentley Restart model and founding group member, has experience turning around an underperforming school as well. When Boston Public Schools decided to close the Roger Clap elementary school due to underperformance, Mr. Vernon saw an opportunity. He reopened the school as an Innovation School and led the school through an immediate transformation. In just one year the school was transformed from a level 3 school to a level 1 school- the only school in BPS to do so that year.<sup>6</sup> Marlena Afonso, Head of Operations at the Bentley Restart and founding group member, comes from a college preparatory charter school background where she was the founding special populations team chair. Blackstone Academy Charter School became one of the highest performing schools in Rhode Islands during Ms. Afonso's tenure.

This founding group, along with the active support of Salem Public Schools is well positioned to make an immediate and lasting change in the lives of the students attending Bentley.

### *Community identification and need*

The founding team believes deeply in the power of education to transform lives. Getting to and through college is not only an impressive accomplishment, but also a researched measure of future earnings.<sup>7</sup> College can be a personally transformative experience- broadening a student's understanding of the world, exposing him or her to diverse perspectives, and allowing a degree of academic freedom that often does not exist in high school. Additionally, college is a stepping stone on the career path- a place where connections are made, skills are honed, and experiences are gained. In sum, college can be the needed disruption to break the cycle of poverty that plagues so many urban areas. Helping students, particularly Salem's at-risk student population, achieve the foundation that they need in order to get to, succeed in, and graduate from college is the goal of Bentley Academy Charter School.

Salem is a vibrant, diverse, emerging community home to more than 42,000 people and some of the area's most impressive cultural exhibits. The Peabody Essex Museum, the Salem Maritime National Historic Site, and the House of Seven Gables are among the attractions that share Salem's rich history and cultural offerings with the region and the world. Salem is also home to a strong public school system that includes an existing Horace Mann charter school and an Innovation School as well as Salem Academy, a Commonwealth Charter School. However, the percent of Salem residents with an Associates or Bachelor's degree continues to lag behind the state average, and the percent of residents who have not finished high school exceeds the state average.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, Salem is the only city that is not a Commissioner's District to have a Level 4 school: Bentley Elementary.

Recognizing the need for bold change, Salem Public Schools worked with Empower Schools (a Boston based non-profit) to develop an alternative path to success for Bentley Elementary. These discussions, reviews of school data, and conversations with potential partners yielded the 'Restart to Horace Mann' pathway that is currently being pursued.

While in development, teacher, parent, and community feedback on the plan was solicited by both SPS and Empower Schools through communications and in person meetings. The Salem School Committee was also briefed numerous times by both SPS leadership and Empower Schools on the development of the plan and was asked for feedback along the way. All but one of the school committee meetings were public meetings where teachers, parents, and community members were invited to attend and many did, providing critical feedback during the public comment period. Meetings were also hosted by SPS, Blueprint, and Empower at Bentley Elementary School for the purpose of informing parents and community members about the plan and gaining input before final decisions were made. SPS, Blueprint, and Empower representatives presented data, the key components of a restart model and a Horace Mann charter school, and the Blueprint strategy to the Bentley community as early as March. Feedback was solicited at each meeting.

Individual stakeholders have been involved in the process as well, from assistant superintendents to the acting co-principal and former assistant principal of Bentley Elementary, existing partnering

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<sup>6</sup> See <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/mcascharts2.aspx?linkid=33&orgcode=00350298&fycode=2013&orgtypecode=6&> for student achievement data.

<sup>7</sup> See the Bureau of Labor Statistics [http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep\\_chart\\_001.htm](http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm) 2014.

<sup>8</sup> See the Metro Boston Data Common <http://metrobostondatacommon.org/snapshots/cities-and-towns/salem/education/> 2014.

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programs and institutions have all been brought up to speed on plans for the coming year at Bentley Academy Charter School. The knowledge shared by these people has been invaluable in understanding current processes and systems at Bentley and what changes might be the most impactful.

The core of the founding group of Bentley Academy Charter School is made up of several local stakeholders in order to maintain the kind of community connections needed for successful partnerships and thriving school. Among them are the current principal of the Bentley Restart (also a Salem resident), the Head of Operations of the Bentley Restart, the Head of Student Success for the Bentley Restart, two founding lead teachers of the Restart, and a current Salem School Committee member (a resident). Rounding out the group are two members of supporting organizations, Matt Spengler, Executive Director of Blueprint Schools Network, the key design and operational partner for both the restart and the Horace Mann charter school; and Sarah Toce, Program Director at Empower Schools, and the lead manager of the effort to execute the 'Restart to Horace Mann' effort for Bentley Elementary.

### *Why a Horace Mann Charter School?*

During the initial stages of the partnership, Salem Public Schools, Blueprint Schools Network and Empower Schools discussed possible next steps after Bentley became a Restart model school. Under MA law, once a school has exited level 4 status, there are no longer protections in place for that school to maintain its autonomy. All three parties believe that autonomy is a necessary condition for Bentley to succeed as a turnaround school and to implement the educational program that they believe will rapidly improve academic and personal outcomes for students in Salem. It became apparent that a Horace Mann Charter School was the logical next step for the school.

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, the Salem School Committee voted in a 5-2 decision to commit to the partnership with Blueprint Schools Network to operate a Restart model school in SY 2014-15 and to seek a Horace Mann III charter school to ensure the continuation of necessary autonomies in subsequent years. The Memorandum of Understanding, signed on May 29<sup>th</sup>, governs the partnership in the Restart year and serves as the MOU A for the Horace Mann Charter School. The contract that was approved by the board reflects a truly collaborative process to develop the vision, the plan and the agreements.

## **How will the school demonstrate academic success?**

### Overview of Program Delivery

#### *Core strategies revisited*

The six core strategies outlined earlier in this document are the foundation on which the education program of Bentley Academy Charter School is built. These strategies are based on a significant and growing body of research, particularly research focused on urban schools and turnaround schools, and our own experience with and exposure to high performing urban schools.<sup>9</sup> Below is a more thorough discussion of how each strategy will come alive at BACS.

#### *Create a culture of achievement*

Achievement for the scholars of BACS will look different for each student at Bentley because of their different starting points. What will not look different is the high expectations that will be set and maintained throughout the year for their academic effort, their personal behavior, and their extracurricular endeavors. Each and every Bentley scholar, regardless of their starting point, will be expected to focus on a goal of becoming a collegiate scholar and will pursue that path from day one with the help of the staff and the surrounding community. Setting high expectations for all students, regardless of their current academic achievement, benefits the whole community and places a premium of effort, determination, and perseverance.<sup>10</sup>

From banners on the wall to the opportunity to wear college branded apparel on non-uniform days, BACS will be steeped in a college going culture. Rather than 3<sup>rd</sup> graders or 5<sup>th</sup> graders, BACS scholars will be in the habit of referring to themselves and their peers by their college graduation year- the first cohort of third graders will refer to themselves as “Class of 2029”, for example.

Teachers will embody the college going attitude as well by displaying prominently their college memorabilia, sharing stories with the scholars about their experience in college, and using language that reflects this culture. For instance, a particularly good answer from a scholar might elicit a response from the teacher similar to, “That is a college answer, John!”

A clear and consistent behavioral expectation system will be implemented early and will be the same throughout the school. Scholars will be expected to interact with teachers, administrators, visitors, and their peers in an adult manner, and adults will be expected to treat the scholars with similar respect. Those students who are having a hard time understanding or acting in the appropriate manner will work specifically with the Dean of Student Success to identify the source of the misunderstanding or disagreement, address any underlying issues, and then return to the classroom ready to learn and participate effectively.

#### *Develop comprehensive and rigorous curricula*

Your first college seminar is not the right time nor place to be experiencing rigorous coursework for the first time. Too often our students arrive at college unprepared for the rigors of the classroom and are required to take remedial classes on their own dime for no credit.<sup>11</sup> We believe that it is imperative that a student’s exposure to curricula that challenges, excites, and rewards be early in their educational career, not the first time they sit in Sociology 101.

Scholars at BACS will be encouraged to challenge themselves on a regular basis, reading a book recommended for a higher grade level, or pushing ahead in math when it makes sense. These kinds of

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<sup>9</sup> Selected resources from Mass Insight and Education Research Institute, *The Turnaround Challenge*. 2007; Carter, S.C., *No Excuses: lessons from 21 High performing, high poverty schools*, The Heritage Foundation, 2000; and Chenoweth, K., *It's being done: academic success in unexpected schools*, Harvard Education Press, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Lemov, D. *Teach like a champion: 49 techniques that put students on the path to college*. Jossey-Bass, 2010; and Tough, P., *How children succeed: Grit, curiosity, and the hidden power of character*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012.

<sup>11</sup> The MA Department of Higher Education reports that 38% of students enrolled in public colleges and universities in MA had to take remedial coursework during their first semester <http://www.mass.edu/aboutus/documents/2013-12-10MathPathways.pdf>

academic stretches will not only benefit academic achievement, but will also develop the non-cognitive skills that are important to a student's success in school, in college, and in their future career.<sup>12</sup>

A comprehensive and rigorous curriculum includes core academics *and* visual art, music, physical education, foreign languages, and many other options that employ the skills and content learned in those classes. Most important is a common thread throughout all coursework, core academic or enrichment, which allows students to develop the college going habits like open-mindedness, honesty, and perseverance.

