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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MISSION

The goal of Creative Minds Public Charter School (Creative Minds PCS) is to offer students a positive learning experience within a comprehensive education program that involves a highly engaging international, project-based curriculum, includes the arts, and integrates standards-based literacy and math instruction in supportive small classrooms.

PHILOSOPHY AND INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

The founders of Creative Minds PCS believe that all students can learn and achieve academic success, provided they have a supportive educational environment, an exciting and challenging curriculum, and individualized attention. We based the design of our preschool to eighth-grade program on research in the social-cognitive theory of learning, early childhood education, positive classroom models, best teaching practices, and inclusive curriculum and instructional methodologies proven to provide high-quality educational opportunities to all types of learners.

Creative Minds PCS will be the only school in the Washington, D.C., area to integrate the developmental perspective of education through Dr. Stanley Greenspan's renowned DIR®/Floortime™ approach, which ensures that all students acquire the prerequisite capacities for self-regulation and higher-level creative thinking required for academic achievement. With the support of Jake Greenspan, a member of our Founding Group, Dr. Greenspan's son, and director of The Floortime Center™, we will train all our teachers in this child-centered approach, to ensure that all our students are making progress in developmental milestones crucial to learning and accessing the school curriculum.

We are also the only school in the District of Columbia to implement the International Primary Curriculum (IPC), with its project-based, cross-curricular, thematic instructional units, and rigorous teaching structure designed to engage children of all abilities in today's world. Along with foreign-language instruction, the IPC will enable our students to become knowledgeable, creative thinkers ready for successful engagement in a globalized economy.

Our small group, standards-based literacy and mathematics instruction holds high expectations for all students to make steady progress toward individual academic goals and meet or exceed U.S. national standards in these areas. The Creative Minds PCS literacy and mathematics goals are based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) recently adopted by the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). Our reading and math programs are based on research in best practices and include multiple scaffolding methods of planning and instruction to ensure students gain strong foundational skills and learn higher-level cognitive strategies. Because strong literacy skills are imperative to academic success, our goal is to make sure all students have excellent reading and writing proficiency.

Arts education and integration in our curriculum will provide students with multiple modes of representation, multiple modes of expression, and multiple forms of engagement, based on the Universal Design for Learning. The Universal Design for Learning is based on the principle that

individuals have unique ways of processing information and expressing themselves. Our teachers will receive training in applying these principles that will enable them to tap into students' innate and preferred modes of learning, providing all students with access to the academic curriculum and successful educational experiences. Creative Minds PCS's inclusive curriculum will offer students instruction in a variety of art forms to allow artistically gifted students opportunities to follow their interests and pursue their talents at school. In addition, the IPC integrates arts-based activities in its instructional units.

We designed the Creative Minds PCS curriculum and instructional methodologies to ensure that all types of learners experience success in our educational program. Based on the social-cognitive framework of learning, successful school-based learning experiences are crucial to students' academic self-efficacy beliefs. Positive self-efficacy beliefs enhance students' cognitive, motivational, and behavioral engagement in learning, and improve self-regulation, leading to high levels of academic achievement.

OPERATIONS

Creative Minds PCS will open in the fall of 2012, serving 112 students in preschool through third grade. We will ultimately expand to include fourth through eighth grades. To achieve our goals, we will work to limit our class size to 14 students at the preschool and elementary levels.

Creative Minds PCS will combine rigorous application of the curriculum with strong financial and operations support. Through the efficient use of contractors and implementation of best practices in administration, the school will maintain a lean management layer that puts more resources into the classroom. Our Founding Group provides the school with the array of skills and perspectives that we need to succeed. With education professionals- real estate attorneys, and leaders in nonprofit finance and governance, this group of D.C. residents has the aptitude and the commitment to ensure Creative Minds Public Charter School achieves its goals.

CONCLUSION

We strongly believe in our holistic approach to education that is responsive to students' social/emotional, cognitive, and academic needs. We look forward to offering students in the District of Columbia a world-class, inclusive education that promotes their innate creativity on the path to academic and future success.

PROPOSED PLANS

This application presents the education and business plans of the Creative Minds Public Charter School. Members of the Creative Minds PCS Founding Group have contributed to the parts of this application that match our areas of expertise. Our Founding Group members are knowledgeable in the areas of education leadership and policy, curriculum and instruction, developmental psychology, nonprofit finance and governance, and real-estate law. Along with our expertise, we have a firm understanding of the Washington, D.C., context, with regards to the education needs of students, historical and socioeconomic trends, and the challenges of finding facilities for a school building. Founding Group members who are parents of D.C. public school students are concerned about the scarcity of high-quality schools and are fully committed to supporting Creative Minds PCS's mission of offering a comprehensive, rigorous education program to D.C. residents, including our own children. We have confidence in our ability to consider and address the multitude of issues related to starting a successful school.

We believe our program's child-centered and developmental approach to education is unique, and that it will ensure that the goal of educating every student to reach his or her potential is not just rhetoric. The design of Creative Minds PCS is based on extensive research in all the aspects of schooling that have the most significant effects on academic achievement. The program is also informed by the Founding Group's collective experience working with all types of learners in urban public schools and learning from both successful and failing approaches and implementation models. We believe a holistic view of the different elements that enhance or impede learning is required to fully support students to overcome their struggles and reach beyond their perceived limits. We look forward to your feedback on our application.

A. EDUCATIONAL PLAN

Educational Needs of the Target Student Audience

Creative Minds PCS will be the first school in the District of Columbia to incorporate DIR®/Floortime™ developmental model¹ of education and the highly engaging, project-based, arts-infused thematic instructional units of the International Primary Curriculum (IPC). In our initial year, Creative Minds PCS will serve 112 students from preschool to third grade. We will eventually serve 308 students, from preschool to eighth grade, when we reach full capacity. In our first year of operation (2012-2013), we will start with two preschool and two prekindergarten classes, and one classroom for each subsequent grade level up to third grade. Each year thereafter we will add one additional classroom for students in Kindergarten to third grade; we will also add an additional grade level (up to eighth grade). Exhibit 1 lists the progression of grades served beginning in 2012.

¹ Stanley I. Greenspan, M.D., was a world-renowned child psychologist who outlined six underlying developmental milestones based on typical development as a guide for assessing individual children's levels of social, emotional, and cognitive ability. He developed the DIR®/Floortime™ Model to support children with developmental and emotional difficulties move through the six stages of development (described in more detail in the section on Creative Minds PCS education plan).

Exhibit 1. Students per Grade, by Year of Operation

Grade	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014	Year 2015	Year 2016	Year 2017	Year 2018	Year 2019	Year 2020	Year 2021
PS	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
PK	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
K	14	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
1	14	14	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
2	14	14	14	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
3	14	14	14	14	28	28	28	28	28	28
4	0	14	14	14	14	28	28	28	28	28
5	0		14	14	14	14	28	28	28	28
6	0			14	14	14	14	28	28	28
7	0				14	14	14	14	28	28
8	0					14	14	14	14	28
Total	112	140	168	196	224	252	266	280	294	308

As Exhibit 1 illustrates, our enrollment level is determined by our small class-size, which we intend to limit to 14 students. We believe that, in addition to student-teacher ratio, class size is crucial to a truly inclusive education model in which every student receives individualized attention, especially in preschool, a time when a high-quality education can prevent later learning challenges. Based on our goal of implementing an inclusive program by design, small class-size is also important for students with sensory processing and attention problems, to limit distractions in the learning environment. Based on an extensive longitudinal experimental study, reduced class-size strongly correlates with higher student achievement in reading and math in the early primary grades, especially for low-income students. The study presented in *Quality Schools, Healthy Neighborhoods: A Research Report*, sponsored by the D.C. Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), reports:

Students in smaller classes scored higher on norm-referenced tests than those in larger classes. Teachers reported that the smaller classes helped them to better identify student needs, provide more individualized instruction, and effectively cover more material. Follow-up studies found that these enhanced outcomes lasted well beyond the experimental period, with small-class-size students outperforming their regular-class-size peers through the eighth grade. Additional findings suggested that small-class students had fewer special education identifications, fewer discipline problems, lower dropout rates, and lower grade retention rates than their regular class size peers.²

Our decision to serve students from preschool to eighth grade was based on the following reasons:

- Given the shortage of placement options and available seats for children from preschool to kindergarten in Washington, D.C., we intend to offer a high-quality early childhood program to students in this age group. Our school will serve students in small, nurturing classroom environments with a maximum of 14 students per classroom, taught by an early childhood teacher and a teacher’s assistant. We believe a strong early childhood

² *Quality Schools, Healthy Neighborhoods: A Research Report*. Sponsored by the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE); p. 45. Available at: http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411769_quality_schools.pdf?RSSFeed=UI_WashingtonD.C.Region.xml

education program will prepare students for future social and academic success. Our program will be the only one in Washington, D.C., that will monitor children's progress through developmental milestones that relate to social and cognitive learning based on the DIR®/Floortime™ model integrated with our curriculum and assessments (explained in subsequent sections of this application). Providing early interventions and a strong pre-literacy program will make certain each child has a solid developmental and academic foundation for his or her future learning experiences.

- The IPC program will offer elementary-level students opportunities to incorporate their creativity through the arts-infused, project-based learning units that promote high levels of engagement. Our small reading and math groups will be guided by the sequence of skills embedded in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS); however, our literacy and math program will be unique in grouping students based on their cognitive developmental readiness and academic skills instead of their grade level.
- There is a scarcity of high-quality middle school options for students attending D.C. public schools. Middle school is a critical time when adolescents' experiences of academic success or failure influence their levels of engagement in learning and determine their self-perceptions as students. For many who have not mastered underlying social and cognitive developmental milestones, and for those who lack solid literacy skills, the gap between their academic skills and curricular demands grows exponentially, causing a negative impact on their academic self-confidence as they reach adolescence.³
- Successful educational experiences are crucial for adolescents' self-efficacy beliefs and their decisions to remain in school. Academic failure leaves students vulnerable to seeking approval from negative peer groups, joining illegal and dangerous activities, and dropping out of school. Through our project-based, arts-integrated curriculum, adolescents will be engaged in multiple modes of learning that tap into their areas of strength, reward them for creativity, and provide them with opportunities for success. We hope to support our students' growth through this critical stage, ideally serving them from preschool through eighth grade, as we offer D.C. residents better-quality middle school placement options.

Target Population Based on Demographic and Adequate Yearly Progress Analyses

Creative Minds PCS aims to offer a well-rounded, academically rigorous program to children residing in the District of Columbia, especially to student groups currently underserved in public schools. As shown in the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reports from all schools in Washington, D.C.⁴ (represented in Exhibit 2), the following groups of students are not meeting proficiency targets for literacy based on the DC-CAS reading assessment: blacks, Hispanics, students with disabilities, those with limited English proficiency, and economically disadvantaged students.

³ Fuchs, D. and Deshler, 2007. What We Need to Know About Responsiveness to Intervention (and Shouldn't be Afraid to Ask). *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*. 22 (2).

⁴ Table from the Office of State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) website, available at: <http://www.nclb.osse.dc.gov/aypsummaryreports.asp#>

Exhibit 2. 2010 AYP Report for All Public Schools in Washington, D.C.

AYP REPORT ALL SCHOOLS	Year : 2010						MET AYP?	
	Group : STATE REPORTS						Acad.	Safe Harbor
	Subject : READING						Target	
	Category : ELEMENTARY						NO	NO
GROUP	2009	READING, 2010						
	% PROFICIENT	Number in Group	Number Tested	% Tested	% Proficient	Met % Tested (95%)	Met Prof. Target (1) (73.69%)	Safe Harbor (2)
ETHNICITY								
Asian/Pacific Islanders (3)	75.70%	264	261	98.86%	77.59%	Yes	Yes	-
Black/Non-Hispanic (3)	43.70%	14,703	14,574	99.12%	40.22%	Yes	No	No
Hispanic (3)	49.39%	2,185	2,160	98.86%	44.74%	Yes	No	No
Amer. Indian/Alaskan Native*	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
White/Non-Hispanic (3)	90.27%	1,128	1,125	99.73%	89.14%	Yes	Yes	-
GENDER (4)								
Female	52.92%	9,002	8,946	99.38%	49.31%	-	-	-
Male	42.69%	9,280	9,176	98.88%	39.50%	-	-	-
SPECIAL EDUCATION								
Disabled (5)	23.35%	3,223	3,136	97.30%	17.44%	Yes	No	No
ENGLISH PROFICIENCY								
Lep/Nep (3)	47.99%	1,557	1,542	99.04%	42.29%	Yes	No	No
ECONOMIC STATUS								
Econ. Disadvantaged (3)	41.35%	13,255	13,143	99.16%	37.32%	Yes	No	No
TOTAL (3)	47.75%	18,282	18,122	99.12%	44.37%	YES	NO	NO

* No data are displayed for groups with less than 25 students.

(1) AYP reading target = 73.69%, AYP math target = 70.14%.

(2) Safe Harbor is achieved if a group that does not meet the proficiency target in the current year has at least 95% tested and reduces the percent not proficient from the previous year by 10%. In 2006 the reduction in percent not proficient has been adjusted because of the difference in proficiency standards on the DC-CAS and the SAT9.

(3) This group includes at least one LEPNEP student who has been in a U. S. school for less than one year. These students are counted in percent tested but not in percent proficient.

(4) Females, males, and migrants are not subject to AYP targets.

(5) This group includes at least one student who took the alternate assessment.

Creative Minds PCS will address this problem by offering students inclusive learning opportunities through an engaging project-based international curriculum and developmentally appropriate instructional methodologies in small literacy and math groups. Our goal is to engage in a citywide recruitment effort to include the student groups that are underserved by existing schools. We believe that the inclusive design of our program and small class-size will benefit students by meeting their developmental, social, and emotional needs while holding them to high expectations within our standards-based literacy and math programs. These features will especially benefit students at risk due to poverty or special needs. According to the “District of Columbia Early Childhood Reach and Risk Assessment” for 2008, produced by Child Trends, risk factors include: percent of children receiving aid through Transitional Aid to Needy Families, infant mortality rate, births to teen mothers and percent of low-birth-weight infants.

Children facing these kinds of challenges will benefit from Creative Minds PCS's developmental approach.

Therefore, in the process of providing a research-based, highly effective program that meets the needs of all students, Creative Minds PCS will add to charter-school placement options for students with the greatest needs (due to risk factors or special needs) in an inclusion setting. Exhibit 3 compares student demographics in D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) and D.C. public charter schools⁵. Based on this information, students with special needs are significantly underrepresented in D.C. charter schools compared to other student groups, except at St. Coletta Special Education PCS (100 percent), Bridges PCS (up to 40 percent), and SAIL PCS (up to 50 percent).

⁵ available at: <http://www.dc.gov/DCPS/About+DCPS/Who+We+Are/Facts+and+Statistics> and <http://www.dcpbublicharter.com/Enrollment-and-Demographics/SY2010-002D-2011-Charter-School-Profile.aspx>

Exhibit 3. Student Demographics (DCPS and D.C. Charter Schools)

Student Characteristics	DCPS	DC PCS
% Student Population Black	79%	87%
% Student Population Hispanic	12%	9%
% Student Population Other Ethnicity	2%	1%
% Student Population White	7%	3%
% Students in Special Education	19%	10%
% Students ELL	8%	6%
% Students with Free/Reduced Lunch	66%	65%

We believe our developmental screening and early interventions through the DIR/Floortime framework, along with implementation of the Success For All curriculum, will especially serve students with developmental delays due to special needs or poverty risk factors through our early childhood program. Provided with the appropriate learning supports within a general education program, students with mild to moderate developmental delays, sensory integration problems and autism spectrum disorders can reach high levels of academic achievement. Based on the lack of knowledge in the area of inclusion for students with sensory-based and autism spectrum disorders, whose numbers are increasing, one of our goals is to implement the highly successful developmental approach represented in the DIR/Floortime model (described in detail in subsequent sections) to provide these students with additional placement options with their general education peers. The DIR/Floortime model also provides a strong foundation for all students. Concepts from the model are applied at high-performing private schools, such as Sidwell Friends.

