

**MO CHARTER SCHOOL PROSPECTUS**  
**Gateway Global Academy of Geospatial Science & Technology**

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## INTRODUCTION

Two crucial events are taking place in the St. Louis metro area directly impacting low-income students and their communities. The first is the phase out of the VICC (Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation) program. Since 1981, the VICC program has given low-income and minority students school choice and accessibility to higher quality education outside of neighborhoods with dilapidated school buildings and challenged school districts where they live. In St. Louis we call this “busing” or “the deseg program”- and it’s all coming to an end by 2032, when the last lottery student is scheduled to graduate.<sup>1</sup> The second event is the opening of the NGA facility, a military operated organization that employs civilians with high tech and other professional skills needed to help secure our nation and monitor world events. The selected location of the facility has caused much debate around gentrification and jobs. The debate also presents a pressing question – will students who live in St. Louis city be ready for these jobs and other careers that impact the region and the globe?<sup>2</sup> The site is scheduled to open in 2025, just 7 years before the VICC program comes to a final close. Both events coupled with the ongoing challenges of providing students with safe, high quality social and academic environments comes down to one word - choice. A parent being interviewed by the St. Louis Post Dispatch, summed it up perfectly when she stated that it all “boils down to a choice” and went on to say that students want to attend a school where they can focus and “study”.<sup>3</sup> Will students finally have a choice of education that pushes them to think past their neighborhoods and into a world full of opportunities and innovations? Gateway Global AYBAA is a 501 c3 nonprofit workforce and charter education organization headquartered in St. Louis, MO that was launched to offer students a real opportunity at understanding their world and inspiring them to fully participate in it. Our premier charter school will be Gateway Global Academy of Geospatial Science and Technology. The school will hold a separate 501 c3 status and will be managed by Gateway Global AYBAA. Our mission is centered on economic and workforce development with a global theme. As part of our vision we have identified four core values that encapsulate our mission: awareness, aspiration, access and application. We believe firmly that these values are what drive students to identify and seize opportunities for a successful future.

## GATEWAY GLOBAL MISSION

Our mission is to act as a gateway to learning experiences that give underserved, low-income students a global perspective on how they relate to the world and how it relates to them. We seek to educate students on academic pathways and career frameworks ranging from international trade, national security, economics, and global technologies like geographic information systems, smart cities, artificial intelligence, automation and transportation. Our goal is to produce a viable, strong and a globally aware workforce that will understand individual social and economic contributions to the bigger picture. By doing so we will cultivate generations of leaders and individual contributors with high aspirations that are inspired to make the global community a better place for all - beginning with the improvement of their local community.

## STUDENT POPULATION

Gateway Global Academy of Geospatial Science and Technology (GGAGST) will serve primarily a low-income student population in grades 9-12 across the St. Louis metropolitan area. Our decision to locate the school in north city was carefully considered after research determining that there are four public high schools, all of which are considered as underperforming, or not quality, within a three-mile radius of the NGA site and other key development corridors near downtown. This opens a great opportunity for GGAGST to serve students that lack school choice in the area. The high school will begin its first two years serving 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades and will increase the student population by adding 11<sup>th</sup> grade by year three and 12<sup>th</sup> grade by year four.

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<sup>1</sup> VICC website review and phone call to the office conducted by Zekita Asuquo.

<sup>2</sup> Editorial Board. “Editorial: NGA, and jobs, are coming to St. Louis. Will local students be ready?” *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, 14 Nov 2017. [http://www.stltoday.com/opinion/editorial/editorial-nga-and-jobs-are-coming-to-st-louis-will/article\\_1d9e3f7f-de8e-530a-9856-98c393a004ea.html](http://www.stltoday.com/opinion/editorial/editorial-nga-and-jobs-are-coming-to-st-louis-will/article_1d9e3f7f-de8e-530a-9856-98c393a004ea.html)

<sup>3</sup> Elisa Crouch. “Impending closure of Beaumont High tells a larger story”, *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, 27 Aug 2013. [http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/impending-closure-of-beaumont-high-tells-a-larger-story/article\\_b5e3bff0-ca1a-531c-93d4-d3e33a1e5ed4.html](http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/impending-closure-of-beaumont-high-tells-a-larger-story/article_b5e3bff0-ca1a-531c-93d4-d3e33a1e5ed4.html)

By the fifth year the school will have reached its capacity goal of 460. By 2026, our plan is to have graduated a class of seniors that will 1) have earned industry recognized credentials for *now* and *next generation* technologies, 2) will be academically capable of entering a 2-or-4 year college or university and completing a degree, and 3) will be viable candidates for entry level career opportunities as interns or apprentices within the advancing industries that accept their industry recognized credential.

