

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Mission and Vision

The mission of the Amani Public Charter School (“APCS” or the “School”) is to provide 100% of Mount Vernon students who attend the school from the 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade with the academic and critical thinking skills necessary to succeed in competitive high school programs, college and the career of their choice. APCS graduates are academically accomplished, intellectually curious, and civically engaged young people who tackle challenges diligently and creatively.

### Key Design Elements

There are three things that we will execute *ridiculously* well: great teaching, an exemplary academic program and strong school culture. Our program will adopt elements of the No Excuses Model that has proven successful in many charter schools. Every decision in the school at every level will be made through a process of goal setting, data analysis and program modification, which we refer to as the Continuous Cycle for Improvement. We are committed to a number of design elements which will deliver outstanding academic performance.

#### *Great Teaching*

We believe in the slogan made popular by Uncommon Schools, “Without Great Teachers, Nothing Else Matters.” Our faculty will be the champions and the backbone of the Amani community. Great teaching drives student achievement. We will employ a highly qualified faculty that will be committed to the middle school model and to teaching in an urban environment. We will expect teachers to be passionate about their content area and reflective about their practice. We will support the growth of master teachers with a robust embedded professional development program driven by the data on student achievement.

#### *Exemplary Academic Program*

We will develop a standards-based, rigorous academic program, with a strong focus on literacy and numeracy. Amani will be data-driven school. How are we doing? How do we know? These are the questions we will ask continuously. Data collection, analysis and reporting are the means to the answers.

We are going to create a data-based school culture. APCS will be a data-driven program in which teachers and administrators work together to analyze student assessment data, identify student needs and create instructional strategies to address them.

The Amani educational program will be based on best practices for middle schools, heavily influenced by the No Excuses Model. This model has proven effective in raising student achievement levels in at-risk student populations.

Amani’s small, structured school environment and its rigorous curriculum will lead to improved academic achievement for students who are eligible for the federal free and reduced priced lunch program.

We will offer a special education program that exceeds the statutory requirements of a least restrictive environment to provide an educational experience where special education students can truly thrive.

We believe the support of a dedicated ELL teacher, along with a structured program, will provide ELL students with the foundation they need to attain the achievement goals we have set for all students at Amani.

All Amani students will succeed in competitive high school programs, college and the career of their choice. We will create a learning community where the primary objective of all stakeholders is the advancement of the students.

### *Strong School Culture*

We will create a purposefully structured environment marked by rules, rituals and routines. In order for learning to take place, the school environment needs to be safe for both staff and students alike. There will be clear expectations for behavior and a consistent approach to school discipline. Our students will be in school more time in the day and more weeks in the year. The instructional day will begin at 7:45 A.M. and continue until 4:00 P.M. Amani students will be in school an average of 495 minutes per day, compared to 367 minutes per day for students in the Mount Vernon middle schools. The School will operate for 195 days per academic year, three full weeks longer than the traditional Mount Vernon schools, where a 180 day year is the norm.

Amani will be a small school, enrolling 80 students in the first year. While research is mixed regarding the effect of small *class* size, it does indicate that a small *school* size has a positive impact on student outcomes. A full enrollment of 320 students allows Amani to execute a strong assessment system and to closely monitor student achievement every step of the way.

### Founding Group's Capacity

#### *Who We Are*

Our founding team includes a coalition of Mount Vernon residents, educators, parents, grandparents, non-profit representatives, and community and civic leaders. Mount Vernon is a small, insular community. Interpersonal relationships and histories carry great weight as a result. It would be extremely difficult for a perceived outsider to engender community support. Of the eleven prospective Amani board members, five are lifelong members of the Mount Vernon community and were educated in its public schools. They include deacons at local churches, past employees of the Mount Vernon City School District, a former school board trustee, a past trustee of the Mount Vernon Library, a trustee of the Mount Vernon Library Friends Foundation and parents of children presently in the Mount Vernon public schools.

Our founding board includes a partner in a global law firm who is prepared to lend his own time and to seek out *pro-bono* legal assistance for the school; a former Mount Vernon school board trustee who has worked as a business manager for a public charter school; and a Certified Public Accountant with extensive professional experience as a controller for a multibillion-dollar division of a public company. Two members of our board bring a background in education. One is a long-time professor of education who has expertise in professional and curriculum development as well as school administration; the other is an Admissions Director at a public college in New York State who brings a strong operations background as well as visibility into the remote end of the Amani students' educational journey. One prospective board member started her own local non-profit in the area and brings a strong community perspective; another has worked in capacity-building for not-for-profits; and the last brings a background in governmental affairs from his years as a special assistant in the Office of the Governor of New York State.

## II. STUDENT POPULATION

### A. Student Enrollment

Amani will admit new students in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade only. Based on discussions with leaders at charter schools, specifically an Operations Manager at KIPP and the Principal of the Charter School of Educational Excellence (the only charter school located in Westchester County), 10% attrition in each year is anticipated. Our goal is to maintain an enrollment of 320 students when the school is at full capacity. We feel that this is an optimal level to foster a small school environment. Amani will be characterized by a structured, high-expectations culture, and students who are exposed for four full years are the most likely to benefit and to succeed academically. Presently, the middle schools in Mount Vernon are 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade only. We believe that starting our school in the fifth grade will allow us to intercede and assist the students during a pivotal time in their academic, social, physical and emotional development.

| School Year     | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 |
|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 5 <sup>th</sup> | 80      | 80      | 88      | 88      | 88      |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> |         | 80      | 80      | 88      | 88      |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> |         |         | 72      | 72      | 72      |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> |         |         |         | 72      | 72      |
| Total           | 80      | 160     | 240     | 320     | 320     |

### B. Target Populations

Mount Vernon is a densely populated suburban city covering four square miles with a high concentration of poverty in what is colloquially known as its *south side*. Railroad tracks run through the center of Mount Vernon, and for decades divided it roughly into rich and poor, white and black, privileged and under-privileged, with the latter living south of the tracks. We plan on placing the school facility squarely within the two square miles of the south side, in zip code 10550. The demographic data in the New York State Report Cards reflects clearly that a concentration of high needs children is situated in proximity to Mount Vernon’s south side elementary schools and along its western corridor.

#### Identifying and Attracting Free and Reduced Priced Lunch Eligible Students

The highest density of children eligible for free and reduced price lunch can be found near four elementary schools. These schools are Parker, Hamilton, Williams and Grimes.

