EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background: The concept for the Dr. Muriel Petioni Charter School began as an idea initiated by the Central Harlem Interagency Programs, Inc., a community based organization under the leadership of Dr. Conrad Graves, to host a Youth Forum co-sponsored with Region 10 of the NYC Department of Education. The Forum held on May 17, 2005, was attended by community leaders, business leaders, clergy and several organizations that serve the student population of CSD 5. The purpose of the event was to identify and address the cause of the educational inequalities and student performance gaps in CSD 5. Over 250 middle and high school students, their parents, and teachers, along with community and youth organizations in the Harlem community were in attendance. Elected officials from all levels of government representing the Harlem community attended and participated in the discussion about concerns raised by students and their parents. It was from this Youth Forum that the seeds for the Dr. Muriel Petioni Charter School were planted. With the support of concerned community leaders from the health care field, educators, law, and business community, a planning team was created who subsequently developed the application for a charter school. Recognizing the impact of finding a location to house the school that met the cultural, educational and environmental needs of the students, the team negotiated with the Board of Directors of the James Varick Community Center to lease space for the school.

Mission Statement: The mission of the Dr. Muriel Petioni Charter School (DMPCS) is to offer a rigorous college-prep middle school educational program that is aligned with the State Common Core Learning Standards. DMPCS will prepare students living in Harlem to: 1) demonstrate Scholarship by graduating middle school at or above proficiency in all subject areas as exhibited by testing into top NYC high schools; 2) develop Healthy life skills that result in the achievement of personal health goals that are consistent with NYS Health standards for middle level grades; and 3) demonstrate effective Leadership through the successful completion of an approved leadership project that benefits the local community.

Educational Program: The DMPCS educational program aligns with the all the NYS core learning standards including: ELA, Mathematics, Science, Technology, Social Studies, Health, Physical Education, Family and Consumer Science, Career Development & Occupational Studies, the Arts, and LOTE (Spanish). The truly dynamic and innovative aspect of the DMPCS program is the framework in which the educational model is administered, addressing the educational needs of all students: general education, special education, and English language learners.

Research has shown several key components that result in high performing middle schools: standards based curriculum, integrating literacy into all core subject areas (reading in the content areas or RICA), using data to inform instruction, strong leadership, holding staff responsible for student outcomes, shared school mission, meaningful parent involvement, an environment where students feel psychologically and physically safe, and a community where students are supported and welcomed. DMPCS will implement all these components through a rigorous academic program aligned with NYS core standards, preparing students to compete for spots in high performing city high schools. The school's instructional methods and philosophy are based on three pillars supporting the foundation of DMPCS:

Scholarship: rigorous academic scholarship delivered through a variety of engaging pedagogies based on a standards-aligned curriculum and assessment program
Health: health education (i.e. nutrition, prevention and fitness), career awareness building and exposure to health professionals, promotion of healthy life choices and access to health-related referral services
Leadership: leadership development focused on citizenship, service learning and community leadership developed through curriculum and practice.

The DMPCS school day will begin at 7:45 a.m. and ends at 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Following breakfast, students begin each day in Advisories. These small working groups of students and adults are charged with contributing to the development and monitoring of individual learning plans (ILP)

for students and the planning and implantation of community-based service learning projects. The ILPs will both direct and guide each student's academic, leadership, and community work. Working closely with members of the Harlem community and DMPCS parents, there will be opportunities for leadership and career education within the Advisories.

Based on a careful analysis of student performance in CSD 5, the DMPCS founders believe that the majority of students enrolling in DMPCS will be performing below grade level. A goal of the program is to have all students at or above grade level by the conclusion of their 6th grade. To achieve this goal, the 6th grade class will be organized on an elementary school model with rigorous exit standards. One teacher will be assigned to one classroom of 6th grade students. Instruction in the 6th grade will be focused primarily on literacy which is recognized to mean a student's ability to read, write and speak in English and, compute and solve problems at levels necessary to achieve at least proficiency in the NYS standards. Using embedded staff development, literacy will be taught in all core subject classes using RICA.

After creating a cohesive community culture in grade 6, with students assigned to one teacher per classroom for the entire day, the 7th grade marks the beginning of the more traditional middle school model of students rotating among classes and teachers. After a year of intense core academic instruction in grade 6, non-core subjects will be introduced such as visual art and music in grade 7. While students will move from class to class, teachers in the initial 7th grade will form a team that will loop with the students into 8th grade. Thus, students will experience the same team of teachers for 2 consecutive years.

Data driven decision-making (D3M) to inform instruction and accountability will be used at DMPCS by teachers and administrators. The school will adopt a school improvement model being used in a number of NYC charter schools. Several characteristics of this model include digitized curriculum maps, lesson plans and assessments that are aligned to NYS learning standards, curriculum guidelines and performance indicators. All staff will be paid incentives that are directly linked to student performance and test outcomes. Overall, the DMPCS educational philosophy, school model, and course content will result in students who are active in their community, lead healthy lives, make positive choices, gain admittance and attend NYC's top high schools, and become functioning citizens.

Governance and Organizational Design: The founding group of DMPCS will comprise the school's initial Board of Trustees and will be the sole governing body of DMPCS. The members of the Board have extensive and relevant experiences and talents. Members include the Lead Applicant, 1) Virginia Montague, a long time Harlem community leader and advocate; 2) Conrad Graves, Ph.D., retired professor and Harlem community leader; 3) Belinda K. Amoako, educator with a specialty in math and special education and Ph.D. candidate; 4) Kordai Decoteau, DPM, will be opening a practice in Harlem in March 2011, 5) Selvin R. Osbourne, M.P.A., CFO and Fiscal Officer for over 20 years in major not-for-profit agencies; 6) Brenda Smith, Ed.D., retired Superintendent of the Mount Vernon Public Schools; 7) Sophia James, M.S., has over five years experience in education services that include child development, and program organization and management, and 8) Rev. Gregory Robeson Smith, Ed.D., DMin.,. MBA, MDiv., Senior Pastor of Mother AME Zion Church who has over 20 years management and fund raising experience and is Grand Master of Prince Hall Mason for NYS.

These individuals have worked together on the development of the DMPCS for over four years, visiting many different charter schools, collecting best practices in education and charter school operations, and discussing school development and operations with a number of charter school Board members, administrators and teachers, others related to NYC charter schools and local, State and federal politicians whose constituencies include portions of Harlem. This group attended a number of seminars and trainings sponsored by the NYC Charter School Center and continue to consult such organizations as CEI-PEA and the NYCDOE. The DMPCS founding group possesses community credibility, and the knowledge, skills, passion, and experience sufficient to launch, oversee and govern a successful charter school.

II. STUDENT POPULATION

A. Student Enrollment

The enrollment projections for the school, by year, for the first five years of operation are shown below.