In addition to our curricular changes, we will introduce AVID, 'Advancement via Individual Determination' in grades 4 and 5 and begin piloting AVID practices with the 3rd grade. This program, which started in high schools across the country, has caught on in hundreds of middle and elementary schools primarily because it teaches students how to develop study habits, read for content, take organized notes, and manage time. It is designed to help students prepare for and succeed in college. We will train our 3-5th grade team on AVID and they will teach those crucial study skills and habits to our students as a means of increasing success. In addition, participation in AVID gives teachers access to AVID curriculum materials, which have recently put an emphasis on text complexity and close reading exercises. Students will be given homework every night that is meaningful, builds on concepts from the day's work, and extends thinking and student processing. Consistent with AVID, students will write their assignments in an agenda every school day. Parents will sign the students' agenda once these homework assignments are completed.<sup>13</sup>

#### *Differentiate instruction*

BACS scholars will be grouped in heterogeneous, inclusive classrooms for general instruction and then will move to homogenous groups for intervention and enrichment blocks that occur twice a day. All students will participate in 30 minutes of ELA intervention/enrichment and 30 minutes of mathematics intervention/enrichment in which all students are assigned to small groups and given tailored instruction to fit their needs. This time may be used to ensure that special education and ESL students receive their required minutes of specialized instruction as well. Though the intervention and enrichment blocks are an explicit use of differentiation, teachers will work hard to address the needs of all of their students in general instruction as well. Research shows that inclusion of special education students in general education classrooms is important for overall academic achievement in the classroom.<sup>14</sup>

Departmentalizing grades 3 through 5 will allow teachers to be subject area experts and hone in on their own instructional practice and content knowledge, and to collaborate with the other department head to specifically target interventions for scholars. Additionally, this model prepares students for middle school and high school where they will have to adapt to working with multiple teachers throughout the school day.

Saturday Scholars, is both additional time in the school year and a further differentiation for students. Teachers will encourage a select group of students that are really struggling academically to attend intervention sessions on Saturdays throughout the school year with BACS teachers. These lessons are meant to engage them in remediation work (i.e. decoding) while continuing to make learning enjoyable. Similarly, students that are excelling will be asked to attend Saturday Scholars to participate in enrichment activities (i.e. debate). Saturdays are voluntary, but will be encouraged and marketed as a fun addition to the school week, not as a punishment for underperformance.

Acceleration Academies have shown results in both Boston Public Schools and Lawrence Public Schools and initial, small scale success at Bentley Elementary during the 2013-14 school year. Similar to Saturday Scholars, Acceleration Academies are fully optional and for struggling and excelling students alike. February vacation will focus on ELA and April will focus on Math.

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<sup>12</sup> Knudsen, E. I., Heckman, J. J., Cameron, J. L., and Shonkoff, J. P., *Economic, neurobiological, and behavioral perspectives on building America's future workforce*. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 103(27), 10155-10162. 2006; and Casner-Lotto, J., & Barrington, L. (2006). *Are They Really Ready to Work? Employers' Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skills of New Entrants to the 21st Century US Workforce*. Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2006.

<sup>13</sup> McAndrews, S. (developed by) *AVID: Advancement Via Individual Determination Foundations: Implementations guide*, Avid Press, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> Hehir, T., *Effective Inclusive Schools: Designing successful schoolwide programs*, Jossey Bass, 2012.

Further differentiation comes in the form of the Blueprint Math Fellows. Fellows typically meet daily with up to four students at a time for a 45-60 minute tutorial. The small group ensures that each student gets the necessary attention to master the math skills that he or she will need to move ahead in their academic courses. Math Fellows collaborate with grade level teachers to create specific lesson plans and activities for each student included in the small group sessions ensuring that each scholars' math needs are being met on a daily basis.

*Attain excellence in leadership and instruction*

The work of a teacher in a turnaround school is significantly different from that of a teacher in a school trying to maintain the status quo. These differences require a different set of competencies, skills, and knowledge in order to be successful. Public Impact has compiled a list of these based on their research in Turnaround schools across the country, Blueprint has adopted them for their own schools, and BACS plans to use them as a guide for our own hiring and evaluation. The adapted Turnaround teacher competencies, skills, and knowledge<sup>15</sup> include:

- A relentless drive for results
- Ability to influence and motivate others
- A data-driven and problem solving approach
- Interpersonal understanding and cultural awareness
- Ability to overcome adversity
- A Sense of self-efficacy
- Initiative and persistence
- Strong pedagogy and delivery
- Effective classroom management

In order for teachers at BACS to be most effective, clear and consistent communication and evaluation based on the above competencies, leading to specific improvement plans will be important. A professional development plan will be tailored for individual teachers and will work to develop and improve these competencies, skills, and knowledge throughout the year.

Staff members will participate in at least 100 hours of professional development throughout the course of the school year. Professional development will occur in the summer and after the school day roughly two days per month. The sessions will largely be provided in-house or through key partnerships and will be specifically focused on where BACS teachers need it most. The summer sessions will focus on exploring and norming the school's expectations, incentive systems, and operating procedures (e.g., the hall pass system, the student progress report system, the agenda system, etc), curriculum overview, data analysis, goal setting, and building content and instructional strategies knowledge so that every teacher and staff member is on the same page on the first day of school. Possible sessions during the school year include curriculum refinement and vertical alignment, student and staff culture, use of data to drive instruction and rigorous and differentiated instruction for students. Recognizing and honoring the partnership with the district, teachers may be asked to attend district wide professional development sessions at the request of the principal.

To supplement professional development sessions, individual teachers will be asked to play leadership roles within the staff. Mentor teachers, lead teachers, and senior lead teachers will have various responsibilities ranging from leading specific PD sessions to mentoring younger teachers, to helping critique and improve the instructional practices of colleagues. Teachers who are willing and able to take on these additional roles will be paid a stipend for their additional work.

Collaboration will be of paramount importance to the staff at BACS. Each teacher will have numerous teams that they participate in, from a common planning time team to a data team or school culture team. The responsibility of a teacher at BACS goes far beyond his or her classroom, each understands that the success of the school relies on their forming an unbeatable team that is rowing in the same direction.

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<sup>15</sup> See *School Turnaround Teachers: Competencies for Success*, Public Impact, 2008.

*Expand the learning day and year*

More time used well has proven to be an important change to address persistent achievement gaps.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the school hours for BACS will be 7:30am to 3:30pm and the school year will start two weeks earlier than SPS. Additionally, students will not have early release days as a result of teacher professional development. At Bentley Academy Charter School, teachers and students will learn during a full eight hour school day and a 190 day school year. As a result, by the end of their time at BACS, scholars will have had the equivalent of at least one and a half years of additional school<sup>17</sup>. But in order for a longer school day to yield positive results for scholars, it must not mean just adding an hour. For real impact the BACS administrative team has rethought the entire schedule and has created a new schedule designed with the needs of BACS scholars and teachers in mind.

This extra year and a half will have been used for honing core academic skills, but also for deepening artistic appreciation, broadening understanding of diverse cultures, and improving mind and body awareness and wellness. Additional time means time for individualized small group instruction for at least an hour for each student each day. It also means enough time to support students that really need remediation and to push students that are achieving at or above grade level to the next level.

The Summer Springboard Program will take place for two weeks prior to the opening of Salem Public Schools and will be a specifically tailored opportunity to teach students about school climate and culture, expectations and operating procedure, and behavioral norms. During this time, we will provide opportunities for students to practice meeting the school’s expectations and operating procedures; educate students about the academic and professional opportunities that are attainable with a solid education; and link the school’s new expectations and operating procedures to the attainment of such opportunities.

<u>Sample BACS schedule</u>		
<u>Period</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>4th Grade A</u>
Arrival and breakfast	7:00-7:30am	4th
Homeroom	7:30-7:40am	Routines and structures
RC	7:40-8:00	Responsive Classroom
Period 1	8:00-10:00	ELA/Social Studies
Period 2	10:00-10:30	ELA Intervention/Enrichment/Tutoring Support
Period 3	10:30-11:30	Physical Education
LUNCH	11:30-12:10	Lunch/recess
Period 4	12:10-12:40	Math Intervention/Enrichment/Tutoring Support
Period 5	12:40-2:40	Math/Science
Period 6	2:40-3:30	SSR/Additional Intervention/Town Hall

A two and a half hour block of each core academic subject allows the teacher to create academic experiences that hone scholars’ non-cognitive skills in addition to being a content rich period. Authentic group work becomes more attainable and helps to build cooperation, collaboration, and interpersonal skills. Longer blocks allow more differentiation for all scholars as they move much more fluidly in and out of activities rather than having to pull scholars out of general instruction for small group focus.

*Partner with family and community<sup>18</sup>*

We believe that the school should not only be a place of joy and learning for students, but also for their families and the bigger community. Parents, guardians, family members, and community members can have a significant impact on scholars’ ability to succeed while in school- teachers and parents have to work together to ensure that there are no barriers to success.

<sup>16</sup> Hoxby, C., Murarka, S., and Kang, J., NYC Charter Schools Evaluation Project *How New York City's charter schools affect achievement*, 2009; and Dobbie, W., and Fryer, R.G. Jr., *Getting beneath the veil of effective schools: Evidence from New York City*, NBER Working Paper, No. 17632, 2009.

<sup>17</sup> Calculated based on a 180 day year, 6.5 hour day as compared to a 190 day year, 8 hour day. Does not include hours lost in the traditional schedule due to early releases, nor optional Saturday Scholars or Acceleration Academies

<sup>18</sup> More on the family and community engagement strategy can be found on page 27.

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Parent engagement, regardless of a parent's background, income, race, or language, has been shown to be an important factor in improving student achievement, attendance, and social skills, but how to foster parent engagement stumps many schools serving at-risk students.<sup>19</sup> Throughout the planning process for the Restart we heard just how difficult it was to engage parents in school activities, and we experienced that several times. To be successful engaging parents of BACS students, we knew we would have to do something different and have partnered with the Flamboyant Foundation, a family foundation based in Washington DC that focuses on improving family engagement in schools. Specifically, we have teamed up with the Flamboyant Foundation to train BACS teachers and staff members how to perform a successful home visit. Moving away from the classroom and into the living room gives parents the control they need to feel comfortable engaging in an authentic manner with teachers and gives teachers the personal information they need to be able to work with individual students more effectively. The new, more flexible contract for teachers will allow the time needed for these visits to take place.