To form an inclusive learning community, we aim for a student body that represents the following characteristics:

- More than 50 percent economically disadvantaged (qualify for free or reduced-price lunch)
- More than 75 percent Black and Hispanic students
- Up to 8 percent English language learner students
- Up to 20 percent students with special needs (up to 10 percent of them students with autism spectrum disorders)

We believe our multifaceted developmental, social, and academic curriculum and small class-size make Creative Minds PCS an ideal context for a truly inclusive program. Our unique school model combines standards-based academic rigor for typically developing students with individualized instructional methods for those with special needs and English language learners. Based on the Multiple Intelligence Theory⁶ and research in the area of inclusive education⁷, the design of our program, including project-based learning opportunities and the arts, will serve all students and learning styles.

⁶ Gardner, H. (2004). *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. Basic Books, a member of Perseus Books Group.

⁷ Jorgensen, C. M. (1997). *Curriculum and Its Impact on Inclusion and the Achievement of Students with Disabilities*. Washington, DC: Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS).

School Location

The Creative Minds PCS founders are searching for a school facility with the help of Brett Orlove, a real estate attorney, and with support from Building Hope, a private foundation that helps high-quality public charter schools with technical and financial assistance for educational facilities. As of the writing of this application, Creative Minds PCS has not finalized a location. Due to the challenges of finding adequate educational facilities in Washington, D.C., we will remain flexible and open to educational spaces that best serve our mission and are affordable, as we intentionally engage in citywide recruiting efforts. However, based on our analyses of existing DCPS and charter schools, our target student population, and goal to be centrally located, we aim to find facilities in Ward 5.

According to data presented in the “District of Columbia Early Childhood Reach and Risk Assessment,” 2008 conducted by Child Trends, Ward 5 is a “High Risk” ward, exceeded only by Wards 7 and 8. This assessment is based on factors such as percent of children receiving aid through TANF, infant mortality rate, births to teen mothers, and percent of low-birth-weight infants. Children facing these challenges would benefit from Creative Minds PCS’s strong early childhood program, the developmental approach to education (ensuring students acquire prerequisite social and cognitive milestones), and our inclusive and engaging curriculum.

Of the 11 DCPS schools and 11 charter schools in Ward 5 that participated in the DCAS in 2010, seven DCPS schools and four charter schools showed both lower growth and lower proficiency relative to the state average (these numbers exclude schools with less than four years of data.) It is likely that parents in Ward 5 are seeking alternatives to these schools.

Due to the scarcity of available seats and quality programming in early childhood education, many students faced with the described risk factors that could benefit from early interventions and outgrow their challenges end up being referred for special education services. The quality of special education based on timeliness requirements and implementation of services has been historically low in the District of Columbia, resulting in the Blackman/Jones consent decree. There are more lawsuits related to the failure to implement federal and state special education policies in D.C. than any other place in the United States, resulting in high numbers of private-school placements and high cost of transportation to these schools for D.C. taxpayers. Given the rise in the number of students identified with mild to moderate autism spectrum disorders and the scarcity of appropriate inclusive programming for these students, it is likely that lawsuits for private placement will increase as private education companies such as Capital Schools move to D.C. to fill this need. Therefore, the inclusive programming, small class-size and high-quality early interventions based on the DIR/Floortime developmental model offered by Creative Minds PCS will add to much-needed public school options in Washington, D.C.

In sum, the founders of Creative Minds PCS strongly believe in the important social and academic benefits of inclusive education. The described demographics and AYP proficiency reports show that D.C. lacks sufficient placement options that are providing equitable educational opportunities that meet the needs of all its students.

1. Mission and Purpose of Proposed Public Charter School

1A. Mission and Philosophy

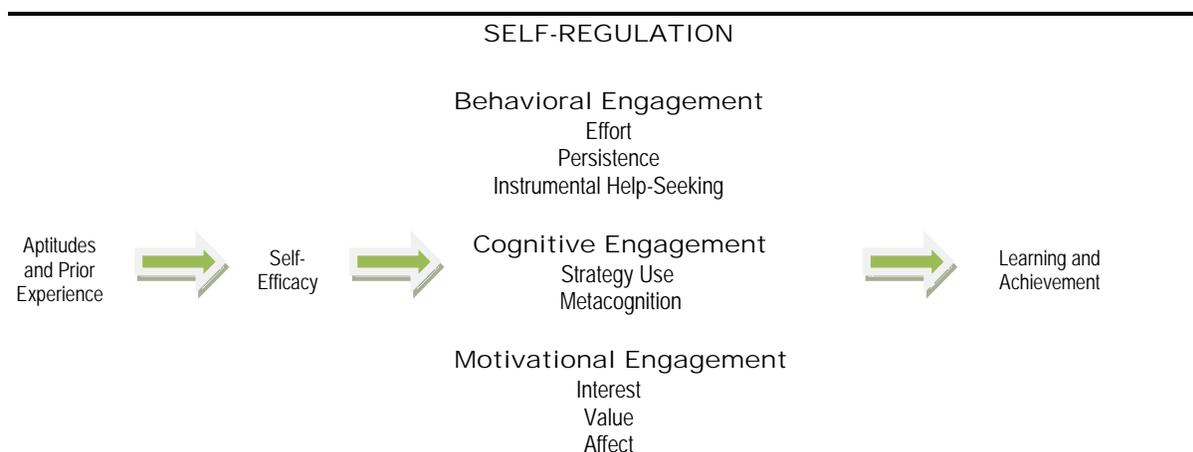
Mission

The goal of Creative Minds Public Charter School is to offer students a positive learning experience within a comprehensive education program that involves a highly engaging international, project-based curriculum, includes the arts, and integrates standards-based literacy and math instruction in supportive small classrooms.

Philosophy

The founders of Creative Minds PCS believe that today’s children need a supportive and nurturing educational environment that promotes high levels of engagement through active learning experiences and opportunities for creativity that prepare them for success in a globalized economy. The school program is designed to promote high levels of literacy and academic achievement through a multifaceted perspective of students’ educational requirements. We believe that, in addition to a rigorous educational program, the foundation for students’ future success depends on their developmental, social, and emotional growth in a positive learning environment that provides them with opportunities for success, thereby enhancing their social and academic self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is a motivational construct defined as students’ beliefs about their own capabilities. Research based on the social-cognitive theory of learning demonstrates that student self-efficacy beliefs influence academic achievement.⁸ Exhibit 4 illustrates how self-efficacy beliefs are found to influence students’ behavioral, cognitive, and motivational engagement in learning that have a direct impact on self-regulation and academic achievement.

Exhibit 4. Social-Cognitive Perspective of Learning Processes



A social-cognitive framework of affective and cognitive attributes of learning in relation to academic achievement (based on a combination of models by Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003 and Schunk, 1989).

⁸The Role of Self-Efficacy Beliefs in Student Engagement and Learning in the Classroom. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, (19).

Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2003) found that self-efficacy is inherently changeable and sensitive to contextual features of the classroom; they recommend meaningful learning opportunities that foster the development of self-efficacy. Creative Minds PCS intends to offer a rich and multifaceted program that provides all students with opportunities for success, with the goal of enhancing the social and cognitive aspects of their learning. This program design is framed within a social-constructivist philosophical perspective of education⁹: learning is influenced by individual student characteristics, social interactions between students and teachers (and among peers), and the classroom and school learning environments.

1B. Educational Focus

Intensive Literacy Instruction from Preschool to Eighth Grade

Our goal at Creative Minds PCS is to provide ample opportunities for active, engaging, project- and theme-based learning opportunities, within a developmentally appropriate educational program that prepares students to be lifelong learners. A strong basis in literacy is one of the ways we will invest in our students' future academic success.

At present, traditional grade-level instruction in reading is leaving many historically underserved groups of students below the "proficient" level (based on the No Child Left Behind Act Adequate Yearly Progress reports from schools in Washington, D.C.). Exhibit 2 in the preceding section represents disaggregated information regarding D.C. public school students who scored proficient on the DC-CAS Reading Assessment.¹⁰ The information indicates that the following categories of students are not performing at the proficient level in reading:

- Black students
- Hispanic students
- Students with disabilities
- Students with limited English proficiency
- Economically disadvantaged students

The lack of consideration for developmentally sound literacy instruction in prerequisite skills in comprehension and higher-level cognitive processes leaves holes in students' educational experiences at school, denying them access to further academic advancement.

The high rates of illiteracy in Washington, D.C., demonstrate that the education system is failing large numbers of students in the nation's capital. The unacceptable rates of illiteracy and school failure experienced by children affected by poverty and those with special needs have serious consequences for their academic achievement in school and for their lives. Approximately 90 percent of people, of all races, who are arrested are living below the poverty level at the time of

⁹ The social-constructivist perspective of learning holds that knowledge acquisition requires the engagement of different aspects of the learning process and that individuals are affected by the social aspects of their educational environment (Stone and Reid, 1994).

¹⁰ Reported by the Office of State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), available at: <http://www.nclb.osse.dc.gov/aypsummaryreports.asp#>

their arrest.¹¹ Though 10 percent of schoolchildren are in special education programs, they make up between 30 percent and 50 percent of those incarcerated.¹²

Based on this information, Creative Minds PCS aims to address literacy as a top priority in our curriculum and instruction from preschool to eighth grade. Through our literacy program, students will learn phonemic awareness, receive whole-language instruction, and gain comprehension skills that help them become good readers and access the academic curriculum.

The major components of our literacy plan are:

- Integration of English Language Arts Common Core State Standards into the curriculum
- Pre-literacy instruction from age 3
- Engaging curriculum materials and resources
- Small-group instruction based on students' actual reading and developmental levels, rather than grade level
- A combination of phonics, whole language, and comprehension activities
- Interactive and guided reading instruction, as well as opportunities for independent reading
- Arts-integrated reading activities that incorporate drama and visual arts
- Two literacy blocks each day for students from Kindergarten through eighth grade, including reading applications to other subject areas

Arts Education and Arts-Integration

At Creative Minds PCS, we intend to offer students a rich arts program that will eventually include music, dance, theater, and visual arts. Our early childhood and elementary curriculum units integrate the arts into project-based units of instruction to offer students greater access to academic content and active engagement in learning. Aligned with the social-constructivist perspective embedded in our school philosophy, which applies a holistic lens to education, the arts offer students inclusive opportunities through nonverbal, embodied engagement in learning, student ownership of the learning process, and an enhanced social and environmental educational context.¹³

Given our focus on providing all students with opportunities to explore their strengths and have positive, successful learning experiences, we believe that the addition of the arts to an academic program at Creative Minds PCS will result in a more inclusive school. The arts enhance our goals toward high levels of student engagement by offering students additional opportunities to include their interests and creativity in learning. (For detailed information about Arts Education and Arts-Integration at Creative Minds PCS, please see the "School Curriculum" and "Instructional Methodology" sections of this application.)

¹¹ Jones, S., (2009). Jails, Prisons, Incarceration Rates, and Public Cost. Available at:

<http://engagedintellectual.wordpress.com/2009/08/16/jails-prisons-incarceration-rates-and-public-cost/>

¹² National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice. November 8, 1999. University of Maryland Newsdesk, available at: <http://www.newsdesk.umd.edu/mail/send.cfm?articleID=473>

¹³ Abedin, G. (2010). Exploring the Potential of Arts-Based Education for Adolescents with Learning Disabilities: A case study of engagement in learning through the arts. *UM Theses and Dissertations*

International, Project-Based Curriculum

Interactive, project-based learning opportunities offered through our international curriculum (the IPC) integrate research-based, inclusive curricular components¹⁴, providing access to all types of learners and ability groups. The IPC's international learning experiences help students develop:

- The personal qualities they need to be good citizens and to respond to the changing contexts of their future lives.
- A sense of their own nationality and culture alongside a profound respect for the nationalities and cultures of others.

The international focus of our academic program also offers students an opportunity to gain knowledge of foreign languages, different cultural traditions, and greater awareness of current events, enabling them to participate and compete in a globalized economy. Many public school students live in the international context of Washington, D.C., without enough school-based connections to help them benefit from resources such as cultural experiences and awareness of future employment opportunities. At Creative Minds PCS, we will help students gain greater cultural awareness and international understanding through the IPC and foreign-language instruction.

Inclusive, Developmentally Appropriate Education

We selected the Creative Minds PCS curriculum and instructional materials to create an inclusive school that meets the needs of all student sub-groups, including those with special needs, English language learners, and gifted students. Our goal is to design a program that engages all students in general education classes, through instructional methodologies that have proven effective for all students, such as our proposed project-based learning and arts integration.

In addition to inclusive instructional methodologies, our goal is to detect developmental and academic problems (often related) early, avoiding the possibility that these challenges will lead to lifelong struggles for our students. We have worked closely with our Founding Group member, Jake Greenspan who is an expert on the internationally renowned Developmental, Individual Difference, Relationship-based (DIR)®/Floortime™ model created by his father, the late Stanley Greenspan, to make sure our design includes a developmental approach to education. The DIR® model is a developmental and interdisciplinary framework that is directed toward “building healthy foundations for social, emotional, and intellectual capacities rather than focusing on skills and isolated behaviors.”¹⁵ Central to the model is “the role of the child’s natural emotions and interests which has been shown to be essential for learning interactions that enable the different parts of the mind and brain to work together and to build successively higher

¹⁴ Jorgensen, C. M. (1997). Curriculum and Its Impact on Inclusion and the Achievement of Students with Disabilities. Washington, DC: Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS).

¹⁵ More information regarding DIR®/Floortime™ Model can be found at: <http://www.icdl.com/DIRFloortime.shtml>

levels of social, emotional, and intellectual capacities.”¹⁶ The framework takes into account individual differences in development and the unique ways each child processes information. Relationships with caregivers, educators, and peers are important aspects of supporting children’s progress through the developmental stages that are essential foundations for learning and problem-solving. The Creative Minds PCS founding group selected this approach because it addresses students’ developmental and social needs along with their academic goals.

Dr. Greenspan designed the DIR®/Floortime™ model based on the developmental stages of typically developing children, providing a guide for experiences that lead to the linguistic, social, and cognitive abilities that are required for academic achievement. Due to neurological differences, developmental delays, or emotional problems experienced in early childhood (trauma, poverty, malnutrition), many children do not reach these milestones on their own; they need interventions and support in their education program and from their caregivers.

DIR®/Floortime™ addresses the following areas related to learning:

- Attention
- Engagement
- Interaction and communication
- Problem-solving
- Meaningful use of ideas
- Logical thinking
- Multi-causal thinking
- Comparative and gray-area thinking
- Reflective thinking
- Motor planning and sequencing
- Organizing thoughts
- Regulating sensations¹⁷

The many students who do not master developmental milestones and struggle with one or more of these areas experience negative effects in their social and academic performance. Dr. Greenspan explains the connection between a strong foundation in the listed areas of learning and the following academic skills needed for school success:

- Reading comprehension
- Expressing thoughts in writing and speaking
- Mathematical thinking and reasoning
- Visual and verbal mathematical skills
- Organizational skills
- Following directions

¹⁶ Greenspan, S., and Weider, S., available at: <http://www.icdl.com/dirFloortime/overview/documents/WhatisDIR.pdf>

¹⁷ Greenspan, S., Greenspan, N.T. (2010). *The Learning Tree: Overcoming Disabilities from the Ground Up*. Da Capo Press: PA.