Anticipated Enrollment Table

Grades	Projected Enrollment Table				
	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2017-2018
K					
1st					
2nd					
3rd					
4th					
5th					
6th	150	150	150	135	135
7th		135	135	135	135
8th			115	130	130
9th					
10th					
11th					
12th					
Ungraded					
Totals	**150**	**285**	**400**	**400**	**400**

An area that the Planning Team is very sensitive to is the necessity of developing a school culture. After talking with other leaders who had opened new schools, two issues become very clear. First, students and their families do move to other cities and states at an annual rate of about 10% of the school population. Second, replacing these students at later grades can disrupt the culture building of a new school. Therefore, the Planning Team is recommending over-enrollment in grade 6 during the first three years of the school. Once the culture of the school has been established, it will be possible to replace students who leave at the upper grades. If the anticipated 10% of the students do not move, grade 6 in future years will be adjusted. The overall census will never exceed 400 students.

B. Target Populations

Incoming students are expected to mirror those from CSD 5. According to the NYSED, of the tested students, 58% were Black, 37% Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 2% White. CSD 5 has been identified by NYSED as a District In Need of Improvement (DINI) in ELA for 2009-2010.[1] And on the NYSED ELA and Math tests in grades 3 – 8 for 2009-2010, performance data indicates that students in the District still lag behind the city.[2]

	ELA			Mathematics		
Grades	**CSD 5**	**City Wide**	**Difference**	**CSD 5**	**City Wide**	**Difference**
5th Grade	27.2%	46.2%	**-19.0**	38.5%	59.7%	**-21.2**
6th Grade	31.2%	40.1%	**-8.9**	38.6%	53.0%	**-14.4**

[1] From https://www.nystart.gov/publicweb/District.do?county=NEWYORK&district=310500010000&year=2009 on April 20, 2010, page 8.
[2] From http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/TestResults/ELAandMathTestResults on August 12, 2010.

7th Grade	28.7%	38.2%	**-9.5**	37.7%	52.6%	**-14.9**
8th Grade	24.1%	37.5%	**-13.4**	35.7%	46.3%	**-10.6**

Looking further into the student demographics of CSD 5, the percentage of ELL students is 10.6%; the percentage eligible for free and reduced lunch is 80.39%; and while the NYSED did provide a comparability spreadsheet for use in preparation of this prospectus, the percent of students with disabilities column has been left blank for all NYC school districts.[3] After a thorough search of available documents turned up no estimates of the number of students with disabilities by district, we estimate that this number will be around 15% for CSD 5—a number which is significantly higher than six of the seven CSD 5 existing charter schools and only slightly lower than one existing charter school.[4]

Application and Admission Periods and Procedures: Starting in January 2012, DMPCS will advertise open registration and families, if they choose, will meet with staff and learn additional details of the school. Interested families may submit applications, either in person or through the mail, beginning on January 15, 2012, until 9:00 a.m. on April 1, 2012. If the number of applicants to the school exceeds capacity, a random selection process (lottery) will be used to assign spaces. This lottery will be held annually on or about 12 noon on April 1. Students not selected in the lottery will be placed on a waiting list. The lottery will be open to the public and conducted by the School Leader, a member of the Board, and Community Board member to ensure that the lottery is fair and adheres to Education Law, subdivision 2854(2).

Because students and their parents/guardians do not need to disclose LEP/ELL, SPED, or free and reduced lunch status on the lottery application, the recruitment of students in these categories is very important. Consequently, DMPCS will develop and implement an aggressive targeted recruitment program for ELL and SPED students. The school therefore expects to attract, serve, and retain the students in numbers comparable to that or greater than of CSD 5, which is 11% ELL, 15% SPED (estimated), and 80% free and reduced lunch.

Student Recruitment: The DMPCS general recruitment process will include: distribution of mailings to parents of Harlem-based elementary schools; presentations during parent organization meetings at Harlem-based public elementary schools; flyers sent home with 5th grade students; distribution of mailings to residents of CSD 5; posted flyers and notices in Harlem-based newspapers, communities of faith, community centers, and apartment complexes; presentations in CSD 5 public and private elementary schools, after-school programs and youth centers; and visits to community-based organizations. DMPCS has been approved and supported by Community Board 10 and will partner with them to advertise the school extensively within the community. All materials will be presented in English, Spanish, and various African dialects to ensure that those families who are traditionally less informed about educational choice options have access to the materials. DMPCS will meet with Harlem Village Academy Charter School to discuss their recruitment regarding free and reduced lunch since their rate is over 92%. This general recruitment will elicit the 80% free and reduced lunch participants.

In addition to its general recruitment efforts, DMPCS will employ a different set of strategies and techniques to recruit students with disabilities at a rate comparable to or greater than the number enrolled in CSD 5 schools. Recruitment efforts designed to interest special education students and their families include: (1) print advertisements that include specific information about DMPCS' Special Education program, (2) special open-house sessions held in the community geared towards parents of Special Education students, (3) one-on-one meetings with members of the staff with any parents of Special

[3] From http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/startcharter.html on January 22, 2011 from the *Demographic Comparison Tables.*
[4] Ibid.

Education students who express interest in learning more about how DMPCS can meet the particular needs of their child, and (4) outreach to all CSD 5 special education coordinators in the elementary school to provide a description of the program. DMPCS staff will liaison with St. Hope Leadership Academy Charter School to review their recruitment efforts regarding students with disabilities since their enrollment rate is over 18%.

To reach students with LEP/ELL classifications, DMPCS staff will reach out to all the LEP/ELL coordinators and teachers in Harlem-based elementary schools, as well as distributing marketing and outreach materials in areas of the district where individuals who do not speak English reside and congregate, of which the majority speak Spanish and several African dialects. DMPCS staff will reach out to the appropriate language-speaking community-based organizations and individuals working with or providing services to families that might have students classified as LEP/ELL. DMPCS staff will meet with the leadership of Family Life Academy who has an LEP/ELL population in excess of 40% as well as St. Hope Leadership Academy Charter School to review their recruitment efforts in Harlem.

Recruitment Plan: Based on the interest shown at the CHIPS sponsored meeting discussing the educational inequities in Central Harlem mentioned earlier, the number of parent signatures, the history and community status of the James Varick Community Center, the strong community ties and outreach capabilities of the planning team, and the low test scores of the majority of schools in Harlem, recruitment is not expected to be a problem. However, the School Leader and Board of Trustees will monitor the number of applications received on a weekly basis. If at least 12 applications a week are not received (12 weeks from application announcement to lottery = 144 applications), the outreach attempts will be greatly increased. The School Leader and the Board of Trustees will make public appearances at different institutions (hospitals, day care, after school programs, elementary schools, churches, libraries) to alert families to the existence of the school. If at least 60 applications are not received by mid-February, the School Leader and Board members will make the rounds of radio and TV stations. Further, during the entire recruitment period whether or not the school is making its quota, interested parents will be asked to spread the word within their personal spheres.

Provision of Services to Special Education Students: DMPCS will educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, with their non-disabled peers to the extent appropriate and allowed by each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) prepared by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) of the students' school district of residence and all applicable federal laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The School shall not discriminate in admission and enrollment practices on the basis of a student having or being suspected of having a disability. All special education programs and services at the School shall be provided in accordance with Education Law § 2853(4)(a) and applicable federal laws and regulations and in accordance with the IEP recommended by the CSE of the students' school district of residence.