One great program that currently exists at Bentley Elementary School that we will continue is a citizenship and English language class for community members. Taught by a current Bentley parent, these citizenship classes have been successful at bringing some of the hardest to reach parents into the school. Partnering with the organizer to maximize the time that the parents are there will be another way that BACS will create a strong sense of community for the entire school.

### Curriculum and Instruction

#### *Developing and evaluating curricula*

Driven by our mission to prepare all of Bentley Academy's scholars to be personally and academically successful to and through college, any curriculum used must be of the highest quality and designed with the specific needs of Bentley's scholars in mind. A mix of core academic content, enrichment opportunities, and chances to practice intellectual and interpersonal skills will ensure that BACS scholars graduate our school with the knowledge, habits, and skills necessary to succeed in whatever academic challenges lie ahead of them.

Common core and MA frameworks aligned curricula will be developed in-house by the teaching staff working in teams with the support and guidance of the Principal/Director of Curriculum and Instruction. The scholars of Bentley Academy are similar to those at many high performing urban schools, so learning directly from their choices will be key to the development of curricula early on. Additionally, recognizing the tremendous work that has taken place in Salem Public Schools in recent years to develop new curricula maps for Salem schools and because of the depth of the partnership and resources at SPS, teachers will use these maps as guideposts as they hone the curricular options for the scholars of BACS. The teachers of BACS will have access to Atlas Rubicon which will facilitate the use of the curricula maps. We believe that this will enable the school and SPS to better learn from each other's work to improve student achievement.

Several foundational curricula have been chosen by BACS leadership due to personal experience and research. These curricula will serve as a jumping off point for teachers as they develop student needs driven curricula. In ELA, the Lucy Calkins' workshop model will be used with a particular focus in the upper grades on novels, informational texts, and poetry.<sup>20</sup> Wordly Wise or Words Their Way workbooks will be used to expose students to Tier II vocabulary. The younger grades will use Lively Letters to support letter sounds and names and Wilson Foundations will provide support for early reading skills. Fountas and Pinnell will be used to benchmark all grade levels. For ELL students, the curriculum will have a base similar to on National Geographic Reach, and WIDA ACCESS speaking and writing rubrics will be used to drive and monitor instruction.

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<sup>19</sup> Henderson, A.T., and Mapp, K., *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement* National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools, 2002.

<sup>20</sup> Calkins, L., Ehrenworth, M., and Lehman, C., *Pathways to the common core: accelerating achievement*, New Hampshire, 2012

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Math at BACS will be inquiry based and will use Engage NY as the foundational curricula and will supplement it with Singapore Math.<sup>21</sup> Khan Academy will be used to help differentiate for both struggling students and high achieving students.

Science will also be inquiry based and will continuously support the scientific method. Science will also be used to hone ELA skills through the use of argumentative writing throughout the curricula. Due to the close proximity of the school to many different naturally occurring outdoor classrooms, much of Bentley's surroundings will be used to supplement the scientific curricula.

Social studies at BACS will also use the community as a resource, drawing on Salem's rich history. The use of primary sources will be a cornerstone of the Social Studies curriculum and be bolstered by visits to local landmarks like Pioneer Village, the House of Seven Gables, and the Peabody Essex Museum.

Overall, the principles of the Advanced Work Curriculum in Boston Public Schools will drive the curriculum and curricular choices for scholars of BACS.<sup>22</sup>

In order to maintain the curriculum and ensure that it is still meeting the needs of all students, unit plans will be submitted monthly to the Principal/Director of Curriculum and Instruction for review and discussion and regular teacher team meetings will take place to ensure alignment between and among subjects and grade levels. Teachers at BACS will be expected to reflect critically on each day's lessons and adjust the next lesson accordingly.

Curricular choices will be reviewed during the year on a regular basis aligned with the multiple assessments taking place. The Achievement Network assessment timeline will provide benchmarking that teachers and the Principal/Director of Curriculum and Instruction can use to determine the effectiveness of the curricula. At the end of each school year, a more thorough review of student achievement (including whole school trends, and specific sub-groups such as ELL students, Special Education students, and low-income students) will take place and will guide any changes that need to be made to the previous year's curricula.

### *Pedagogy and learning environment*

BACS is fortunate to have a partnership with SPS that allows the use of the wonderful Bentley facility. Large airy classrooms will allow a team teaching model to occur in all classes: both a departmentalized teacher and a grade level interventionist will be responsible for the learning taking place. As much as possible, two adults at all times will make differentiating instruction in an integrated classroom more feasible and seamless. The department teacher will be responsible for the bulk of the core content curriculum planning and delivery. The interventionist will be responsible for tailoring the instruction to the needs of the students in the classroom, particularly those students identified as ELL or Special Education. Interventionists will be dual or tri certified (general, special education, ELL) to ensure compliance.

Together, the two teachers will set high expectations for the scholars in their class, and will also be able to provide the kind of individualized support that the kinds of students at Bentley Academy are going to need. Most lessons will follow the commonly used "I do, We do, You do" model. Differentiation beyond the lesson will look different in each class each day, but some examples are small group instruction; addressing specific processing styles like oral processors, visual learners, and kinesthetic/tactile learners; introducing games, challenges, and other 'fun' opportunities; opportunity for individual work; culturally relevant topics to present ideas (for example, a teacher might ordinarily use the example of a pie being split into pieces to begin understanding fractions, but in a BACS classroom, a teacher might know of a different example that would help the students relate to the material better). Teachers will always be on the lookout for opportunities for scholars to be challenged academically. This might take the form of a specific assignment intended to push the scholar's understanding, or it might entail helping to teach another student who has yet to master the material.

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<sup>21</sup> Chapin, S., O'Connor, C., and Anderson, N.C., *Classroom Discussions: Using math talk to help students learn*, Second Edition. Math Solutions, 2009.

<sup>22</sup> See Boston Public Schools' description of the program <http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/domain/216>

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To support instruction, teacher and scholar routines will be established early in the year and practiced, reinforced, and perfected throughout the year. Routines will be consistent and will help scholars understand when it is time to focus and when it is time to be more relaxed. These routines will be perfectly aligned with the school culture expectations and behavioral expectations of scholars and will help scholars transition from one activity or class to another seamlessly and with a minimum number of adjustments.

### *Professional development*

As was mentioned above, BACS staff will complete rigorous professional development throughout the year. The professional development during the weeks prior to the start of the school year will be focused on preparing teachers and staff to execute all procedures and expectations smoothly one day one, but professional development during the school year will be focused on instructional practice.

The core values set for the scholars of BACS do not stop with them. We expect the teachers and staff of BACS to embody the same values in everything they do. To that end, we will foster a teacher culture of self-improvement and collaboration where improving your own knowledge, skills, and habits is just as important as helping others improve theirs. Teachers hired at BACS will be expected to engage in ongoing self-assessments as well as be open to the critiquing of their peers and administrators. Lead Teachers and Senior Lead Teachers will have additional responsibilities related to mentoring and coaching newer teachers.

In this kind of culture, we expect teachers to be more aware of their own areas for improvement and be able to seek out resources (including their peers) that will help them achieve their professional goals. Administrators and teachers in leadership positions will also have the responsibility to monitor the needs of the teachers and plan appropriate professional development. School leadership will also use student achievement data, qualitative data from Blueprint site visits and administrator observations, and conversations individually and with groups of teachers. Early on we expect much of the professional development to be related to the Turnaround Teacher Competencies mentioned on page 13.

### *Curriculum scope and sequence<sup>23</sup>*

#### **Mathematics, grades 2 -5**

##### **Overview:**

Every student at Bentley Academy Charter School will receive 450 minutes of mathematics instruction throughout the week for the entire year. In addition, students struggling in mathematics will receive additional time and support for 30 minutes four days per week. This schedule allows all of our students to have access to rigorous mathematical content. The schedule allows for students needing additional support to fill in previous mathematics concept and fluency gaps. In addition, the schedule allows teachers to support students needing to be pushed academically.

Bentley's students with disabilities will be integrated using the inclusion model. Math classes will have a heavy focus on four major components: (1) mathematical procedural skill and fluency with math facts appropriate for the grade level (2) conceptual understanding (3) application and problem-solving and (4) discussion and verbal and written defense/processing of mathematical thinking. At least 10 minutes of the overall math time daily for students will be dedicated to practicing on mathematical facts and fluency. Students will have dedicated time in each lesson for application of the day's content as well.

Students in grades 2-5 will take 4 major interim assessments throughout the school year. The scope and sequence for each grade will be aligned with these major interim assessments using *Understanding by Design* as a framework for planning.

In addition to content objectives, students will focus on these key mathematical practices:

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<sup>23</sup> Curriculum scope and sequences for grades K through 1 can be found in the appendix and Curricula overviews are drawn from Common Core Standards, Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and Next Generation Science Standards with text often drawn verbatim from said frameworks.

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
4. Model with mathematics.
5. Use appropriate tools strategically.
6. Attend to precision.
7. Look for and make use of structure.
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

### **Grade 2:**

In Grade 2 instructional time will focus on five major areas: (1) Operations and Algebraic Thinking, (2) Number and Operations in Base Ten, (3) Measurement and Data, and (4) Geometry. Operations and Algebraic Thinking includes representing and solving addition and subtraction problems within 20 and working with equal groups of objects to gain foundations for multiplication. Number and Operations in Base Ten encompasses place value understandings that digits represent amounts of hundreds, tens, and ones to count, skip count, read, write, and compare three-digit numbers. This place value understanding deepens to add and subtract with fluency and explain why strategies work. Measurement and Data focuses on measuring and estimating standard units of length, telling and writing time, solving problems with money, and representing data sets with graphs. Within Geometry, 2nd graders will identify shape attributes and partition rectangles and circles to share in equal parts.