In sum, our education focus encompasses rigorous standards-based academic instruction in literacy and math, arts education and integration, international education, and foreign-language instruction through an inclusive design based on a developmental perspective of learning.

1C. Goals

Aligned with Creative Minds PCS's mission and philosophy, the following student and organizational goals will guide our academic instruction and assessment, the social school environment, relationships with parents and community organizations, and our financial stability and growth.

Academic Goals

- Students will have strong English language arts and literacy skills, demonstrated by reading and comprehending developmentally appropriate material and demonstrating proficiency based on individualized student goals and informal and formal assessments.
- Students will acquire a solid foundation in mathematics concepts, computation, and problem-solving, demonstrated by proficiency based on individualized student goals and informal and formal assessments.
- Students will be given opportunities to pursue and advance their learning in areas of academic interest, such as science or social studies, through project-based learning offered within the curriculum.

Social/Emotional, Cognitive, and Developmental Goals

- Students make progress in social/emotional, cognitive, and developmental areas of learning by mastering the nine milestones presented in the DIR®/Floortime™ model (see Appendix K-1, under "Optional Documents").
- Assessment results will be tracked under each area of development in individual student portfolios until the student masters all nine levels (between ages 3-13, depending on individual developmental differences).

Arts Education and Integration into the Curriculum

- Creative Minds PCS will have a strong arts program with a growing number of teachers teaching each art form (music, dance, theater, and visual arts).
- Students will engage in the different areas of learning in the arts outlined by the District of Columbia Arts Standards.
- The arts will be integrated into the school's project-based curriculum to enhance students' access to learning through different modalities (i.e., visual, kinesthetic, and auditory).

International Awareness and Foreign-Language Instruction

- Creative Minds PCS will successfully implement the International Primary Curriculum. As a result:
 - Students will demonstrate cross-cultural understanding and sensitivity.
 - Students will demonstrate understanding of other cultures and places in the world through their research and projects.
- Students will be offered instruction in Spanish and other foreign languages based on surveys assessing parents' preferences for specific languages. As a result:
 - Students will be motivated to continue learning a foreign language over the years they attend Creative Minds PCS.
 - Students will have basic skills in a language pursued at the school.
 - Students will participate in after-school foreign-language instruction.

Positive Classroom and School Learning Environments

- Students will be actively engaged in learning the majority of the time.
- School staff members and students will have positive interactions on a regular basis.
- Students will have multiple opportunities for success through the variety of activities offered at the school.
- Students will attend school regularly.

Collaborative Decision-Making and Community Involvement

- Creative Minds PCS will maintain an active Board of Trustees who attend monthly meetings and support the school.
- The school will have an active Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA) that collaborates with and supports the school leadership team.
- Parents will demonstrate a positive opinion of the school and recommend it to others.
- The school will be supported by, and collaborate with, community organizations to provide additional services to students and their parents.

Financial Sustainability

- Creative Minds PCS will maintain a positive financial position.
- Creative Minds PCS will use practices that ensure its financial integrity.
- Creative Minds PCS will anticipate long-term financial threats and opportunities.

Fundraising

- Creative Minds PCS will fundraise effectively.
- School leaders will assess whether potential grant opportunities are being appropriately identified and pursued.

2. Curriculum of Proposed Public Charter School

Through hands-on, project-based instructional methodologies, the curriculum at Creative Minds PCS will support students' academic, social/emotional, and physical development, provide them with multiple opportunities to achieve high academic standards, and enhance their knowledge of the world around them. Upon graduation from eighth grade, our students will be:

- Academically advanced in literacy and math
- Self-efficacious, motivated, self-regulated learners
- Knowledgeable and respectful of various local and international cultures
- Creative thinkers and problem-solvers

To achieve these goals, we will offer our students a research-based preschool program, as well as literacy and mathematics instruction in elementary grades, using the Success for All curriculum material. In addition, the International Primary Curriculum will serve as a project- and theme-based curricular framework that we will infuse with academic national Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics. The IPC is an outcomes-led, enquiry-based, and future-oriented curriculum for all subjects for children age 5-12. Instructional units have been developed to bring together the social sciences and arts subjects in a thematic approach that enables children to make links between the subjects in exciting and stimulating ways. While the curriculum offers goals for language and mathematics, it does not prescribe units for these two important academic areas, allowing schools to develop them based on local or national standards.

Once our teachers are trained and become experts in using the IPC, in the years leading up to the addition of middle school grades 6 through 8, Creative Minds PCS staff will develop a similar project-based thematic approach for our older students. Common Core State Standards from English language arts, mathematics, and science (once developed) will guide the focus of each unit for middle school.

Our small-group, developmentally appropriate reading and mathematics instruction will support students' literacy skills and understanding of math concepts and problem-solving. In addition to arts-integrated units within the IPC, we will offer students opportunities to learn an art form. Students will be exposed to different art forms up to third grade; older students will be allowed to choose an art form as we hire additional arts teachers and our school grows to include higher grade levels over the years.

Our developmental approach to education, informed by the DIR®/Floortime™ model, will train teachers to have the ability to observe and analyze students' physical, social, and cognitive development. Twice a year, students' developmental progress will be assessed based, on the nine areas of the DIR® model (see Appendix K-1 under "Optional Documents"), as part of their portfolio assessments. This approach will help us monitor and support the underlying learner characteristics, explained in the DIR® model, that are imperative for academic success (e.g., attention, social interaction and communication, problem-solving, reflective thinking, motor planning and sequencing, and self-regulation). Given the importance of these social and cognitive underlying abilities for high levels of academic achievement, providing opportunities to develop these areas in our curriculum is critical to students' future success. The DIR® model

will also help us monitor students’ developmental growth from an early age, with the goal of providing early intervention through intensive instruction, to avoid the need for special education classification. If a student’s developmental growth in these areas is significantly delayed, however, our trained teachers will know to inform the Student Support Team; subsequently our team will refer the student for a psycho-educational assessment to determine the need for special education services in addition to the general education curriculum.

Our educational curriculum is designed to ensure that all students are stimulated and highly engaged in a positive learning environment that promotes high levels of academic achievement while supporting social-cognitive abilities that lead to student success. Our curriculum model also responds to students’ individual areas of strengths and weaknesses to make sure all students are successful within the program.

Process and Timeline for Curriculum Planning

Our Curriculum Team, made up of Founding Group members — including the director of education, the director of student services, Jake Greenspan of The Floortime Center™, our general education teacher, early childhood education teacher, and music education teacher — will meet in the summer of 2011 to map out our curriculum for the fall of 2012. Before planning the curriculum, we will purchase the Success for All curriculum material and the IPC, and research grade-level English language arts and mathematics Common Core State Standards for each grade. The Common Core State Standards will inform teachers of the skills expected of students in each grade level. Our DIR developmental assessment will inform us of students’ individual cognitive ability as it relates to reading and math instruction. This approach is intended to ensure that all students receive sufficient instruction in core academic reading and math, and in related underlying cognitive skills, to ascertain that there are no gaps in their learning. The Success for All preschool program and the reading and mathematics elementary and middle-school curricula will help us meet most of the education requirements of our English language learners (ELLs) and special education students within the design of our inclusive program rather than in a pull-out model.

Exhibit 5. Curriculum Planning and Professional Development Timeline

June-December 2011	Purchase Success for All and IPC curriculum, and research Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics for K-5 th grade.
January-March 2012	Curriculum Team gathers to review purchased material and receive training. Subsequently, the team will ensure the curriculum includes developmentally based, incremental reading and math units for students age 3-12. The team will create quarterly performance benchmarks for literacy and mathematics based on Common Core State Standards appropriate for each reading and mathematics level.
August 2012 <i>Week 1</i>	Creative Minds PCS teachers attend a mandatory two-week professional development workshop (to be repeated each year), to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training by Jake Greenspan on the DIR®/Floortime™ approach, developmental milestones, and their relevance to academic achievement. (Jake Greenspan will provide additional training in the DIR model in subsequent professional development sessions throughout the year.) • Training in Success for All early childhood, elementary, and middle school curricula. • IPC expert training on using the curriculum software and unit plans.

<p>Week 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our arts integration specialist, Linda Krauker, will introduce the importance of the arts in providing access to learning for different types of learners. (Linda Krauker will provide further training in arts integration in professional development sessions throughout the year.) • The director of student services reviews school policies and procedures, focusing on identification of ELLs and special education students, the Student Support Team process, and IEP planning and implementation. Teachers are introduced to the Special Education Database System and the Office of State Superintendent of Education’s requirements as they relate to the organization and timeliness of IEPs. (Teachers will receive further training in these areas throughout the year.) • Teachers are guided through the planning of their curriculum units. Common Core State Standards for K-3 will be integrated into the IPC project-based units. • The Director of Education reviews curriculum units for each grade level. • Teachers enter their curriculum units on ATLAS Rubicon.
<p>September 2012</p>	<p>School opens.</p>
<p>September 2012- June 2013</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing professional development, provided by Jake Greenspan (DIR@Floortime™), Alida Anderson of American University (special education, differentiating instruction), Linda Krauker (arts integration), and other experts invited to our monthly professional development days. • The director of education and director of student services provides continuous support at weekly staff meetings throughout the academic year.

2A. Student Learning Standards

Our Curriculum Team has selected a set of standards that will enable Creative Minds PCS to monitor student progress and academic achievement. These standards will also enable us to communicate clearly regarding our values and educational emphasis; they align instruction and student assessment with our mission and philosophy and will facilitate ongoing analysis of our school’s progress toward our goals.

The following types of standards will guide Creative Minds PCS to accomplish its mission of providing all types of learners with multiple opportunities for high levels of engagement in learning that leads to academic achievement:

- Preschool standards
- Developmental standards
- Academic content standards for English language arts and mathematics
- IPC standards
- Arts education standards

Standards in these areas will assure that students are acquiring prerequisite skills and competencies to become creative thinkers and problem-solvers who will be successful, in high school and beyond.

The Standards Selection and Development Process

The Curriculum Team selected national and international standards that indicate high expectations for academic achievement and acquisition of important learner characteristics that

will enable all students to continue succeeding after they graduate from our program. We selected the standards based on their alignment with our school mission and philosophy, which emphasize social/emotional growth, rigorous and developmentally appropriate achievement in reading and math, international knowledge and awareness, and learning in the arts. These standards will inform our curriculum and instruction, guide us in preparing students who can meet and learn beyond expectations, and provide a vehicle for assessing the performance of our students and our school. We also selected our standards based on their appropriateness for all learners, including students with special needs and English language learners.

Preschool Standards

To ascertain that our preschool and pre-kindergarten students will be well-prepared for future learning and academic achievement, after extensive research into state standards for early childhood education, we adopted New Jersey's Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards¹⁸. These research-based standards, listed in Appendix K-2 under "Optional Documents", address social/emotional development, language arts literacy, social studies, family and life skills, mathematics, world languages, health, safety, and physical education, science, technology, and visual and performing arts. The standards align with Creative Minds PCS's multifaceted education focus. They address different aspects of early childhood education and relate to underlying developmental milestones in language, social/emotional development, and motor development, serving as a guide for monitoring and assessing developmental delays through early intervention for students with special needs.

Elementary and Middle School Academic Content Standards

Creative Minds PCS will use the Common Core State Standards for K-8 English language arts and mathematics adopted by Washington, D.C., as a guide to inform our specific goals for student learning outcomes for each grade level. Common Core State Standards are based on research and feedback from stakeholders (national organizations representing teachers, postsecondary educators, civil rights groups, English language learners, and students with disabilities) and provide clear expectations for each grade level based on national standards. Applying the Common Core State Standards to inform our instruction will ensure that our students are well-prepared for high school, and beyond, and can compete with their peers from other schools. Standards in English language arts include indicators for required skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening, language, and media and technology. The mathematics standards for students in grades K-5 focus on whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals, helping students build the foundation to successfully apply more demanding math concepts and procedures, and move into application of those concepts and procedures. The standards stress conceptual understanding in addition to procedural skill. The middle school mathematics standards include geometry, algebra, probability, and statistics. Using Common Core State Standards to inform our goals for student learning outcomes, we can ensure that they will be prepared for high-school mathematics when they graduate from eighth grade at Creative Minds PCS.

¹⁸ Available at: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/ece/code/expectations/>

In addition to using the Common Core State Standards to inform our literacy and math instructional goals, the IPC standards we integrate with our curriculum will reinforce underlying skills and conceptual understanding in these academic areas. The IPC includes learning standards for literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, physical education, information technology, and international-mindedness for children ages 5-12. We will use indicators from *The Six Traits of Writing* (see Appendix K-3, under “Optional Documents”) as our instructional guide for teaching students writing skills.

Social/Emotional and Sensory-Motor Development Standards

As mentioned in the “Education Focus” section of this application, Creative Minds PCS’s curriculum, instructional methodologies, and teacher training all focus on students’ developmental growth in every area affecting academic achievement. We will use indicators from the DIR®/Floortime™ model (see Appendix K-1, under “Optional Documents”) in our curriculum to ensure that students are meeting social/emotional and developmental milestones necessary for successful learning.

2B. Resources and Instructional Materials

We selected Creative Minds PCS resources and instructional materials based on their alignment with our education focus and corresponding learning standards. These resources will facilitate the implementation of our curriculum goals by teachers who will receive advance training in using the instructional materials in ways that advance students’ progress toward meeting our high academic expectations. We selected the instructional materials to provide students with:

- Developmentally appropriate, academically rich, project-based learning opportunities
- Reading and math instruction based on Common Core State Standard
- Engaging and interesting content and instructional material in literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts, physical education, foreign languages (beginning with Spanish in our first year), information technology, and international knowledge that motivate students to learn
- Positive social and collaborative learning experiences
- Multiple modes of engagement in learning (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic) that provide all types of learners with opportunities for success
- The acquisition of underlying learner characteristics (e.g., critical thinking, problem-solving, self-regulation, and organizational skills) that lead to a strong foundation for academic and future career success
- Inclusive learning opportunities for gifted student, those with special needs, and English language learners

Preschool Curriculum, Pre-Kindergarten, and Kindergarten Instructional Material

Given the importance of early learning experiences for future academic success, we conducted thorough research on preschool models and instructional materials that would offer high-quality early childhood education. We searched for materials that offered hands-on, project-based learning experiences and promoted developmental growth, a strong pre-literacy and mathematics component, foreign-language instruction, and arts education. The research was led by our director of education, Golnar Abedin, and director of student services, Davina Soleyman, and through consultations with early childhood experts Charlotte Brown (teacher at Hyde-Addison Elementary School, Washington, D.C.) and Jake Greenspan of The Floortime Center™, with input from Patricia Steele, one of our founding group members and a mother of preschool-age children.

