

Prospectus

Proposed New Directions Charter High School

I. Executive Summary

Mission

The mission of the proposed New Directions Charter High School is to give pregnant teen girls and parenting teen boys and girls residing within the five boroughs of New York City, a place where they have the opportunity to resume and complete their high school education. New Directions Charter High School will provide an environment that is non-judgmental, encourages academic growth and excellence, develops self-confidence and worth, and promotes critical thinking skills that will open the door for positive life choices.

Key Design Elements

In order for the proposed New Directions Charter High School to fulfill its mission, our school's key design elements will include:

- a. More time to learn – this encompasses three sub elements.
Extended school year – our school year will run from August to June.
Extended school week – our school week will be Monday to Saturday,
Extended school day – our school day will go from 8:00am to 4:30pm
Mon, Tues, Thurs, and Friday; and from 9am to 1:45pm on Wed and Sat
- b. High Academic Standards.
Every student will be required to pass all classes with a 70%; complete four years in math, science, English, social studies. Plus students must complete four years in Spanish, French, or Latin.
- c. Uniforms
All students and staff will be required to wear uniforms.
- d. Success Teams for each grade.
- e. On-site daycare services
New Directions Charter High School will provide onsite day care for those students needing this support.

Founding Group's Capacity

The proposed New Directions Charter High School founding members have an extensive professional background in nonprofit management, education, human resources, and community engagement. All founding members live or work within the five boroughs of New York City.

Here is a brief synopsis of their background:

1. Jacquelyn Wideman has worked in nonprofit management for over 20 years. Her work includes volunteer management, grant writing, nonprofit development,

program development and evaluation. She has held various management positions with the Girl Scouts, Morris Heights Health Center in the Bronx, and the New York Council of Smaller Churches, a drug treatment center in Harlem for dually diagnosed HIV positive clients. Ms. Wideman holds a MS in nonprofit management, fundraising certification from Indiana University, and currently a PhD candidate in nonprofit management and service leadership through Capella University

2. Carlos Haynes has worked in the business world for over 30 years. He holds a BA in Business Administration. Mr. Haynes has been the pastor of Faith Assemblies Church of God for over 20 years located in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, New York. Being pastor has connected him to the community and its people. He saw the devastation of hunger among families, children and the elderly and started an emergency feeding program which serves over 10,000 men, women and children monthly for the past 10 years.
3. Elissa Campbell has worked in the public high school system for over 10 years as a guidance counselor in Brooklyn, New York. She holds a bachelors in education.
4. Brenda Morris has worked a teacher in a private school for over 15 years. She holds a masters in education.
5. Lynn Henderson has over 30 years as chief human resources manager for a head start daycare. Ms Henderson holds a BA in Liberal Arts. Ms. Henderson also has extensive experience in parental involvement, community partnerships and volunteer management. She also has various certifications including School Age Childcare Director's Training certification, Human and Community Services certification from Empire State College, Family Development training and credentialing from NYC Technical College.
6. Ellen Cates holds a BA in Liberal Arts from Pace University. She has worked in the Bedford Stuyvesant community for over 10 years at the Bedford Stuyvesant Family Health Center as the assistant program director.

Once the proposed New Directions Charter High School is approved, the board of trustees will include three parents and three community residents who will also be the Parent Coordinating Committee. This committee will work with the community, the proposed charter high school and the leadership to insure that their voices, suggestions and ideas are always woven into the fabric of the proposed New Directions Charter High School.

II. Student Population

Grades	Projected Enrollment Table				
	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2017-2018
K					
1st					
2nd					
3rd					
4th					
5th					
6th					
7th					
8th					
9th	80	80	80	80	80
10th		80	80	80	80
11th			80	80	80
12th				80	80
Ungraded					
Totals	80	160	240	320	320

The proposed New Directions Charter High School will enroll 80 students in its first year for grade 9 with four classes of no more than 20 students each.

Each progressive year until reaching 12th grade will have no more than 80 students as well. At least 75% of students will succeed to the next grade level. No matter what the student's academic ability, there will be a mixture of high and low performers in each grade class. This will help low performers by not segregating them among other low performers thus encouraging self esteem and self confidence to achieve.