The table below reflects the free and reduced lunch eligible student enrollment percentages for these elementary schools.

| Parker | Grimes | Hamilton | Williams |
|--------|--------|----------|----------|
| 72%    | 53%    | 71%      | 80%      |

Source: New York State Report Cards 2008-2009

Fundamentally, we know where the density of high needs children exists. We know that it is going to require an enormous ground initiative to reach parents and caregivers of the target population. The School will be publicized and marketed throughout the community to a broad cross-section of families and prospective students. We will recruit free and reduced priced lunch eligible children in numbers that are comparable to or greater than the Mount Vernon City School District using the following specific tactical measures:

*Door-to-Door Information Distribution:* Target students can be found in the following housing complexes: Levister Towers, Ebony Gardens and The Plaza (Lefrak Housing). In each one the Amani team enjoys one or more resident contacts prepared to serve as community liaison to gain access. We have prior experience conducting door-to-door campaigns in these buildings, as several founding board members are also Mount Vernon Democratic District Leaders. This is a strategy that we will use to reach families that are traditionally less informed about educational choice.

*Mailing:* We have focused a majority of our informational outreach over the last few months in the 10550 zip code. This was an important strategic move to educate a segment of the community that is somewhat less aware of school choice options and about charter schools. This effort was concomitant with the petition process. We have over 385 signatures in support of the charter school, 105 of which are from parents of children eligible to attend grade 5 in September 2011. A large majority of these supporters live in the 10550 zip code. If the School’s application is approved, Amani will send letters to all families, outlining the opening of the school and alerting these individuals to the lottery process. .

*Open House:* Community-style open house meetings will be held in the Doles Center, the Mount Vernon Public Library and the Mount Vernon Family YMCA. All are community institutions located in the 10550 zip code. The public library director has submitted a letter of support to the project. The Mount Vernon Family YMCA is a partner with us, serving as a potential landlord.

*Retaining Students:* Our student retention rate will be linked to the degree to which parents feel confident that the needs of their children are being met. It will be critical to respectfully communicate with parents about issues that are important to them, and to continuously monitor and measure the parents’ perceptions of the program and of their children’s safety and educational progress. Our founding team is well equipped to do this, as a majority of us live in the community, utilize the resources in the community and reflect the population that we plan to serve.

Identifying and Attracting Students with Disabilities

The special education classification rate in Mount Vernon is elevated relative to the neighboring communities and relative to New York State overall. In Mt. Vernon 13.67% of students are classified, 9% in New Rochelle, 8% in White Plains and 10% in Pelham. (Source: New York State Report Cards, 2008-09)

The table below reflects the enrollment of students with disabilities in the target elementary schools:

| Parker | Grimes | Hamilton | Williams |
|--------|--------|----------|----------|
| 29%    | 11%    | 17%      | 23%      |

Source: New York State Report Cards 2008-2009<sup>1</sup>

The grades 3-8 assessments as reflected in the New York State Report Cards indicate that students with disabilities are performing worse in Mount Vernon than in neighboring communities by a significant margin.

In Mt. Vernon, 14% of students with disabilities are performing at grade level on the ELA assessment. In New Rochelle, a similar sized district, there are 34% at or above grade level; 28% in White Plains, a

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<sup>1</sup> These percentages were determined by dividing the number of students with disabilities by total enrollment as reported in each school’s New York State Report Card, within the data for School Accountability for Elementary/Middle Level English Language Arts.

demographically similar district; and 67% in Pelham, a neighboring district. (Source: New York State Report Cards, 2008-09) Simply stated, although Mount Vernon’s neighboring districts have fewer students with disabilities, they are doing a notably better job at educating them.

The overwhelming majority of classifications come about as a result of behavioral issues. This information has been shared anecdotally by principals throughout the district and alluded to at district-wide school board meetings. It is difficult to determine the exact breakdown of the special education classifications in the district. The statewide statistics suggest that students might be over-classified in Mount Vernon.

We will recruit students with disabilities in numbers that are comparable to or greater than the Mount Vernon City School District using the following specific tactical measures:

*Newspaper/Cable TV/Radio PSA:* We are going to use free media to the extent practicable to get information about Amani’s special education program into the community. We understand that it will take an extensive public education campaign to inform people that special education services are available and to describe the qualifications of Amani’s special education faculty. Amani has appeared in local publications like the Mount Vernon Inquirer and we continue to make such appearances through our intensive community outreach efforts. We also have developed a relationship with popular local morning show host Bob Marone on WVOX1460 Radio and have appeared on his show to discuss the Amani Public Charter School. Many parents turn to this show for local information about the school district.

*Open House:* Information sessions will be held throughout the Mount Vernon community with organizations that serve special education families such as Family Ties, the Districts Special Education PTA, and Westchester Jewish Community Services.

*District Outreach:* One-on-one meetings will be held between the APCS’ Executive Director and APCS’ special education staff with any parents of special education students who express interest in learning more about how the school can meet the particular needs of their child.

We believe that applying consistent expectations to all aspects of school life will be the hallmark of the Amani program and will be critical for supporting the retention of the special education population.

Identifying and Attracting English Language Learners

The community of English Language Learners is complex. Three elementary schools have elevated ELL population percentages. The table below reflects the enrollment of English Language Learners at targeted schools:

|          |          |         |
|----------|----------|---------|
| Columbus | Hamilton | Lincoln |
| 24 %     | 22 %     | 20 %    |

The number of ELL students in Mount Vernon’s neighboring communities is extremely low by comparison, with the exception of New Rochelle where it is 11%. (Source: New York State Report Cards, 2008-09)

The profile of an ELL child in Mount Vernon is one with immigrant parents with a high school education who place a very high value on education. Largely due to language barriers, these parents experience challenges in accessing the resources of the city and the schools. Often the child knows more English than their parent. It is common for a sibling to adopt a liaison role for the family.

We will recruit English Language Learners in numbers that are comparable to or greater than the Mount Vernon City School District using the following specific tactical measures:

*Building Trust within the Community through Identified Community Leaders.* The Mexican and Brazilian communities have focal points in Mount Vernon where it is fairly easy to draw an audience for recruitment purposes. While the community is dispersed throughout the city, there are focal points located primarily in the western section of Mount Vernon along west Lincoln Avenue. For example, the Brazilian Bakery, Padaminas, on West Lincoln Avenue is owned by the “Unofficial Mayor of Mount Vernon’s Little Brazil.” He is also the owner of two nearby restaurants. Over the course of the development of our application, he has offered insight into the challenges of recent immigrants and made his community-based establishments available for open houses and outreach efforts. He has introduced members of the design team to clergy and other Portuguese-speaking people who are supportive of education options for the children of Brazilian immigrants. We are also actively pursuing this individual to be a member of our board.