We selected the following programs and curriculum material for our preschool, prekindergarten, and kindergarten students:

(1) *Success For All, Curiosity Corner* is designed to engage three- and four-year-olds in literacy-focused problem-solving activities. The instructional processes are built around effective instructional concepts of cooperative learning and active teaching. Curiosity Corner provides teachers with well-structured thematic units aligned with state and national early-learning guidelines, and with our thematic elementary IPC. The program includes detailed instructions, provides many of the materials necessary for implementing a stimulating, engaging program, and offers training and support for educators. The separate programs for three-year-olds and four-year-olds are based on the same themes, with different books and activities to meet the developmental needs of young children. The program has 38 thematic units (e.g., families, bread, opposites, and spring) organized into global themes. Each unit features active, integrated experiences that enhance children’s language and literacy and their cognitive, mathematical, social, personal, creative, and physical development.

- **Curriculum:** Curiosity Corner’s integrated approach is built on a daily sequence of components. In “Greetings & Readings,” each child is individually greeted and made to feel welcome for a relaxed beginning to the day. Children look at books and explore table-top activities before gathering for the “Daily Message.”

Each day, during “Clues & Questions,” the class mascot (Curiosity Cat) introduces the concepts for the day with an active problem-solving activity. For example, Curiosity might bring out an object related to the theme and give the children clues so they can guess what the object is. The teacher stimulates the children’s curiosity and motivates them to learn more about the topic.

During “Rhyme Time,” children learn active rhymes and songs related to the theme to promote their phonemic awareness. During “Learning Labs,” children explore the theme through concrete, hands-on experiences in a variety of learning centers.

Through “Story Tree,” the interactive story component, children have opportunities to expand their worlds and explore the theme through books and stories. They develop their vocabularies, learn to make predictions, and prepare for reading by learning that print communicates ideas. Children are challenged to higher levels of thinking through interaction with educators who model thinking and questioning within and beyond the stories.

“Outside/Gross Motor Play” promotes physical, cognitive, and social development through theme-related movement activities.

“Snack Time” enhances children’s health, hygiene, and interpersonal skills with discussion, exploration, and guidance.

At the end of each day, “Question/Reflection” asks children to review the experiences they had throughout the day and reflect on what they have learned from them. Through

“Home Link” activities, children relate what they learned in school with their lives at home.

Families are encouraged to actively engage in their children’s learning through the Home Link components –the Home Link Page, a lending library, videos, and participation in classroom activities. These aspects of the program help keep families informed of their children’s school experiences, so family members can encourage their children’s learning.

- Instructional Materials: Each teacher receives a *Teacher’s Manual*. Except for basic equipment and supplies typical of a well-equipped early childhood classroom and some teacher-acquired materials, the Success For All Foundation supplies the materials necessary for implementing Curiosity Corner in monthly kits that include: two Theme Guides for each weekly unit; theme-related children’s books; manipulatives; games; and other materials to support the theme-related activities.

Each weekly theme guide is about 80 pages long and contains:

- A rationale and introduction to the theme
- A Learning Focus (a web indicating what learning objectives the unit covers)
- A Peek at the Week (an overview of the week’s activities)
- A list of materials needed for the unit
- Detailed lessons for implementing each component in a five-day sequence, including the Learning Labs for the theme, thematic rhymes, and recipes
- A Resource Corner (a bibliography of books associated with the theme)
- Home Link Pages, in English and Spanish, to introduce the theme to families
- Appendices with patterns, games, and handouts related to different early education topics¹⁹

Appendix K-4 (under “Optional Documents”) presents the scope and sequence of *Curiosity Corner*. A sample lesson plan is presented in Appendix K-5.

(2) *Success For All KinderCorner* is a research-based and research-proven full-day kindergarten program that provides children with experiences that prepare them for success in primary grades. KinderCorner fosters the development of children’s language, literacy, math, interpersonal and self-help skills, science, and social studies concepts. The focus on strong oral language skills, a love of reading, phonemic awareness, phonics, and listening comprehension creates a solid foundation for reading. Appendix K-6 (under “Optional Documents”) presents a sample lesson plan from KinderCorner.²⁰

- Curriculum:
 - “Greetings, Readings, & Writings” welcomes children into the classroom to begin the day with reading, writing, and other meaningful activities.

¹⁹ Information available at: <http://www.successforall.net/Programs/curiositycorner.html>

²⁰ Information available at: <http://www.successforall.net/Programs/kindercorner.html>

- “Let’s Get Together” settles children into a sharing time to promote oral language development and a sense of community. They learn vocabulary and thematic concepts for the day.
 - “Rhyme Time” promotes phonemic awareness and increases vocabulary related to the theme through rhymes, songs, and games.
 - “Story Tree” engages children in wonderful, age-appropriate literature as they make predictions, recall events, and learn new, theme-related vocabulary.
 - “Learning Labs” engages children in problem-solving, exploring materials, experimenting, observing, and recording.
 - “15 Minute Math” connects math to everyday life. Activities center around an interactive bulletin board.
 - “Snack/Outside/Gross Motor Play” enhances children’s interpersonal, self-help, and gross motor skills through peer and adult-child interaction.
 - “Stepping Stones” exposes children to phonics through letter-sound connections, blending, and segmenting. The *KinderRoots Shared Stories* provide a meaningful context to practice beginning reading skills.
 - “Math Mysteries” emphasizes number concept awareness and math skills development as students construct their own understanding of mathematics.
 - “Let’s Daydream” provides poetry or beautiful prose filled with imagery that children listen to as they rest.
 - “Write Away” gets children writing about whatever they wish or responding to theme-related suggestions by the teacher.
 - “Let’s Think About It” reinforces skills and concepts that children have learned during the day.
 - “Home Link” promotes family involvement in children’s education through an activity that links what children learn at school with their life outside school.
- Instructional Materials: KinderCorner provides Kindergarten teachers all the necessary instructional materials to implement the program:
 - A *KinderCorner Teacher’s Manual* containing an overview of the program and chapters on the curriculum components, teaching reading, teaching strategies, family and teacher support, and assessment.
 - Sixteen two-week unit theme guides, the backbone of KinderCorner. Theme guides provide daily lesson guides, lists of materials, objectives, vocabulary, a detailed description of each component, and a letter for parents.
 - Four comprehensive kits containing children’s books, puzzles, and other manipulative materials that introduce and support the thematic concepts and vocabulary of each theme.
 - Big Books with bright, beautiful photographs and illustrations that provide support for instruction on concepts of print as well as thematic concepts. Small black and white student copies of each of these Big Books go home with the children so that they can read them with family.
 - 19 KinderCorner “Shared Stories.” A powerful literacy strand includes colorful stories with decodable text. Children’s consumable versions help them build a library at home as they master reading.

- Optional classroom videos/DVDs, linked to the reading program, that create memorable images of vocabulary, sound/letter correspondences, sound blending, and reading strategies.
- Rhyme cards, phonics picture cards, activity cards, and posters support instruction of new concepts, concepts of print, and/or the children’s practice of skills (sorting, classifying, and so on).
- “Stories and Rhymes” CDs that provide the children with additional opportunities to listen to some of the stories they have heard during Story Tree. The children can “read along” as the CDs provide a signal when to turn the page. The rhymes and songs from Rhyme Time encourage children to recite or sing along, enhancing phonemic awareness and vocabulary development.
- “Math Home Link” pages the children take home to practice their math skills.

International Primary Curriculum (IPC)

The IPC is an international curriculum that provides a rigorous, cross-curricular, thematic teaching structure designed to engage children of all abilities to be creative thinkers and problem-solvers in a globalized world. Since its introduction in 2000, more than 1,000 schools in more than 65 countries are using this highly engaging curriculum to teach different academic subjects. Research shows that the IPC has been effective in turning around underachieving schools. It has been equally successful for children who need to be challenged and children who need support to access the mainstream curriculum.²¹

The activities included in IPC units are based on research in the following areas:

- Brain research, multiple intelligence theory and different learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) that point to the importance of: (1) connections between subjects, themes and ideas; and (2) the relationship between positive emotions and long-term memory.
- Providing opportunities to enhance learner characteristics as students gain academic knowledge.
- The importance of opportunities for individual and group work.
- Using an exciting entry point to all units that motivates students to learn.
- Tapping into students’ prior knowledge.
- Open-ended questions that invite students’ curiosity.
- Assessment activities that require children to represent their own learning.
- Parent involvement through informational sheets that explain what students are working on and how parents can support their children’s work at home.

The IPC is designed so that students:

- Learn the essential knowledge, skills, and understanding of a broad range of subjects.
- Engage with their learning so they remain committed to learning throughout their school careers and their lives.

²¹ More information available at: <http://www.internationalprimarycurriculum.com/pages/21068>

- Develop the personal qualities they need to be good citizens and respond to the changing contexts of their future lives.
- Simultaneously develop a sense of their own nationality and culture and a profound respect for the nationalities and cultures of others.

In addition to pre-written units of instruction, the IPC provides templates to guide us in producing our own curriculum units that personalize content to meet local standards. At Creative Minds PCS, we will infuse Common Core Standards in English language arts and mathematics in the IPC’s project-based curriculum units. Our goal is twofold: to prepare District of Columbia students based on national standards in literacy and mathematics, and to prepare them for engagement and employment in a globalized world. We will integrate curriculum units from the IPC for our 5- to 12-year-old students with our project- and theme-based instructional methodology. This approach will provide students with context for information learned and allow them to practice standards-based skills.

Based on research, the following are important components of inclusive instruction.

Exhibit 6. Inclusive Curricular Components

<i>A Central Unit Issue, Problem, or Question</i>	Structuring a unit of study around an issue, problem or essential question creates a framework for the learning experience and provides direction and coherence. When all students in a classroom are focused on addressing a common question, difference in learning style and ability are less important than the commonality of all students construction meaning in the content area, in a personalized way.
<i>Unit Grabber</i>	Beginning each major unit of study with a highly motivating “grabber” or kick-off activity can help engage all students (by assessing and involving students’ prior experiences and interests).
<i>Learning Experiences that Link</i>	All students need to have explicit connections made among individual daily learning experiences.
<i>Richly Detailed Source Material</i>	The use of richly detailed source material that represents a variety of student learning styles and intelligences assures that each student in the class has access to the knowledge base in the topic being studied.
<i>Varied Learning Formats</i>	When teachers use a variety of teaching formats, such as cooperative groups, whole class instruction, student pairs, Socratic dialogues, labs, and teacher student conferencing, the probability increases that each students learning style will be addressed.
<i>Multiple Assessments</i>	To ensure powerful student learning, teachers need to monitor and assess students’ progress through the unit, not just at the end. The greater diversity found in the inclusive classroom makes the need for periodic assessment all the more critical.
<i>Varied Modes of Expression:</i>	Intelligence is comprised of many different kinds of abilities and talents. While teachers traditional tend to emphasize verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences to the exclusion of most other talents, teachers in inclusive classrooms need to design instructional and assessment activities that ‘tap into’ the variety of intelligences (such as musical, interpersonal and spatial intelligences).
<i>Culminating Projects</i>	Culminating projects provide student with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of the unit’s central issue or problem through a public presentation. When teachers provide choices for how students can present their final exhibition including options for written papers, demonstration, oral presentations and building models each student has the opportunity to use his

or her favored learning style.

Source : Jorgensen, et al. 1997; p. 7.

The founders of CM PCS searched for curriculum and instructional materials based on the inclusive education curricular components presented in Exhibit 6. We chose Curiosity Corner, KinderCorner, and the IPC based on their compatibility with these inclusive teaching practices, which will ensure we are meeting the learning requirements of all students, including those with special needs and English language learners.

Literacy and Mathematics Resources

To provide our elementary and future middle-school students with standards-based English language arts and mathematics instruction, the Creative Minds PCS Curriculum Team sought out instructional materials that are research-based, aligned with national standards, and provide resources for differentiated instruction.

- **Reading:** After researching different literacy instructional materials and resources, we selected the Success for All reading curriculum for grades K-8²². Success for All is a comprehensive reading approach designed to ensure that every child will read at or above grade level. The program emphasizes prevention and early intervention to respond to and solve any child’s learning problems. Success for All is an approved model, in accordance with “No Child Left Behind” legislation, that provides schools with:
 - Research-based curriculum materials.
 - Extensive professional development in proven instructional strategies.
 - Assessment and data-monitoring tools.
 - Classroom management techniques.
 - One-to-one tutoring for struggling students.
 - Ongoing family involvement and community support.

The Success for All reading program is based on extensive research into how children learn to read and write. At the heart of the program is 90 minutes of uninterrupted, daily reading instruction. Beginning in the first grade, children are grouped across classes and grades by reading level. Regrouping gives each teacher the opportunity to work intensively with students, one reading level at a time. Cooperative learning embedded throughout the program focuses on individual student accountability, common goals, and recognition of group success. Providing the opportunity to work with peers enables students to master basic reading skills as they continue to grow as thoughtful learners.

Reading Wings is a 90-minute daily comprehensive program that targets the needs of students reading at the second- through sixth-grade levels to ensure their consistent growth as proficient readers. Reading Wings is based on scientific principles and proven, through control-group research, to improve reading comprehension. Students are assessed and regrouped according to their reading level every quarter, to ensure they receive the most focused instruction possible.

²² Information from Success For All Foundation website, available at: <http://www.successforall.net/Programs/readingwings.html>

Students in grades 2-6 who have successfully learned to decode need more sophisticated reading skills to become proficient readers: vocabulary development, reading comprehension, fluency, oral language development, and written expression. Students also need ample opportunities to read both narrative and expository text. Reading Wings teaches students comprehension strategies such as summarization, clarification, graphic organizers, story structure, and prediction, so that students become confident, strategic readers.

- Listening Comprehension: Teachers use fiction or nonfiction to model strategic reading and engage students in interactive dialogue about story elements, author's craft, or expository text structure. The teacher reads the selection interactively with the students, asks higher-order thinking questions, and involves them in discussing the story structure of narrative and expository text, literary devices, genres, and making predictions.
- Teamwork: Students spend approximately 55 minutes participating in "Reading Together," during which student activities are guided by "Treasure Hunts" that support a variety of reading materials from the second- through eighth-grade reading levels. Treasure Hunts focus on story-related activities, beginning with teacher-directed story motivation, vocabulary, and story introduction. Partner/Team practice guides students through a sequence for reading and discussing the text. Teachers closely monitor student teams to model the use of comprehension strategies.
- Adventures in Writing activities are linked to the texts the students are reading. They are designed to extend students' thinking about certain concepts or skills, provide instruction in different types of writing, and engage students in working through the writing process in a cooperative setting.
- Two-Minute Edit: Toward the end of each day's lesson, students participate in a whole-group activity that focuses on a grammar or mechanics objective the teacher selects from a sentence or short paragraph in their writing.
- Book Club, which takes place two or three times each week, allows students to share books and stories they have enjoyed with their classmates. Book Club is an opportunity to reinforce and celebrate the reading students complete each night at home.

Instructional Materials:

- *Reading Wings* can be used with a variety of texts, either trade books or basal anthologies. Schools must possess or purchase a quarterly assessment tool (e.g., the Success for All Foundation's 4Sight or the Gates McGinitie or Scholastic Reading Inventory). Materials for each basal series or trade book include: a teacher's guide, student materials to support basals or trade books, student test materials, reading strategy cue-cards, and team and teacher folders (including team score sheets and record forms). A Reading Wings sample lesson is included in Appendix K-7 (under "Optional Documents").