As a goal, following our first renewal, our plan is to add 6<sup>th</sup> grade in 2027, 7<sup>th</sup> grade in 2028 and 8<sup>th</sup> grade in 2029. By 2029, our expectation is to be at full capacity for both middle school and high school levels, using the middle school as a feeder for the high school. Gradually adding a younger pipeline to serve the high school will begin an early preparation of younger students for STEM based industry clusters opportunities in their community and will ensure the continued success of GGAGST through a proactive recruitment and enrollment strategy.

High School	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
9 <sup>th</sup>	115	115	115	115	115
10 <sup>th</sup>	0	115	115	115	115
11 <sup>th</sup>	0	0	115	115	115
12 <sup>th</sup>	0	0	0	115	115
<b>Total Students</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>460</b>

The target population of low-income can be characterized by:<sup>4</sup>

- High work hours, low pay
- Single parent household
- Low work hours, low pay
- Uninsured or put off needed care
- Unbanked
- Housing insecurity
- Food insecurity
- Living in high crime neighborhood
- Living in challenged or unaccredited school district, Title I eligible

### SOME INNOVATIVE FEATURES

- 1) Thematic structure centered 5 pillars of Geographic Literacy: Global Resources, Global Business, Global Technology, Global Policy, and Global Health
- 2) College readiness coupled with workforce preparedness to provide a safety net for all students
- 3) Second language fundamentals including symbolism, writing, and speech production (Mandarin)
- 4) Electives that encompass a range of STEM based industry recognized credentials
- 5) Experiential learning centered on local and regional businesses doing global business
- 6) A full remediation plan designed to prepare students for academic and workforce capabilities assessments at the front end of their educational experience
- 7) Apprenticeship and internship opportunities by 12<sup>th</sup> grade with industry partners

### SCHOOL DESIGN

GGAGST’s design is one that builds bridges between the immediate needs of students to earn while they learn and to pursue more education or credentials while they work. Our model is designed to introduce students to entry level work opportunities that will lead to more education, more role responsibilities at work, and eventually more lucrative career options. Our model is not designed to facilitate and either/or for students. Our design is based on the reality that only 33% of American adults have a college degree<sup>5</sup>. Our model

<sup>4</sup> Gregory Acs and Austin Nichols, The Urban Institute, “An Assessment of Low Income and Expenses of America’s Low Income Families Using Survey Data from the National Survey of America’s Families”, *National Poverty Center Working Paper Series*, #06-37, Oct 2006. [http://www.npc.umich.edu/publications/u/working\\_paper06-37.pdf](http://www.npc.umich.edu/publications/u/working_paper06-37.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Ryan, Camille L. and Kurt Bauman. “Educational Attainment in the United States 2015”, Population Characteristics: Current Population Reports, March 2016. United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p20-578.pdf>

supposes that that number would increase if more Americans in high school had alternatives to pursuing those degrees outside of a conventional or traditional path. We also understand that everyone does not want to pursue a college degree and therefore have made industry recognized credentials a requirement for graduation from GGAGST. We have set our design standards to meet these goals:

- 100% of students will have earned a certificate in Geographic Information Systems using ESRI K-12 mapping software and open source GIS platforms
- 80% of students will have earned at least one Industry Recognized Credential in GEOINT/RS&I (stackable), Network Security, or Cybersecurity upon graduation
- 75% of students will have experience working in a STEM based apprenticeship in GEOINT
- 100% of students will have experience in job shadowing or working with an industry-based mentor upon graduation
- 100% of GGAGST students will have fundamentals in Chinese Mandarin foreign language upon graduation (basic symbol recognition, writing, speech pattern production)
- 35% of GGAGST students will have shadowing or mentor/mentee experience with local entrepreneurs in related industries upon graduation

There are currently no other known charter schools that offer education centered on the global economy and relative post-secondary alternatives like STEM apprenticeships, credentialing and small business ownership education focused on international relations and global market intelligence. GGAGST will act as a catalyst for students being prepared with skills and education that are in high demand. We will also offer Enrichment and Character Education Programs during a period of the school day. These programs include: Success as a Habit, Right Choice Right Now, and Money Matters- all created to help students understand how to apply the knowledge that they receive at the academy to their real lives.

GGAGST will also offer Experience Programming. These programs will be corporate or grant sponsored trips that include: Annual Overseas Trip (selected seniors only), Tours of Global Companies involved in importing and exporting goods or services, Tour of Missouri State Capitol and MO International Trade & Investment Office, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, and Walking Tours of local business and tech districts. Also as part of the school's design, GGAGST will hold an annual fundraiser open to sponsors, partners and the public named *Gateway to the Globe* where student finalists will be given an opportunity to present their ideas and solutions (in the form of researched mapping project) for solving world issues.