DMPCS will provide instruction to special education students in the most inclusive environment possible, subject in all instances to the requirements and restrictions included in each student's IEP. The School will provide support services to students to ensure that IEP mandates and measurable goals are met. Present performance levels will be supported and documented through the Educational Benefits Plan in each IEP. The School will not place a student in a learning environment that is inconsistent with the IEP, nor will it limit its acceptance of students with disabilities to students with IEPs that require a full inclusion program. In accordance with the State Education Law Section 2853(4) et al, the School will provide services required by the IEP, either directly, by contract or by agreement with the school district. If DMPCS requests that the district provide a self-contained class or resource room for a student, it will work with the district to place the student in a self-contained class or resource room operated by the district at a location other than DMPCS, if that is appropriate to the needs of the student. However, if a self-contained class or resource room on the school site is determined by the school district CSE to be the

appropriate placement for the student, and if DMPCS requests that the school district provide such services, a self-contained class or resource room must be provided by the school district. In this situation, DMPCS and the district CSE will work with the parents to design a program that implements the IEP, addresses the student's needs and is integrated into the School's educational programs and makes use of the School and school district resources. In this situation, DMPCS and the CSE will work with the parents to develop an IEP that meets the student's needs and design a program that is integrated into the charter school's educational programs and makes use of charter school and school district resources.

Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of students with disabilities from the regular educational environment will occur only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily, in accordance with the IEP. Special education students, when appropriate according to their IEPs, will receive their adapted curriculum work, and other therapies such as speech-language therapy and occupational therapy, within a regular education classroom. Special educators and therapists will come to the regular education classroom, when appropriate, to provide services to small groups of regular and special education students. A special education teacher, paraprofessional or aide may sit with them to help implement the goals of their IEPs. Students with disabilities will also be expected to participate in, and receive credit for, nonacademic, extracurricular and ancillary programs and activities with all other students to the extent allowed by the IEP. Students with disabilities will receive all notices concerning school-sponsored programs.

If DMPCS is unable to directly provide services to the extent necessary, it will seek appropriately certified or licensed individuals to provide services from CSD 5. The services to be provided may include, but are not limited to: speech language pathology and audiologist services; psychological services; physical and occupational therapy; recreation, including therapeutic recreation; early rehabilitation counseling; orientation and mobility services; diagnostic and/or evaluative medical services and student and/or parent counseling.

The School will employ a full-time special education teacher in its 1st year and special education teachers will be hired based on the number of students with IEPs as the school grows to ensure compliance to Educational Law. The special education student to special education teacher ratio will benefit special education students by ensuring that sufficient time and attention will be provided for each student.

DMPCS will ensure that the special education programs and services as indicated on each student's IEP will be provided directly to the student during school hours. DMPCS special education staff will provide consultation and support to classroom teachers, work in the general education classrooms with special education students individually and in small groups, provide resource room services and serve as special education consultants to the overall school community. DMPCS classroom teachers will be knowledgeable about the needs of students with disabilities; informed of their responsibilities for particular students; receive the support they require to implement a student's program; and implement any modifications or accommodations in their classes in accordance with the students' IEPs. Teachers will receive on-going training regarding the education of special needs students including during the pre-opening professional development prior to the opening of school each year.

In the case of students suspected of having undiagnosed disabilities, the DMPCS will adopt a referral process that implements all procedures as outlined in the regulations of the NYS Commissioner of Education for initiating a referral in accordance with Part 200.4 of the Regulations. A referral may be made by a teacher, parent or person in parental relationship, a professional staff member of the School, a physician, a judicial officer, a representative of a public agency, or a student over 18 years of age. The Regulation that will be followed identifies specific requirements for referrals initiated by professional staff members. All staff will receive training in these procedures.

Initial evaluations, re-evaluations, and revisions of IEPs, and the procedures relating thereto, are the responsibility of the school district of a student's residence (*see* 34 CFR §§300.22, 300.312 and 300.340 *et al*). DMPCS will implement the IEP developed by the CSE of the student's district of residence for each student with a disability, and will cooperate with the student's district of residence to ensure that all services as recommended in that IEP are provided to the student.

DMPCS will provide substitute coverage for teachers to ensure they are able to attend CSE meetings. As required by the IDEA, the student's regular education teacher will be involved in the development and implementation of a student's IEP. DMPCS will ensure that the teacher is knowledgeable about the student's needs and will help implement any modifications or accommodation as determined by the CSE. Every teacher of a student with a disability will be provided a copy of the student's IEP. Training will be provided by the special education staff for teachers to ensure that teachers fully understand the IEP of each student and its instructional implications. With support from the special education staff, general education teachers will be able to establish modifications in the general education classrooms.

Quarterly progress reports regarding the progress of each student and his or her IEP, as well as copies of all report cards, will be provided to the parents of each special education student and to his/her district of residence. The district is welcome at any time to monitor the School's implementation of its special education program. The School's special education staff will interact with the students' district(s) of residence in a number of ways, including seeing that referrals are made for students suspected of having a disability; fulfilling reporting requirements of the resident district; ensuring that all appropriate school staff participate in meetings of the resident district CSE; and establishing a reporting structure in accordance with applicable law whereby the district of the student's residence is provided progress on the degree to which the services on the IEP are being provided.

Provision of Services to LEP/ELL Students: DMPCS will not discriminate against LEP/ELL students in its admissions policies or practices, and it will comply with all applicable laws including Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Federal Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974. In addition, it will make proactive efforts to build awareness of the charter school and of the opportunity for parents to enroll their children within the CSD 5 communities where large numbers of LEP/ELLs reside.

Once enrolled, the School assures that LEP/ELL students will not be assigned to classes for students with disabilities because of their lack of English skills. Parents whose English proficiency is limited will receive notices and other information in their native language to encourage participation in the School community. DMPCS will establish an LEP/ELL student enrollment target each year, in consideration of the School's prior year's enrollment figures for such students and the school district's prior-year enrollment figures for such students. This figure will be at least the same as, or higher, than the figure determined by the Authorizer. The School will then adapt and document its student recruitment strategies to support achievement of the LEP/ELL student enrollment targets.

DMPCS' process for identifying LEP/ELL students and the method for determining LEP/ELL status is as follows: (a) If English is the only language spoken in the home as indicated on the Home Language Questionnaire then the screening process need not continue; (b) If the home language is other than English or the student's native language is other than English, ATS will be checked to determine if the student has already taken the LAB-R and had been identified as an LEP/ELL student, if yes, then the student will receive ESL services; (c) if not on ATS, then appropriate school staff will informally interview the student and the parent in English, or when necessary in their native language; (d) if the student speaks a language other than English and speaks little or no English, then the School will administer the Language Assessment Battery-Revised (LAB-R)—a score below the designated proficient level identifies the test taker as limited English Proficient (LEP), thus eligible for ESL services; (e) after

placement into LEP/ELL services, student achievement or progress in the English language is measured annually with the NYSESLAT. The scores on the NYSESLAT indicate the proficiency level the student has achieved each year, and whether or not the student's level of English proficiency is high enough to exit ESL services. Any student classified and receiving educational services as a LEP/ELL student who subsequently tests above the established cut-off point will be deemed to be no longer in need of ESL services.

