

Evaluation Summary Analysis—Democracy Prep III Charter School

This form was completed by OISM staff at the conclusion of the Prospectus review, Full Application review, and Capacity Interview. This Evaluation Summary Analysis summarizes the main findings in the review process as well as:

- 1) a discussion of the applicant’s alignment with priorities of the law (as measured by the prospectus),
- 2) a discussion of the applicant’s quality of design (as measured by the Full Application), and
- 3) a discussion of the capacity of the founding group (as measured by the Capacity Interview).

APPLICANT INFORMATION		
School Name:	Democracy Prep III Charter School	
Grade Levels:	Year 1	Year 5
	Grade 6	Grade 6 through Grade 8 (104 students in each grade)
Enrollment:	104 students	312 students
Mission:	The mission of the Democracy Prep III Charter School (DPIIICS) is “to educate responsible citizen-scholars for success in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship.”	
School Leadership:	The school’s leadership team will consist of a Superintendent of Schools, Campus Director and in the second year add an Operations and Finance Manager. The work of the school leadership team will be supported by Democracy Prep Public Schools, a not-for-profit charter management organization with responsibility for curriculum development, human resources, financial management, media relations, marketing, and compliance with state and federal regulations. A proposed school leader has been identified.	
Governing Board:	The Democracy Prep III Charter School Board of Trustees shall serve as the governing authority of the proposed charter school. The five standing committees of the Board of Trustees will be Finance, Development, Academic Accountability, Community & Families, and Governance. The Board will have four officers: Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. Other ad-hoc committees will be formed as necessary to support the mission. The founding group plans to transition and grow into the Board of Trustees pending New York	

State Board of Regents approval. It is anticipated that two additional board members will be added with legal and marketing experience. Founding members and proposed Board Members include:

Khary Barnes, founding group member and proposed Board Chair, joined American Express in 2009 as a Manager in the Corporate Development/M&A group. He graduated from Cornell University and from Harvard Business School.

Katie Duffy, founding group member and proposed Board Secretary, is currently the Chief of Staff of Democracy Prep Public Schools. She is a graduate of Mount Holyoke College and earned her Masters in Educational Leadership from George Washington University

Christina Grant, proposed Board Vice-Chair, is currently the site Director for New Site Development at Teach for America. She has earned a Masters of Education from Columbia University, Teacher's College. She also has a master's degree in education from Fordham University and a Bachelors of Arts degree from Hofstra University.

William Cooke, proposed Democracy Prep III Charter School Leader, is currently the Democracy Preparatory Charter School Campus Director for 8th Grade. Mr. Cooke graduated from the University of Massachusetts and taught math at City on a Hill Charter School in Boston for four years. There, he developed an exceptional athletic program.

Seth Andrew, founder and Superintendent of Democracy Prep Public Schools and founder and former Head of Schools at Democracy Preparatory Charter School, is a member of the founding group. He is a graduate of the New York City public school system, Brown University and Harvard University. He has experience as a teacher, school administrator and consultant.

Jaime White is currently Senior Director for Curriculum and Instruction at Democracy Prep Public Schools and a founding group member. She has over fifteen years of experience in urban education. She holds a bachelors degree from the University of Massachusetts in Anthropology and African American Studies, a master's in education from the University of Pennsylvania and is currently working on her doctoral degree in education at Columbia Teacher's College.

Andrew Epstein is currently the Director of Finance at Democracy

Prep Public Schools and is a founding member. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan and Columbia Business School. He began his career as a Teach For America Core Member in the South Bronx and a founding staff member at Camp Starfish, a program for children with special needs.

Gabriel Nadel, founding member, is the current Director of Data and Technology at Democracy Prep Public Schools. He received degrees from the University of Michigan and the NYU Stern School of Business.

Linda Jones Easton, founding member and current Senior Director of Human Resources at Democracy Prep Public Schools, with years of experience in facilities management and human resources and benefits.

Jonathan Howard, currently Director of Talent Acquisition at Democracy Prep Public Schools is a founding member. He joined the first Democracy Prep School in its second year after serving as a teacher and Teach For America Corps Member and is a graduate of Arizona State University and Pace University in New York City.

Will Packer is a founding member and Special Assistant to the Superintendent at Democracy Prep Public Schools. He graduated from Brown University with a degree in Political Science and Public Policy.

PROSPECTUS ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Inadequate	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds
		X	

Analysis Summary
 The founding group is comprised of experienced charter school educators and developers, who have successfully opened and operated effective charter schools in New York. Presentation of data, particularly on academic performance of students with disabilities (SWD), was clear and concise.

The group fell a bit short in its responses to a few items under school design in the prospectus. For example, the applicant simply repeats its goal of preparation for college success and civic success but did not specifically address transition to high school as requested for item c.