On our Letter of Intent for the proposed New Directions Charter High School will be located in Community Board 3 – Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, New York, which encompasses school districts 13 and 16. However, our proposed high school will be open to all New York City residents who meet the proposed schools eligibility. The eligibility criteria for admission is residing in communities within NYC's five boroughs where the poverty level is 20% or above (U.S. Census Bureau 2006 – 2008 American Community Survey); are at risk of dropping out or failing due to being pregnant or a parenting teen; or have low proficiency in English as a second language or considered English language learners.

The founding group saw a need that was not being met in their community and that of the five boroughs of New York City. According to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Teen Pregnancy in New York City: 1997 – 2007, teen pregnancy rates for New York City teens ages 15 – 17 years in 2007 was 52.2%, compared to the same age group for the United States was lower at 40.2%, a difference of 12.98%. However, this number does not represent the number of teen boys who are parenting fathers that have custody of their babies. The need for an all inclusive high school for pregnant and parenting teens will eliminate barriers to completing high school education; eliminate stigma and judgmental attitudes associated with those that are pregnant and in school; provide a supportive environment to academically achieve; and provide onsite daycare eliminating daycare barriers to returning to school.

Out of the 52.2% of pregnant teens ages 15 – 17 years, 75.4% are Black non-Hispanic and 73.2% are Hispanic. 17.7% of Black non-Hispanic teens ages 15 – 17 had live births, and 31.1% of Hispanic teens in the same age group had live births. This report from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene 1997 – 2007 examined teen pregnancy rates by district public health office area and age (DPHO). East and Central Harlem had the highest rate at 100.9% for teens ages 15 -17; the South Bronx was second at 86.9% and North and Central Brooklyn at 80.4%.

Although the rate of teen births in NYC has been declining over the past decade, the correlation between teen pregnancy and poverty persists. In 2007, there were 8,480 live births to teenagers in NYC, and, in an overwhelming majority of these cases, the mother was unmarried and poor. Mott Haven, NYC's poorest community district, also has the highest rate of teen pregnancy (16%) among Hispanic low English proficiency residents. Teen pregnancy is one of several risks that young people living in poverty face during their

transition into adulthood. Other risks include school suspension, sexually transmitted infections, substance abuse, and other unhealthy behaviors.

The city's poverty rate is significantly higher than the national average at 18.7 percent. All of these numbers have a margin of error, and because of the way the number is calculated, Mayor Michael Bloomberg says there really was no increase in the city's poverty rate during that period.

The Bronx, as usual, has the highest poverty rate in the city at 28.5 %, followed by Brooklyn at 21.5%. Latinos in the city have the highest poverty rate at 28.1%. The black poverty rate is about 21%, and for whites, it is 13.8 %.

In order for students to access the proposed New Directions High School, the founding members will network and engage community boards in those communities identified as those that have a need for the key design elements of the proposed school. Also, recruitment strategies will include engaging New York City high schools that have a high percentage of students that are at risk of dropping out or failing due to being pregnant or a parenting teen; or have low proficiency in English as a second language or considered English language learners.

Students attending our proposed charter high school would be eligible for free or reduce lunches; and for other services deemed appropriate to support and encourage them in their quest for academic excellence.

The proposed New Directions Charter High School's curriculum will be academically rigorous that will meet and perform at 75% of the NYS learning standards, but will also keep the student's abilities first and therefore, will adapt teaching techniques based on the student's academic map, monthly assessments and progress towards academic goals. Creating an environment of student first, will allow the student, parents, and success team to design individual academic learning maps that is realistic and attainable where the student will not feel overwhelmed, but acceptable because the student will have input and ownership of their academic maps. To accomplish this, the proposed charter high school will utilize the Concept Schools Model.

Students will receive four periods of Literacy, 2 periods of math, one period of science with two periods of lab each week and one period of social studies on a daily basis. Students will also receive physical education according to their ability, ELL immersion, French, Spanish or Latin and technology classes.

Students of the proposed New Directions Charter High School will be retained through the Success Teams, high engagement of parental involvement and a sense of community through emotional and social support for each student through the Success Teams. Each grade will have a success team for students to

access when obstacles arise that may cause interruption of achieving their graduation goals.