The School will implement a *Freestanding English as a Second Language (ESL)* program to provide instruction in English. Two organizational models will be used: a push-in and pull-out. In a push-in model an LEP/ELL teacher works with students during content instruction in collaboration with the classroom teacher to provide language acquisition and vocabulary support while retaining content instruction time. In the pull-out model, LEP/ELLs will be brought together for English-acquisition-focused instruction by the LEP/ELL teacher outside of the general classroom. The topics being discussed in the content class will be the topics used in the pull out.

LEP/ELL teachers will use the research-based Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) program model for instructional purposes. Research indicates successful performance on ELA assessments is based upon the development of both oral and cognitive academic language proficiency. Academic language proficiency includes the language skills required for literacy and complex thinking such as reading comprehension, writing mechanics, critical thinking skills, study skills, and academic vocabulary. Content instruction is provided in English with sheltered English instructional methods to make content comprehensible. SEI is "a means for making grade-level academic content more accessible for English language learners while at the same time promoting their English language development."[5]

Teachers also utilize special instructional strategies sometimes referred to nationally as Sheltered English Techniques (SET) or Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) for delivering content to LEP/ELLs in English. At DMPCS, students will receive instruction from their classroom teacher and, as needed, discrete ESL instruction from the highly qualified LEP/ELL teacher. DMPCS will use the new standards document entitled, *The Teaching of Language Arts to Limited English Proficient/English Language Learners: Learning Standards for English as a Second Language* as a guide to ensure that LEP/ELL students meet the same standards as the general student population. PD for teachers and administrators in instructional methodology appropriate for language learners (particularly in the use of SDAIE and SET) will ensure that the materials and facilities available to LEP/ELL/LEP students are equal to those of the general population. Appropriate materials will be available for ESL instruction.

DMPCS ensures that LEP/ELL students will not be excluded from curricular and extra curricular activities based on an inability to speak and understand the language of instruction. Parents whose English proficiency is limited will receive notices and information from the School in their native language to encourage participation in the School.

DMPCS will undertake a training program for teachers who are directly involved with LEP/ELL students. The staff development program will enhance staff appreciation for the LEP/ELL students' native language and culture, and provide information on the techniques, methods, and strategies appropriate for instructional and support services for LEP/ELL students. DMPCS will guarantee that materials and facilities for the implementation of the LEP/ELL instructional program will be of the same quality and quantity and not be inferior to those materials and facilities available to English proficient students.

III. SCHOOL DESIGN

[5] Short, D., Hudec, J., & Echevarria, J. (2002). *Using the SIOP model: Professional development manual for sheltered instruction.* Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

The primary rationale for creating the school in CSD 5 is based on the current lack of opportunities for community leadership, health awareness and scholarship in the community. Students need exposure to different careers so that there is the opportunity for choice. The second rationale for creating a charter school for students within the boundaries of district 5 is based on awareness of the physical health and risk factors present in Central Harlem, and the need for residents, especially youthful residents, to make healthy choices for themselves and their families, and to promote healthy choices throughout the community. Finally, education impacts every aspect of our lives including the choices we make; choices which are based on our experiences and opportunities. Students will only be able to make healthy life choices, including becoming community leaders, by obtaining a focused, rigorous education. Based on the NYC DOE and NYSED data, it is clear that this community would be well served by the development of strong middle and high schools.

In response to these identified issues, DMPCS has developed an intensive Academic Intervention Services (AIS) model. The AIS model includes assessment, intervention, and reassessment thus ensuring that students progress successfully through middle school by obtaining grade level mastery by the end of 6th grade; continuing to gain proficiency through the 8th grade, ready to gain admittance and compete in NYC's top performing high schools. The educational program at DMPCS will utilize a standards-based curriculum delivered through inquiry- and project-based learning activities, and direct and differentiated instruction. Curriculum and instructional strategies will be examined regularly and evaluated for effectiveness as measured by student performance assessments, paper and pencil predictive and instructional-targeted assessments, and the NYS ELA, math, social studies and science tests. To support instructional staff there will be daily opportunities for planning, and an end-of-week extended time period for whole team planning in areas such as curriculum and instruction and monthly professional development trainings targeting specific areas of challenge. These strategies all lead to the support of the School's mission to impact the lives of students through Scholarship, Health, and Leadership.

Guided by Dr. Muriel Petioni's pioneering spirit and steadfast commitment to excellence, DMPCS' approach to learning will be engaging, collaborative, experiential and performance-based. The education program will provide a standards-aligned curriculum and assessment program, utilize research-based pedagogies, and create opportunities to build college exposure and career awareness. Students and staff will be held accountable to the highest academic standards. Students will engage in learning activities that will develop the academic, social and employment skills necessary to succeed in postsecondary education and employment in high stakes careers.

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

The DMPCS directors recognize the challenges of increasing student achievement and decreasing student achievement gaps for economically disadvantaged students and children of color. DMPCS will address these challenges by delivering an educational and support program that will focus on ensuring that each student has the ability to read, write and speak in English and, compute and solve problems at levels necessary to achieve and surpass proficiency in the NYS standards including the recently adopted common core standards. Beyond the classroom there will be strategic components of the school developed to support students in the application of these academic principles to real life experiences, moving the student to the end goal of becoming life long learners, thus successfully and permanently increasing classroom achievement and decreasing student achievement gaps. Below are the strategic components of the DMPCS program which will lead to increasing achievement and decreasing achievement gaps.

ELA. The leadership of DMPCS does not accept the common held view that literacy is the domain of primary educators and is only addressed in secondary school as a remedial subject. The stated position of the DMPCS leadership is that to effectively improve the proficiency level of underachieving students all DMPCS teachers, regardless of assignment, are expected to confront the poor reading skills of their students. Based on a solid body of knowledge on adolescent literacy, the DMPCS leadership expects all of its instructional staff members to become teachers of reading and writing appropriate to their disciplines. While tradition says that teaching reading is the job of primary school teachers, the practice of Reading in the Content Areas (RICA) at DMPCS will be the rule and not the exception.

It is also understood by the DMPCS leadership that middle school teachers need considerable help to understand how they can develop content knowledge at the same time that they improve student literacy. In fact, effective teaching in their subject areas will be boosted by complementary literacy instruction related to the texts (and the other communication demands) characteristic of their subjects. Plenty of data exists to show that teachers who infuse these techniques into their classes are able to cover (and their students are able to learn) more content more successfully. At J.E.B. Stuart High School in Falls Church, Virginia, for example, 76% of students had been reading below grade level before the principal instituted a literacy program. Today, the school is recognized as a "breakthrough high school": Only a small number of its students are behind.[6] In South Salt Lake City, Utah, staff at Granite Park Middle School credits the school's literacy program with turning around its mathematics and science scores—once the lowest in the district. Several years after instituting a literacy program, Cedar Ridge Middle School in Decatur, Alabama, has seen its writing scores improve sharply.[7]

To achieve full implementation of Reading in the Content Areas (RICA), the DMPCS leadership will institute a RICA professional development program and will assign literacy experts to coach content area teachers. The effectiveness of coaches has not been rigorously studied, but schools that implement this model do show large gains in literacy scores. In-service provided to teachers results in improved reading achievement for students[8] so it follows naturally that literacy coaching—a form of highly targeted professional development—is a particularly potent vehicle for improving reading skills. Literacy coaching adheres to what research identifies as the essential features of effective professional development.[9],[10] Common components include training that is: grounded in inquiry and reflection; participant-driven and collaborative, involving a sharing of knowledge among teachers within communities of practice; sustained, ongoing, and intensive; and connected to and derived from teachers' ongoing work with their students.