### **Grade 3:**

In Grade 3 instructional time will focus on five major areas: (1) Operations and Algebraic Thinking, (2) Number and Operations in Base Ten, (3) Number and Operations – Fractions, (4) Measurement and Data, and (5) Geometry. Our 3rd grades work with Operations and Algebraic Thinking will focus on: Representing and solving problems involving multiplication and division, understanding properties of multiplication and the relationship between multiplication and division, multiplying and dividing within 100, solving problems involving the four operations, and identifying and explaining patterns in arithmetic. Their focus in Number and Operations in Base Ten will be on using place value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic. Their work within Numbers and Operations – Fractions will be on developing an understanding of fractions as numbers. Within Measurement and Data, students will work on: solving problems involving measurement and estimation of intervals of time, liquid volumes, and masses of objects, representing and interpreting data, understanding concepts of area and relate area to multiplication and to addition and recognizing perimeter as an attribute of plane figures and distinguish between linear and area measures. The students focus within Geometry will be on reasoning with shapes and their attributes.

### **Grade 4:**

In Grade 4 instructional time will focus on five major areas: (1) Operations and Algebraic Thinking, (2) Number and Operations in Base Ten, (3) Number and Operations – Fractions, (4) Measurement and Data, and (5) Geometry. The 4th grade's work on Operations and Algebraic Thinking will consist of solving numerical and word problems using the four operations, developing an understanding of factors and multiplies, and generating patterns. Within Number Operations and Base Ten, focus will be on multi-digit place value algorithm fluency, along with comparing and rounding multi-digit numbers to complete the four operations. Fraction development will work with the relationships of equivalent and ordered fractions, building on a unit fraction to multiply by whole numbers—including with word problems, and understanding decimal notation for fractions. Measurement and Data goals surround measurement units and their relationships, interpreting data through various methods, and the properties and measurements of angles. Geometry work will build on angle understanding, expanding to lines and two-dimensional figures. All 4th graders will develop fluency with

the standards of mathematical practice to demonstrate conceptual understanding, providing evidence in written explanations.

**Grade 5:**

In Grade 5 instructional time will focus on five major areas: (1) Operations and Algebraic Thinking, (2) Number and Operations in Base Ten, (3) Number and Operations – Fractions, (4) Measurement and Data, and (5) Geometry. Within the context of Operations and Algebraic Thinking, the 5th grade will use parentheses, brackets, or braces in to write and interpret numerical expressions, along with analyzing patterns and relationships of numerical patterns given rules. Focus in Number and Operations in Base Ten will revolve around relationships within the place value system, and the fractional, exponential, and decimal place value representations. Students will develop fluency in the four operations with multi-digit whole numbers and with decimals to hundredths. Fraction understanding will build on equivalent fractions, using them as a strategy to add and subtract fractions. Multiplication and division of fractions will extend to interpreting fractions as division, multiplying fractions by fractions and whole numbers, and using the area of a rectangle as a model for multiplying fractional side lengths to interpret products of fractions. Students will interpret multiplication as scaling comparing the size of products given their relationship to the whole number 1. All of this fraction understanding will be applied to real world problems involving multiplication and division of fractions with visual models to represent the problem. Within Measurement and Data, the conversion of units within standard measurement systems will be used to solve multi-step, real world problems. Line plots will represent a data set of measurements, and geometric measurement will be used to build concepts of volume. Geometry will extend to graphing points on a coordinate plane to solve real world problems, and the classification of the attributes of two-dimensional figures. Standards of mathematical practice will be integrated throughout units and reinforced through mathematical writing to explain reasoning.

**English Language Arts, grades 2 through 5**

**Overview:**

Bentley Academy Charter School students will receive 450 minutes of English Language Arts instruction throughout the week for the entire year. In addition, students struggling in ELA will receive additional time and support for 30 minutes four days per week. Rigorous literacy instruction in the classroom will be supported by intervention time for students with below grade reading levels and/or gaps in writing instruction. ELA goals will have a strong integration in content area literacy.

It is the goal of Bentley Academy to create students with academic literacy skills, equipped with thoughtful, robust reading and writing abilities for college and careers. Grade levels will study literature and informational texts to identify key ideas and details, evaluate craft and structure, integrate knowledge and ideas, and read at a range of levels and texts complexities. Foundational skills include print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluently reading with purpose and understanding.

Students in grades 2-5 will take 4 major interim assessments throughout the school year. The scope and sequence for each grade will be aligned with these major interim assessments using *Understanding by Design* as a framework for planning.

ELA instructional blocks will be based on the Lucy Calkins Balanced Literacy workshop model, containing a connection/opening, focus lesson, guided practice, independent practice, and group share. Teachers will confer with students 1:1 about their reading and conduct small group reading lessons. Independent reading will be sustained for extended periods of time with all students reading at their independent level. Classroom interactive read alouds and mentor texts, however, will all be above or at grade level benchmark. Mentor texts will act as anchor to students to engage in high quality writing of their own: narrative, information, and argumentative.

Vocabulary instruction will be explicit and structured, incorporating the strategies of Marzano and programs like Words Their Way to teach tiered vocabulary that is both academic and

content based.<sup>24</sup> This vocabulary work will support the needs of Bentley' Academy's English Language Learner population while also benefiting all mainstream students. With both writing and reading, student discussion will be used to gauge student comprehension of skills and content. Likewise, our students with learning disabilities will follow the inclusion model with access to all.

### **Grade 2:**

The 2nd grade will read literature and informational texts to identify central ideas and answer questions about key details. Students will integrate illustrations, various texts, and levels of complexity to give reasons for ideas. Phonics and word analysis skills build on prior knowledge to develop vowel sound, prefixes and suffixes, and grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words. Students will read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension and develop self-correction strategies. Writing will be developed in a variety of forms and for a variety of purposes, giving reasons to support ideas and developing revisions and publishing work.

### **Grade 3:**

The 3rd grade will read literature and informational text and begin to refer explicitly and provide details to support ideas and their relationships. Students will develop strategies for determining the meaning of words in context and find an author's purpose. They will work with the features of a variety of types of text and comprehend texts at the high end of the grades 2-3 text complexity band independently and proficiently. Fluency with decoding skills will support the work in prefixes, suffixes, and words with multi-syllables or irregular spellings. Students develop strategies for self-correction and rereading for understanding. Third graders will write opinion pieces with evidence, informational pieces with clear ideas, and narrative pieces with technique, details, and sequencing.

### **Grade 4:**

The 4th grade will read literature and informational texts to draw on specific details as support for claims about theme, characters, point of view, text comparisons, and word meanings in context. Fourth graders will develop strategies for finding the main idea of a text and the details that support it, leading to the ability to summarize a text. They will evaluate how authors provide information that contributes to the larger meaning of a text, using text structure, point of view, or text features to leak details to the reader. Writing instruction will encompass opinion, informational, and narrative writing, developing technique to use detail, precise language, and organizational structures to communicate clearly. Students will research across types of texts and sources, learning to categorize and analyze information for a given purpose.

### **Grade 5:**

The 5th grade will use details in a text to make explicit claims, draw inferences, determine theme, or compare and contrast relationships using informational and literature texts. Students will integrate information from several texts on the same topic to speak or write about the topic knowledgeably. Fifth graders will use opinion, informational, and narrative formats to write routinely and appropriately for a task, purpose, or audience. Research skills will develop the integration of ideas by using various types of texts and sources to communicate ideas in writing.

## **Science, grades 2 through 5**

### **Overview:**

All students at Bentley Academy Charter School will receive 150 minutes of Science instruction weekly. Students will use non-fiction reading, experiments, informational writing, and inquiry to explore the themes of science throughout the year. Students in grades K-2 will learn to ask questions about the world, tell about *why and what would happen if?*, make predictions based on observed patterns, name and use simple equipment, and record observations to discuss them

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<sup>24</sup> Bear, D., Invernizzi, M., Templeton, S., and Johnson, F., *Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Pearson Education Unlimited, 2012.

with others. Students in grades 3-5 will learn to ask question and make predictions, use tools and technology to observe, keep accurate records, compare results of multiple investigations, recognize patterns, and record data to communicate findings orally or in writing. Instruction will focus around the following four themes: (1) Earth and Space (2) Life Science, (3) Physical Science, (4) Technology / Engineering.

**Grade 2:**

In 2nd grade, students will develop an understanding of what plants need to grow and how plants depend on animals, as well as the diversity of life in different habitats. Students understand that the properties of materials can be observed. Students are able to apply their understanding of the idea that wind and water can change the shape of the land to compare design solutions to slow or prevent such change. Students are able to use information and models to identify and represent the shapes and kinds of land and bodies of water. Cross-curricular concepts of patterns; cause and effect; energy and matter; structure and function; stability and change; and influence of engineering, technology, and science on society and the natural are integrated with content. Performance expectations include developing and using models, planning and carrying out investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, constructing explanations and designing solutions, engaging in argument from evidence, and obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information.