### **How Can Low-Income Students Connect with a Global Economy Focused Education?<sup>6</sup>**

- Better understanding of how international issues affect their communities (i.e. more jobs, less jobs, higher consumer prices, etc.)
- Better understanding of US foreign policy including trade, national security and diplomacy increasing their ability to communicate these issues and to work in contributing sectors or industries
- Access to information, ideas and innovations that their counterparts in more affluent districts receive (making them equals in the attainment of critical knowledge)
- The ability to understand other cultures in relation to themselves
- An interest in traveling outside of the U.S. and broadening their awareness of world issues
- Learning how their home state is connected to other nations through commerce and how that has an impact on jobs and the possibility of entrepreneurship for them
- Sparks high aspirations and the desire to excel and participate in higher level thinking, planning, and working in society

### **A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A GGAGST STUDENT**

GGAGST will have a scheduled school day with classes beginning at 8:00am and ending at 3:25pm Monday through Friday. Daily schedules will consist of traditional learning (Math, Science, Social Studies, and Language Arts) with a series of required thematic electives, enrichment programs and

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<sup>6</sup> David Hicks. "A Rationale for Global Education", *UNESCO Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future*, UNESCO, 2009. [http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/mods/theme\\_c/popups/mod18t05s02.html](http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/mods/theme_c/popups/mod18t05s02.html)

credentialing courses. The student would arrive by car, walking, or school bus each day at 7:30am. After visiting her locker, she would walk to the Commons area and get in line at the breakfast bar for a light breakfast snack at a table in the Commons. She would socialize with classmates while enjoying her breakfast snack. At 7:50am the morning class bell would ring, and she would leave the Commons to walk to her first Elective class. Following first period, she would attend her Social Science, Math, and ELA classes having a five-minute period between each class to go to her locker or to the restroom. After her morning classes, she would go to her locker to drop off morning books and materials then head over the Commons area to get in line for the lunch bar. Following lunch, the student would attend her required Foreign Language elective, then Physical Science, and her Experiential Elective that offers stackable industry credentials. Near the end of the school day, she would report to her Enrichment Class where she will spend time during the semester studying, completing homework or research, and learning about a selected Enrichment topic like “Making Smart Choices for the Future”. Enrichment periods will also be used for outdoor learning experiences like gardening and other team building activities. After the school day has ended, she would be released to go home by car, school bus, or walking or report to the Commons for afterschool study monitored by school staff. The school’s Commons area will be open from 3:25pm - 5:30pm daily to provide students with a safe and nurturing environment to read, study, use wi-fi (for school work) prepare, or socialize with other like-minded classmates and afterschool staff. The school will purchase two used school buses to provide morning, afternoon, and afterschool transportation for students living in adjacent north St. Louis City neighborhoods. Afterschool transportation will be limited.

Sample of a 9<sup>th</sup> grade daily schedule at GGAGST:

START	END	COURSE
7:30am	7:50am	Light breakfast bar (in Commons area)
8:00am	8:45am	Elective 1
8:50am	9:35am	Social Science
9:40am	10:25am	Math
10:30am	11:15am	English Language Arts
11:30am	12:00pm	LUNCH BREAK
12:05pm	12:50pm	Elective 2/ Foreign Language
1:00pm	1:45pm	Physical Science
1:50pm	2:35pm	Elective 3/Experiential (GIS)
2:40pm	3:20pm	Enrichment (Tues/Thur/Fri – outdoors)
3:20pm	3:25pm	RELEASE

## OUTCOMES

### *Academic*

GGAGST’s academic goals include:

- ✓ 95% of students meet Missouri Learning Priority Standards in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies
- ✓ Increase the number of high school graduates to 95%, exceeding the Missouri state average of 87.5% by almost 10%,
- ✓ Qualify 100% of our graduating students with certifications or nanodegrees in high demand fields relative to global business and technology in Geospatial/GEOINT/Remote Sensing & Imagery (Satellite); Network Security; and CyberSecurity
- ✓ Prepare 100% of our students for ACT and SAT exams to enable them to make the post-secondary choice that meets their needs
- ✓ Provide a minimum of 35% of our students with entrepreneurial shadowing, mentors, and entrepreneurship training by utilizing NFTE (Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship) education program.