*Meeting the Community Where They Are.* The focal point for the Latino community centers around several churches: Our Lady of Victory Roman Catholic Church, de Nuestra Señora de Monte Carmelo (Our Lady of Mount Carmel) Roman Catholic Church and St. Ursula’s Roman Catholic Church. All hold native language services. Design team members have visited each of these churches and have met with the clergy. We will hold community-style open houses at each of these churches, led by a Spanish and Portuguese-speaking member of our team.

*Appropriate Materials in Native Languages.* APCS will go to great lengths to assure that its materials are understandable for all levels of reading abilities and languages. All promotional materials, past and future, are translated to Spanish and Portuguese.

We will emphasize the personalized nature of our educational program and explain to parents and families the lengths to which we will go to in order to ensure retention.

#### How We Will Serve Free and Reduced Lunch Eligible Students

Students from economically depressed neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty are less likely to graduate high school or college and more likely to engage in risky behavior. We will serve these students by offering them an academically rich environment in which to thrive.

Researchers agree that the key agent in breaking the cycle of poverty is academic achievement. Current achievement data for Mount Vernon indicates that many students are not equipped with the skills needed to succeed in higher education. Mount Vernon High School has been a school in need of improvement for several years. Overall the graduation rate for Mount Vernon High School is 65%. The two middle schools in Mount Vernon have also struggled academically. In 2010 at Longfellow Middle School, 28.7% of eighth grade students scored at or above level 3 on the state ELA exam, while 41.7% scored at or above level 3 on the state math exam. In the same year at Davis Middle School, 27.0% of eighth grade students scored at or above Level 3 on the state ELA exam, and 23.9% scored at or above level 3 on the state math exam. Amani’s program will raise the academic achievement of students so that they will be more likely to attain high school graduation.

Davis Middle School, with almost 900 students, exceeds the size that researchers have recommended for schools to address the developmental and academic needs of their student population.<sup>2</sup> Large schools do

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<sup>2</sup> Research indicates that an effective size for a secondary school is 400-800. Williams, D. T. “The Dimensions of Education: Recent Research on School Size.” Working Paper Series. Clemson, SC: Clemson University, Strom Thurmond Institute of Government and Public Affairs, December 1990.

not allow for the personal attention that many students from poverty need. Research indicates that small schools, particularly for an academically at-risk urban population of students, lead to improved academic achievement, improved student attitudes towards school, increased extracurricular participation, higher attendance rates, and lower dropout rates.<sup>3</sup> Amani's small school environment will impact the retention of these students.

#### How We Serve English Language Learners

First and foremost we will develop a program that will respect the home language of our students. The inclusion model for English Language Learners is based on the belief that the acquisition of verbal skills is enhanced through immersion. All faculty members will receive training on ELL teaching strategies. We plan to hire a full-time ELL teacher who will provide push-in and pull-out intervention during ELA class time. We strongly believe the special support that the ELL teacher, along with a structured program, will provide students with the foundation they need to attain the achievement goals we have set for all students at Amani. As indicated by the actual enrolled ELL students, we anticipate that we will hire an ELL coordinator in a part-time capacity, at minimum, at the beginning of the life of the school. We will make a concerted effort to employ, at minimum, one staff member in the building who is fluent in Portuguese and one fluent in Spanish.

#### How We Will Serve Students with Disabilities

Amani will provide a program that will serve students with disabilities based on their individualized education plans (IEP), as developed by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) of the Mount Vernon City School District. Amani is built on the concept of inclusion for all students. All students will have access to the same curriculum and materials. The flexibility that is inherent in charter schools, the laser focus on data and the collaborative nature of the school culture enable Amani to offer a special education program that exceeds the statutory requirements of a least restrictive environment and to provide an educational experience where special education students can truly thrive.

Amani will deploy a collaborative team-teaching model for ELA and Math. There is an enormous measurable benefit to having two teachers in the classroom for these core subjects. Further, the special education teacher travels with the students as they move from class to class. This technique extends the opportunities for students to make connections with an adult and for a small educational environment within the school. There will be time during scheduled enrichment and advisory times for students requiring even more support.

The faculty will receive specific training and professional development regarding special education students. Therefore, the school leadership intends to reach out to organizations such as Accomplish Network to provide training, coaching and professional development on special education. The school will employ a part-time special education coordinator to provide on-going training, within the school's embedded professional development model, covering the referral process to the district's CSE, implementation of the students' IEPs, evaluation of students' progress toward meeting IEP goals and objectives, reporting requirements to parents and the CSE and the importance of confidentiality.

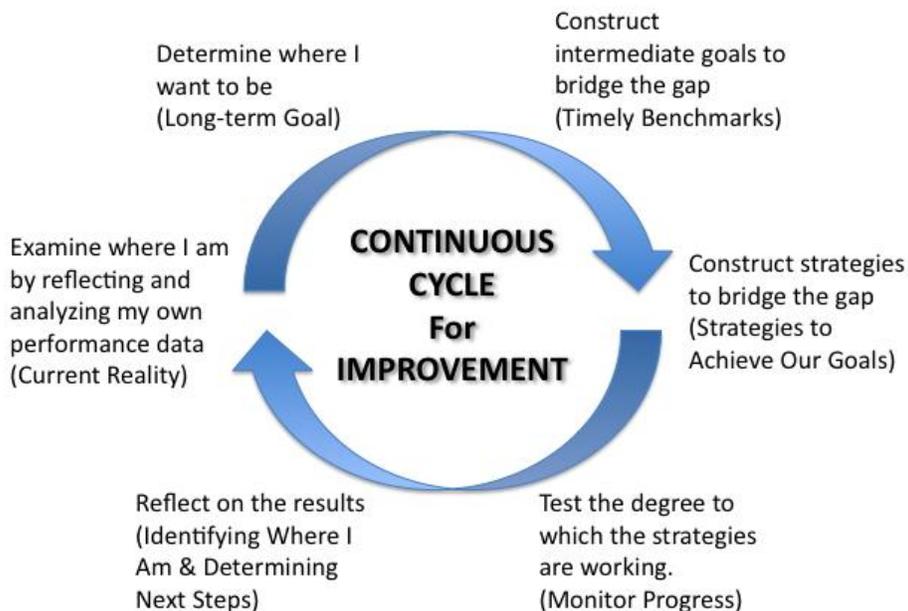
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<sup>3</sup> Cotton, Kathleen. "School Size, School Climate, and Student Performance." Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. May 1996. <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/10/c020.html>

### III. School Design

The educational philosophy of Amani is oriented around the Continuous Cycle for Improvement. Every decision in the school at every level will be made through a process of goal setting, data analysis, and program modification. Whether it is school-wide systems for attendance and discipline, teacher evaluation, professional development, or Response to Intervention for struggling students, the school will utilize formative assessment techniques to move the school forward towards its goals. All decisions that get filtered through the cycle will be geared towards the paramount goal of increasing student performance. If an intervention or corrective action at any level does not indicate a relationship to positive student growth, it will be subjected to review and modification.