**Grade 3:**

In 3rd grade, students will organize and use data to describe typical weather conditions expected during a particular season and make a claim about weather hazards and solutions designed for their impact. Students will explore similarities and differences of organisms' life cycles and understand that organisms have different inherited traits that can be affected by environment. Students are able to construct an explanation using evidence for how the variations in characteristics among individuals of the same species may provide advantages in surviving, finding mates, and reproducing. Students will explore the types of organisms that lived long ago and discover what happens when the environment changes. Students are able to determine the effects forces on an object and the cause and effect relationships of electric or magnetic interactions. Cross-curricular concepts of patterns; cause and effect; scale, proportion, and quantity; systems and system models; interdependence of science, engineering, and technology; and influence of engineering, technology, and science on society and the natural world will be integrated with content. Performance expectations include asking questions and defining problems; developing and using models, planning and carrying out investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, constructing explanations and designing solutions, engaging in argument from evidence, and obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information.

**Grade 4:**

In 4th grade, students develop understanding of the behavior of waves and the effects of weathering and erosion, and apply their knowledge of natural Earth processes to generate and compare multiple solutions to reduce the impacts of such processes on humans. Students will gain an understanding that plants and animals have structures that function to support survival, growth, behavior, and reproduction. Students explore the functions of an eye, the speed and energy of moving objects, and transfers and conversions of energy. Cross-curricular concepts include patterns; cause and effect; energy and matter; systems and system models; interdependence of science, engineering, and technology; and influence of engineering, technology, and science on society and the natural world. Performance expectations include asking questions, developing and using models, planning and carrying out investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, constructing explanations and designing solutions, engaging in argument from evidence, and obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information.

**Grade 5:**

In 5th grade students develop an understanding of the size of matter particles, the types of changes that matter undergoes, and the weight of matter. Students are able to describe ways the

geosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and/or atmosphere interact. They describe and graph data about the distribution of water on Earth and discover that plants get the materials they need for growth chiefly from air and water. Students will observe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment and that energy in animals' food was once energy from the sun. Students explore the patterns of daily changes in length and direction of shadows, day and night, and the seasonal appearance of some stars in the night sky. Cross-curricular concepts include cause and effect; scale, proportion, and quantity; energy and matter; and systems and systems. Performance expectations include developing and using models, planning and carrying out investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, using mathematics and computational thinking, engaging in argument from evidence, and obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information.

## **Social Studies, grades 2 through 5**

### **Overview:**

All students at Bentley Academy Charter School will receive 150 minutes of Social Studies instruction weekly. Students will use non-fiction reading, technological resources, literature, and informational writing to explore the following themes of the social studies curriculum:

Kindergarten: Living, Learning, and Working Together

Grade 1: True Stories and Folk Tales from America and from Around the World

Grade 2: E Pluribus Unum: From Many, One

Grade 3: Massachusetts and its Cities and Towns: Geography and History

Grade 4: North American Geography with Optional Standards for One Early Civilization

Grade 5: United States History, Geography, Economics, and Government: Early Exploration to Westward Movement

### **Grade 2:**

The 2nd grade will learn more about world and United States history, geography, economics, and government by learning more about who Americans are and where they came from. They will explore their own family's history and listen to or read a variety of texts exploring distinctive individuals, peoples, achievements, customs, events, places, or landmarks from long ago and around the world. Students will learn more economic concepts by identifying producers, consumers, buyers, and sellers in their own communities.

### **Grade 3:**

The 3rd grade will use local sites such as the Salem Maritime National Historic Site and museums such as the Peabody Essex Museum to learn about the history of Massachusetts from the time of the arrival of the Pilgrims. They will learn the history of Salem and its significance in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, global trade, and American history. They will read about famous people and events in Massachusetts' history and biographies of prominent Massachusetts people in science, technology, the arts, business, education, or political leadership in order to learn how they contributed to Massachusetts history.

### **Grade 4:**

The 4th grade will study the geography and people of the United States today. Students learn geography by addressing standards that emphasize political and physical geography and embed five major concepts: location, place, human interaction with the environment, movement, and regions. In addition, they learn about the geography and people of contemporary Mexico and Canada. Knowledge of globe skills, map features, national historic sites, rights of citizens, immigration, and economic resources will contribute to 4th graders' understanding of American society today. In addition, 4th graders will complete a community service project aimed at integrated disciplines in which students will need to create and allocate a budget for a given purpose. Throughout this project students will interact with the needs of a community and the civic responsibilities of community members.

**Grade 5:**

The 5th grade will study the exploration to the New World and the resulting conflicts and new societies. Students will understand the changes that led countries to explore the western hemisphere, global trade routes and key leading explorers, the earliest settlements that arrived here, and the political, economic, and social development of the English colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries. They also study the early development of democratic institutions and ideas, including the ideas and events that led to the independence of the original thirteen colonies and the formation of a national government under the U.S. Constitution. In addition, 5th graders will complete a community service project aimed at integrated disciplines in which students will need to create and allocate a budget for a given purpose. Throughout this project students will interact with the needs of a community and the civic responsibilities of community members.

**Other curricular offerings:**

**Music:**

Students at Bentley Academy Charter School will receive 60 minutes weekly of musical instruction. Instruction will revolve around the following themes: singing, reading and notation, playing instruments, improvisation and composition, and critical response. Within these, students will learn to sing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music and read music written in standard notation. Students will play instruments, alone and with others, to perform a varied repertoire of music. Students will improvise, compose, and arrange music. Students will describe and analyze their own music and the music of others using appropriate music vocabulary. When appropriate, students will connect their analysis to interpretation and evaluation.

**Physical Education:**

Students at Bentley Academy Charter School will receive 180 minutes weekly of physical education instruction. Students will recognize decisions that all individuals will make with respect to their bodies in daily living and identify the relationships among actions, conduct and wellness. Students will learn the basic characteristics of physical growth and development, including body functions and systems throughout the life cycle, and will acquire skills to promote and maintain positive growth and development. Students will, by repeated practice, acquire and refine a variety of manipulative, locomotor, and non-locomotor movement skills, and will utilize principles of training and conditioning, will learn biomechanics and exercise physiology, and will apply the concept of wellness to their lives.

**Art:**

Students at Bentley Academy Charter School will receive 60 minutes weekly of art instruction. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the methods, materials, and techniques unique to the visual arts. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the elements and principles of design. Students will demonstrate their powers of observation, abstraction, invention, and expression in a variety of media, materials, and techniques. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the processes of creating and exhibiting artwork: drafts, critique, self-assessment, refinement, and exhibit preparation. Students will describe and analyze their own work and the work of others using appropriate visual arts vocabulary. When appropriate, students will connect their analysis to interpretation and evaluation.

Student Performance, Assessment, and Program Evaluation

*Student assessments*

In order for BACS scholars to be prepared for success in college, they must have mastered certain subjects and skills. To monitor their attainment of such content and skills throughout the year, the teachers Data Team, and administrative team at BACS will develop a comprehensive set of assessments that might include exit tickets, portfolios of scholar work, and review of regular classroom assignments.

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Based on these assessments, curricula at all levels will be continuously tweaked and modified to meet the needs of BACS scholars. End of unit assessments will be administered in each subject as well. These assessments will be aligned with the planned scope and sequence of each class.

BACS will continue to use the Achievement Network as a key partner to provide assessments in both mathematics and ELA, along with coaching around the data inquiry cycle. Fountas and Pinnell will be used at least three times a year to supplement A-Net ELA assessments.

Regular homework is an important element of the BCAS model and is essential for academic success. Scholars will be expected to read and study vocabulary words every evening for at least 30 minutes. In addition to completing nightly reading, scholars must have an opportunity each night to practice the skills and content learned in class. Teacher will evaluate homework based on accuracy, and will check homework completion each day and use the information as another means to differentiate and adjust or focus lessons.

The Data Team will be responsible for the appropriate collection and interpretation of the performance of students as a whole and individual teachers and teacher teams will be responsible for individual students, with support, if needed, from the Data Team. Overall, teachers at BCAS will understand that assessments are only as good as the actions they catalyze, and will thus use assessments to determine what specifically needs to be retaught and how.

State requirements include MCAS (administered annually to all students in grades 3 through 5) and WIDA ACCESS (administered annually to F/LEP students in grades K through 5).<sup>25</sup> These assessments are summative and thus not useful in the day to day understanding of student achievement and growth; however, MCAS and WIDA ACCESS will be key data points during the annual reflection on overall student and school performance and will be used to recalibrate (if necessary) the academic program in the following year.

### *School operations and culture assessments*

Blueprint Schools Network's site visit model will be the main assessment of the overall operation of BACS. These site visits happen at least quarterly (depending on need) and are administered by a specifically trained group of Blueprint Employees. The site visits include classroom observations, observations of team meetings and other staff events, general observation of student behavior, and focus groups conducted with teachers and students. The results of the site visit are shared with the administrative team and a specific action plan for improvement is jointly created on the day of the visit.

Bentley Books will be an online grade book developed with the core values and education program of BACS as its core. Bentley Books will house all student achievement reports, behavioral reports, and will track student progress towards promotion. It will be a 'virtual report card' of a moment in time and the hope is to be able to give parents access to it so they can remain up to date on their child's school performance.

In order to maintain the quality of BACS' work with Salem's most at-risk students, parents and scholars will be asked to fill out a survey at least yearly to understand, from a parent and student perspective, where improvements need to be made. This kind of anonymous feedback can be a powerful indicator of true parental and student satisfaction. BACS administration will treat this data like they would any other, digesting it and creating an action plan to make adjustments in the following year.

### *Review of data*

All stakeholder will have the opportunity to review and question student achievement data from BACS.

**Board of Trustees:** All data related to student achievement, student growth, and school operations and culture will be presented to the Board of Trustees on a yearly basis (or as requested by the Board).