- *Reading Roots* is a researched-based, 90-minute comprehensive program that targets the needs of beginning readers and provides a strong base for successful reading through systematic phonics instruction supported by decodable stories, along with instruction in fluency and comprehension. Reading Roots also fosters students' love of reading by providing rich literature experiences, extensive oral-language development, and thematically focused writing instruction. These objectives are embedded in a fast-paced, engaging, and highly effective instructional process. Students are assessed and regrouped according to their reading level every quarter to ensure they receive the most focused instruction. Second and third grade nonreaders can be regrouped into Reading Roots classes. This solution includes all the elements needed to ensure success: teacher manuals, student materials, initial training for teachers, intensive onsite and telephone coaching, and tools to monitor students progress.

Curriculum: Reading Roots lessons feature the following parts:

- **FastTrack Phonics:** Colorful mnemonic pictures are integrated with alliterative phrases, sounds, and letter cues to provide phonemic awareness and phonics instruction in six skills: letter-sound correspondence, auditory sound blending, word-level blending, writing sounds, auditory segmentation of sounds, and sound spelling. Entertaining puppets, chants, and games add fun to the fast-paced, systematic instruction that is designed to review and introduce sounds and their written representations. Teachers decide to review or accelerate lessons based on informal monitoring and diagnostic assessments.
- **Shared Stories:** Colorful books invite students to use their developing decoding, fluency, and comprehension skills. The teacher presents new vocabulary words, then guides students to read the story with their partners. Students then discuss their comprehension as they become confident, enthusiastic readers.
- **Story Telling and Retelling (STaR):** A collection of 48 books, both fictional and expository text, are read interactively with students as part of Reading Roots lessons. Predicting, clarifying, questioning, summarizing, and visualizing strategies are modeled and practiced as they relate to the comprehension of the text structure, meaning, or story elements of the STaR books.
- **Writing:** Every day of the Reading Roots lesson, students are guided through a writing activity related to the theme of the Shared Story and STaR books. Students use the writing process as they think, speak, and collaborate with others.

Reading Roots 4th Edition-Interactive provides schools with the same student and teacher materials as the paper version, and includes a CD with interactive lessons for use with a whiteboard. All media traditionally used with the Roots program (letter key cards, picture cards, word cards, animations, puppet skits, word plays, etc.) are tightly integrated into lessons so the teacher can manage and present them simply by tapping and dragging on the whiteboard. Teachers can independently choose a lesson from the CD to re-teach a

reading lesson. New computer activities, such as “Break-It-Down,” “Stretch and Read,” and “Quick Erase,” increase student motivation and engagement. Brief professional-development clips that model each lesson segment are provided. Reading Roots-Interactive will work with any interactive whiteboard systems. Teachers have access to online resource centers that include resource libraries, actively moderated forums, success stories, and frequently asked questions.

- Mathematics: We will consider the following curriculum materials for implementing standards-based mathematics instruction and assessments:
 - *Math Expressions* is a complete K-5 mathematics curriculum combines the most powerful elements of standards-based instruction with the best of traditional approaches. Math Expressions uses objects, drawings, conceptual language, and real-world situations to help students build mathematical ideas that make sense to them.
 - *Above & Beyond with Digi-Block Mathematics: A Program for Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities*
 - *Expeditions to Numeracy (with Digi-Block): A Place-Value-Based Intervention for K-4*

Social Emotional Curriculum

In addition to intensive teacher training in the DIR®/Floortime™ to enhance students’ social-emotional development and growth, we will implement principles from the *Responsive Classroom* model to promote learning through social interactions. Students will learn the importance of cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control as social skills that, along with academic skills, are necessary for success. The model is based on knowing students on an individual basis and responding to each child’s needs. Adult members of the learning community, including parents, are important resources for meeting students’ needs.

The following Responsive Classroom principles are fully aligned with the Creative Minds PCS education philosophy:

- The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
- How children learn is as important as what they learn: process and content go hand in hand.
- The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
- To be successful academically and socially, children need a set of social skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.
- Knowing the children we teach — individually, culturally, and developmentally — is as important as knowing the content we teach.
- Knowing the families of the children we teach and working with them as partners is essential to children’s education.

- How the adults at school work together is as important as their individual competence: lasting change begins with the adult community.

The Responsive Classroom approach enhances students' social-emotional and academic competencies. Creative Minds PCS will adopt the following classroom and school-wide practices, which the model promotes and are well-aligned with our program and school philosophy:

Classroom Practices

- *Morning Meeting* — gathering as a whole class each morning to greet one another, share news, and warm up for the day ahead. Morning Meeting will be a part of every classroom at Creative Minds PCS. During this time, teachers will go over a visual daily schedule to prepare students and answer their questions, and discuss issues relevant to the school community. The meeting will include time for students to share important events in their lives. Finally, teachers will highlight and celebrate students' progress toward individual goals.
- *Rule Creation* — helping students create classroom rules to ensure an environment that allows all class members to meet their learning goals. Rule Creation will be an interactive process in which students (pre-Kindergarten and older) provide input and analyze rules necessary for a positive classroom environment. The teacher will provide guidance in making sure rules are developmentally appropriate and conducive to learning. Through discussions with students, the teacher will emphasize the importance of individual differences in strengths and weaknesses related to the rules, and allow students with disabilities who interfere with class routines to have individualized plans for achieving social and behavioral goals. The teacher will let students know that, as community members, they will support each other in following classroom expectations.
- *Interactive Modeling and Positive Teacher Language* — teaching children to notice and internalize expected behaviors through modeling; using words and tone as a tool to promote children's active learning and sense of community. An important quality of teachers at Creative Minds PCS will be their ability to serve as positive role models who can build a collaborative learning environment. We would like the teachers we hire to have the intuition to notice children's struggles and their positive attributes, emphasize successful moments in a child's day at school, and help all students learn from each other's strengths. Teachers must have a positive approach to education, as demonstrated in their affect, language, and tone.
- *Logical Consequences* — responding to misbehavior in a way that allows children to fix and learn from mistakes while preserving their dignity. Along with their interactive modeling and positive language qualities, Creative Minds PCS teachers will help students understand and reflect on their emotions and behaviors, guiding them in coming up with logical consequences that are appropriate responses to misbehavior. Teachers will be informed of ways to ensure logical consequences are within a child's developmental

capacity, based on the DIR®/Floortime™ milestones and by recognizing and taking into account IEP goals, when relevant.

- *Guided Discovery* — introducing classroom materials using a format that encourages independence, creativity, and responsibility.
- *Academic Choice* — increasing student learning by allowing students teacher-structured choices in their work.
- *Classroom Organization* — setting up the physical room in ways that encourage students’ independence, cooperation, and productivity.
- *Working with Families* — creating avenues for hearing parents’ insights and helping them understand the school’s teaching approaches.
- *Collaborative Problem-Solving* — using conferencing, role-playing, and other strategies to resolve problems with students.

School-Wide Practices

- Aligning policies and procedures with the Responsive Classroom philosophy.
- Allocating resources to support Responsive Classroom implementation through teacher training.
- Planning all-school activities to build a sense of community.
- Welcoming families and the community as partners.
- Organizing the physical environment to set a tone of learning.²³

The Responsive Classroom approach will guide us in promoting students’ social-emotional growth and in building a positive school environment.

2C. Methods of Instruction

We chose our methods of instruction based on extensive research into the most effective ways to create an inclusive learning environment that engages all students. In our education philosophy, the founding members of Creative Minds PCS embrace a social-constructivist perspective of education, which holds that knowledge acquisition requires engagement of different aspects of the learning process, and that individuals are affected by the social aspects of their educational environment (Stone & Reid, 1994)²⁴.

M.C. O’Conner describes constructivism as the following: “Learners are active creators of their knowledge, not passive receptacles into which performed knowledge can be placed. In this theoretical domain, a ‘construction’ ... is the building up, piece by piece of an internal mental

²³ Available at: <http://www.responsiveclassroom.org>

²⁴ Stone, C., Reid, D. K. (1994). Social and Individual Forces in Learning: Implication for Instruction of Children with Learning Difficulties. *Learning Disabilities Quarterly*, 17 (1).

structure” (O’Conner, 1998; p. 34)²⁵. Mallory and New explain inclusive practice based on the concepts of “classrooms as communities, learning as socially mediated, curriculum as contextually relevant and problem based, and assessment as authentic and personally meaningful” (Mallory and New, 1994, p. 322).

In the application of the social-constructivist theory to education, the social context of classrooms — including teachers, peers, and the curriculum — can enhance or impede learning and lead to alterable educational outcomes. This dynamic theory of education requires the application of instructional methods that engage students in the necessary intellectual activities of learning. Therefore we applied Trent et al.’s four social-constructivist requirements of inclusive education as we chose the most engaging teaching methodologies to be implemented by the instructional staff at Creative Minds PCS: (a) apprenticeship in applied settings; (b) access to empowering modes of discourse; (c) guided instruction that leads to self-regulated learning; and (d) learning in cultural historical contexts (Trent et al., 1998, p. 285).

We chose the child-centered DIR pedagogical approach, project-based learning of integrated thematic units of instruction, and arts integration as methodologies that educate the whole child and engage students of differing learning styles in active classroom participation. Our curriculum and instructional materials incorporate these methodologies:

- The DIR pedagogical approach emphasizes the importance of relating, communicating, and thinking for the whole child within the context of human relationships.
- Project-based thematic curriculum units provide students with hands-on experiences and contextualized information in different academic areas.
- Arts-integration instructional methodologies engage all types of learners and provide them with an entry point to access the curriculum
- Scaffolding instruction

The DIR Pedagogical Approach

By hiring teachers who are highly motivated and naturally embrace a student-centered approach to education, and providing them with training in the DIR pedagogical approach, we emphasize the important role of the teacher in educating the whole child. The DIR approach is based on a developmental perspective of students’ strength and weakness in a number of underlying characteristics related to learning (described in depth in previous sections describing the model). A main component of the instructional methodology involves engaging students’ interests, to motivate them to learn and progress to higher cognitive and social/emotional levels. In the DIR method, teachers’ positive affect is of great importance in the process of engaging students, especially students who have difficulty attending to and processing auditory information. The approach gives us a language and a methodology that teachers can implement to explicitly guide students to learn meta-cognitive strategies, gray-area thinking, and self-regulation. The DIR approach ensures all students have mastered developmental milestones that are precursors to the higher-level thinking skills they will need for academic achievement and future success.

²⁵ O’Conner, M. C. (1998). Can We Trace the “Efficacy of Social Constructivism?” *Review of Research in Education*. 23.

Project-Based Learning

The project-based learning methodology helps us engage students in active learning processes, and enables teachers to see and assess different aspects of students’ strengths and struggles. Project-based learning is proven to allow deeper conceptual understanding of academic content through hands-on activities related to academic content. For many students, gaps in their conceptual understanding impede them from internalizing and generalizing information. A theme-based curriculum and project-based learning opportunities contextualize academic content through students’ active engagement in learning and allow students to connect information to their experiences. Project-based learning also deepens students’ knowledge and helps them understand the relevance of their school-based learning to other aspects of their lives and the world around them. The school curriculum we selected for Creative Minds PCS is based on the importance of this methodology. Teachers will receive training and supervision to ensure they understand and implement this approach in ways that lead to high levels of academic achievement for all students.

Arts Integration

Research shows that the arts lead to cognitive and motivational enhancements in learning.²⁶ The arts allow students with strengths in nonverbal areas of learning to engage in activities that may be better aligned with their interests and abilities, offering them the opportunity to develop their skills and feel successful among their peers. Based on Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory and studies of arts-integrated programs for at-risk students, the arts offer inclusive learning opportunities for different types of learners. Combining three theoretical orientations — Universal Design for Learning, Equity and Standards Movement, and Arts Education — Wolf (2007) describes how the arts enhance opportunities to understand, opportunities for excellence, and opportunities to imagine.²⁷

Exhibit 7. Dimensions of an Enriched Framework for Opportunity to Learn

Opportunity to understand	Multiple modes of representation, multiple modes of expression, and multiple forms of engagement
Opportunity for excellence	Clear and widely shared information, sustained access to key tools, spaces, and interactions, challenging assignments, and supports for learning
Opportunity to imagine	Originality, choices and varieties of excellence, exchange and response

Source: Wolf, 2007.

²⁶ Catteral, J.S. (2002). The arts and the transfer of learning. In R.J. Deasy (Ed.), *Critical links: Learning in the arts and student academic and social development*. (pp. 151-157). Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership.

²⁷ Wolf, D. P. (1999). Why the arts matter in education: Just what do children learn when they create an opera. In E. B. Fiske (Ed.), *Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning* (pp. 91-98). Washington DC; The Arts Education Partnership. (U.S. Department of Education website, 2007) (in Chapter 2, under policy) (Center for Education Policy, 2008) Chapt. 2 policy(United States Code (20 U.S.C. §1401 [30])

A study of an arts-integrated program in Minneapolis²⁸ showed that through the use of the arts, low-performing students who were previously withdrawn or disruptive became active and productive class members. “Learning in the arts is interesting and meaningful, promotes higher levels of engagement, raises students’ intrinsic standards and motivates students to invest energy that learning requires of them.”²⁹

As described by Sally Smith, founder and late director of the Lab School of Washington (a private arts-based school for students with learning disabilities in Washington, D.C.), the “power of the arts” is in the way the arts provide opportunities for students who have language-based difficulties to use all their senses in learning. Smith explains, “many nontraditional learners are visual learners who do not think in words, but rather in shapes, forms, sizes, and textures;” “their world is a graphic world.” She states that the arts “articulate human experience,” offer concrete learners “hands-on experiences,” and provide the material for the “concrete child” who needs to “look, touch, and see” in the learning process (2004, pp. 4, 5, 21). Smith explained that the arts are a learning tool because their symbolic nature allows for understanding without words — the arts are “motivators;” they “capture children’s excitement, interests, and passions;” and “they build self-worth, confidence, and self-esteem” (Ibid, p. 5). Smith draws on Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligence theory, explaining, “alternative learners frequently use visual intelligence, musical intelligence, or kinesthetic intelligence.”³⁰

Baum et al. (1997) found that students’ success in the arts was related to the nature of arts instruction, which relies on a mixture of both verbal and nonverbal teaching. The authors report that, parallel to the sequence advocated by cognitive developmentalists (Piaget and Brunet), in arts instruction nonverbal instruction often precedes the verbal and is given more emphasis. “Arts students had been assessed as having particular strengths in nonverbal intelligences—musical, kinesthetic, and spatial and were eager to attend to tasks that emphasized those abilities (i.e., tasks that forecast success).”³¹

Scaffolding Instruction

Scaffolding instruction supports students by making the learning process explicit. Rather than simply presenting new content material, teachers using scaffolding techniques guide students step by step through the necessary cognitive strategies. Through a gradual decrease in teacher assistance and a gradual increase in student responsibility (Rosenshine & Meister, 1992)³², the goal of scaffolding is to support students until they can apply the new skills and strategies independently (Larkin, 2001). Creative Minds PCS teachers will integrate concepts embedded in scaffolding as part of their instruction:

²⁸ Ingram, D., Seashore, K. R. (2003). *Arts for academic achievement: Summative evaluation report*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Minnesota, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, Minneapolis, MN.

²⁹ Rabkin, N. and Redmond, R. (2006). The Arts Make a Difference. *Educational Leadership*, 63(5).

³⁰ Smith, Sally L. (2001). *The Power of the Arts: Creative Strategies for Teaching Exceptional Learners*. Paul Brookes Publishing Co.: MD.

³¹ Baum, S., Owen, S., and Oreck, B. (1997). Transferring Individual Self-Regulation Process from Arts to Academics. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 98(4).

³² Rosenshine, B., Meister, C. (1992). The use of scaffolds for teaching higher-level cognitive strategies. *Educational Leadership*, 49(7), 26-33.