#### *Continuous Cycle for Improvement*



Amani will open its doors with several presumptions about the essential ingredients for the success of middle school students. According to Wavering (1995) a middle school provides a bridge between the nurturing and support of the elementary classroom and the independence and self-discipline required at the high school level (pg. 10).<sup>4</sup> Amani will be the true definition of this bridge for the Mount Vernon Community. Presently the two middle schools are grades 7 and 8 and follow a more junior high school model.<sup>5</sup> We have chosen to start our school in the fifth grade and follow the middle school model as first developed by Eichorn (1966). At the time, Eichorn stated that the intent of the middle school is to provide “a curriculum which includes provision for a planned sequence of concepts in the general education areas; major emphasis on the interests and skills for continued learning; a balanced program for exploratory experiences and other activities and services for personal development; and appropriate

<sup>4</sup> Wavering, M.J. (1995) Educating Young Adolescents; Life in the Middle.

<sup>5</sup>Tye, K.A. (1985). The Junior High: School in Search of a Mission.

attention to the development of values” (pg. 3).<sup>6</sup> We intend to build this program with an emphasis on outstanding teaching, rigorous academic program, and awareness of the developmental issues of the young adolescent.

As part of the development of the school, the design team turned to research on the best practices for developing Middle Schools and the development of young adolescents. Numerous site visits to high-performing, public, urban elementary, middle and high schools, combined with our core beliefs, have informed our specific instructional philosophy.

Our structured classroom environment will help students to understand that the educational process should be honored. We expect that our students’ best selves will show up every day. The students will be told that they are part of the learning community and we are all working together - faculty, staff and administration, as well as their families - to help them reach their goals. These ideas will be influenced by the No Excuses Model. Our school environment will promote the value of hard work, discipline and the setting of and reaching for long-term goals.<sup>7</sup>

Members of our board visited at least 11 charter schools throughout the tri-state area. Schools visited included: Democracy Prep, KIPP Academy Middle School, Boys and Girls Harbor, Amistad Academy, Dream Charter School, Boys and Girls Harbor, Charter School for Educational Excellence, Girls Prep Bronx, The Bronx Preparatory Charter School, The Equity Project, Fahari Academy and Renaissance. These visits helped us to shape a concept of what a successful Charter school looks and feels like. In discussions with the school leaders we were able to shape an idea of how a successful charter school operates. Through in-depth study of these and other school programs, we are able to understand the methods needed to drive student achievement.

A key take-away from these visits is that school culture is a critical ingredient to the students’ success. We will create a strong, supportive school culture marked by rules, rituals and routines to establish the tone for a sound academic environment. Our visit to Amistad Academy influenced the ideas of the importance of a coming together of the whole community to celebrate each other. Every day at Amani will begin with morning meeting. Each meeting will be kicked off with our Amani Pledge

*Education is power.  
I am powerful because I am smart.  
Education is my weapon,  
learning is in my heart.*

This pledge will be important because we are attempting to instill in Amani Students the idea that learning is a lifelong journey and that high academic achievement and confidence in their ability to reach their goals is essential; they are Amani Achievers. Our goal is not to create *data bots*. Rather, we are concerned with the whole student. What we teach will not be relevant unless there is a connection to the individual student and their own personal power.

We will create an environment that is highly structured. The tone of the school will exude an intense seriousness about the value and benefits of learning and will be tightly focused on the preparation for the next stage and phase of the students’ academic lives. In order for learning to take place, the school environment needs to be safe for both staff and students alike. Clear expectations will be set for behavior with a consistent approach to school discipline.

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<sup>6</sup> Ichors, D.H. (1996), *The Middle School*.

<sup>7</sup> Thernstrom, A. & Thernstrom, S. (2003) *No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning*.

The importance of professional development was also evident from many of our school visits. We learned that many successful charter schools release their students early one day a week for professional development - The Bronx Preparatory Charter School at 12:00 P.M. on Wednesday and Coney Island Prep at 1:45 P.M., for example. We will adapt this model into our schedule. Our students will be released at 2:00 P.M. one day per week, allowing for two hours of weekly school-wide professional development. This time will be used to analyze assessment data and create plans to meet academic performance goals. The time will be dedicated to school-wide issues as well as grade level and content area specific issues as the school grows.

It is worth noting that this is a dramatically different approach to professional development versus the Mount Vernon City School District. The district holds 3 professional development days per year, totaling approximately 18 hours. Amani will hold more than 80 hours of professional development, a 4X increase. In addition, Amani's approach is to embed teacher training within the weekly routine of the teaching schedule so that relevant techniques and strategies may put into practice, and measured for efficacy, immediately. Here again, is an opportunity to apply the School's overarching concept of the continuous cycle of improvement.

The main objective for our visit to Girls Prep Bronx was to understand ways for two faculty members to effectively teach as a team in a classroom. At Girls Prep Bronx, there are two instructors present in classrooms — a fully certified Lead Teacher and a Fellow or Associate. This model allows for increased individual attention and daily small group instruction. This model will be effective for our student population. We will incorporate this model into our program by having two faculty members present in the ELA and Math classes. Girls Prep Bronx works with Princeton 55. We are exploring working with this program and also with local colleges to create a fellows program.

Our prospective Executive Director visited the Renaissance Charter School and spoke extensively with the Special Education Coordinator. The insights she gained regarding the IEP process and the Wilson Reading System will be considered for implementation in our program. We anticipate a significant number of Amani's students will require reading remediation.