Math. All students will achieve math proficiency at DMPCS by the beginning of grade 8. To achieve this goal and thus effectively close the math proficiency gap, students will understand that their teachers and administrators will hold them to high expectations. Math classes will be a learning environment that is non-threatening where there is an accommodation for individual differences. Teachers will employ varied instructional practices and there will be consistent support for each student's effort. A typical Math practice employed by teachers is to promote active engagement in problem-solving activities that are built on knowledge of experiences. The ability to reason is a process that grows out of these experiences.

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[6] Taken from http://www.principals.org/Content.aspx?topic=53684 on August 15, 2010.
[7] McGrath, A. "A new read on teen literacy" *U.S. News & World Report* 138.7 (February 28, 2005): 68.
[8] National Reading Institute (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction.* Washington, DC: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.
[9] Darling-Hammond, L., & McLaughlin, M.W. (1995). Policies that support professional development in an era of reform." *Phi Delta Kappan* 76, 8: 597-604.
[10] Garet, M. S., Porter, A. C., Desimone, L., Birman, B. F., & Yoon, K. S. (2001). What makes professional development effective? Results from a national sample of teachers. *American Educational Research Journal, 38* (4), 915-945.

Learning is enhanced by connecting math to the real world through technology and communication of mathematical ideas by operationalizing the support activities offered by the school (see below). To close the achievement gap Math intervention strategies at DMPCS will be used during and/or before initial instruction to ensure success for at-risk students. These strategies will teach concepts that move from manipulatives, to pictures, to symbols. Teachers will help students transfer actively learned concepts to pencil-paper tasks and assessments similar to the end of grade/end of course tests. Vocabulary activities, higher order thinking and problem solving strategies will all be included in intervention strategies designed to close the gap. It is important that teachers teach math concepts from the NYS Math curriculum guide since it is most likely that these concepts will be included in the state math assessments. Teachers will be "scaffolding" math instruction filling existing gaps as required for groups of students. The DMPCS leadership has identified a list of expectations for teachers when teaching math. These expectations include the following: 1) Feel comfortable in their use of technology; 2) Provide connections to prior knowledge, other subject areas, careers, and student interests; 3) Develop an array of teaching strategies so as to address students with different learning styles; 4) Continue to improve their knowledge of content so they feel comfortable with the curriculum; 5) Improve their questioning ability by asking higher order questions, allowing for wait time, and encouraging students to give more than one answer; 6) Become positive about their ability to teach mathematics to all students; and 7) Expect students to want to learn, to do homework, to ask questions, and to seek assistance.

Professional development, delivered as sustained, job-embedded coaching, maximizes the likelihood that teachers will translate newly learned skills and strategies into practice.[11] By combining RICA and math strategies with other instructional practices such as Data Driven Decision Making (D3M), differentiated instruction and formative assessment, the DMPCS leadership will increase student achievement and decrease student achievement gaps in reading/language arts and math.

In addition to these academic strategies, supports in the community are also important in closing the achievement gap. Students need real world experiences where classroom instruction is integrated into the community. The strategies for implementation to the real world are as follows:

Inquiry-Based Student-Directed Work: Students will pursue active learning opportunities that will culminate every nine weeks in a final project. These project-based learning (PBL) activities will follow the guidelines and utilize the resources developed by the Buck Institute for Education.[12] PBL opportunities will be designed to help students take responsibility and ownership for their own education, thereby building confidence through the development of effective work habits and attitudes towards learning, and instilling persistence in pursuit of their academic and social endeavors. Strategies to be used will include student-directed learning that deliberately engages student voice and classroom knowledge; student and staff collaboration; pursuing the answer to an essential question relevant to students' lives; outcomes-based measures and deliverables; and real world use of technology.

Leadership Opportunities: Teaching students to take control of their education works best if students are provided with opportunities to practice responsibility and learn what that entails. There will be weekly community assemblies to provide students with these opportunities. Students, staff and others will work together to identify and execute agenda items for these community meetings. A key tool in the development of leadership among students will be the establishment of a student government program, which will be based on the guidelines and principles recommended by the National Council for Social Studies.[13] The student government will be actively engaged in the development of student leadership

[11] Wong, K. & Nicotera, A. (2003). Enhancing teacher quality: Peer coaching as a professional development strategy, a preliminary synthesis of the literature. Pub. Series #5. Nashville: Vanderbilt University.
[12] From http://www.bie.org/ on April 21, 2010.
[13] From http://www.socialstudies.org/positions/studentgovt on April 21, 2010

abilities and will integrate classroom instruction with student government activities.

Career Education: Building career awareness and developing college and job skills for the 21st century workplace are significant components of DMPCS' educational philosophy. DMPCS will integrate a career education program with career awareness and project-based activities to help students gain self knowledge about their attributes and skills, identify industry interests, and education and employment goals. This too is a very real life activity that supports and integrates classroom learning.

Advisory Program: The benefits of implementing a school-wide advisory program are well documented.[14] The DMPCS Advisory Program will play a critical role in the school's overall academic and student support services plan and is the primary vehicle for creating a more personalized learning environment where all students are well known and supported by more than one adult. Moreover, the advisory will provide a structure and a set of practices for monitoring and supporting students' academic progress and college and career readiness throughout their DMPCS experience through the development of Individualized Learning Plans (ILP). The DMPCS Advisory program will help to increase student achievement and decrease student achievement gaps in reading/language arts and mathematics by providing an opportunity for ongoing academic support, mentoring, and guidance.

Extended Day: To account for extra time needed for the Advisory program and other non-classroom activities, DMPCS will provide students with an extended school day of learning and activities. The extended day will begin at 7:45 am with dismissal at 5:30 pm, thus extending the traditional school day by 2.5 hours to 8 hours per day, which is well beyond the required 5.5 hours per day. The National Center for Time and Learning cites five potential benefits to extending school time, including: 1) Making it possible for students to spend more time on task; 2) Allowing teachers to delve into subject matter in more depth; 3) Encouraging more student engagement through project-based learning and elective courses; 4) Building in time for more teacher-student interaction; and 5) Creating time for teacher planning and professional development. Others, including Elena Silva of Education Sector, an education think tank, have noted that the addition of high-quality teaching time is of particular benefit to certain groups of students, such as low-income students and others who have little opportunity for learning outside of school. For the reasons provided, the DMPCS extended day will help to increase student achievement and decrease student achievement gaps in reading/language arts and mathematics.