- Teaching cognitive approaches to content material
- Presenting a lesson in a step by step manner
- Continuous assessment and feedback
- Offering multiple and flexible opportunities to demonstrate skills

Universal Design for Learning presents important scaffolding practices (Rose and Meyer, 2002)³³, and recommends instructional techniques that include: highlighting critical features; providing multiple media and formats; supporting background context; providing opportunities to practice with supports; providing ongoing, relevant feedback, and offering flexible opportunities for demonstrating skills (Rose & Meyer, 2002).

The following are examples of the ways teachers and principals can plan and implement scaffolding instruction. To meet the first challenge — meeting individual learning needs — advanced planning is essential. Teachers can learn students’ instructional needs by examining their formal and informal assessments and reading IEPs (for special education students). Once each student’s learning needs are clear, teachers can use scaffolding to help students reach their instructional goals, applying the technique to the instruction of content specific material.

- *Backward planning.* Once teachers know their students’ areas of difficulty and the goals they aim to reach, backward planning is the first step to scaffolding. Teachers begin by considering the skills necessary to reach the instructional goal. After clarifying the learning strategies students need to successfully approach the goal, teachers apply scaffolding strategies, taking into account student differences in the steps toward those goals.
- *Student groupings.* Scaffolding instruction helps group students. Through backward planning, teachers gain information gain students who need similar strategies to succeed; grouping those students together during direct instruction in literacy and mathematics ensures that instructional time is used most efficiently and effectively. Using assessment knowledge and creativity in grouping students is an essential step, given the difficult task of addressing each student’s unique learning style.³⁴

2D. Students with Exceptional Needs

Creative Minds PCS’s mission is to provide high-quality, inclusive education to all types of learners. Provided with a supportive educational environment, all students can learn and accomplish to their full potential. Our multifaceted conceptualization of learning takes into account students’ varying levels of social, cognitive, and academic development in our inclusive curriculum and instructional methodologies.

Program Design

³³ Rose, D. H. Meyer, D. (2002) Universal Design for Learning: Teaching Every Student in the *Digital Age*. Retrieved September 2004 from: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/2002rose>.

³⁴ Abedin, G. Scaffolding Instruction for Students in Special Education. *Design Principles for Learner-Centered Schools: Scaffolding Instruction to Improve Student Learning*. Council for Supervisory Officials of Maryland, (CEASOM), 2004.

The following aspects of our program will ensure that we meet the needs of students with exceptional needs:

- Small class size (maximum 14)
- Provision of multiple modes of engagement in learning through our arts and project-based curriculum
- Support and instruction to achieve standards under the No Child Left Behind Act and the District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment system (DC-CAS)
- Ongoing formal and informal assessments to determine students' academic progress in English language arts and mathematics and adjust student grouping and instruction accordingly
- Teachers who are certified in special education and/or have a M.A. in special education; all teachers will be trained in the DIR®/Floortime™ approach to further prepare them to meet the needs of all learners.
- Multi-age literacy and math groups that allow all students make progress based on their unique developmental and academic strengths and challenges
- Our strong early childhood program that includes:
 - Developmental screening of all children, beginning in preschool
 - A well-rounded curriculum that includes instruction of pre-literacy skills
- Our special education services in line with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) policy requirements:
 - Differentiated instruction in the general education classroom to implement the Least Restrictive Environment federal policy requirement to the extent possible
 - Pull-out services, when required, to meet the needs of students who need small group or individualized instruction
 - Speech and language therapy
 - Floortime/Occupational therapy
 - Counseling services
- Evening classes and community support for parents of students with exceptional needs
- Parent education classes, conducted by Director of Education Jake Greenspan of The Floortime Center™ and our related service providers

The determination of a student's eligibility for special education services, as well as the implementation of special education policies and instructional services, will be supervised by the director of education, and guided by the director of education services. Teachers will receive extensive training on special education procedures and policies of the school, which will be aligned with federal guidelines and the requirements of the D.C. Office of State Superintendent of Education. Our director of education, Golnar Abedin, with an M.A. in Special Education and a Ph.D. in general Education Policy, was a consultant at the OSSE, implementing the Special Education Database System and EasyIEP. Our director of student services, Davina Soleyman, holds a M.A. in Special Education and has years of experience writing IEPs and planning meetings with parents and service providers; she will receive training on how to use the relatively new Special Education Database System and EasyIEP, to work with the education director to meet timeliness requirements and quality assurance.

LEA Status

Creative Minds PCS will be its own LEA. the school will be eligible for IDEA Part B funds for costs borne by LEA-charters.

Special Education Process

The following are our procedures for determining eligibility for special education services:

- Teachers will refer students who are experiencing cognitive, emotional, or behavioral difficulties to the Student Support Team, led by the director of student services.
- Students' parents/guardians will be contacted to attend an initial meeting to collect more information and share home- and school-based observations.
- Information presented by parents, informal and classroom observations regarding students' academic work, and social performance will determine whether a formal psycho-educational evaluation is required to acquire additional information.
- If a student needs a psycho-educational assessment to determine eligibility for special education services, we will contact Psychological Assessment Solutions, based in Washington D.C., to conduct the evaluation.
- If the assessment results show that the student has a disability (based on the definitions of disability categories provided by the OSSE), he or she will receive appropriate services required to meet his or her academic and social/cognitive needs in the least restrictive environment.

2E. English Language Learners

We believe that our inclusive education design will provide English language learners (ELLs) access to high-quality instructional opportunities. Our project-based and arts-based curriculum will provide ELL students with nonverbal means of participation, allowing them opportunities to engage in learning with their peers as they enhance their English language proficiency. In our first year of operation, Creative Minds PCS will contract an experienced, ELL-certified teacher to work with students who qualify for services on a part-time basis. We will also provide our teachers with training in strategies that support ELL students in the general education classroom, through professional development conducted by an expert in the field.

Our director of education, Golnar Abedin, has experience as a coordinator of ELL services; she will oversee the identification of ELL students and the implementation of the program at Creative Minds PCS with the help of the director of student services, Davina Soleyman. Davina has extensive experience teaching ELL students. Golnar and Davina are both bilingual and speak Spanish and French, respectively, skills that will facilitate communication with many of our ELL students and their families. They both have firsthand experience in the acquisition of a second language and are sensitive to the needs of ELL students. Davina has implemented ELL services at the International School in Geneva, Switzerland, where students speak a variety of language at home but are taught in English or French. We will make certain that our ELL teacher is a

qualified and experienced teacher, to ensure that our ELL students receive high-quality instruction that will prepare them for informal assessments, as well as the DC-CAS.

Creative Minds PCS will take the following steps to identify ELL students and implement services:

- A “Home Language Survey” will be included in each student’s enrollment packet. Parents will be required to fill out the survey and return it to school to enroll their children at Creative Minds PCS. Students whose home language is not English will be administered the WIDA-ACCESS³⁵ English Language Proficiency assessment.
- Any student scoring an overall composite score of 5 or less on the WIDA-ACCESS assessment will be identified as limited-English proficient and will require ELL services — in the general education setting, in small group instruction, or on an individual basis in a separate setting, depending on the student’s needs. Those scoring higher than 5 will be monitored by the general education teacher who will notify the director of student services if a student is not making academic progress. We will carefully evaluate bilingual students who struggle academically to ensure accurate assessment of their difficulties and determine whether ELL and/or special education services are required.
- According to NCLB Title III requirements, we will notify parent(s) of identified ELL students no later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year, in a letter that will include the following information:
 - The reasons for identification
 - The child’s level of English proficiency and how the level was assessed
 - The method of instruction used in the program
 - How the program will specifically help their child learn English and meet age-appropriate academic achievement standards for grade promotion and graduation
 - The specific exit requirements for the program
 - The right of the parents to have their child immediately removed from supplemental Title III programs upon request

Students receiving ELL services will be given the WIDA-ACCESS assessment every spring to determine eligibility for the subsequent academic year. ELL students will also participate in other formal and informal assessments, with their peers to the extent possible, and will receive allowed test modifications on the DC-CAS in accordance with their level of English language proficiency. Finally, the ELL teacher will administer ongoing informal assessments in the areas of reading and writing. Test results will be monitored by the director of student services, to ensure ELL students are making progress in our program. We will adjust the number of hours and type of instruction accordingly.

Our small class size, and inclusive program design, and experienced staff will provide ELL students with a socially safe environment in which they will be able to engage in learning prior

³⁵ ACCESS for ELLs[®] stands for Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners.

to being proficient in English. Our rigorous academic program will ensure that they are making progress toward proficiency and that each student's programming meets his or her unique needs. The IPC will help students of other cultural and linguistic backgrounds feel welcomed, inviting them to share their international experiences with their peers.

We will communicate with the parents of our ELL students regularly, both informally and formally, through progress reports based on formal and informal assessments. We will make sure parents of ELL students understand, and will ask for their input into our program. We aim to engage parents of ELL students through cultural activities, including international arts and performances at our school events, and by inviting them to share their cultural costumes with all our students. We will help parents of our ELL students find adult English language classes in the community or engage in language exchange classes with our English-speaking parent volunteers interested in learning a second language.

2F. Gifted and Talented

At Creative Minds PCS, we will offer a comprehensive educational program in which each student can grow at his/her pace. Specifically, our small literacy and math groups are based on students' developmental levels, allowing advanced students to make progress without limits. Students will also receive high-quality instruction in science, social studies, foreign languages, and the arts, allowing those who are gifted in these areas to pursue their talents at the school and share their skills and abilities with their peers. Because many students who are exceptionally gifted in one subject often have limitations in other areas, we view our gifted and talented students as having special needs, just as we believe that all our students have hidden talents. Often, these students have social limitations and emotional difficulties affecting their relationships with their peers. Our school counseling services, DIR-trained teachers, and comprehensive educational program will make sure gifted students learn the skills they need and are offered opportunities to pursue their talents and interests at Creative Minds PCS, in a safe and positive social environment.

2G. Strategies for Providing Intensive Academic Support

We believe our academic program design and ongoing individualized assessments of children through the DIR model will help us identify students who need additional support. Specific strategies for providing intensive academic support within our program include:

- Small class size (limited to 14 students)
- Small-group, developmentally appropriate literacy and math instruction through the Success for All program (explained in previous sections and in Appendices K-4 to K-7 under "Optional Documents), to allow focus on individual students' areas of weakness that maximizes their learning
- Reading instruction that focuses on decoding, comprehension, and fluency
- Ongoing formal and informal assessments and progress monitoring in developmental growth (based on the DIR model, presented in Appendix K-1), reading, and math
- After-school literacy instruction and homework help (we will ask each of our teachers to offer students an hour of after-school help once a week, ensuring that time in the after-school program is used for learning)

- Health screenings by our certified nurse (and additional assessments based on our budget and the needs of our students), to diagnose vision and hearing problems that may be the cause of learning difficulties

3. Student Performance

To assess students' performance and monitor their progress toward standards-based and individual learning goals, we will use a number of formal and informal assessments (see Exhibit 8). We will use norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests, classroom observations, content-based assessments included in our curriculum materials, and developmental screening. Assessments will include systematic recording of teachers' observations. Teachers will be trained to administer all school assessments with fidelity, to ensure accurate student performance results.

3A. Student Progress and Achievement

At Creative Minds PCS, every student's progress and achievement will be monitored and reported in individual portfolios containing the following performance indicators and assessment information:

(1) Student's developmental stage (based on the nine levels in the DIR®/Floortime™ Model; Appendix K-1 under "Optional Documents") to assess strengths and weaknesses in learner characteristics related to academic achievement:

- Attention and level of engagement in learning
- Organizational skills and executive function
- Individual vs. group work
- Relationships with peers
- Overview of students' areas of academic, non-academic, and social strengths
- Overview of students' areas of academic, non-academic, and social areas that require improvement

(2) Students' actual reading level, based on:

- The Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA-236) assessment and/or the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI³⁷), and the DC-CAS Reading Assessment for grades 3-8, (and speech and language assessments, if applicable)
- Classroom tests
- Teacher observations
- Student projects and work samples

³⁶ DRA2 is a valid measurement of accuracy, fluency, and comprehension as evidenced by the following validity measurements: (1) Criterion-Related Validity, (2) Construct Validity, and (3) Content Validity. Available at: <http://www.pearsonschool.com>

³⁷ Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) Enterprise Edition is a reading assessment program which provides immediate, actionable data on students' reading levels and growth over time. SRI helps educators differentiate instruction, make meaningful interventions, forecast growth toward grade-level state tests, and demonstrate accountability. Available at: http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/sri_reading_assessment/index.htm

Actual performance (strengths and challenges) will be written based on the Common Core State Standards for his/her grade level, as well as in comparison with the student's developmental level, and if applicable, his/her individualized IEP goals (included in quarterly progress reports).

(3) Students' actual performance level in mathematics, based on:

- The Scholastic Math Inventory (SMI)³⁸ (for grades 2-8), DC-CAS Math Assessment for grades 3-8
- Classroom tests
- Teacher observations
- Student projects and work samples

Actual performance (strengths and challenges) will be written based on the Common Core State Standards for his/her grade level, and in comparison with each student's developmental level and individualized goals.

(4) Student's areas of strength and weakness in science, social studies, Spanish, physical education and various art forms.

Portfolio Assessment

Portfolio assessment is the systematic, intentional collection of significant samples of each child's work, together with the teacher's comments on how the work samples and records of language serve as evidence of the child's movement toward established learning goals. The portfolio process should clearly indicate the learning goals, should illustrate and document each child's development over a period of time, should actively involve children, and should reflect each child's individual development.

Creative Minds PCS will apply the following strategies for portfolio assessment to gain meaningful assessments and progress monitoring:

- Determine the developmental area or areas to be assessed (e.g., spoken language, art, early literacy, symbolic play, motor skills, math concepts, creativity, peer relationships).
- Identify the documents that best demonstrate development (e.g., drawings, paintings, other artwork, photos, dictated stories, book choices, teacher's notes, audiotapes, graphs, checklists).
- Regularly create a collection of samples with children's input (e.g., record what the children tell you about a variety of things).
- Develop a storage system for the samples of children's work.
- Describe the documents with colleagues in order to gain additional perspectives on each child's development (e.g., study groups of teachers can be formed to collect and describe samples of children's work).

³⁸ *Scholastic Math Inventory* is a quick, computer-adaptive math assessment for grades 2-8 that provides immediate data for universal screening, progress monitoring, and instructional decision-making.

- Connect the children's work to the learning goals.
- Make sure the samples show the full range of what each child can do.
- Collect data that tells a clear story to the audience.

Observations

Observation of young children is crucial to appropriate documentation and assessment; however, observation is a skill the teacher must develop and perfect over time. In the process of observing children, teachers can make use of the following techniques: rating forms, photography, narrative description, anecdotes, videotaping, journals, and recording children's conversations and monologues.

Observation must be intentional. As part of the daily classroom routine, it is probably the most authentic form of assessment. Observing what children do every day is the best place to start when creating a real-life profile of each child.

What to Observe:

- Patterns in behavior reflecting motivation to learn, explore, or investigate a particular thing. These patterns are evidence that a child consistently exhibits these behaviors.
- Problem-solving strategies.
- Patterns of social interaction (i.e., determine individual preferences for large-group, small-group, or solitary play in the classroom and on the playground).
- Key attributes of the child (i.e., identify and list recurring interests).