A highly disciplined culture is integral to establishing an environment where students can achieve at high levels. Another school we visited is the Fahari Academy in Brooklyn. We were particularly interested in understanding how the structured culture, described in great detail in Fahari's charter application, is operationalized day-to-day. We will adapt many of the similar routines that we observed during our visit. We will clearly define acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Our children will understand that within the walls of Amani we are respectful to each other and the learning process. Through our small group advisory we will help students to make smart choices. We plan on implementing a school-wide behavior management system of rewards, including an internal pay-check system with students earning "A-MONEY," a play on the name of the school. Students will earn paycheck deductions or additions depending upon their behavior. We believe, however, that it is not enough to manage student actions. We need to proactively work to help students understand the reasons for and importance of behaving appropriately. To that end we have included numerous opportunities to explicitly teach character education through the advisory program.

On our visit to KIPP Academy Middle School in the Bronx, we were able to see how the No Excuses Model is put into practice. This is among the highest performing charter schools in New York and has a track record for increasing student achievement. The choice to begin our program in the fifth grade was reinforced by our observations of the KIPP middle school visit. We have been fortunate to have access to a KIPP middle school staff member over the course of our school design initiative. He provided valuable

insight into the implementation of the KIPP model. We believe that an intensive focus on academics with structured student support will help our students attain success.

The Amani school design will fulfill the following eligibility criteria and outcomes:

a. Increase student achievement and decrease student achievement gaps in reading/language arts and mathematics

We recognize that there is no easy solution to closing the achievement gap. Rather, we are committed to a series of design elements which have proven to result in improved academic performance.

*More Time to Learn*

Significant numbers of students will enter APCS behind grade level. To bring students up to and beyond grade level, we will provide an extended school day and year. The school day in the middle schools in Mount Vernon runs from 8:03 A.M. to 2:10 P.M. APCS' school day will begin at 7:45 A.M. and end at 4:00 P.M. The School will operate for 195 days per academic year, three full weeks longer than the traditional Mount Vernon City School District program. During the longer day, students will have longer reading and writing periods. Students will have 90 minutes of math instruction daily. There will be a tutoring block after the regular school day for students needing additional help. Faculty will refer students to tutoring based on an on-going review of student achievement results. We have built into our schedule a 50-minute remediation period for students. Those who do not need remediation during this period will participate in enrichment activities.

*How We Will Teach*

Our teaching model considers what is socially and academically appropriate for our students balanced with what allows our faculty flexibility and creativity in exploring the subject matter. Multiple instructional methodologies enable us to meet the needs of individual learners versus having the individual learners conform to one academic approach. While we will use direct instruction for the skills-based classes, we will use experiential and exploratory approaches in other areas, such as social studies and science. It is our hope that we can have an eclectic approach to teaching, as it best suits our staff and students.

*Individualized Learning*

Each student will have an individualized learning plan. The individualized learning plan is part of the process of goal setting, planning, action and review that is central to the Amani program. The students will set their individual achievement goals. Ongoing assessment and the analysis and use of assessment data will be key to helping the student achieve their goals. Instruction will be tailored to address individual student needs growing from their individualized learning plan.

*Outstanding Faculty*

The Amani Public Charter School's educational model places a priority on teacher training and professional development. The school will hire highly-qualified faculty whose academic credentials and prior experience demonstrate a "good fit" with the objectives of the school and a high likelihood of success providing instruction to diverse groups of students in an urban charter school environment. The school will also provide extensive professional development. Indeed, it will be through the school's professional development model that Amani Public Charter School faculty will continually acquire and/or refine their skills and capacity to implement new practices that will lead to school improvement and increased student achievement. It will be the Amani Public Charter School's expectation that faculty will learn together, solve problems in teams or as a whole faculty, and will feel both individual and collective accountability for the success of every student in the school community.

### *Differentiated Instruction*

We will meet individual learners where they are. That is to say, Amani will provide academic rigor appropriate to the level of each child. This will include utilizing differentiated instruction. Teaching strategies will be responsive to children who have different styles and paces of learning through provision of different pathways to reaching desired goals. Teaching will have a "capacity-building" approach: focusing on children's interests and strengths rather than viewing differences as deficits. Every student has strengths and weaknesses. All children, regardless of ability, will need modifications at some point in their educational career. Differentiated instruction requires that faculty know children well and work to build on individual children's strengths to improve areas of need.<sup>8</sup>

### *Intense Focus on Literacy*

There will be an intense focus on literacy and the development of ELA skills. Amani subscribes to the belief that in order for students to become proficient readers and writers of English—and in order to develop the reading comprehension proficiency necessary to excel in other academic subjects—schools must institute a comprehensive approach to literacy and ELA that utilizes elements of both phonics-based and whole language-based instruction. This is especially true at the middle school level, where reading comprehension skills must become increasingly sophisticated to address the demands posed by more challenging academic expectations. Beyond the primary grades, students need to grapple with texts that are expository, dense, and full of new, more difficult vocabulary, especially in math, science, and social studies.<sup>9</sup>

The School must therefore focus its instruction on improving students' ability to transact meaning with complex texts. There will be a 90-minute block of ELA instruction each day. The school's ELA instructional program will also emphasize the development of strong writing skills, with writing instruction partnered with the reading of literature and aimed at developing proficiency in writing in a variety of genres (e.g. descriptive essays, persuasive writing, fiction, poetry, etc.).

### *Intense Focus on Mathematics*

The School's daily math instruction will reflect the philosophy that students must be equipped with strong mathematical and computational skills to be successful on state math exams, in high school and college mathematics courses and in our increasingly competitive economy. Mathematics instruction at The School will reinforce and strengthen students foundational learning regarding number sense, computation and geometry while building their understanding of probability and statistics, algebra, computation with fractions, decimals, and percents and other important math concepts incorporated into the state performance standards

We are considering utilizing the Saxon Math Textbook-based program with embedded differentiated instruction problem solving, real world applications and meaningful hands-on activities. Students will learn to reason, communicate and make connections. Adapted lessons give students with learning difficulties the help they need.

### *Comprehensive Services for Special Education and English Language Learners*

We will provide comprehensive services and programs to help all of our students to succeed. These services and programs will include: a full special education program utilizing special education faculty and, as the school grows, a full-time Special Education Coordinator, with support from social workers; an ELL instructional program designed to promote English language proficiency and academic achievement

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<sup>8</sup> Tomlinson, C.A. & Edison, C.C. (2003) *Differentiation in Practice: A Resource Guide for Differentiating Curriculum, Grades 5–9*.

<sup>9</sup> Allen, R. (2000) *Before It's Too Late: Giving Reading a Last Chance*. Curriculum Update.

for all ELL students; and academic intervention services and other initiatives to address the needs of students who are at-risk.