**School Administrators and Staff:** Teacher teams will meet on a regular basis to discuss individual student performance based on regular informal and formal formative assessments. Teach teams will meet

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<sup>25</sup> BACS acknowledges that PARCC assessments will likely replace MCAS and thus commit to administer PARCC when necessary.

regularly with a key administrator to ensure that data is being used to support the overall curriculum development and modification. The administrative team will meet quarterly, following the Blueprint Site Visit to ensure that all members are on the same page about the action steps for making necessary changes to the program.

**Parents and Community:** It is expected of teachers at BACS to be in regular and effective communication with parents about their child's performance at school, and there will also be a formal report card sent home three times a year. The report card will include academic achievement, behavior, and any specific changes that need to be made to keep the student on track to succeed in college. Progress towards promotion to the next grade will also be included on these report cards.

Parent-teacher conference nights will be held twice a year for all BACS scholars and three times a year for those requiring extra support to stay on track. These meetings will give parents the opportunity to hear from each of their child's teachers in the same day/night and to get an overall look at their child's work at the school. BACS is also considering partnering with the Flamboyant Foundation to train the teachers in a new parent-teacher conference strategy that pulls from the home visits work that teachers are already doing.

#### *Goal setting over time*

The Board of Trustees, with the help of the Headmaster/Executive Director is responsible for setting long term goals for the school, its teachers, and its scholars and for maintaining a focus on and alignment with those long term goals. As a college preparatory elementary school, it would be easy to graduate students in fifth grade and assume they were well prepared. At BACS, we believe that following scholars throughout their academic journey, and offering support and guidance is a key measure of our success. The Board of Trustees will be responsible for the development of appropriate long term goals.

Shorter term goals can be based on previous years' performance on MCAS assessments. As detailed on page 7, the performance of Bentley students has fallen in recent years and is now considered a level 4 school. Increasing the number of students who are proficient and advanced in each subject area is a primary short term goal for BACS and supported by student growth measures (to validate the improvement from 'warning' to 'below proficient' even if the student hasn't yet reached advanced).

The state has created Measurable Achievement Goals (MAGs) for each public school in the state (not including charters) based on the goal of halving the achievement gap at each school by 2017. They are ambitious, particularly for Bentley that has slid backwards in recent years, but using the MAGs established for Bentley throughout its transformation to a Horace Mann charter school would ensure that the goals are still in line with the expectations of the state and based on historical student achievement data at the school.

### Supports for Diverse Learners

#### *Overview*

College is a significant milestone for at-risk students and we believe that every child should have the joy of reaching it regardless of their learning style or needs. Therefore, the school and program design need to meet the needs of not just a regular education student, but every student that might walk through the doors. Each classroom must have the kinds of adults and supports that will enable each scholar to feel like he or she can struggle, but never fail, and the kind of tools that will help adults recognize when scholars are on the wrong track.

#### *Cultural competency*

It begins with a culturally appropriate staff. BACS teachers will have experience and solid results working with urban youth and their families, and will ideally be able to communicate with parents in their native language. Working in an urban setting and dealing with issues of race, class, ethnicity, privilege, and background create situations that are unlike those encountered in a more homogenous setting. Learning how to face, discuss, and work through these uncomfortable topics is key to building

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relationships in the community, and with parents and students. The Head of Student Success will be a key staff member in this regard and will be expected to help design professional development opportunities for staff members around cultural competency.

### *English language learners*

Bentley Academy Charter School will be responsible for educating each scholar in compliance with all state and federal regulations. BACS will collaborate with SPS to ensure that the highest quality supports are being provided to ELLs.

The specific process for identifying and providing supports to students is as follows:

1. Completion of a home language survey at enrollment
2. If a language other than English is indicated, the proper assessments will be given, student records will be reviewed, and interviews with key family members and the scholar himself will take place.
3. Identification of the scholar as ELL (or not)
4. If identified as ELL, the appropriate ESL level will be assigned.
5. Yearly reassessment and identification will take place.

Based on this data, BACS will tailor specific education programs to ELLs' needs and ELL scholars will receive English as a Second Language instruction (ESL). Understanding that BACS is an inclusion school, every effort will be made to 'push in' services rather than 'pull out'. Due to the "push in" approach, Sheltered English Immersion endorsement will be required for all teachers at BACS. BACS will help new teachers receive their Sheltered English Immersion endorsement before entering a classroom. All classes with ELL scholars will be planned to incorporate them into every aspect of the lesson and will tailor instruction to be compliant with all ELL and SEI requirements. Instruction and progress monitoring for ELL scholars will be based on WIDA ACCESS rubrics for speaking, listening, and reading.

During this academic year, Bentley Elementary will use the support provided by the Special Education Team Chair through SPS, but in future years, it is possible that BACS will hire their own chair who would be responsible for all diverse learner supports and assisting teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners including ELLs.

At the conclusion of each year, BACS staff and administration will gather appropriate data from the previous school year and evaluate the success of the program. When changes or enhancements need to be made, a clear action plan will be designed and implemented in the following school year.

It is the intention of BACS to remain always in compliance with state requirements regarding English Language Learners.

### *Special education students*

Bentley Academy Charter School will be responsible for educating each scholar in compliance with all state and federal regulations. BACS will collaborate with SPS to ensure that the highest quality supports are being provided to all students with special education requirements.

The specific process for initially identifying scholars with special education needs is as follows:

1. Completion of a survey to understand prior services or diagnoses
2. If an individual education plan (IEP) exists, it will be reviewed and implemented.
3. Rewriting of the IEP will take place as needed based on student needs.

The process for referring scholars for special education services is as follows:

1. Pre-referral process will begin at the request of teachers who, based on data, believe that the scholar requires special education services.
2. Alternative strategies for the identified scholar will be discussed, implemented, and assessed by a team of teachers.

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3. If, based on data, teachers fail to see improvement in the scholar's performance, the school will communicate with parents and recommend an evaluation.
4. With parental consent, appropriately credentialed professionals will administer the appropriate assessments and determine if special education services are appropriate.
5. If services are deemed appropriate, the IEP team, consisting of the parents, the teachers, and school administration will develop an appropriate IEP and begin providing needed modifications and accommodations.
6. Rewriting of the IEP will take place as needed based on student needs.

Inclusion will be the main methodology used to support students with special needs and particular effort will be made to hire teachers who have dual general and special education certification for all core academic classes. Interventionists (discussed earlier) ideally will be at least dual certified (moderate disabilities and special education) and will work collaboratively with the homeroom teachers to deliver instruction. At all times, the appropriately licensed teacher will be instructing the scholar with special needs and attending to whatever modifications and accommodations are needed for that scholar to succeed.

BACS is collaborating with SPS this school year to use the Special Education Team Chair resource currently serving Bentley Elementary. Depending on the success of this arrangement, BACS may continue to use this service or may elect to hire their own full time chair. This staff member will work collaboratively with the interventionists and homeroom teachers to ensure that students are receiving supports to achieve. This person will be a liaison to the district, will work collaboratively to set up IEP meetings and will serve as a support to the interventionists.

At the conclusion of each year, BACS staff and administration will gather appropriate data from the previous school year and evaluate the success of the program. When changes or enhancements need to be made, a clear action plan will be designed and implemented in the following school year.

It is the intention of BACS to remain always in compliance with state requirements regarding Special Education Students.

### Culture and Family Engagement

#### *Family involvement and family advisory council*

BACS believes that families are essential partners in helping students to achieve academically. As discussed earlier, teachers will be trained before the school year on how to complete successful home visits for each of their students. The Flamboyan Foundation will provide this training in year 1. These home visits will create the foundation for communication and engagement with families. During the home visit, teachers are instructed to ask about the goals and expectations that they have for their child, and how the teacher can help achieve those. Following up on a successful home visit, BACS teachers and administrators will communicate regularly and in a consistent manner with families to keep them abreast of things happening at the school and with respect to their child. Every attempt will be made to communicate in a way that is most appropriate for each parent. The following expectations have been developed and will be implemented to help ensure consistency in communication with families.

- Each teacher will be expected to send home a "Welcome" letter in multiple languages (translation services provided by colleagues if necessary) to families and a copy of their course syllabus within the first week of academic classes beginning.
- Each family will receive at least one call per month to update them on student status.
- Families will be notified immediately when sudden changes in student behavior or academic behavior are noticed.
- All families will receive notice of upcoming assessments (this will happen via a 'bulk call' rather than a personal phone call).
- Any incoming phone call, text, email, or any other mode of communication from families will be responded to within 24 hours. If the communication is received after 4pm on Friday or over the weekend, the expectation is that follow-up will happen on Monday.

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- Each communication with family will be documented to maintain clear records of conversations and requests or decisions made and any change to contact information.
- Language will not be a barrier to communicating with parents. Multi-lingual staff members at BACS will be expected to assist colleagues who do not share a common language with a parent. If there is no one available for a specific language, BACS administration will work with the district to find a translator.

BACS sees family engagement as essential to ensuring that our scholars attend and graduate from college. Families will be invited into the school after the school day a minimum of five times during the year. These open houses may consist of an Opening of the Year Visit, Math Night, ELA Night, Healthy Family Fun Night, and an Arts Night. The purpose of all of these events will be to celebrate student success and partner with families on how to support their child at home academically. At all BACS events and all interactions with parents, a multi-lingual staff member will be present to provide native language services to families that require them.

Additionally, BACS will have a Family Advisory Council to advise the school's leadership team on pressing issues. This group is currently in development and will work with Bentley Restart administrators to create the right structure, frequency of meetings, and goals for the group. By the time BACS opens, the Parent Advisory Council should be a highly functioning supporting body at the school.

### *Implementing school culture from day 1*

The Summer Springboard Program will happen at BACS every summer two weeks prior to the start of the traditional Salem Public Schools calendar. The early start will be an opportunity to teach scholars about the school culture and behavioral expectations. Scholars will have opportunities to practice meeting the school's expectations and operating procedures in a safe environment.