How to Observe:

- Observe regularly with a specific purpose.
- Observe children at different times of the day.
- Observe children in different settings throughout the school or center.
- Observe the usual demeanor of the child, not unusual behavior or bad days.
- Observe for new possibilities (e.g., if a child is having trouble, could the environment or circumstances be changed to assist the child?).

How to Involve Parents:

Parents should be partners in the accurate and sensitive assessment of young children. The following practices help encourage parental involvement in child assessments:

- Accentuate the positive when assessing children.
- Build assessment comments about how a child is doing into everyday conversations with parents.

- Explain assessment approaches at a parent meeting or workshop. Be clear about the differences between standardized tests and authentic assessment.
- Write about assessment in a newsletter or a special letter home.
- Demonstrate that parents are valued as respected partners in their children’s behavior and progress.
- Support assessment comments with documentation showing what the child has accomplished over time.

How to Involve Children:

Everyone has a view of each child’s abilities, preferences, and performances, including the child. To effectively involve the children in their own assessment:

- Observe and document things the children say and do as evidence of whether they are capable of assessing what they can do and how they are changing.
- Ask children about themselves. Children will tell you what they do and do not like to do. Some children may prefer a private, intimate setting in which they have your undivided attention, while others may respond to more informal discussions in busier settings.
- Ask children to assess their work. Ask children to help decide which work should be included in their portfolios. Respect their choices and responses.
- Let children take pictures of their most prized work from time to time. They can make a bulletin board display of their specially chosen pictures or collect them in a portfolio.

The IPC includes a “Teacher’s Rubric” to assess students’ performance, based on each indicator in content areas such as *Beginning*, *Developing*, and *Mastering* (for an example, see Appendix K-8, “IPC Science Assessment,” under “Optional Documents”). The IPC also includes a “Student’s Rubric” that teaches students how to assess themselves (*I’m getting used to it*, *I’m getting better*, *I’m really getting it*). Creative Minds PCS will use the Teacher’s Rubric to share students’ performance in each IPC content area based on the assessment criteria.

Externally Validated Standardized Assessments

As shown in Exhibit 8, Creative Minds PCS will use standardized assessments (e.g., DRA-2, SRI, SMI) to show students’ progress toward individual literacy and math goals and standards. In addition, students will participate in the state-mandated DC-CAS standardized normative assessments annually, or as required (Reading and Math grades 3-8; Science grades 5 and 8).

Data Management

Creative Minds PCS will use a Student Information System to collect students’ assessment information for ongoing review and decision-making regarding their groupings, instruction, promotion, and graduation. Teachers and administrators will use the information to ensure that students are moving toward their performance goals and to communicate regarding students’ academic achievement with parents and charter-school monitoring agencies.

Exhibit 8. Creative Minds PCS Student Assessments

Assessment Tool	Area Assessed	Purpose/Goal	Age/Grade	Timeline/Frequency
Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA): Individually administered comprehensive reading assessment	-Word analysis -Fluency -Vocabulary -Comprehension -Print concepts -Reading engagement	To assess students' developmental reading level for grouping determination. To assess annual progress in areas assessed.	K-8	Fall Additional testing in January/June for students who need additional assessment, to monitor progress and effectiveness of programming)
Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI): Computer-adaptive reading assessment	Reading comprehension	Progress-monitoring toward meeting Common Core State Standards (CSSS). Provides Lexile levels. CSSS provides text complexity grade bands and associated Lexile bands, making it possible to translate Lexile scores to grade-level information based on the standards. Provides information based on the RTI model, grouping students into Tiers I, II, and III to help with instructional grouping for our literacy blocks.	1-8	Fall and Spring
DC-CAS Reading	Literacy (vocabulary and reading comprehension)	To assess CSSS-based performance in English language arts	3-8	Annually
Scholastic Math Inventory (SMI) Computer-adaptive math assessment	Developmental math skills based on the Quantile Framework	Aligned to CSSS goals. Provides information based on the RTI model, grouping students into Tiers I, II, and III to help with instructional grouping for our literacy blocks.	2-8	Fall and Spring
KP Math Informal Assessments	Underlying math concepts related to number sense	Assess underlying knowledge and skills necessary for computation and math problem-solving	K-2 and struggling students 3-8	Fall
DC-CAS Math	Math computation and problem solving	To assess CSSS-based performance in math	3-8	Annually
DC-CAS Science	Content knowledge	To assess performance on science standards	5 and 8	Annually
Curiosity Corner Content Assessments	-Listening -Speaking -Phonological awareness -Emergent literacy -Emergent writing -Numbers -Shapes	To assess developmentally appropriate curriculum content knowledge	Preschool (3- to 4-year-olds)	Ongoing classroom based assessments
KinderCorner Content Assessments	-Listening -Speaking -Phonological awareness -Emergent literacy -Emergent writing -Number concept, math skills	To assess developmentally appropriate curriculum content knowledge	Pre-K (4- to 5-year-olds)	Ongoing classroom based assessments

Assessment Tool	Area Assessed	Purpose/Goal	Age/Grade	Timeline/Frequency
	development			
New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards (NJPTLS)	-Social/Emotional -Visual and performing arts -Health, safety, and physical education -Language arts literacy -Mathematics -Science -Social studies, family, and life skills -World languages	To assess preschool standards-based knowledge and developmental levels based on NJPTLS indicators	3- to 5-year-olds	Annually
IPC Assessments	-Literacy -Mathematics -Science -Social studies -Art -Music -Physical education -Information technology -International-mindedness	To assess curriculum content-based knowledge for elementary school	5- to 12-year-olds	Ongoing classroom-based observations and assessments
DIR®/Floortime™ developmental milestones (listed in Appendix K-1)	-Social/Emotional -Developmental -Cognitive -Communication -Interaction -Reflective thinking	To assess students' developmental progress in important underlying learning characteristics necessary for academic achievement	3-8 years old (or older students who have not mastered these milestones)	Fall and Spring
WIDA-ACCESS	English language skills	English language proficiency	ELL students	Spring

3B. Gateway Measures

At Creative Minds PCS, students' grade-level promotion will depend on a number of factors related to academic and developmental progress. We will use formal and informal assessments to look at all aspects of a student's learning and performance, using the progress monitoring tools we presented in the previous section. While standardized normative tests will compare a student's performance with others, classroom-based formative and summative assessments will show what the student knows. We will also consider a student's rate of academic progress and his/her ability to access grade-level standards in literacy and math.

Of the indicators mentioned, the most important deciding factor will be based on developmental measures of students' underlying social and cognitive abilities that determine the extent to which he/she can benefit from instruction within a specific grade level. Our small reading and math groups, based on students' instructional requirements, will allow each student to be in a given grade level with same-age peers, but receive higher or lower differentiated reading or math education. Many students whose strengths are non-linguistic or who have graphomotor challenges may experience difficulties with reading but have average or above-average conceptual understanding of grade-level content. These students are often diagnosed with

specific learning disabilities in reading or math. Our curriculum design and implementation is intended to allow these students access to age-appropriate learning standards while working on their literacy or math skills through intensive and differentiated instruction. However, if a student is developmentally far below his/her peers in communication skills and cognitive ability affecting all areas of learning, the student may be retained to provide additional time to develop these areas and to ensure that curriculum content is appropriate and within the student's grasp.

The decision to promote or retain a student will be a collaborative process involving our instructional staff, parents, and the director of education. Based on our progress-monitoring measures and teacher observations, a student's parents will be informed and invited to a meeting in the spring if it is likely that the student will have to repeat a grade. The following leading indicators will be considered for grade-level promotion:

- School Attendance
 - Any student whose excessive absences result in significant loss of instructional time may be retained.
 - Any student whose tardiness results in significant loss of instructional time may be retained.
- Student's Developmental Readiness (based on the developmental stages of the DIR®/Floortime™ Model):
 - Any student who may have significant developmental delays that prevent him/her from accessing grade-level curriculum and instruction may be retained to provide him/her additional time and academic support before promotion to higher grades.

Other gateway measures will relate to a student exiting an intervention program previously considered necessary to promote grade-level academic achievement, such as special education or ELL services, or other informal interventions or behavioral supports implemented by the Student Services Team to meet the student's learning requirements.

- A student receiving ELL services can exit the program if he/she scores higher than a level 5 on the WIDA-ACCESS assessment and is performing on grade level in literacy skills.
- To exit from special education services, a student will be evaluated in areas related to his/her specific disability by qualified individuals (e.g., speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, or school psychologist), in addition to our classroom and standardized assessment measures. A meeting that involves the student's teachers, parents, and the director of student services will be held to review assessment information and discuss exit from special education services. Subsequently, we will closely monitor the student's performance to make sure there is no regression in academic progress.

3C. Leading Indicators

In our parent handbook, and at parent/teacher conferences and meetings, we will emphasize expectations regarding attendance that are in accordance with the D.C. Public Charter School Board's (PCSB's) Performance Management Framework. Our teachers will take daily

attendance and report the information to our administrative assistant to track students' absences or tardiness. We will report attendance information to the D.C. PCSB and the OSSE as required. If a student is absent, we will contact parents by phone, and record and analyze information offered by parents regarding student absences — in the case of excessive absences — that require a warning or a meeting with parents to plan an appropriate intervention.

Whether or not parents decide to re-enroll their children in our program will depend on parents' satisfaction with our school. In addition to providing students with excellent learning opportunities for successful academic achievement, the following components of our program will contribute to student retention:

- Extended-day program for parents whose employment obligations prevent them from picking up their children at the end of the school day.
- After-school academic interventions, arts classes, and/or academic clubs to offer students additional opportunities to enhance their literacy skills or pursue interests.
- In addition to asking parents for feedback throughout the academic year, annual surveys disseminated to parents will assess their concerns and allow us to take into account their views in making necessary adjustments to our school program.

4. Support for Learning

4A. Parent Involvement

At Creative Minds PCS, we perceive parent involvement as an important influence on students' academic achievement and crucial for the creation of a school as a community. Direct of Education Golnar Abedin and Director of Student Services Davina Soleyman are both parents and understand the importance of finding ways to successfully engage families in school activities and in the education of our students. For her dissertation research, Golnar relied on information provided by parents as an important source of data for her research findings, based on her belief that parents are experts about their own children. In her previous roles as a special education coordinator and inclusion specialist, she advocated for parents' rights to engage meaningfully in educational decision-making processes and informed them of their choices. Based on her strong communication skills and empathy, she was the parent contact person at Greenwich Village Middle School, where she worked as the resource room teacher and inclusion specialist. Finally, as a working mother and a parent of a child with special needs, Golnar understands the range of issues affecting parents' participation in school activities and meetings, including scheduling challenges, parents' personal feelings toward school based on their own experiences, or language and cultural differences about parents' role in education. With these concerns in mind, the following are some specific ways that Creative Minds PCS will encourage and facilitate parent involvement:

School-Family Communication

Each academic year, before school starts for students, Creative Minds PCS will hold a parent orientation session. The school's rules and regulations, the academic curriculum and extracurricular activities, and the extended-day program will be explained to parents and

translated as required for those who do not speak English. Parents will also be notified of the best ways to communicate with the school staff (through email, phone calls, and our assigned parent-contact staff member). The director of education will also notify parents of ways that the school will contact them in case of emergencies or school closings and delayed openings. This information will also be written in the parent handbook included in students' enrollment package.

Parent Representation

Creative Minds PCS will form a Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA) that will be co-directed by a teacher and a parent member who is not employed by the school. This system is designed to encourage parents and teachers to be common stakeholders in our students' education and work collaboratively to reach common goals. The PTSA co-directors will share information with families and encourage parents' participation in school activities. The co-directors will meet biweekly with the director of education to share information about parents' and students' needs and concerns, and to create an additional channel for sharing information about school-related matters with parents. The PTSA will recruit two parents to serve on our board of directors, to include parents' voices in Creative Minds PCS's planning and decision-making processes.

Information Regarding School and Student Progress

Information regarding students' performance on required standardized assessments (DC-CAS) and Creative Minds PCS's progress toward annual goals will be shared with parents in writing and during an annual conference toward the end of each academic year. The school annual report will include information about:

- The NCLBA school's Adequate Yearly Progress report
- Teacher qualifications
- Creative Minds PCS mission accomplishment progress report

Families as Community Members

To form a positive and collaborative school community, Creative Minds PCS will be responsive to family's concerns — we will work hard to provide needed parents services. We will form community partnerships to offer parents medical, mental health, and adult literacy classes. Through our staff members and the partnerships we have already formed (see the "Community Participation" section), we will offer parents:

- Classes on the importance of diet and nutrition (reflected in our healthy lunch program).
- Classes for parents of students with special needs on ways they can support their children's development through the DIR/Floortime method. Classes will be taught by our director of education and Founding Group member, Jake Greenspan, director of The Floortime Center™.

- Creative writing workshops for parents and students to join together through our partnership with 826DC.

4B. Community Participation

Creative Minds PCS has already built relationships with community organizations through the support of our Founding Group members. We intend to grow our community connections to enrich learning opportunities for our students and their parents. The following are the community-based organizations that have already supported us in the school application process and have committed to ongoing support pending approval.

Van Ness Feldman

The Law Firm of Van Ness Feldman has agreed to provide pro-bono legal counsel to Creative Minds PCS. At present, Van Ness Feldman is assisting the school in the process of obtaining a charter as a nonprofit corporation and obtaining 501(c)(3) certification from the Internal Revenue Service. Based in Georgetown, the firm was founded in 1977 and has more than 90 attorneys on staff.

The Floortime CenterTM

The DIR Model developed by Dr. Stanley Greenspan is a comprehensive developmental model used to identify an individual's unique profile in three main areas.

- *Developmental Milestones:* The approach fosters progress through nine functional, social-emotional milestones, developed throughout a person's life, related to communication, social relationships, and cognitive abilities.
- *Individual Differences:* The model is based on the premise that individuals process information differently in the areas of sensory integration, motor planning and sequencing, auditory processing, and visual-spatial processing. These underlying differences affect the ways individuals learn and are important to consider in designing an education program that is inclusive.
- *Relationships:* Relationships are crucial as they frame learning and can be adjusted to optimize emotional and cognitive development.

The Floortime intervention is designed to:

- Follow a child's lead in order to understand his/her world, encourage engagement in learning, and support self-regulation
- Challenge a child to move up the developmental ladder, learn social and cognitive problem-solving skills, and tolerate stress and frustration
- Encourage creativity, abstract thinking, and understanding dynamic patterns

The model can be implemented by parents or professionals to support children's developmental growth.

Creative Minds PCS is fortunate to have Jake Greenspan, who is also the director of the Floortime Center, as one of our Founding Group members. Mr. Greenspan offered his support during the application process and has committed to assist Creative Minds PCS through teacher training, parent education classes, and by serving on our Advisory Board.

American University

American University's School of Education in the College of Arts and Sciences has designed a teacher-training grant program to assist teaching professionals in gaining new expertise and obtaining academic credentials without formally enrolling in a degree program. The Tuition Grant Program for D.C. Public and Public Charter School Teachers provides D.C. public educators the unique opportunity of enrolling in up to 12 credit-hours of non-degree coursework at the graduate or undergraduate level. Grant recipients are financially responsible for only half of the regular publicized tuition rate for each course, with American University matching the remaining 50 percent. A maximum of 12 credit-hours may be transferable into a degree program at a later date, if all course requirements are met and the student achieves a satisfactory grade.³⁹ Creative Minds PCS's teachers who could benefit from this program will be encouraged to participate to further their learning, especially in areas that promote student academic achievement, such as arts integration, and differentiated instruction.

