

Evaluation Summary Analysis – Urban Dove Charter School

The following form was compiled by OISM staff at the conclusion of the Prospectus review, Full Application review, and Capacity Interview. This Evaluation Summary Analysis summarizes the findings in the main sections of 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:	Urban Dove Charter School	
	Year 1	Year 5
Grade Levels:	Ungraded, high school age students	Ungraded, high school age students
Enrollment:	95 students	240 students
Mission:	The mission of the Urban Dove Charter School (UDCS) is “to provide an alternative high school for over-aged, under-credited (OA/UC) youth that will provide its students the social and emotional supports and rigorous academics they need to obtain a high school diploma, gain the job skills needed to enter the world of work and the academic foundation needed to successfully pursue higher education. To attract, engage, energize and retain students who have not succeeded in traditional school settings, UDCS features a unique sports, health and fitness program, in which teams of students practice and play sports together, go to class together and receive support services together.”	
Leadership:	The proposed charter school’s leadership team will consist of a Principal and a Director of Athletics (AD). No individual persons have been identified at his time.	
Governing Board:	The proposed charter school will be governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of seven to thirteen experienced members. The Board	

will establish four working committees: an Executive/Governance Committee, a Finance Committee, a Fundraising Committee, and an Academic Accountability Committee. The founding members are:

Jai Nanda is the Founder and Executive Director of Urban Dove, a non-profit organization that provides after-school programs for hundreds of New York City's at-risk youth. Mr. Nanda received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Michigan.

Michael Grandis is a Partner at Ingram Yuzek Gainen Carroll and Bertolotti, LLP. Mr. Grandis received his J.D. from Columbia University.

Robert Lesser is the Director for Youth Policy at the Community Service Society of New York, where he leads the agency's efforts to address the nearly 200,000 young people who are out of school and out of work in New York City. Mr. Lesser received his Masters in Public Policy from Harvard University.

Megan Bartlett works in sports-based youth development.

Lazar Treschan is a Youth Policy Director at the Community Service Society. Mr. Treschan received his Masters in Public Policy from Harvard University.

Patrick Fagan is an educator and Network Leader for the New York City Department of Education. Mr. Fagan received his Masters in Business Administration from Baruch College.

Patrick McGillicuddy is an educator and school administrator. Mr. McGillicuddy received his Masters in Public Policy and Administration from Columbia University.

Jason Griffiths is an educator. Mr. Griffiths received his Masters in Education Administration from Temple University.

Spencer Rothschild is a business leader and Urban Dove Board of Trustees member. Mr. Rothschild received his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Tufts University.

Daniel Valerio is an accountant.

Inadequate	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds
		X	

Analysis Summary

There is a documented need for effective programming for the Overage/Under credited population. The prospectus addresses the need with an innovative program design including extended day and year, strategies to reach all students, sports-based youth development and same sex grouping. The board brings a variety of expertise as well as enthusiasm for the school. The founding group appears to understand, as demonstrated in the prospectus, the role and responsibilities of the Board of trustees. The group appears to understand its educational, legal, and fiduciary obligations as required by the Charter Schools Act and other applicable statutes.

I. EDUCATION PLAN ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Inadequate	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds
		X	

Analysis Summary

The founding group presented a strong educational plan which clearly articulated unique features that take advantage of a charter school's flexibility around five key autonomies: governance, budget, staffing, time, curriculum, instruction and assessment. The extended day (for twelve hours, three days a week), the trimester plan, and mandated Saturday school greatly increase the time students will spend in school and provides students with more opportunities to earn credit. A significant portion of this time will be spent in team sports activities, with the academic program gradually taking a larger proportion of time over the three year span of the high school experience.

The founding group stated that the curriculum will be organized to focus on an identified sport for each trimester. The instructional program will be aligned with the New York State learning standards and the common core standards. Strategies to address individual student needs are also included in the plan. The incorporation of multiple intelligences, differentiated instruction, and targeted interventions are described.

The founding group's goals for its students are ambitious but attainable: in three years students will graduate with a total of forty-four credits. The intended student population is defined as fifteen and sixteen year old students who have not completed ninth grade and have fewer than ten credits. These students will have had ten (or more) years of unsuccessful school experience and will benefit from more time and resources to attain graduation. A longer range goal is that, in partnerships with two institutions of higher education, Adelphi University and Kingsborough Community College, students will be encouraged to take college credits toward Associate's degrees.

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 clearly shares a commitment to the students identified as the target population for the school.