The applicant group requests a waiver from Department policy which would limit overlap of trustees for the proposed school and the charter management organization to 40%. Also, the question of whether the proposed charter school can give preference to siblings of students who attend other Democracy Prep charter schools must be addressed in the pre-opening period.

I. EDUCATION PLAN ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Inadequate	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds
			X

Analysis Summary

The application presents a strong academic plan and assessment framework that is aligned to the New York State and Common Core Standards.

The submitted plan and schedule supports all students to meet academic performance standards. This includes having students involved in more than three hours of literacy instruction each day Monday through Thursday, two hours each on Friday, as well as additional time on Saturdays. The literacy program focuses on phonics from the start and will provide targeted intervention services for students who struggle with decoding or fluency, using an appropriate program such as Wilson Reading.

Blocks of time will be set aside for tutoring or for the provision of special education services without requiring pull-outs from core subjects. It is the belief of the founding group that a universally designed curriculum based upon the approach of Dr. Thomas Hehir*, is the most efficient and effective way to provide access for a broad range of diverse student needs. Adjustments to instructional methodology will occur for all learners in order to meet specific needs.

The founding group has high expectations of its teaching staff and will develop a personalized plan for each teacher which identifies strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers will participate in extensive school-wide professional development with a strong focus on data-driven instruction. Professional development (PD) during the summer takes place over four weeks and is focused on norming, data analysis, and trainings, while weekly PD is broken into three sections – taxonomies, campus meetings and department meetings. During the school year, teachers engage in PD every Friday for 3 hours. External PD includes external consultants from Building Excellent Schools and Doug Lemov’s classroom management strategies.

Data related to teaching and student achievement is collected on an ongoing basis. Data

analysis results will direct professional development, inform instruction and be utilized to evaluate staff.

*Dr. Hehir is an Advisor to Democracy Prep. He currently serves as director of the School Leadership Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and was a former special education teacher and administrator and director of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the Department of Education.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Inadequate	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds
			X

Analysis Summary

The founding group provided all required attachments, which included proposed by-laws and the code of ethics, prospective Board member resumes and questionnaires, an organizational chart with key positions, and identification of the roles and responsibilities for administering day to day activities.

The founding group appears to have the capacity to oversee the successful development and implementation of the education program presented in the application. One member of this group is being proposed as the School Leader.

Organizational structure and staffing plan is clear and comprehensive. Based on prior challenges with teacher retention at another Democracy Prep School, the proposed school leader offered several proactive approaches that will be taken at the outset to prevent this issue: strong teacher and staff support, significant opportunities for professional development, competitive salaries and benefits, etc.

III. FINANCIAL PLAN ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Inadequate	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds
		X	

Analysis Summary

The written application and the founding group articulated a budget that is aligned with its mission, and educational program. The revenue and expenditure assumptions were clear. The applicants are working with NYC DOE to find a suitable facility.

Overall, the founding group clearly understands their financial obligations and demonstrated the group's capacity to implement staffing and procedures to successfully operate and manage the charter school. The group has demonstrated the capacity to meet insurance, food service requirements, key financial obligations, and reporting requirements.

CAPACITY INTERVIEW ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Inadequate	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds
			X

Democracy Prep Public Schools is a non-profit charter management organization (CMO) which has successfully operated other charter schools in New York State and Rhode Island. With the identification of already experienced staff, the founding group has developed the proposed school around the framework of five core elements; rigorous college prep academics, more time to learn, smart use of data, safe and supportive school culture and exemplary talent.

The founding group responded to the interviewers questions and addressed all inquiries and concerns satisfactorily. This group appears to have the experience and the capacity needed to operate this proposed charter school.

The group has articulated its understanding of what it means and takes to hold a charter from the Board of Regents and the responsibilities the proposed charter school would have under the law. The group spoke to its educational plan: goals, staffing pattern, curriculum, professional development for teachers, special student population, accountability and the education of special needs and English Language Learners. The group also spoke to the use of data to inform teaching and learning as well as the decision-making process for the proposed charter school.

The applicant group was reflective and used previous experiences when discussing teacher recruitment and retention. They have a solid understanding of the needs of staff and are being proactive in their plan for the proposed charter school.

COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY

Inadequate	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds
			X

Analysis Summary

The founding group was persuasive on paper and in person in terms of their perception of the need for a charter school within their community and, more importantly, of their ability to implement the kind of charter school they envision to meet the needs of students. Democracy Prep III Charter School is a replication of an existing model of instruction: “no excuses” schools the core elements of rigorous college prep academics, extended learning time, the systematic use of data, safe and supportive school culture and exemplary teaching taleThe founding group has strong community support as well as support from the NYCDOE.

There are no material concerns remaining that cannot be fully addressed during the pre-opening phase should this application proceed.