*Family Involvement*

Parents and schools need to be partners in a child's education. The two need to be aligned philosophically and reinforce each others' messages, so that the child is surrounded by a coherent, consistent and collective voice which nurtures, encourages and demands academic success. We will foster a successful partnership with the parents of our children through information sessions, home visits, family surveys, newsletters and parent orientation sessions.

We will also work to establish a chapter of the Parent Teacher Association, chartered through the New York State PTA (NYSPTA). The Board has reached out to the Regional Director of the Westchester East Putnam PTA regarding chartering a unit. The lead applicant, when she served as President of the Mount Vernon PTA, chartered a new PTA unit and supported all 13 PTA units throughout the district. NYS PTA is prepared to assist charter schools in meeting the academic, social, physical, and emotional needs of students through the creation of new PTA units. PTAs promote active parent and family involvement and provide access to PTA programs, services, and leadership. NYS PTA acknowledges charter schools as an avenue to school reform and supports actions that rationally invest in innovation and experimentation. This will be only one of many actions we will take to involve parents and community.

*College is the Goal*

The entire faculty at Amani will work as a team with a vision that our students are all college-bound and will be prepared for college preparatory programs in high school. We recognize that every student can be potentially at risk at any time in their academic career, particularly given the nature of the developmental stages of young adolescents. Therefore we believe that the very nature of our program and the basic structures - focus on literacy, extra learning time, use of assessment to inform instruction, disciplined environment, and time for remediation, enrichment and advisory services - will contribute to the success of all our Amani students.

b. Increase high school graduation rates and focus on serving at-risk high school student populations (including re-enrolled drop outs and those below grade level

We are opening a middle school so therefore this question is not fully applicable although, as described elsewhere, we believe that the Amani program will have a lasting impact on our middle school students to encourage and enable them to graduate from high school and succeed beyond.

c. Focus on academic achievement of middle school student populations and preparation for transition to high school (if applicable).

Early in the development of the School the design team undertook the study of two pieces of literature, *Reviving Ophelia* and *Raising Cain*, in order to understand the "chaos of adolescence."<sup>10</sup> As a middle school, we will enroll students between the ages of 10 and 14, right in the eye of the adolescent storm, when these young people are facing dramatic changes in their physical, social, emotional and intellectual growth and development. Lipsitz (1984) argued that "successful middle schools begin with an understanding of the 'why' of the middle level education- the developmental challenges that young adolescents face as they move from childhood to adulthood." She argues that without that understanding educators cannot possibly deal with the "what" and "how" of schooling (pg. 168).<sup>11</sup> Our goal is to create

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<sup>10</sup> Kindlon, D & Thompson, M. (2000) *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys.* & Pipher, M. (1994) *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls.*

<sup>11</sup> Lipsitz, J.(1984) *Successful Schools for Young Adolescents.*

a model school environment that promotes teaching and learning while keeping in mind the developmental needs of young adolescents.

### *Looping*

To create a learning environment that fosters the development of meaningful relationships we will institute looping in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades. This will provide a stable learning environment to support the students' developmental changes and allow us to respond to their individual needs. There are clear advantages to creating a long-term teacher-student relationship in the first two years of the student's time at Amani. For the age of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders entering Amani, 10 – 12 is a critical time for cultivating consistent relationships. Looping provides a structure that fosters this.<sup>12</sup>

### *Interdisciplinary Teams*

We will implement interdisciplinary teams from different subject areas with a common group of students. They will plan, coordinate and evaluate curriculum and instruction. This model will provide the Amani faculty with a collaborative and supportive work group. For students this will continue to reinforce our efforts to develop stable relationships within the school. The schedule will build in common planning times for faculty, which has been found to be critical for the success of interdisciplinary teams.<sup>13</sup>

### *Advisory*

We will institute an advisory program. According to Beane and Lipka (1987) advisory programs are non-formal interaction systematically developed units whose organizing center is drawn from the common problems, needs, interests or concerns of young adolescents, such as “getting along with peers,” “living in school,” or “developing self-concept.”<sup>14</sup> In the best of these programs, young adolescents have an opportunity to get to know one adult really well, to find a point of security in the institution and to learn about what it means to be a healthy human being. We will study the advisory program run by the Larchmont Mamaroneck Community Counseling Center at the Hommocks Middle School in Mamaroneck. Advisory time will provide students with the opportunity to play out emotions and promote self-assessment. Through advisory programs, we will provide educational experiences, such as role-playing and reading that will help our young students understand that their problems are not unique and that they “are not the only ones.” Every adult in the school will be responsible for an advisory group. For example, in the first year there will be at minimum 10 adults who will be able to lead an advisory group (Executive Director, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Director of Operations, four faculty, Special Education Teacher, ELL teacher and Social Worker). This will allow us to create optimal-sized groups for advisory programs and to create the communal, collegial atmosphere that we strive to develop. We also plan to organize the advisory groups as single-sex in order to encourage more frank discussion.

### *Clear Expectations*

Significant time during staff orientation will focus on working with faculty to speak using one voice regarding behavioral expectations. We will bring in an organization such as Accomplish Network to assist us in crafting our professional development program on behavioral management. By being clear, deliberate and predictable in setting expectations and following through with consequences, students will quickly learn that at APCS discipline is a serious matter.

We will define Amani by an environment and culture that celebrates learning as fun and engages students in the process through free will and not against their will. Given the relative increase in the time the

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<sup>12</sup> Thompson, N. L., Franz, D. P., & Miller, N. (2009). Research summary: Looping. Retrieved June 15, 2010 from <http://www.nmsa.org/Research/ResearchSummaries/Looping/tabid/2090/Default.aspx>

<sup>13</sup> Mertens, S.B., & Flowers, N. (2004). Research summary: Interdisciplinary teaming. Retrieved June 15, 2010 from <http://www.nmsa.org/ResearchSummaries/Summary21>

<sup>14</sup> Beane, J. & Lipka, R. (1987). When kids come first: Enhancing self-esteem.

students will spend at Amani through our longer day and year, the staff will immerse the students in a learning environment that excites them about their academic studies while pushing them to achieve their goals.

d. Utilize a variety of high-quality assessments to measure understanding and critical application of concepts.

Amani will support a data-driven instructional program in which faculty and administrators work together to analyze student assessment data, identify student needs and create differentiated instructional strategies to address them. Ongoing assessment and the analysis and use of assessment data will be a key. Through professional development, use of appropriate technologies and ongoing analysis of and communication about student assessment data, the school will systematically and effectively identify the needs of individual students, including students at risk for academic failure, and establish appropriate instructional protocols and interventions to address them.