In our targeted physical location, the average graduation rate between three main district high schools is 49.9% and of that, an average of only 43.2% enroll in college. In contrast, of the charter high schools that serve 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 86.9% graduate and of that, 72.3% enroll in college.<sup>7</sup> This demonstrates that charter schools as a choice

<sup>7</sup> “Annual School Guide”, *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, “MO DESE data,

<https://graphics.stltoday.com/apps/education/schools/district-map-scores/?district=lift-for-life-academy>

has proven to increase the likelihood of graduation, college enrollment, and ultimately success leading to positive life choices. Our students will be motivated to create change and become participatory agents in the world around them. NEA (National Education Association) lists “high expectations” and a “rigorous curriculum” that connects students’ lives and communities to career education as a key factor leading to higher graduation rates.<sup>8</sup> The academy will provide a rigorous curriculum that challenges students to see the world in relation to their community and enhances their creativity and critical thinking through experiences, projects and online research. These include research and data banks from government, NGOs, research foundations, think tanks and universities. GGAGST students will be continuously exposed to big picture thinking- leading to increased performance in the academy and hope for higher aspirations post-graduation.

### ***Engagement & Recruitment***

GGAGST is currently fully involved in community research and engagement. To date, the organization has conducted surveys collected a range of ordinal and ratio data from high school students and parents/guardians within targeted St. Louis City Zip codes. Most notably, of 137 surveys of parents/guardians, 94% answered “YES” to supporting a ‘new charter high school and/or middle school in their community that would help prepare their students for global career pathways like that of NGA’. We will continue to fully engage parents, community stakeholders and youth in the targeted metro community. Our key engagement and recruitment methods include demographic and ethnographic research used to improve program delivery, quarterly community meetings, social media, blogging and published articles, advertisement, quarterly sponsored youth and community talks from leaders in public and private sectors. In addition to traditional students, we will have active enrollment slots open for recent drop-outs that want to return to high school as well as special needs students. We will host small, semi-annual community summits to encourage dropout re-enrollment and to engage special needs families.

### ***Operational/Financial***

Our plan is to ensure that the staff, administration and board members hold everyone on the team fully accountable for the operational and financial responsibility and capability needed to grow GGAGST. We will have professionals in place with backgrounds in higher education management, taxation and finance, community investment, grants and other funding for nonprofit organizations. Our immediate goal will be to identify an experienced finance partner to lead our accounting and a fundraising professional to lead our grant search and writing, events, and a potential social enterprise to generate revenue. We will also prioritize hiring a HR professional. Operating as an LEA under Title I status, we will fully employ a system of checks and balances and other internal controls including: reports and auditing, timely and accurate bill payments and payroll, have an updated software and cloud based accounting system and will develop annual and long-term budget calendars.

- ✓ Remain in compliance with all state and federal guidelines
- ✓ Create budget that includes local, state and federal funding as well as grants, corporate sponsors and gifts
- ✓ Work with a financial partner to implement a 10-year financial plan
- ✓ Grow fund balance by 20% by end of first charter term
- ✓ Operate facility at no more than 15% of annual budget

### ***Achieving Outcomes***

GGAGST has goals, tactics and strategies in place for budgeting, earning revenue, management, sourcing and community engagement. Beginning the process of searching for grants, private donors, and corporate sponsorships early and continuously will help us achieve our financial goals. There is also a detailed strategy in place to recruit highly qualified teachers and administrative personnel to manage departments including finance, programs, compliance and legal, curriculum and instruction, parent/guardian involvement and marketing and outreach. To achieve our academic goals, we will use a blended learning approach that includes

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<sup>8</sup> Marcella R. Deanda, Ed.D. *NEA (National Education Association), “Preventing Future High School Dropouts”, An Advocacy and Action Guide for State and Local Affiliates, Nov 2008, <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/dropoutguide1108.pdf>*

traditional, experiential, online and thematic. Connecting career opportunities with our school's theme and curriculum will help students to understand how high school and post-secondary education is important to obtaining success in the future. Our career program infuses traditional CTE mechanisms with other key information important to high school students including salary expectations; cities and countries with growing sectors; cities, states and nations they can travel to with certain careers; and high-level government positions they can aspire to fill at the state or national level. Students' progress along with teacher development will be tracked using assessments every quarter as well as evaluations.

### ***Founding Team***

The founding team will consist of five to seven members rotating in three-year terms. The founding team will include Zekita Armstrong Asuquo, B.A., CCIT, MML Candidate, Chair & President of Gateway Global AYBA, GeoFutures Committee Member, and sociologist with a background in diversity management, international marketing, social enterprise management, private school operations, and workforce development; Michael Burns, M.A., President of Northside Community Housing Inc. and background in leading privately owned daycare facilities and real estate at SLPS; and Takako Nomi, PhD, Associate Professor, St. Louis University Department of Education; and Mark Tatgenhorst, Director of Geospatial Innovation Center at T-Rex Downtown. The organization has three prospective board members under consideration. These include: Jason Hall, CEO Arch to Park; Dara Eskridge, Exec. Director, InvestSTL; and Andy Dearing, President, Spatial Advisors. Patty Hagen, PhD, Executive Director of T-Rex Downtown currently services on the advisory board.