

Friendship Court Order Proposal Summary (959 Word Count)

The **Friendship Education Foundation** (Friendship Foundation), a nonprofit 501C3 charter management organization (CMO), intends to respond to the Chester Upland School District's call for CMO partners to serve as a standalone entity to implement a whole-school model Under Option 3. The Friendship Foundation proposes managing the staggered transition of the Chester Upland School of the Arts (k-5) in Yr01 and Toby Farms Intermediate School (6-8) in Yr02. We plan to manage all aspects of the academics, student support, staffing, financial management, and overall day-to-day oversight of the elementary and middle school(s) in the individual CUSD.

In 2014, the Friendship Education Foundation was established in response to invitations from several states and philanthropic entities to replicate the highly successful education programs and practices of the **Friendship Public Charter School** (FPCS), an independent charter school network with over 24 years of experience in Washington DC. Friendship Foundation's mission is to create in underserved communities throughout the nation a world-class education that motivates students to achieve high academic standards, enjoy learning, and develop as ethical, literate, well-rounded, and self-sufficient citizens who contribute actively to their communities. We believe that an excellent college-prep education will set students up for success in whatever life path they choose. A Friendship education will lead to students getting to and through college at a rate above the national average for all our students and three times higher than those from similar economic backgrounds.

Aligned with the local school district and state standards, the Foundation aims to replicate and operate the FPCS charter school model in the CUSD. The Foundation has experience in school conversions and opening new Friendship schools through agreements with State Authorizers/Local School Districts to establish and operate new charter schools or who seeks to turnaround, takeover, or provide additional supports for low-performing schools that serve disadvantaged populations; and provide professional development for school leaders and teachers, technical assistance with school operations, and board development support for local partners.

The Friendship school model's characteristics are consistent with the CUSD Framework for Strategic Options Initiative (SOI) goals. The Friendship school model is a highly successful network of charter schools nationally based in Washington DC, Little Rock and Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and formerly in Baltimore, Maryland, and Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Founded in 1997, Friendship educates over 7,000 school-age kids grades PreK to 12 on 23 campuses nationally.

Friendship is the largest and leading minority-operated charter school network in the United States. The students we serve are predominately African American and academically challenged students in primarily low-income communities—we take on the hardest to help students. Friendship has 24 years' experience operating independent charter schools working with state and local school districts, turnaround, and takeover agreements. We have the resources, capacity, and talent to implement solutions that meet or exceed the student population's needs.

Friendship's school design focuses on the whole child. Our education approach is anchored in the belief that no two students have the same skills or learning styles. Our school design creates an individual learning plan for every child based on their universal and special needs. Our education approach combines direct instruction, small-group work, and one-on-one tutoring in a way that works for the individual student.

We will utilize a K-8 version of a liberal arts education to serve CUSD Pennsylvania students effectively. We offer resource-rich school environments and ensure that each school has robust core offerings in English language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science at every grade level with art, music, physical education, health, world languages, and STEM development. Our school design provides students with technology-based instruction. Every child receives a laptop computer for classroom and home learning use, before and after school programs, arts and sports programs, and bus transportation. Friendship schools are community schools that provide additional supports for families and parents to include parent resource centers, clothing banks, and food pantries. Student health and safety are of the utmost importance with Covid Safety precautions in classroom/buildings, on-site security, and staff patrols. We feel this model would go a long way towards solving the more stubborn problems facing the children of Chester/Upland: Raising children to love reading becoming critical thinkers and social entrepreneurs.

Friendship has a strong track record in improving the reading, reading comprehension, and overall academic performance of the student we serve. The Friendship Model is focused on getting all students to and through college. To that end, to be educated in liberal arts is to have a broad grasp of literature, arts, music, history, and the sciences. This model will naturally expose CUSD students to a wide range of careers to guide their college study of focus.

Friendship also intends to grow and nurture teachers as well. We will provide our teachers and any interested school district instructional staff with extensive subject matter coaching, teacher certification preparation, and classroom and curriculum training throughout the school year and summer through our *Friendship Institute for the Advancement of Teachers*- a separate nonprofit

entity established to provide teachers with instructional training and professional development opportunities.

Friendship is an experienced operator with more than 24 years of experience successfully operating and managing high academic performing schools nationally. We are confident that we will have the expertise, resources, and community connections to effectively work with schools in the Chester Upland School District.

Friendship has a detailed start-up plan and will oversee all aspects of the school's transition and charter school conversion. We will bring to bear the school management, school leadership, quality instruction, and resources to ensure this project's success.

We at Friendship are committed to "our" kids receiving the very best education in a respectful environment and providing opportunities for all our children to excel to their most significant potential.

"Everyone grows with Friendship" Please visit www.friendshipschools.org and www.friendshipaspire.org for more information.