We will utilize a variety of high-quality assessments to measure understanding and critical applications of concepts. At the start, each newly registered student (all 5<sup>th</sup> graders and any first time newly registered 6<sup>th</sup> graders) will be administered a battery of assessments to determine their proficiency with respect to vocabulary, decoding and comprehension and to pinpoint literacy deficits. We are considering the following assessments: Crichtlow Verbal Language Scale to measure vocabulary and the San Diego Quick Assessment to measure reading ability. These have been chosen because they are paper and pencil tests that can be administered in the student's home during the home visit. They will provide the school with a base line to determine placement for students in ELA and also remediation needs.

Also either during the home visit period, or during summer orientation, students will be administered the Language Assessment Battery R to help assess LEP status. This will help us to determine the support and remediation needed for our ELL students.

We will utilize nationally normed testing, such as Terra Nova, in the spring of each year. This will help us to measure the overall efficacy of the program. Results will affect curriculum decisions. It will also provide a perspective on the overall achievement of our students and to determine if the curriculum is meeting goals and objectives.

We will utilize periodic teacher-developed assessments every 4-6 weeks, weekly quizzes and daily assessments. These will help us to determine the pacing of the curriculum, make curriculum choices and determine remediation needs. The weekly and daily assessments will help our teachers to get a clear understanding of our students' performance in real time. Assessments will be used weekly, periodically and quarterly.

Comprehensive exams will be given at the midterm and end of terms. This information, while helping to determine the overall efficacy of Amani's curriculum and instructional design, will also provide information that we can provide to the board of directors as a dashboard indicator of program alignment with New York State learning standards.

We will hire a Director of Curriculum and Instruction (DCI) who will be singularly focused, to the greatest degree possible, on instructional leadership, to support Amani Charter School faculty and to expand and strengthen their instructional capacity. The DCI will use frequent classroom observations and examination of data to determine if there are any school-wide, grade-wide, class-wide, subgroup-wide or department-wide challenges that need to be addressed. The DCI will coach the school's instructional staff and provide training and guidance in the use of data to drive instruction in their work with all learners, including special populations. We will establish an internship program with the local college, specifically

focused on data analysis. We saw this internship type of program developed at The Equity Project, a charter school in New York City, and will outreach to Zeke Vanderhoek, TEP's founder, for further information on how to best structure such an initiative.

There will be regular communication between school and home regarding the nature and purpose of assessment. We will educate parents on the meaning of data and assessments and their role in helping to improve student academic achievement. This will occur primarily through the PTA, and we will work with the parent leadership to design appropriate workshops for PTA meetings.

Formative assessments will be used to measure content mastery and to inform instruction. Examples of these are observations, work samples, teacher anecdotal records and school-based interim assessments and quizzes. For example, we expect that faculty will collect student folders on a consistent basis and provide feedback to the students. Weekly quizzes will be used to track student progress and the data collected from these quizzes will be used to inform instruction.

Summative assessments will be used as a measurement tool to help us understand what our students know and how much they need to know by student, by grade and as a school; and as compared to other student populations, local, state and national. Results will indicate the level of attainment and where improvements are needed. During the summer planning period, the Executive Director and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction will administer a battery of tests to all incoming students to determine their current performance in vocabulary decoding and comprehension. The Critchlow Verbal Language Scale and San Diego Quick Assessment Reading Ability are examples. The data from these tests will be used to determine which students will participate in a reading remediation program, such as the Wilson Reading Program. Our faculty will receive training on this particular program.

The Board of Trustees will have an Education and Accountability Committee. This committee will monitor the academic outcomes as measured by the nationally normed, state and internally created benchmark assessments. The Executive Director will prepare monthly reports for the Board of Directors regarding student academic performance. The school will track this data in a dashboard format. The Committee will closely monitor student performance, report back to the larger Board, and work closely with school leadership to ensure that adequate resources are in place and effective decision-making occurs in support of strong and measurable student achievement.

e. Increase implementation of local instructional improvement systems to assess and inform instructional practice, decision making and effectiveness.

A key lever of school success will be leadership. To deliver on our high expectations, we need a strong leader guiding the school. We recognize that running a successful charter school is a huge task and in essence consists of two separate jobs—starting and running a successful non-profit organization *and* managing a successful school. We have identified an Executive Director who can do both.

We believe that it will be key to recruit a strong leadership team. We have begun to reach out to individuals in our charter and public schools network to recruit key members of the Executive Directors Cabinet, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the Director of Finance and Operations.

Amani's proximity to New York City means the School will compete for both New York and Westchester County-based applicants. We will cast the net wide when hiring, and we have planned an aggressive, multi-pronged recruitment approach, including, but not limited to, advertising on the Internet, attending job fairs in the tri-state area and networking at events held by the New York City Center for Charter School Excellence and the New York Charter Schools Association. We also will utilize our extensive local contacts to help recruit staff from the community. Amani will participate in Westchester's on-line

system for K-12 recruiting, OLAS. We will offer a salary that is competitive with New York City and the Mount Vernon City School District.

*Evaluation of Leadership Team*

One of the main functions of the Board will be to annually evaluate the school's Executive Director. The Executive Director will be evaluated on all items on the school's accountability plan, her annual goals set during the performance appraisal process, and specific management criteria outlined in a performance appraisal form. To oversee this process, the Board will appoint an Executive Director Performance Appraisal Task Force. The Executive Director will receive feedback of their performance from both the school staff as well as the Board of Trustees.

The school leadership team will be evaluated on an annual basis. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the Director of Finance and Operations will be evaluated by the Executive Director.

All faculty members will be formally evaluated annually; however, informal evaluations will take place on an ongoing basis throughout the year. Evaluations for faculty will include specific criteria and a narrative summary, which will be in letter form, co-written by the DCI and the Executive Director based on year-to-date observations. While the DCI will perform classroom observations on a regular basis, the Executive Director will conduct periodic observations throughout the year and during one week of intensive observations. Faculty also will be asked to submit a self-evaluation.

The Board, through the work of its Education and Accountability Committee, will review results of comprehensive assessments, New York State Tests, and standardized tests annually. This review will allow the Board to monitor the progress towards meeting agreed-upon student achievement goals. The Board will work closely with the Executive Director to facilitate formal reviews and stay up to date on interim and other assessments as results become available.