Building a community of support and care through the success teams, each team will be comprised of an intervention specialist that will work with students to remove obstacles of possible failure; an academic guidance specialist who will assist the students to remain on track with academic goal mapping, monitoring and evaluating course work towards graduation; special education teacher that will work with those students who have been identified as needing this support service; and a social worker that will assist students with personal life issues and make referrals as needed.

The Success Team will be able to problem solve academic and social needs of each student. Each success team will develop academic maps by utilizing the Concepts Schools Model, for each student to follow in completing course requirements and credits towards graduation. Monitoring and evaluation will be done on a monthly basis according to student's progress at which time changes can be made that will keep students on track to their goal. If remedial time is needed or more time for ELL is required, then the success team and the student will be able to schedule this time that fits into the student's schedule on Wednesdays and Saturdays. This will be accomplished by using a comprehensive assessment program that utilizes several different measures. They are Aptitude Test, Criterion-referenced tests, Formative assessment, Multiple-choice tests, Performance assessments, Norm-referenced tests, Standardized achievement tests

Using the aforementioned internal assessments and monitoring will be coupled with the NYS assessments for the appropriate grade, and adjustments to the students' academic map.

III. School Design

In order for the proposed New Directions Charter High School to fulfill its mission, our school's key design elements will include:

- f. More time to learn – this encompasses three sub elements.
 - 1. Extended school year – our school year will run from August to June. This will allow our students to make up classes, credits and tests needed to keep them on track to graduation.
 - 2. Extended school week – our school week will be Monday to Saturday, allowing the students more time for academics, remedial help, and use of school resources possibly not available at home.
 - 3. Extended school day – our school day will go from 8:00am to 4:30pm Mon, Tues, Thurs, and Friday with breakfast, lunch and evening meals being offered; and from 9am to 1:45pm on Wed and Sat with breakfast and lunch being offered. The Wednesday and Saturday schedules will

allow for professional development, planning and evaluation time for our staff, and make up time for students.

- g. High Academic Standards
Every student will be required to pass all classes with a 70%; complete four years in math, science, English, social studies. Plus students must complete four years in Spanish, French, or Latin.
- h. Uniforms
All students will be required to wear uniforms. Uniforms for students will encourage focus on academics and not on fashion. Also, a uniform dress code will be required for all staff as role models for our students.
- i. Success Teams for each grade
Each grade will have a success team for students to access when obstacles arise that may cause interruption of achieving their graduation goals
- j. On-site daycare services
New Directions Charter High School will provide onsite day care for those students needing this support. Many students find themselves with no support in this area, and therefore, do not return to school. New Directions wants to eliminate this barrier to completion of their high school diploma. New Directions will apply for the necessary process to provide an appropriate day care setting.

The proposed New Directions Charter High School will utilize the Concept Schools Model. The overarching philosophy of the model is the belief that “intelligence is not an innate ability and achievement is the outcome of effort, which is driven by motivation, not ability”. Therefore, academics will be engulfed in rich and meaningful auxiliary programs to motivate students and foster a thirst for learning, which aligns with the NYS Learning Standards and with Section 2850 – Purpose of the NYS Charter Schools Act of 1998 amended May 2007.

The proposed New Directions Charter High School will be structured in a manner that requires teachers to work in teams to plan lessons, analyze data, and develop strategies to increase student learning. The core features of Concept model are based on ten features of good small schools outlined in *Redesigning High Schools: What Matters and What Works* (2002), a publication of the School Redesign Network at Stanford University. The core features of Concept Design, which are research based, include:

Personalized approach – Each student will have daily, individualized support for achieving milestones toward their own goals and school goals. Research shows that social supports are as important as academic supports for improving student achievement and preparing students for life beyond high school graduation (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007; Pathways to College Network, 2007). Social supports can include small learning communities, structured peer interactions, and faculty advisors for small groups of students (Herlihy & Quint, 2006). Other forms of social support increase students’ access to college information through post-graduation planning sessions, financial aid and college application assistance, and generally establishing a college-going mindset among high school students (Hoyt, 2001; Nagaoka et al., 2006; Corwin & Tierney, 2007).