All students will participate in these components of the DMPCS educational and support program, including specifically identified students defined as those students who are identified as being "at-risk" through prior academic underachievement and those designated as a special education student or as an English Language Learner. DMPCS has already developed strategies for all three groups based on an inclusion model of classroom instruction supported by specialty teachers and coaches working with the classroom teachers, ensuring that these students perform proficiently as well.

The educational model proposed by DMPCS will propel all students beyond mere grade level proficiency, preparing them for competing at NYC's top high schools and colleges, and into adulthood by implementing a rigorous academic program within a framework of supporting activities that allow students to apply classroom knowledge and take responsibility for their own learning, increasing proficiency and decreasing the achievement gap.

III.b. Increase high school graduation rates and focus on serving at-risk high school student populations

While DMPCS is not a high school, the curriculum offered at the middle school level is key to admission

[14] Taken from www.turningpts.org/work.htm on April 24, 2010.

to high performing high schools. A practice that is critical to the success of the DMPCS is early intervention. Based on the published proficiency rates of CSD 5 many of its grade 3-8 students are currently categorized as "at-risk". These students are attending the primary feeder schools for DMPCS. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that if a student is not proficient by grade 8, the probability s/he will drop-out of school is high. To reverse this trend, DMPCS will commence a process of early intervention service (AIS) in the 6th grade which includes frequent monitoring of progress, appropriate instructional and socio-emotional interventions and continuous feedback to the student and his/her family. Early implementation of AIS can dramatically improve the student proficiency rate during the middle school years. In addition, DMPCS will offer a middle school curriculum that will prepare students for high schools that have early college prep programs. In addition, students in grade 8 will be trained and mentored to assume leadership roles within the school's advisories for 6th and 7th grade students. Students in the 8th grade who are qualified will also offer tutoring to students who require additional assistance and will be involved in planning assemblies and other school activities. All students will benefit from NYSED certified teachers who will be hired to support these students as mentors, tutors, and scholars.

III.c. Focus on academic achievement of middle school student populations and preparation for transition to high school

To demonstrate a focus on academic achievement of middle school student populations and preparation for transition to high school DMPCS will offer two basic schedules for middle school students; a common sixth grade schedule and a common schedule for the 7th and 8th grade. The 6th grade classes will be based on the elementary school model with a literacy priority in the core subjects. Each 6th grade classroom will consist of one certified elementary teacher with a proven track record in reading instruction and math. In addition to ELA and mathematics, the 6th grade classroom teachers will be responsible for teaching science and social studies and will team teach with the technology teacher, integrating technology with the core subjects. Physical education and health will be taught by other certified faculty members. This arrangement of classes will ensure that all students enter the 7th grade on or above grade level.

This model is based on the data available for the CSD 5 surrounding schools. We expect that many students will enroll at DMPCS below, some significantly below, 6th grade proficiency. It is predicted that the school will have a significant number of students lagging in proficiency because parents/guardians who are displeased with the educational services their students have received through the 5th grade as reflected by the students' actual skills, will make up a sizable share of those who sign up for the lottery. Thus, a large proportion of these students will enroll in the school and special structures must be in place to meet their needs. This model does not negatively impact students who are at or above grade level, but supports them as well because they also benefit from another year with one teacher, developing powerful relationships with the teacher.

The 7th and 8th grade schedules will resemble those of a regular middle school with NYSED certified core subject teachers and a full complement of subjects. The 7th and 8th grade differ from a traditional middle school by having teachers loop with their students from 7th through 8th grade, continuing to build on the DMPCS philosophy that strong relationships with adults support learning. Looping has been shown to have positive effects on both the academic and social lives of students, providing the support necessary for students to succeed.[15] Looping from 7th to 8th grade will allow students and teachers to develop a family-like environment, which will support long-term stability for some students who may have unstable lives outside of school.[16] Another advantage is that there is an increase in instructional time because there

[15] Grant, J., Johnson, B., & Richardson, I. (1996). *The Looping Handbook: Teachers and Students Progressing Together.* Peterborough, NH: Crystal Springs Books.
[16]Taken from: http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2194/Looping.html">Looping - How Widespread Is Its Use?, Rationale, Evidence Supporting Its Use

is no need to spend the first month of the new school year establishing classroom rules and procedures; students and teachers are able to begin instruction immediately. Further, at the end of the 7th grade school year, teachers will be able to assign summer projects to be completed as part of the advisories. Additional benefits include the increased involvement of parents due to a strengthening of the parent-teacher bond[17] and looping has been shown to be particularly beneficial at the middle school level.[18] Looping will provide a stable environment, allow teachers to fully understand each child's academic and social needs, provide the necessary time for the parent-teacher bond to develop, and will ensure that by the end of 8th grade, students are prepared for enrollment in any number of high performing high schools, including those focused on early college enrollment as well as those high schools with an intensive academic focus.

Because DMPCS has made a commitment to a data driven culture, assessment results will be used throughout to ensure students are functioning above grade level. Through these strategies, DMPCS will maintain high rates of acceptance to high performing high schools by demonstrating, through early, continuous and effective AIS that students are at proficiency levels in middle school. The integration of these strategies will prepare students for the transition to high school by focusing on the achievement of middle school students, thus impacting the graduation rate. By 8th grade, based on the successes at other charter schools such as Renaissance Charter School and Hellenic Classical Charter School, 8th grade students will begin to take Regents exams. Taking at least one Regence exam by grade 8 will be a goal for 20% of the students in the 8th grade class for the first two years that the school has a grade 8 and will grow to 50% in the second chartering period.

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

DMPCS will implement a rigorous data driven culture to inform instruction which is described in III.e. below. The assessments used are described as follows:

Name of Assessment	Purpose	Grades Administered	When Administered
Scantron Performance Series Read/Lang. Arts	Identify reading fluency, competency, and reading comprehension levels	6-8	September & June
Scantron Performance Series Mathematics	Identify number fluency and mathematical skills for grade level	6-8	September & June
Teacher developed assessments & quizzes	To determine learning in a variety of areas (ELA, math, Social Studies, Science, Health)	6-8	As needed based on lesson plans
Language Assessment Battery – Revised (LAB-R)	To determine English proficiency.	6-8 identif-ied by Home Lang Survey & Staff	September (or within 10 days of the student's enrollment)
New York State English as 2nd Lan-guage Achievement Test (NYSESLAT)	To determine when students identified as ELLs become fluent in English.	6-8 if required by LAB-R	April/May*
New York State Alternative Assessment	Identify students' ability to meet or exceed grade level standards in all areas for Special Education students	6-8 if needed determined by IEP	October through February*
Specialized HS	Those students who wish to enroll in one of	8	October/November

[17] Ibid.
[18] George, P.S. & Lounsbury, J. H. (2000). *Making Big Schools Feel Small: Multiage Grouping, Looping, and Schools-within-a-School.* Westerville, OH: National Middle School Association.