Progress towards achievement goals will be reviewed at all Board meetings through a "dashboard" presented by the Executive Director, and other staff as requested, and will include results from state standardized tests, interim student achievement assessments, student performance, attendance, teacher performance data, professional development, financials and other key operating indicators. The Board will use this data to help guide strategic decisions on professional development, curriculum realignment and allocation of resources. The Board will ensure that the Executive Director and DCI are using data to make necessary adjustments to the school's program and curriculum.

f. Partner with low-performing, local public schools to share best practices

A Joint Intervention Team (JIT) report for the improvement of Mount Vernon High School was presented at a June 2010 Board of Education meeting. The JIT identified a lack of a systematic approach for using data to inform decisions; noted that teachers need professional development to support research-based instructional strategies, flexible grouping strategies, and differentiated instruction; and argued that there needs to be an analysis of the concept of academics as the framework for school organization to determine the optimal configuration to impact student success.

APCS does not intend to be an island in the educational sea of the Mount Vernon City School District (MVCSD). We believe that cooperation with other schools in the MVCSD is essential. As we prepare our students for admission to high school, the reality is that many of them may enroll in Mount Vernon High School and therefore that needs to be a program that can provide the academic rigor that we plan to implement at Amani. It is to the benefit of all that we find ways to share our best practices. Ideas about how to accomplish this include opening professional development opportunities offered at APCS to the MVCSD, particularly in the area of data collection and analysis, and sharing best practices on the

acquisition and implementation of electronic data management and tracking systems that provide real time access to student achievement data.

We will continue to leverage the relationships that the leaders of APCS have with the local school district, particularly as it faces the Mount Vernon High School. It is to the advantage of our students that there is a viable public high school option in the district. We can partner with the leadership at the Mount Vernon High School as they begin their process of restructuring.

g. Demonstrate the ability to overcome start-up challenges to open a successful school through management and leadership techniques.

Amani will be led by an Executive Director responsible for all aspects of the school's operations and who will be the sole reporting agent to the Board. The Executive Director's responsibilities will include leadership of the entire school administrative team, full execution of the school's mission, and management of all external functions, including Board relations, regulatory reporting, financial operations, and fundraising. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction (DCI) will be the primary instructional leader of the school, overseeing the implementation of the various curricula and assessments, working with faculty to use assessment data to inform and drive instruction, observing faculty, providing faculty with feedback, and overseeing professional development. The Director of Finance and Operations will oversee administrative, financial and logistical operations and will directly manage the Office Manager. We believe that having three administrators (ED, DCI, and DFO) will ensure the school opens smoothly, and that all of the requisite operations and compliance issues are handled efficiently and appropriately. Both positions (DCI and DFO) will report directly to the Executive Director.

There must be a clear delineation between governance and management. The Board will govern the school, and remain careful not to involve itself in issues relating to management.

We anticipate considerable start-up challenges related to facilities. The design team has focused on this aspect of the design. We have secured a below market rent at the Mount Vernon Family YMCA. A potential future project to partner with the Mount Vernon Family YMCA to construct a building has exciting possibilities. We are in preliminary discussions with Local Initiative Support Corporation and Civic Builders to explore financing options for capital projects. We have already secured the support of a local building manager and architect who have provided pro bono services as we explore the YMCA as a potential space. In addition, we are in active talks with other institutions that have space available, including The New York Archdiocese and a local church, both of which have spaces which would not require renovation and are zoned for school use.

Another start-up challenge will be establishing an infrastructure for information systems and procedures. Specifically, we will implement a network infrastructure, student information systems, back office systems, HR, general ledger and payroll. We have secured the services of a systems engineer who has committed to provide pro bono design and implementation services to the school. He will set up and configure the devices and software applications necessary to run the school such as our SIS, a parent portal, QuickBooks, other applications and the underlying network infrastructure.

A strong foundation in finance, operations and human resources will ensure APCS's fiscal stability and allow us to provide a quality education. We will work with organizations such as Charter School Business Management or Accomplish Network to handle services such as payroll and administration related to human resources files. We will also look to these organizations to provide professional development on best practices and implementation as they relate to the financial operations, internal controls and accountability practices of the school. We will provide training for our Executive Director, Director of Finance and Operations and individuals who are employed in the business management side

of the School. Professional development is as important for these individuals as the broader professional development program is for our faculty. We will participate in the New York State Charter School Association High Performance Network, providing access to a team of accomplished professionals with extensive experience in working with charter schools in New York City. The Amani team is in the New York Charter Schools Association New School Incubator.

Finally, Amani's design team anticipates that another start-up phase obstacle may be community resistance to or misunderstanding of, charter schools. Over the past year we have mounted a campaign to reach out to influential community leaders to inform them early about the project and to educate the community regarding basic facts about charter schools. All materials that we have distributed regarding Amani include information on "myths vs. facts" about charter schools. We are particularly proud of the inroads we have made through this initiative.

h. Demonstrate the support of the school district and the intent to establish an ongoing relationship with the district.

The Lead Applicant met with the Mount Vernon Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Welton Sawyer in October of 2009 to introduce the concept of bringing a public charter school to Mount Vernon. She continues to meet with the Superintendent to apprise him of the status of the proposal.

The Lead Applicant has also spoken extensively with the President of the Board of Education and individual members of the Board of Education about the project. All acknowledge a need and desire for an innovative educational option for the community.

Several elected officials and community leaders from the Mount Vernon school district support the Amani proposal.

i. Provide access to viable education alternatives to students in regions where there are a lack of alternatives.

According to a demographic study commissioned by the Mount Vernon City School District in 2008, the public schools had lost 10% enrollment in five years, a decline of over 1,000 students.<sup>15</sup> According to BEDS enrollment data, as reported in the New York State Report Cards, there was a 10% enrollment decline between 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 6<sup>th</sup> grade in 2008-09. Families are choosing to educate their children outside the district. Further evidence of the lack of alternatives in Mount Vernon is indicated by the number of Mount Vernon children attending charter schools elsewhere. The district's budget for charter school tuition in 2009-10 was \$252,420.<sup>16</sup> Amani would provide an alternative that would keep families in the district.

There are presently two large middle schools with reported low achievement. According to 2009-10 New York State 3-8 assessment data, at Longfellow Middle School 28.7% of students scored at or above grade level in ELA and at Davis Middle School 27%. In Math, at Longfellow, 41.7% score at or above grade level, and 23.9% at Davis. These are the only public school options - two low performing middle schools.

Amani Public Charter School, through the implementation of its key design elements as outlined in this prospectus, will represent a viable and effective educational alternative.

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<sup>15</sup> Mount Vernon School District: Demographic Study (September, 2008) Arete Consulting

<sup>16</sup> Mount Vernon City School District, 2010-2011 Projected Budget.