Continuous relationships – Effective small schools are designed to nurture relationships with students. Concept has an advisory system. Each teacher is assigned a small group of students to advise, mentor, and help with academic, social, and emotional needs. Teachers organize additional events with their group of students outside the school in order to build a sustainable and healthy relationship. Advisors conduct home visits to their students to assist in building a relationship with their parents, as well. Advisors are the primary contact for parents regarding their children. The advisory system, along with the homeroom, which is also focused on community-building activities, will foster an environment that allows students to be socially and emotionally safe. Students' sense of belonging and community will increase self-esteem and lead to greater success.

High standards and performance-based assessments – the Concept Schools Model clearly define the expectations for academic achievement and conduct for all students regardless of background. Students, parents, teachers, and staff create and reinforce a culture of achievement and support through a range of formal and informal rewards and consequences for academic performance and behavior. With an extended school day, week, and year, students will have more time in the classroom to acquire the academic knowledge and skills that will prepare them for competitive colleges.

Adaptive pedagogy – Teachers use multiple instructional strategies to adapt teaching to students' backgrounds, talents, interests, and the nature of their past performance. Students are taught how to study, how to approach academic tasks, and how to evaluate their own and others' work. By carefully scaffolding tasks, teachers work students through a step-by-step process resulting in a finished product.

Multi-cultural teaching – By exposing students to a rich, diversity of American and international cultures, the Concept Schools Model promote respect for diversity and create a context in which teachers' and students' experiences can be understood, appreciated, and connected to the curriculum. By drawing upon Concept Schools' relationships in and outside of the country, the schools hire a diverse faculty and administration.

Knowledgeable and skilled teachers –the Concept Schools Model recruit highly qualified math and science teachers that will be among the brightest, most talented in their field. Their demonstrated technological skills will be infused in their curriculums. Many have advanced degrees and understand the multifaceted needs of different learners.

Collaborative planning and professional development – Because so much is expected of the teachers, professional development and collaborative planning play a critical role at schools' success. The Summer Institute and professional development days during the year provide time for teachers to work together in teams and by grade levels to develop curriculum, review assessment data, and develop teaching strategies.

Family and community connections – Students, parents, teachers and staff are part of a school culture that fosters strong communication between school and families.

Everyone will be asked to uphold a commitment to the school and to each other to put in the time and effort required to achieve success. The schools host community breakfasts and student-centered exhibits to create a sense of community and build community support. Families and educators share responsibility for student learning and they will rely on each other to contribute to the learning process. High-quality interactions among educators and families can build trust, increase adult support for learning, and improve student performance (Adams & Christenson, 2000, Perna & Titus, 2005).

Democratic decision-making – Day-to-day decision-making is made as close to the classroom as possible. Teachers share responsibility for groups of students adapting teaching strategies to meet student needs. Students will be encouraged to attend parent-teacher conferences. Both parents and students will have the opportunity to serve on school committees and plan school events. Parents and teachers will have the opportunity to participate in professional development to enhance their ability to contribute to student success.

Authentic curriculum – Students are engaged in active learning set in a real world context and requiring higher-order thinking. Students consider alternatives in developing solutions and present them to an appropriate audience.

Using the following internal assessments, monitoring will be coupled with the NYS assessments for the appropriate grade, the proposed New Directions Charter High School will utilize a variety of tools to evaluate and assess progression towards academic achievements. They are:

Aptitude Test

A test consisting of items selected and standardized so that the test predicts a person's future performance on tasks not obviously similar to those in the test. Aptitude tests may or may not differ in content from achievement tests, but they do differ in purpose. Aptitude tests consist of items that predict future learning or performance; achievement tests consist of items that sample the adequacy of past learning.

Criterion-referenced tests

This type of assessment is designed to compare a student's test performance with clearly defined curricular objectives, skill levels, or areas of knowledge. While norm-referenced test results compare student performance to peers—for example, a student spelled better than 95 percent of his or her classmates— results from criterion-referenced tests compare the performance to a predefined set of objectives—and demonstrated mastery (knowledge) of a specific subject, such as long division.