The Head of Student Success focuses nearly exclusively on ensuring that the school's expectations are upheld by staff and met by students and is responsible for a robust and meaningful Summer Springboard Program. The Head of Student Success will be the face of BACS school culture and will be responsible for holding all parties, administration, teachers, and students accountable for living the BACS Core Values.

Parents will also be encouraged to attend a 'Summer Springboard Program' which will be a one-time orientation explaining the expectations for their children at the school. Ideally, this orientation will happen after the home visit and be an appropriate time to review the Home-School Compact and have parents sign it.

### *School Uniform Policy*

In order to minimize distractions and help all scholars focus on academics, BACS scholars will wear uniforms daily. The uniforms will consist of khaki colored pants or skirt and a white collared shirt. One white t-shirt with the BACS mascot (the rooster) will be provided for free to students at the beginning of the school year. On Fridays, scholars are permitted to wear either the regular uniform or a shirt displaying the name of a college or university.

### *Code of conduct*

BACS will develop their own code of conduct to ensure that the school remains a respectful space for learning and an environment in which scholars make excellent academic and behavioral decisions. All policies will be developed in full compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, including but not limited to M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and §37H1/2. These systems will be communicated to parents through a school handbook and acknowledged through the signing of a Home/School Compact. Scholars will be required to reflect on their own academic achievement and behavioral achievement and set ambitious goals for their growth regularly.

BACS will have 4-5 school rules to be posted in all classrooms. These might include such rules as, 'Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Be Positive, Be Safe, and Work Hard.' More detailed rules for all

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spaces (cafeteria, recess, bus, hallways, bathroom, and classroom) will be posted clearly for all scholars to see and reviewed with scholars on a regular basis.

Scholars in all grades will receive a daily progress report that outlines their achievement with respect to the school rules. Parents will sign this progress report on a weekly basis. For some scholars, parents will sign the report on a daily basis. For those scholars struggling to abide by the school rules, staff members will take quick action to engage the scholars in reflection and contact their families. Scholars' repeated exemplification of the core values on progress reports will lead to rewards or incentives such as field trips and "Arcade Day". Progress reports will be able to be spent at the school store on instructional supplies and/or scholars can work collaboratively within the class to earn a special classroom event.

### *Conveying the Importance of Continued Education*

The importance of college and continued education is paramount at BACS. All homerooms will be named after the teacher's college, all scholars will know when they will be graduating from college or further education, and regular town hall meetings will give scholars the opportunity to meet members of our community who will share their college experience. College campus visits for fifth graders will take place at Salem State and Endicott at the end of each school year. Scholars will be asked to share reflections on what the college campuses felt like, what they noticed, and how they picture themselves on that same campus one day.

### *Celebrating Student Success*

Regular Town Hall meetings will take place once a week at BACS. Staff members and student government representatives will talk about what the school's core values look like and sound like and guests from the community will be invited to speak about their experiences and their role in the community and how it aligns with BACS values. Town Hall will also be used to celebrate scholar success. Scholars demonstrating high achievement and improvement on assessments, such as A-Net, and with attendance and core values will receive certificates and recognition. In addition, regular Student of the Month events to honor select students for their effort, achievement, and improvement will occur. At the very least, student recognition activities will take place weekly.

### *Student Support Team*

BACS will have a strong Student Support Team and School Climate Committee. The Student Support Team (consisting of special education staff, ESL staff, the Head of Operations, Head of Family and Community Engagement, and Head of Student Success) will meet weekly to trouble-shoot around individual student behavior, attendance, and academic concerns.

A school Climate Committee, led by the Head of Operations will meet roughly every two weeks to discuss overall school operations such as PBIS implementation and school-wide attendance trends and put in place any necessary changes. Students are discussed in the SST meeting if (1) they have been referred by a teacher cohort within the last week; (2) one of the members of the SST has had an interaction with a student that warrants follow-up action; or (3) a student had an emergency situation within the last week.

Actions taken by the SST can include: a referral to in-house counseling (short-term and long-term); a referral to mandated outside counseling; a Department of Children and Families Report; a CHINS filing; an Emergency medical referral; an in-house medical intervention, monitoring, or follow-up; or a connection to other outside resources, such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters, community organizations, etc. The Student Support Coordinator notifies respective teacher cohorts of non-confidential actions taken by the SST.

### *Community Partnerships*

Though there are many school based partnerships (SPS, A-Net, Blueprint, Flamboyant) that support the activities of adults in the buildings, there are also partnerships that support the students.

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A long standing and very popular YMCA program, for example, will remain an after school program option for all BACS scholars. New partnerships are currently being forged with such community resources as the Peabody Essex Museum, READ Trust, the Salem Maritime National Historic Site, and the House of Seven Gables.

## **How will the school demonstrate organizational viability?**

### Capacity

#### *History of the founding group*

The founding group of Bentley Academy Charter School was united through the original partnership between Salem Public Schools, Blueprint Schools Network, and Empower Schools to address the ongoing decline at Bentley Elementary. Working together the three organizations developed a legal pathway to achieve and maintain the kind of reforms necessary to turn around Bentley Elementary School. The first step in the process was a change from the “transformation” model to a “restart” model of turnaround for grades 3 through 5 in school year 2014-15 that would allow for a new collective bargaining agreement to be negotiated, a new leader to be hired, and teachers to recommit to a new academic program- a fresh start for Bentley.<sup>26</sup> The second step in the process is becoming a Horace Mann III charter school in order to maintain the kind of autonomies that the school will enjoy in the 2014-15 school year. Unfortunately, in Massachusetts, once a school exits level 4 status there are no *guarantees* that the school will be able to maintain the kind of changes that allowed it to succeed. The only guaranteed autonomy is in the form of a charter school and due to the depth of the partnership with Salem Public Schools, a Horace Mann charter was the appropriate model.

#### *Founding group members*

A mix of backgrounds and experiences of the founding group members will ensure that there is always a member with the appropriate skill set or experience to help overcome whatever challenges arise. Three members of the founding group (Patrick Schultz, Matt Spengler, and Sarah Toce) represent the original three partnering organizations, SPS, Blueprint, and Empower, respectively. Each has been involved in the development of the regulatory strategy, the educational plan for the restart (and thus the Horace Mann), securing necessary agreements (particularly with the Salem School Committee and Salem Teachers Union), and the beginning of operations at Bentley.

The other founding members are key staff members at the Bentley Elementary School Restart operating in the 2014-15 school year: Justin Vernon, Head of School/Principal; Marlina Afonso, Head of Operations; Marquis Victor, Head of Student Success; Shawn Berry, lead teacher; and Rebecca Lewis, lead teacher.

**Marlena Afonso-** Marlina most recently earned her Ed.M. from the Harvard Graduate school of Education in the School Leadership program. She has spent the past six years in education with positions ranging from classroom teacher, to special populations chair, to non-profit operations. She has experience in a traditional school and a charter school which make her well qualified to be involved with the Bentley Restart and Bentley Academy Charter School. Most recently, as a principal intern, she led professional development, managed a school budget, and provided regular feedback to teachers using the MA Educator Evaluation. Additionally, Marlina speaks both Portuguese and Spanish allowing her to communicate with many BACS parents in their native language.

**Shawn Berry-** Shawn was one of the first teachers hired for the Bentley Restart effort due to her outstanding results as a teacher and her connection to the Salem community. As a teacher at Salem Academy (a Commonwealth charter school in Salem) for eight years, Shawn assumed increasing responsibility for curricular development and student support. At the Bentley restart Shawn will be a lead teacher, helping to mentor less experienced teachers and drive professional development opportunities to meet staff needs. As a member of a community organization board she brings many important Salem connections to the group.

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<sup>26</sup> Due to the timing of the decision and necessary agreements it was decided that trying to manage a restart process for all grades (K through 5) was unwise, and thus only grades 3 through 5 are impacted by the restart model.

**Rebecca Lewis-** Rebecca comes to the Bentley Restart after teaching at UP Academy (a highly successful turnaround school organization) in Boston and Lawrence. As a founding teacher at each school she is familiar with the processes and procedures of a highly successful start up school and will be an invaluable teacher leader as the staff begins to coalesce in year one.

**Patrick Schultz-** Patrick brings a number of strengths to the founding team. Experience as a teacher, department chair, assistant principal, a director of school services at a Boston based non-profit, and now the owner of his own successful restaurant in Salem give Pat a unique perspective. He has a thorough understanding of what the inside of a school looks like, but also has the business acumen that will be key as the school moves into charter school status. A current member of the Salem School Committee, Pat is never shy about asking the question that gets to the heart of the matter. He was a strong proponent of the Restart model for Bentley, but not before doing his own research, and becoming a trusted ally during the development of the strategy.

**Matthew Spengler-** Matt has spent nearly 25 years in public education as a teacher, a principal, a school founder, assistant to a major superintendent, a consultant, the academic director at a non-profit CMO, and most recently as the founder of Blueprint Schools Network, a non-profit organization that partners with school districts to turn around their lowest performing schools (find more information about Blueprint's success on page 6). His broad experience will help the founding group remain focused on the most important aspects of a turnaround school and set up BACS for success and his deep understanding of the inner workings of district processes have already helped this fledgling partnership improve.

**Sarah Toce-** Sarah works for Empower Schools and was the lead project director for the Bentley Turnaround in 2014. She has worked in education related organizations since 2006. As a lobbyist's assistant, researcher, and executive director of a statewide charter school association she has a deep knowledge of policy and state law as it relates to education which will continue to be important in this groundbreaking partnership and regulatory environment. She recently earned her Ed.M. from the Harvard Graduate school of Education in the education policy and management cohort.