Admission Test (SHSAT)	NYC's specialized high schools.		*
New York State ELA	Identify students' ability to meet/exceed grade level standards in reading & reading comp.	6-8	April/May*
New York State Math	Identify students' ability to meet or exceed grade level standards in mathematical computation, mathematical reasoning and problem-solving	6-8	April/May*
New York State Social Studies	Identify students' ability to meet/exceed grade level standards in content and reading and writing strategies in social studies	8	May*
New York State Science	Identify students' ability to meet or exceed grade level standards in science content and use of scientific tools	8	April/May*
NYS Regents Exams (ELA, Math, Global, Science, US History, LOTE)	To assess students' mastery of NYS Learning Standards in preparation for enrollment in high performing high schools and graduation.	8	January, June, August*

*DMPCS will administer these NYS Assessments as prescribed by NYS on the dates that are required for each school year.

The Scantron Performance Series is a web-based tool that self-corrects the level on which the student is working based on the responses of the students. Rather than a static paper and pencil test, the Scantron shifts the level of questioning which provides very detailed information about student abilities from the report generator. Scantron is a nationally recognized test that has high validity and reliability and is aligned with NYS Learning Standards. The information gleaned from the reports will inform teachers about the academic needs of the students in their classes for interventions.[19]

To assess classroom teaching and learning directly, unit and common assessments in ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies will be administered by classroom teachers. This is good pedagogy and will provide much needed information about where students are struggling. By using this data, teachers will be able to re-teach areas ensuring that all students gain the most from their academic experiences. This testing program will give teachers and administrators ample feedback concerning student progress for the purpose of modifying teaching and targeting areas in which students are struggling. Please see section III.e. for an explanation of how this will be conducted.

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

As discussed previously, DMPCS will implement a locally developed school improvement model called PICCS (Partnership in Innovation of Compensation for Charter Schools). PICCS is a Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant which holds teachers directly accountable for student outcomes while providing the necessary tools and professional development so that teachers can in fact do this. Based on prior research and best practices, it has been shown that all adults in a building need to support students for students to be successful. Therefore, the Planning Team believes that holding not just teachers, but all staff, accountable for student outcomes is an important component in the success of students. Therefore, another aspect of the school improvement model is that each staff is eligible to receive an incentive of up to $5,000 based on student outcomes.

[19] From http://www.scantron.com/performanceseries/ on April 21, 2010.

The implementation of this model will require the DMPCS staff to assess student performance on a continuous basis. Assessments will provide instructional staff, students and parents with detailed data on individual student performance and growth, student cohort performance gaps, and performance comparisons with similar student populations. Instructional staff will use assessment data to modify content and/or instruction, working towards a goal of ensuring continuous student progress. To support this D3M approach, DMPCS will use the SunGard/Performance Plus suite of software and on-line services that include: CurriculumConnector, Assessment Builder, and Tracker. Through this software, the teachers can map curriculum aligning it to the NYS Learning Standards, develop their own tests which align to the curriculum and NYS Learning Standards, load standardized tests (i.e., Scantron), load the NYS tests including the item analysis, and then track student progress over time. Administrators can use the combined software to identify gaps and weaknesses in the curriculum. This has been piloted by 10 charter schools with a success rate so high that the U.S. DOE awarding PICCS an additional $17.5 million to integrate the program into seven additional NYC charter schools as well as six charter school in Buffalo in the coming five years.

It is critical that the school's entire community of students, parents, staff, administration, and Board are invested in a school culture dedicated to the effective use of performance data. The DMPCS Board will work closely with the School Leader in the formative stages of planning to develop and implement goals, protocols, systems, and tools to facilitate the use of assessment data to influence decision making. While the collaborative effort is essential, the components described below serve as examples of the ways DMPCS expects to use data to inform decision making with regard to instruction. The goals of the charter school regarding the use of data in the design and implementation of instructional strategies include 1) Refining and directing classroom instruction, including setting individual student goals; 2) Adjusting scheduling to include adequate time for core subjects, non-core subjects, and any necessary remediation to ensure mastery of the material; 3) Refining the teacher-developed and diagnostic tests to ensure consistent alignment with the NYS learning standards with the results indicative of outcomes on state exams; 4) Informing policies for student retention and promotion; 5) Providing sufficient time in the daily schedule for common planning, training on various data issues, and embedded professional development; and 6) Evaluating teacher and school leader performance.

At the start of the school year the faculty and administrators will use students' prior-year New York State tests, where available, to understand starting points, deficiencies and baseline performance for individual students. Once students take the full series of Scantron exams, as well as any initial diagnostics and teacher created tests, the data can be used to confirm baseline starting points, set goals and facilitate conversations with students and parents about each child's academic goals. The school leader also will communicate the starting points and goals for the school, each class and teacher. As well, students will use this data in Advisories to develop the ILPs. Throughout the year, teachers will use data from the Scantron series as well as diagnostic and other formative assessments during scheduled meetings with the School Leader and during lesson planning time to examine item analysis, individual and class level data in conjunction with curriculum to adjust lesson plans, and schedules for additional instructional time where needed. Faculty and administrators will use the data to create small groups for immediate tutoring and remediation to be done at the end of the school day. Faculty and staff also will use the data to set and measure individual student growth goals. In strategic group data analysis and lesson planning meetings, teachers may collaborate on cross content instructional strategies.

The School Leader and Board will use academic performance data to cultivate evidence-based program evaluation, increase communication about the academic goals and success, and make decisions about instructional delivery and direct instructional needs, organizational structure and resource allocation. Formal data management systems and technologies will ensure regular collection, evaluation and communication about academic progress and attainment.

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

No school wants to be identified as a "low-performing" school, particularly not by the new school in the neighborhood. Doing this would in fact create terrible tension and would not benefit any school. Therefore, DMPCS will take a slightly different tactic that involves the entire community of schools in the Harlem. Working with District 5 and the Education Committee of Community Board 10, DMPCS proposes co-hosting with DOE traditional and charter schools in the neighborhood, best practice seminars. Community Board 10 has reviewed this charter application, has endorsed DMPCS and is willing to work with the DMPCS with this initiative. Best practices seminars will allow everyone to participate and not be labeled as "low-performing". Further DMPCS can learn from other schools, students, and educators as well. By developing a coalition of schools, everyone wins. To initiate this effort, the School Leader and Director of Operations and Compliance will visit local schools in the beginning of the year. There are ways that an existing school can be of great help to DMPCS, such as getting involved in the NYC DOE ATS system, working with the local Committee on Special Education, short cuts when dealing with metro cards, and the like. After developing a relationship, DMPCS in conjunction with Community Board 10, will host neighborhood seminars for area schools where everyone presents and discusses best practices. This will be done under belief that all schools are responsible for the education of all students in the community.

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

The Board of Trustees consists of professionals in all areas of expertise needed to open a charter school: operations, finance, legal, facilities, educational, and community involvement. Further, several people on the Board are long time Harlem advocates and residents and two have been intimately involved in the public educational system, one as a superintendent and one as a classroom teacher, now Assistant Principal in a NYC DOE District 75 school with an expertise in special education. Below are the start-up challenges, which have been and are being identified by the Board and the contingency plans developed to address these challenges.

