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Revati Puranik
Board Chair
NextGen Global Leadership Academies
3773 Richmond Avenue
Houston, Texas 77046

Dear Ms. Puranik,

On behalf of the Center for Educational Outreach at Baylor College of Medicine (BCM), I am pleased to provide this letter of support and collaboration for NextGen Global Leadership Academies (NGLA) and their application to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for a 6 to 12 grade open enrollment public charter school. Your proposal for this school builds upon your work and prior programs with our local school districts around innovation, design thinking, global outreach, mentorship and leadership opportunities for students and teachers in Houston. BCM's long record of success with school choice programs and specialized curricula, and more than 50 years of collaboration with K -12 education assures a wealth of experience and expertise to help support the expansion and enhancement of education options such as this for Houston students.

My BCM colleagues and I fully endorse the NGLA plan to create a school with a distinctive Entrepreneurship and STEM + M (medical) theme that specifically addresses the career and workforce needs of local, regional, and global markets. Houston's economy boasts a diverse business base in energy, medicine, and emerging technology fields that serve globally competitive industries. Industry needs include traditional STEM jobs, "STEM- capable" jobs, and positions that require creative problem-solving skills. The innovative Entrepreneurship and STEM theme you propose will help to meet growing industry demand for engineers, technicians, scientists, and global leaders with backgrounds in medical health science, sustainable processes, and entrepreneurial fields.

These objectives are very much aligned with the mission of our Center and of Baylor's College of Medicine. We welcome the opportunity to serve as active partners in the exciting new program you propose. This will enable our institution to provide interdisciplinary curriculum and training to more teachers and students, and to extend the important, gratifying work already underway through our collaborations with 11 other K-12 schools in Texas. Your proposed project will create a school choice option—and provide the guidance, and preparation needed—for all students, regardless of racial background or economic status, to attend, and succeed at top tier schools of their choosing.

A useful template for your proposed project can be observed in the recent joint effort between HISD and BCM to establish the Baylor College of Medicine Academy at Ryan (BCMAR), a health sciences magnet program for grades 6-8, at which a full-time BCM faculty member serves on campus as a STEM Specialist. The school opened in 2013 and celebrated its first graduating 8th grade class in 2016. The school's current enrollment is approximately 700. More than 90% of BCMAR students are Hispanic or African American, more than 60% are economically disadvantaged. All core subject areas are pre-AP, and the school already has established a reputation for excellence throughout the district, and the nation, based on school rankings, distinctions earned and standardized test results.

Of course, BCM and HISD have jointly operated the health sciences magnet program at the DeBakey High School for Health Professions (DHSHP) since 1972. This exceptional school provides a challenging, well-balanced college preparatory curriculum and direct experiences in laboratory and health care facilities throughout the Texas Medical Center (TMC). Now with more than 6,000 graduates, DHSHP is recognized as one of the finest schools in the nation. It has been named a National Blue Ribbon School and has earned numerous other state and national awards. The 2017 opening of the DHSHP's new multi-million-dollar campus, in the heart of the TMC, has enhanced students' experiences and increased their opportunities for involvement in medical, scientific and healthcare facilities. The school's current enrollment is approximately 900 students, of whom 67% are Hispanic or African American, and 43% are economically disadvantaged. Almost all (98%) DHSHP graduates obtain postsecondary education.

BCM has also collaborated for decades with other school districts to strengthen K-8 science teaching. Thousands of HISD elementary and middle school teachers—have participated in BCM's science professional development programs, funded by the National Science Foundation, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, National Institutes of Health and others. This work continues in a collaboration through a national foundation via a STEM+M initiative through which BCM's Center for Educational Outreach provides professional development to teachers and school leaders for planning and launching a new schools or pathways.

Your proposal to create a new program in Houston is a logical step and a clear "fit" for the ongoing goals and vision of BCM to expand educational access and preparation for students in STEM. BCM's Center for Educational Outreach will be pleased to participate. If your application is approved, we will: (1) help to plan the Biotech (STEM + M) program and curricula; (2) plan/conduct professional development in science and health for teachers at the schools; (3) make available the existing science and health curricular content and resources developed by BCM; (4) help facilitate and evaluate joint activities between the schools' teachers and BCM students and faculty members; and (5) promote collaboration between teachers and students at the new school with those at other BCM partner schools.

Indeed, we are happy to contribute in any way possible to the school's success. Your application to TEA represents an important new opportunity to increase Houston students' access to the cutting-edge careers in science, the health professions, and entrepreneurial fields. We are excited to be part of this initiative and look forward to working with you in the coming months.

Sincerely,