**Justin Vernon-** Justin is a Salem resident who most recently brought a Boston Public School from a level 3 to a level 1 school in just one year. As the founding Principal of Clap Innovation School, Justin not only understands the responsibilities of a start up principal, but particularly those of a principal at an autonomous school. This experience has served him well as he has embarked on yet another school start up. He completed both the Harvard Graduate School of Education School Leadership program and Lynch Leadership Academy.

**Marquis Victor-** Marquis was the founding Dean of Student Success at the Clap Innovation School with Justin Vernon where he spearheaded the effort to create a school culture that was focused on high expectations and strong behavioral supports. He was also responsible for many of the community partnerships that helped to rocket Clap to a level 1 school. A north shore native, Marquis was named Student Athlete of the year in 2008 at Salem State University and maintains many of his connections that will be invaluable as the school begins to reach out for broader support.

#### *Founding group process*

Justin Vernon, Marlana Afonso, and Sarah Toce were the primary authors of this document. The three have been meeting on a regular basis since April 2014 and will continue to do so throughout the upcoming school year. Other founding group members have been asked to provide feedback on specific sections of this document where they have expertise. To complete a full application, the entire team plans to meet on a regular basis to discuss challenges arising at the school and make sure that they are appropriately remedied in the application. The founding group will also be important in generating a list of people to approach for membership on the Board of Trustees.

## Governance

### *Management and reporting*

Daily oversight of the school will be the responsibility of the Headmaster/Executive Director. His job will be to translate the strategic vision of the Board of Trustees into an actionable plan that can be implemented by the administrative team, teachers, and staff at BACS. The administrative team, consisting of the Principal/Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Head of Operations, and Head of Family and Community Engagement will work very closely with the Headmaster/Executive Director to ensure smooth operations and alignment with the vision of the Board of Trustees. Regular meetings of the Headmaster/Executive Director and administrative team will facilitate this communication. The Headmaster/Executive Director will also have the responsibility to ensure that all accountability measures are being met on a regular basis.

The Board of Trustees of Bentley Elementary School is the main strategic decision making body for the organization. The Board of Trustees will work most closely with the Headmaster/Executive Director to understand the progress of the school and have candid conversations about where challenges are appearing and what solutions are being proposed/implemented to keep the school on the right track. The Board of Trustees will be responsible for maintaining the integrity of the school as a publicly accountable body. This means financial oversight, ensuring compliance with all mandatory laws, and maintaining the relationships with key partners. For instance, Blueprint Schools Network is proposed to be a main partner for BACS continuing to provide the Math Fellows program as well as school evaluation and guidance. This contract would be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees.

The Memorandum of Understanding signed on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014 governs both the Restart model and serves as the MOU A for BACS. It outlines a number of shared responsibilities of the school and the school committee and thus the Salem School Committee will rely heavily on the Board of Trustees to be transparent about the school and thorough in its attempts to work collaboratively to produce results. This MOU also outlines services to be provided by the district, and a per pupil amount to be paid to BACS, among many other things.

The Board of Trustees will also have the responsibility to negotiate a contract with Salem Teachers Union that provides the flexibility for administration and teachers to execute the mission, vision, and educational program of BACS. The Restart model allowed Salem Public Schools to renegotiate the contract to achieve those same flexibilities and was successful with many of them. The job of the Board of Trustees, then, will be to continue the work already started by SPS.

The May 29<sup>th</sup> MOU also lays out a clear process for the hire, evaluation, renewal or possible dismissal of the Headmaster/Executive Director. When it is required by MA state law, the Salem Superintendent's approval will be sought by the Board of Trustees. The Headmaster/Executive Director, Principal, and Head of Operations will have joint hiring and teacher evaluation responsibility.

The Board of Trustees will abide by all applicable state laws including but not limited to open meeting laws, state ethics law, and charter school law and, in line with the core values of Bentley Academy Charter School, will hold itself to exceptionally high standards. There are organizations that support the development and functionality of public boards and a partnership with one such organization could be pursued if necessary.

### *Board of trustees structure*

The Bentley Academy Board of Trustees will be a nine member body and will at all times include a BACS teacher, and a parent of a current BACS student as voting members. The Executive Director will be an Ex-Officio member at all times. The balance of the Board of Trustees (7 members) will be comprised of local stakeholders with expertise in areas needed to oversee a Horace Mann Charter School: finance, state education policy, community connections, strategic planning experience, development, and law.

Due to the Bentley Restart operating in the year prior to the opening of BACS, recruitment of Board members will be seamlessly integrated with the other work of the Bentley Restart. Relationships with key community agencies and individuals have already begun to be forged and will continue

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throughout this year. The principal/Head of School has already begun to reach out to potential board members and it is probable that one or more of the founding group members would be asked and choose to sit on the Board of Trustees.

## **Appendices**

### Curriculum Scope and Sequence

#### *Mathematics, K through 1*

##### **Kindergarten:**

In Kindergarten instructional time will focus on five major areas: (1) Counting and Cardinality (2) Operations and Algebraic Thinking, (3) Number and Operations in Base Ten, (4) Measurement and Data, and (5) Geometry. Counting and Cardinality consists of knowing the number names and the counting sequence, counting to tell the number of objects, and comparing numbers. Operations and Algebraic Thinking develops the understanding of addition and subtraction within 10 by representing the operations with objects. Students decompose numbers into pairs and fluently add and subtract within 5. A foundation is built in Number and Operations in Base Ten by composing and decomposing with numbers 11-19 into tens and ones. Measurement and Data focuses on describing and comparing measurable attributes to classify and count objects. Geometry concentrates on identifying and describing shapes in order to analyze, compare, and create shapes.

##### **Grade 1:**

In Grade 1 instructional time will focus on five major areas: (1) Operations and Algebraic Thinking, (2) Number and Operations in Base Ten, (3) Measurement and Data, and (4) Geometry. Operations and Algebraic Thinking will concentrate on representing and solving problems that involve addition and subtraction and the relationship of the properties of said operations. Students will add and subtract within 20 and work with equations to understand equal signs and determine the value of an unknown number. Number and Operations in Base Ten include extending the counting sequence and understanding the use of place value when adding and subtracting. Within Measurement and Data students measure lengths indirectly by iterating length units, telling and writing time, and representing and interpreting data. Geometry skills include distinguishing between defining and non-defining attributes of shapes, composing 2-D and 3-D shapes, and partitioning shapes to share in equal amounts with appropriate vocabulary.

#### *English Language Arts, grades K through 1*

##### **Kindergarten:**

In Kindergarten, students learn to recognize types of text and to tell stories, identify story elements, and compare characters with prompting and support. Informational text instruction focuses on identifying main topics, asking and answering questions, and describing connections. Students will learn print concepts such as spacing, flow of language, and upper- and lowercase letters. Phonological awareness will include an understanding of spoken words, rhymes, syllables, and word segments. Kindergarten will use phonics and word-analysis skills in decoding words and reading common high-frequency words by sight. Kindergartners will use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose texts for a variety of purposes.

##### **Grade 1:**

The 1st grade will read to be able to ask and answer questions about a text, make connections, and distinguish defining features of types of literature. Foundational skills include print concepts such as organization, capitalization, and punctuation. Their phonological awareness will demonstrate knowledge of vowel sounds, blending, and segmenting. Phonics and word-analysis skills will be used to decode words in order to read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. First graders will write a variety of types of text to focus on a topic, publish writing, and participate in shared projects.

#### *Science, grades K through 1*

**Kindergarten:**

In Kindergarten, students will learn about patterns and variations in local weather and the purpose of weather forecasting. Students are able to apply an understanding of the effects of different strengths or different directions of pushes and pulls on the motion of an object to analyze a design solution. Students are also expected to develop understanding of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive and the relationship between their needs and where they live. Cross-curricular concepts of patterns; cause and effect; systems and system models; interdependence of science, engineering, and technology; and influence of engineering, technology, and science on society and the natural world are called out as organizing concepts for these disciplinary core ideas. Kindergarteners are expected to demonstrate grade-appropriate proficiency in asking questions, developing and using models, planning and carrying out investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, designing solutions, engaging in argument from evidence, and obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information.

**Grade 1:**

In 1st grade, Students will explore the relationship between sound and vibrating materials as well as between the availability and movement of light and ability to see objects. Students will develop understanding of how plants and animals use their external parts to help them survive, grow, and meet their needs as well as how behaviors of parents and offspring help the offspring survive. The understanding is developed that young plants and animals are like, but not exactly the same as, their parents. Students are able to observe, describe, and predict some patterns of the movement of objects in the sky. Cross-curricular concepts of patterns; cause and effect; structure and function; and influence of engineering, technology, and science on society and the natural world are integrated with content. First graders are expected to demonstrate grade-appropriate proficiency in planning and carrying out investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, constructing explanations and designing solutions, and obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information.

*Social Studies, grades K through 1*

**Kindergarten:**

Kindergarten students will draw on their experiences in their family, school, community, state, and country to learn more about place and time. Students will learn about U.S. national holidays and the important people or events they celebrate. Students will understand the significance of American symbols and their meanings. Community members, neighborhood features, family events, and jobs will all be used to contribute to kindergarteners' knowledge of social science. Teachers will use read alouds, stories, and songs to explore these themes.

**Grade 1:**

The 1st grade will explore historical events and figures, symbols of the United States, and national holidays through folk tales and true stories from America and around the world. Students will interact with and be able to explain major American concepts like the Pledge of Allegiance, the President, states and capitals on maps, national songs, holidays, and diversity in religions, customs, and families that exist in communities. Students will listen to stories of famous Americans of different ethnic groups and legends of American folklore.