Staff Recruitment and Hiring. The DMPCS is well aware of the importance of hiring highly skilled and talented professionals who will support the vision and mission of the school. A staff recruitment program has been and continues to be a major topic of discussion by the board members. The general elements of such a program have been developed and upon approval of the application, the specific details necessary to implement its plan will be instituted. In addition, the board designees have been conducting a serious search for an experienced and highly qualified School Leader as well as a Director of Operations and Compliance. Job descriptions for both positions have been developed and discussions have occurred with various individuals and organizations that have access to potential candidates.

Facilities. This has been an issue for every charter school; however, DMPCS has already identified their space and have begun to work on the planning and funding for renovations. The James Varick Center, located at 151 West 136th Street in Harlem, will be the home of DMPCS. The Varick Center is a separate 501(c)3. The James Varick Board will be financing all construction costs to expand the Center for use by the school and there is currently an MOU in place attesting to agreement. Ehrenkrantz, Eckstut & Kuhn Architects have been retained to do this work and already have plans, specs, and costs completed. This Architect group has offices in New York, Washington, DC, Los Angeles and Shanghi. One of the specialties of this group is the design and construction of schools ensuring that all work will reflect the necessary health, education, and safety requirements. In New York, examples of the work of this group can be seen at PS 7 in Queens and PS 15 in the Bronx, both NYC DOE schools. Ehrenkrantz, Eckstut & Kuhn Architects recently completed the first entirely green building for the NYC DOE at PS 59, The Beekman Hill International School. Plans for renovation are based around the school year and the first

phase of the renovation is scheduled to be completed in time for the first class of students.

Operations of the School. Typically, charter school Principals or School Leaders have the responsibility of overseeing both the academic and the operational start up activities of a new charter school. Having the principal responsible for operation duties limits the time he/she can spend on academic issues such as staff recruitment and professional development. To address this issue, DMPCS Trustees made the determination to immediately hire a Director of Operations and Compliance (DOC) who will answer to the School Leader but will be responsible for running the operations (all compliance, facilities, finance, safety) for the school. This individual will present to the Board at every meeting the status of the school's "start up" activities and will liaison with the city and state around such issues as Entitlements, Annual Report, Finance, BEDS reporting, free and reduced lunch, safety, and health.

Curriculum. DMPCS has been fortunate enough to retain the services of Art Pritchard, Ph.D., through JPS Solutions to assist them in the development of their curriculum crosswalks, which align to NYS Learning Standards. Dr. Pritchard has developed the NYS aligned crosswalks for many charter schools across the State and all have been approved and are being used. For a list of former schools, please see http://www.jpssolutions.com/clients.htm. All crosswalks for all subjects from grades 6 through 8 have been completed and are ready for implementation. This will allow for the School Leader and new grade 6 teachers to begin work on lesson planning immediately. The curriculum will be digitized through CurriculumConnector and aligned with the NYS Learning Standards. Having digitized its curriculum, teachers can begin to immediately map their lesson plans to the curriculum within a digital environment. The School Leader can then review the work and assess for any gaps in lessons. Further, the group can come together and begin to develop their common assessments immediately.

Data Driven Instruction. The DMPCS Board understands that data driven instruction (D3M) is an essential element for the success of the school's instructional program. Thus, the board has decided that training and practice of D3M must start from day one both because it is good pedagogical practice and because it will help with the development of a culture of accountability. To this end, a data specialist is being hired to work with the School Leader to support teachers in the use of data. Further, because the school will be purchasing CurriculumConnector along with Assessment Builder and Tracker, teachers and administrators will have all the necessary tools to ensure that relevant data is easily accessible and used to the fullest extent. Training on these tools has been built into the daily schedule and the budget. Since all DMPCS instructional staff is eligible for performance based incentives that are determined in part by student outcomes, making the use of data a central part of the programming will assist the staff in successfully meeting performance requirements related to the incentives.

Fiscal Accountability. The DOC is responsible for fiscal accountability along with the School Leader. A monthly financial report and fiscal statement will be provided to the Board. The firm of Allen S. Joseph, (ASJ) CPA, has already begun to work on the framework for accounting and there is an MOU in place describing this relationship. ASJ will be responsible for establishing all accounting procedures (already written) and providing accounting support and services for the "start-up" period and the first year of operation.

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

As a school that has officially been in development over the last year, first as a NYC DOE school (prior to the new charter law), DMPCS has had and will continue to have the support and assistance of the NYC DOE. In the Harlem community, members of the Board have already begun reaching out to the Superintendent Gale Reese to begin discussion about the role of DMPCS in the district, particularly in light of the new requirements that best practices be shared. Further, DMPCS will work closely with the

District on reporting necessary data on ATS, working with the local Committee on Special Education (as well as CSE's from other districts as necessary) and will of course take referrals from the District particularly in the areas of special education and English Language Learners.

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

It may seem a little strange to think of any student in NYC living in a region where there is a lack of alternatives, but this is in fact the case with Central Harlem. In general, approximately 55,000 students applied to public charter schools in NYC and only 11,700 were actually offered seats in charter schools.[20] Parents are clearly seeing a lack of alternatives in NYC. Further, of the 22 charter schools in upper Manhattan, one is a specialty school for students with autism and only six offer middle and high school while another four offer kindergarten through grade 12.[21] Finally, test scores on the NYSED ELA and math tests in CSD 5 are very low. However, looking at the data for the schools indicates a further lack of alternatives. Students from the 10 district high schools faired even worse with the district failing to achieve AYP in ELA at the high school level with one high school on the NYSED's Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools list.[22] There is only one high school that received an "A" on its NYC DOE Progress Report—the one school that students must test into. Of the remaining nine schools, three did not have Progress Reports, but according to NYSED, one of them did not make AYP in math (the other two did); one received a "B"; three received a "C"; and two received a "D". The percent of low school progress report grades for high schools compared to the progress report grades city-wide high schools show a significant educational discrepancy between CSD 5 and NYC.[23]

Grade on Progress Report	# (%) in CSD 5	# (%) City-Wide
A	1 (10%)	1,037 (72%)
B	1 (10%)	245 (17%)
C	3 (30%)	81 (7%)
D	2 (20%)	26 (2%)
No Progress Report	3 (30%)	48 (3%)

Clearly, all the data indicates that CSD 5 needs more high quality, rigorous middle and high schools. The DMPCS planning team believes that high school may be too late to impact proficiency levels and that middle school is the age at which positive interventions will be the most effective. It is the goal of the School to offer a quality education option that provides the leadership training, awareness of personal health, and academic rigor that is currently available only on a very limited scale in Central Harlem.

The Dr. Muriel Petioni Charter School Planning Team would like to take this opportunity to thank the New York City Department of Education's Office of Charter Schools for supporting this application. We would also like to thank the New York State Education Department's Office of Innovative School Models for the opportunity to present our plan for the Dr. Muriel Petioni Charter School.

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[20] From http://nyccharterschools.org/learn/news/press-releases on August 12, 2010.
[21] From http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/50117A5B-DB95-4231-82CC-16C853A8EE2B/0/CharterSchoolDirectory_English.pdf on August 12, 2010.
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