The Board members bring strong skills and experience appropriate to their anticipated role as leaders of a charter school. They clearly share a commitment to the students identified as the target population for the school. The founding board has the will, skill and commitment to launch and sustain the proposed school.

The organizational structure of the administration includes a Principal and a Director of Athletics, both of whom report directly to the Board. There is also provision for a Director of Operations, reporting to the Principal, and a Social Worker, reporting to the Director of Athletics. The founding group has already identified key leadership candidates and teacher candidates.

The application indicates “We do not intend to contract with a not-for-profit charter management organization.” However, the proposed relationship between the school and Urban Dove, a non-profit youth service organization, includes many components of a management company/charter school relationship: services provided to the school, fees for some services, conducting fundraising and back office support. There is Board membership overlap of three out of ten Trustees. In the interview, the founding group reiterated that the relationship will be formalized in a contract which will delineate fee-for-service items (fundraising, facility, AmeriCorps program, back-office services) and no-cost items (curriculum and training materials, expertise of Urban Dove staff). A letter of support from AmeriCorps was provided.

The proposed facility, at Floyd Bennett Field on the campus of the Gateway National Recreation Area, is currently vacant and will require extensive renovation. This will be managed by Urban Dove, which will then lease the space to the proposed charter school at below market rate cost of \$12/psf with a \$5/psq renovation premium. The renovation work will be conducted over a number of years at a pace that will accommodate the growing school. The founding group anticipates the need for incubator space in the first school year and several viable contingency options have been identified. A partnership has been established with the Aviator Sports and Recreation Complex for use of athletic facilities.

III. FINANCIAL PLAN ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Inadequate	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds
		X	

Analysis Summary

The founding group has articulated a budget that is well-aligned with its mission, educational program, and staffing plan.

The founding group understands their financial obligations and demonstrated the group's capacity to implement financial controls, resources and practices. The group demonstrated the knowledge of its responsibility for the public trust with public dollars, as well as its capacity to oversee fundraising efforts.

The Board's finance committee will be charged with specific monitoring related to financial controls, resources and practices. The Board members have demonstrated skills related to fundraising. They articulated their responsibility for the public trust with public dollars.

The school is heavily dependent upon donated resources, including up-front funding for a facility, athletic equipment and uniforms, and insurance coverage for its students. It is not clear that the level of donations will be sustainable over time.

CAPACITY INTERVIEW ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Inadequate	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds
		X	

Analysis Summary

The founding group responded competently and sufficiently to both general questions posed by the Assistant Commissioner and to specific questions posed by the reviewers.

The interview was attended by all but one founding member of the Board of Trustees. Their enthusiasm for the proposed school and knowledge of the needs of the target student population was clear and consistent. Discussion focused on the components that they were bringing together to create a unique new school, including the transfer school model, the sports focus and the career and technical school model.

When asked what it meant to hold a public charter in New York State, the responses included trust, an opportunity for innovation, leeway in restrictions, and an opportunity to serve a population not served previously. The interviewees seemed convinced that their school would attract the targeted population to the exclusion of other students.

A query about accountability to the State brought responses about key data points, such as the population served, credit accumulation pace and accomplishment, attendance, the re-engagement of students, physical health, graduation rate and post-graduation information. Board members were adamant that the school would be separate from the Urban Dove Board (a “partner in support of the school”).

Members discussed the role of athletics in the proposed school, on different levels, and the value of sports to the school’s purpose and attraction for students. Certain aspects of the sports program will be financially and otherwise supported by an outside partner, the Aviation Sports and Recreation Complex. The sustainability of these contributions is not clear.

In a discussion of staffing, the Board members indicated that they feel the staffing they have proposed will be sufficient and viable. They do intend to use a number of AmeriCorps members as “coaches” in the classroom and for the sports programs.

Other topics included the extended day and year, transportation, special education and English language learner students, and parent involvement. When asked how the students (many of whom may be expected to have serious academic deficits) were expected to reach the goals set for them in the time frame allotted, specifically graduating in three years with forty-four credits, the response focused on the additional time that will be available in school and the belief that students have not been engaged sufficiently in the past.

COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY

Inadequate	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds
		X	

Analysis Summary

This application has strong points, especially in its focus on a very needy, narrow population and its use of the freedom afforded by the charter school law for innovation and flexibility. The individual Board members are experienced in education and social service areas, and bring expertise and enthusiasm to the table. They have set ambitious goals for the proposed students and express confidence, based on past experience with this population of students through the after-school program, that they are attainable. The creation of an enhanced transfer model school serving students in NYC is an attractive fit with the charter school governance model.

The overall application is sound and the founding board conveys the capacity and skill to launch this program.