Formative assessment

A process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes. Formative assessment provides educators with critical information about student and classroom progress and can be used to

adjust the teacher's approach and the pace of instruction throughout the year. Formative assessment is often used as a tool for uncovering opportunities for instructional intervention because it gives teachers information about where additional practice and support may be needed. Importantly, formative assessments help deliver this information while there is still time in the school year to improve student achievement.

Multiple-choice tests

Many standardized tests give students the opportunity to select responses to test questions from among a number of specific choices. This format, called "selected response" or "multiple choice," is efficient and practical. Carefully designed multiple-choice questions can provide valid information about students' knowledge and their ability to reason logically and apply complex thinking processes to solve problems. Norm-referenced tests are usually administered in a multiple-choice format, where the correct answer is provided along with incorrect answers. These are the tests most adults remember taking in their youth. In most instances, multiple-choice tests are scored by computers and provide impartial, accurate results.

Performance assessments

Tests that directly assess pupil performance. Students may be asked to write an essay or short response, draw a conclusion, respond to a reading passage, or perform a science experiment. Teachers or other school personnel observe students' performances and rate the outcomes. This kind of assessment is also useful in measuring listening skills, writing, and the process of problem solving. Performance assessments can also be standardized so that the test is given and scored the same way at each administration.

Norm-referenced tests

Norm-referenced achievement tests measure basic concepts and skills commonly taught in schools throughout the country. These tests are not designed as precise measures of any given curriculum or single instructional program. Results from norm-referenced tests provide information that compares students' achievement with that of a representative national sample. This gives teachers the opportunity to compare their students with other students. So, when a teacher says that a student scored at the 82nd percentile, that student's score was equal to or better than 81 percent of the scores of all the students who took the same norm-referenced test during the forming process.

Standardized achievement tests

These tests are commonly used to provide valid, reliable, and unbiased information about students' knowledge in various areas. "Standardized" means that the test is always given and scored the same way. The same questions are asked and the same directions are given for each test. Specific time limits are set, and each student's performance may be compared with that of all the other students taking the same test. Most standardized achievement tests are norm-referenced, multiple-choice tests.

The proposed New Directions Charter High School proposes to be located in community board 3 and co-occupying NYCBOE school space in either School District 13 or 16, which was indicated in this RFP as having under-utilized school space. The founding members will work with the community through community board 3's manager to identify an appropriate engagement style of engaging parents, and community residents. Also, the founding members will engage and work with the specified school districts' superintendents to share best practices keep them informed of the proposed charter high school's academic and community activities.

The proposed New Directions Charter High School will work through and with our congressional representative the Honorable Ed Towns because the physical location of the proposed charter high school will be in Community Board 3.

Also, the proposed charter high school will partner potentially with community based organizations that specifically serve the same population, such as TASA. TASA, which is the Teenage Services Act under the NYC's Administration for Children's Services programs work with pregnant or parenting teens who are receiving Medicaid or whose child only has Medicaid. TASA's case managers help mothers and fathers under age 22 to manage their new responsibilities, take control of their lives, and learn how to provide better futures for them and their children.

Another community based program that will provide supportive services for the target population of the proposed charter high school is Teen ACTION. The Teen ACTION (Achieving Change Together in Our Neighborhood) initiative establishes after-school service-learning programs serving middle and high-school students in neighborhoods with high rates of poverty and teen pregnancy.

Many high schools continue to be isolated from their communities and community partners and limited family engagement unless communication is for disciplinary actions. The proposed New Directions Charter High School will propose to address this concern through the Action Team, a component of the National Network of Partnership Schools. Teachers, administrators, parents, community members and students work together to design and implement partnership activities that meet goals for student success. The goal is to enable families and communities to become informed about and involved in the student's education and schools. The Parent Coordinating Committee will be the oversight committee for the Action Team.

The Action Team will employ a variety of strategies for increasing such involvement that will include:

- Offering programs to parents that provide parent and child-rearing skills development;
- Communicating with families about school programs student progress;
- Involving families as volunteers and audiences at school events;
- Including families as participants in school decisions and governance;

- Conducting open board meetings quarterly where the community is invited to learn what the proposed charter high school is doing and garner suggestions for improvement; and
- Collaborating with social service agencies to coordinate resources from the broader community for families and students. This component will have oversight provided by the Success Teams.