Alida Anderson, who teaches courses in the Tuition Grant Program, has offered her support in formulating and implementing Creative Mind PCS's curriculum and instruction. Dr. Anderson's areas of expertise are in language development and literacy acquisition of diverse populations. Her dissertation research focused on the development of literate oral language by preschool age children with language impairments and those with typical language. She has also researched the development and implementation of a response-to-intervention mathematics curriculum for teaching place-value and number concepts to primary grade students with diverse language and learning needs in distressed urban school settings. In addition, Dr. Anderson has researched and supported arts integration programs serving students with disabilities.

Based on her alignment with Creative Minds PCS's mission and goals, Dr. Anderson has agreed to advise our director of education on programming matters and curriculum implementation. She will also connect us with qualified pre-service teachers in American University's teacher education program whose skills and interests match our school's mission, and will work with us in providing them with continuous training and supervision.

826DC

826DC is a nonprofit corporation, based in the District of Columbia, dedicated to supporting students ages 6 to 18 with their creative and expository writing skills and to helping teachers inspire their students to write. 826DC services are provided with one-on-one attention to promote strong writing skills fundamental to future success.

826 DC provides drop-in tutoring, field trips, after-school workshops, in-school tutoring, help for English language learners, and assistance with student publications.⁴⁰ 826DC has committed to support Creative Minds PCS toward our literacy goals and in fostering student creativity. The group has offered to work with our teachers and offer after-school workshops to our students and their parents.

³⁹ Information available at: <http://www.american.edu/cas/seth/grants/tuition-grant.cfm>

⁴⁰ Information available at: <http://826dc.org/>

4C. School Organization and Culture

A major component of Creative Minds PCS’s mission and program design is to create a warm and positive school culture where all members (students, teachers, parents, and guests) feel welcomed and appreciated. It is our belief that the school leadership sets the organizational structure and tone, but every member contributes to the social interactions, activities, and experiences that form the school culture.

The design of the school program, including curricular activities and resources, shows that the leadership cares deeply about creating opportunities for deep and successful learning for each student. We believe that the following components our program will lead to a thriving organization that promotes a positive school culture.

Highly Qualified and Compassionate Teachers

Our staffing efforts will ensure that all our teachers are highly qualified to teach their assigned subjects. We will create conditions that require teachers to demonstrate their skills and interactions with children prior to hiring them. As part of the interview process, each teacher will be informed of the school curriculum and activities and will answer questions regarding his/her personal philosophy of education, to ensure alignment with our unique approach to student learning. Teachers’ intuition and positive interactions with students will be an important factor in the hiring process.

We will provide teachers with professional development and ample opportunity for guided planning of their curriculum units before the start of each academic year. Subsequently, teachers will be supported by the director of education and director of student services — weekly, at staff meetings; monthly, through professional development days that will also include guests specialized in areas of our curriculum; and through frequent classroom observations and feedback by the director of education.

Curriculum Design and Learning Activities

We selected the following components of our curriculum based on research that points to their benefits for students’ self-efficacy, motivation, self-regulation, and the enhancement of social interactions, all considered important influences on academic achievement and a positive school environment.

- *International Primary Curriculum.* The IPC provides students with theme and project-based learning opportunities that help them make sense of the world around them as they enhance their knowledge in specific subject areas. The curriculum includes structure and routines that enhance students’ understanding of expectations, helping them with transitions between activities. The interactive nature of project-based learning enables students to practice their social skills and provides opportunities for guided group work.⁴¹

⁴¹ Jorgensen, C. M. (1997). Curriculum and Its Impact on Inclusion and the Achievement of Students with Disabilities. Washington, DC: Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS).

- *Arts Education and Integration.* Students will have opportunities to participate in the arts (visual arts, dance, music, and drama) throughout the day, found to enhance the social learning environment. They will receive instruction in each art form and in the academic curriculum through art-integrated units in the IPC. Research shows that the arts allow students with differing learning styles to successfully participate in learning by providing them with opportunities that tap into their strengths (especially for those whose strengths are nonverbal).⁴² In addition, studies show that the arts enhance the learning environment and social interactions by enhancing the mood and tone of classroom instruction and by releasing students' imagination and creativity.⁴³ Finally, the arts have been found to enhance students' self-efficacy beliefs and motivation and foster self-regulatory skills necessary for a positive learning environment.⁴⁴
- *DIR/Floortime Model.* This positive approach to interactions and relationship-building is integrated into our school philosophy, and will help us monitor each student's social and cognitive strengths and challenges and plan developmentally appropriate instruction and activities that offer students opportunities for success. The model is based on engaging students' interests, positive teacher-student interactions, and building a strong foundation for social, linguistic, and academic learning. All our staff will receive training in the DIR/Floortime model and developmental milestones, which will be included in students' portfolio assessments. We are proud to be the only school in the Washington, D.C., area to integrate Dr. Greenspan's enlightened and humanistic approach to learning, outlined in his latest book, *The Learning Tree*, with the help of his son, who will serve on our Advisory Board.
- *Responsive Classroom Approach.* The following aspects of the Responsive Classroom Model (described in detail in "Instructional Materials and Resources") will also enhance our school organization and culture:

Classroom Practices:

- Morning Meeting: gathering as a whole class each morning to greet one another, share news, and warm up for the day ahead
- Rule Creation: helping students create classroom rules to ensure an environment that allows all class members to meet their learning goals.
- Interactive Modeling and Positive Teacher Language: teaching children to notice and internalize expected behaviors through modeling; using words and tone as a tool to promote children's active learning and sense of community
- Logical Consequences: responding to misbehavior in a way that allows children to fix and learn from their mistakes while preserving their dignity
- Guided Discovery: introducing classroom materials using a format that encourages independence, creativity, and responsibility

⁴² Ingram, D., Seashore, K. R. (2003). *Arts for academic achievement: Summative evaluation report*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Minnesota, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, Minneapolis, MN.

⁴³ Stevenson, L.M., Deasy, R. J. (2005). *Third Space: When learning matters*. Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership.

⁴⁴ Baum, S., Owen, S., and Oreck, B. (1997). Transferring Individual Self-Regulation Process from Arts to Academics. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 98(4).

Green, M. (1995). *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts and Social Change*. Jossey-Bass.

- Academic Choice: increasing student learning by allowing students teacher-structured choices in their work
- Classroom Organization: setting up the physical room in ways that encourage students' independence, cooperation, and productivity
- Working with Families: creating avenues for hearing parents' insights and helping them understand the school's teaching approaches
- Collaborative Problem Solving: using conferencing, role playing, and other strategies to resolve problems with students

School-Wide Practices:

- Planning all-school activities to build a sense of community
- Welcoming families and the community as partners
- Organizing the physical environment to set a tone of learning⁴⁵

4D. Extracurricular Activities

Creative Minds PCS will offer students a variety of extracurricular activities during the school day and after school. We will implement our holistic approach to education, which emphasizes healthy living, physical fitness, and the importance of the arts for creativity, both in our extracurricular activities and through our curriculum and instruction. Our goal is to find facilities that have space for students to have ample opportunities for movement and exercise, as well as for artistic performances.

During the School Day

In addition to offering the arts and physical education during the school day, Creative Minds PCS students will learn healthy life skills within their curriculum and in after school programs. We believe that healthy living (diet, stress management, and the overall psychological well-being) affects students' academic performance. To teach students healthy life habits, we will offer them:

- Healthy lunches and snacks, provided by Revolution Foods⁴⁶
- Lessons on healthy habits, diet, and exercise within their science curriculum
- Opportunities to participate in exercise and yoga, provided by volunteers and staff members trained in these areas
- Sensory integration activities for all students, with additional supports and services for those who need it, by our Floortime occupational therapist

After School

We also plan to offer students additional after-school classes in the arts, sports, and interest-based clubs (Environmental Responsibility Club, Poetry Club, etc.) to further pursue their

⁴⁵ Available at: <http://www.responsiveclassroom.org>

⁴⁶ Revolution Foods delivers tasty and healthy meals and nutrition education to schools and programs across the country. Information available at: <http://www.revfoods.com/browse/home>

passions. These activities will be implemented by interested Creative Minds staff members and partners:

- Poetry and creative writing classes for students and their parents, provided by 826DC
- After-school music and/or art lessons, provided by our arts teachers or volunteers
- Environmental Responsibility Club, organized by a staff member interested and experienced in environmental sciences
- Yoga classes taught by our teachers and volunteers
- African cultural dancing by Kukuwa, an internationally acclaimed African dance performer, choreographer, and fitness instructor and originator of Gye Nyame African Cultural Dance Company, and Kukuwa, LLC® of the Kukuwa Dance Workout®

In line with our goal of inviting parents to participate in their children’s school life and help us build a community, at least once every quarter we will arrange social events with local and international artists and performers to attract our students’ families to the school and build a social environment. Our Founding Group members include known local and international artists who can support us in our initiative to attract parents to our community events:

- Ashton Conklin, a classical violinist
- Omékongo Luhaka wa Dibinga, a motivational speaker, writer, musician, and international diversity consultant
- Davina Soleyman, an African drummer
- Bob LaVallee, a yoga instructor

We will continue to form additional partnerships with community organizations and hire qualified staff as we grow and develop additional extracurricular activities for our students.

4E. Safety, Order, and Student Discipline

Safety and Order through the School Curriculum

At Creative Mind PCS, we will be proactive in creating conditions for students’ physical and emotional safety. Our described curriculum and instructional methodologies, including the arts and project-based learning will ensure that all students are highly engaged and have multiple opportunities for success based on their strengths to promote positive feelings toward school and learning. Research based on the social-cognitive perspective embedded in our school philosophy holds that students’ positive self-efficacy beliefs lead to their motivational, behavioral, and cognitive engagement in learning, enhanced self-regulation, and improved academic achievement⁴⁷. We believe that our instructional methodologies and engaging activities will minimize problem behaviors and enhance the learning environment. In inclusive classrooms,

⁴⁷ Pintrich, P.R., Linnenbrink, E.A., (2003). The Role of Self-Efficacy Beliefs in Student Engagement and Learning in the Classroom. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, (19).

where students are involved in the construction and interpretation of the cognitive and social aspects of that environment, engagement replaces the need for management⁴⁸.

In addition to positive approaches to student engagement, our use of the Responsive Classroom model will create an orderly and positive school culture based on routines and expectations that include students and teachers in creating rules. Through guidelines provided by the Responsive Classroom approach, each teacher and his/her students will come up with rules for a list of inappropriate behaviors and logical consequences. In addition, we will publish the Students and Staff Rules of Conduct and disseminate them to teachers and parents. This handbook will include rules for teachers that will be considered in their formal evaluations. Rules for students will be made explicit to students and parents at school and during the parent orientation event before the start of the school year. Violations of school rules relating to drugs and violence will be handled in collaboration with the D.C. Police Department.

We have developed a set of guidelines and strategies designed to help students have a safe and orderly school environment, and to support school staff respond to crisis situations.

Social and Behavioral Supports Through Special Education Services

In many cases, students' behavioral, social, and emotional challenges are related to developmental challenges in these areas, and/or difficult life experiences. To avoid unnecessary referrals for special education services, we will try to meet the needs of these students through behavioral interventions and emotional support. If we suspect that a student is manifesting behavioral problems due to a disability, we will take great measures to involve parents, and use a variety of measures by qualified personnel prior to diagnosis.

Through the process set up by our director of student services, in collaboration with our Student Support Team (described in "Students with Special Needs"), we will ensure that we identify and address students' social, emotional, and behavioral challenges. We will implement an incentive-based approach and positive reinforcement through participation in preferred activities, as well as appropriate limits, to help students monitor and manage their own behavior. If a student's challenges are due to a disability that requires specialized instruction, we will offer additional supports through our special education staff and service providers. All behavioral intervention plans and incentive programs will be designed in collaboration with parents and teachers.

Student and Staff Rules of Conduct

We will develop a handbook describing rules of conduct for students and staff and disseminate it to all teachers and parents that inform them of Creative Minds PCS's guidelines for teacher professionalism and student behaviors; the guidelines will clarify the consequences when rules are broken. The handbook will also provide steps to be taken in case of emergencies involving drugs, violence, reporting parental abuse or neglect, and fire or other events requiring

⁴⁸ Cooper, D., Valli, L. (1996). "Designing classrooms for inclusion: Beyond management." In B. Keogh & D. Speece (Eds.) Research on classroom ecologies: Implications for inclusion of children with learning disabilities (pp. 143-162). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

evacuation. We will review these guidelines with staff on a regular basis and practice necessary procedures, such as fire drills.

Physical Care

All Creative Minds PCS staff members will be trained in first aid and CPR. First aid kits will be available in all classrooms. We will seek the approval of the D.C. Police Department for our safety policies and procedures.

4F. Professional Development for Teachers, Administrators, and Other School Staff

As a school with an innovative program, we will engage in many professional development opportunities, especially during the first year of operation. As a new school with a small leadership team consisting of the director of education, director of organizational capacity, director of student services, and the administrative assistant, we will form partnerships with mentors from experienced and high-quality charter schools, to learn from their experiences and operate the school effectively and efficiently. Schools considered for partnerships are Capital City Public Charter School, where Director of Education Golnar Abedin conducted her doctoral dissertation research, and Centronia.

In addition, we will engage in professional development offered by the D.C. PCSB and the OSSE. During the Creative Minds PCS “Summer Institute” (see below), our teachers will receive training on curriculum models, assessments, and instructional methodology implemented in our program. They will also be guided to plan the standards they will teach during each academic quarter within project-based units of instruction.

Creative Minds PCS Summer Institute

Each August, Creative Minds PCS’s instructional staff will attend a two-week professional development session, after which they will spend the week before school begins reviewing and adjusting the IPC units and integrating standards-based educational goals based on the CCSS. Professional development will be offered by experts in areas related to our school mission, including:

Dr. Golnar Abedin, Director of Education: Based on her teaching, administrative, and consulting experiences, Dr. Abedin will provide professional development in the following areas:

- School procedures, policies and expectations
- Creative Minds curriculum guidelines, standards, and assessments
- The importance of arts integration and multiple opportunities for engagement
- Responsive Classroom approach
- Special education policy and implementation
- Use of the Special Education Data System (SEDS) and Easy IEP
- Policies and procedures regarding English language learner students

Davina Soleyman, Director of Student Services will assist with professional development in:

- International Primary Curriculum
- Integration of drama in literacy instruction

- Multisensory instruction
- School Support Team process
- Special education program implementation

Jake Greenspan, a member of our Founding Group, will offer training in:

- DIR®/Floortime™ philosophy and methodology
- Application of the nine DIR®/Floortime™ developmental milestones in our curriculum and portfolio assessments

Linda Krauker, and arts integration expert, will provide further training in arts integration.

Dr. Alida Anderson from American University will introduce the KP Mathematics Curriculum (used in our K-2 math instruction and as an intervention for struggling students in grades 3-8) to teach math concepts and number sense.

Individual Teacher Support

Teachers will receive ongoing professional development from the director of education and the director of student services in their areas of expertise during monthly professional development days and weekly staff meetings. In addition, the director of education will conduct weekly teacher observations and quarterly formal evaluations.

Teacher and Team Planning Time

Teachers will be provided with 90 minutes of planning time each day, including two 45-minute opportunities for team meetings each week that will include curriculum planning and discussions of student performance data. The director of education and/or director of student services will attend weekly team meetings to guide staff in student data analysis and planning.

Professional Development Delivered by Specialized Experts

We will invite Jake Greenspan, Dr. Anderson, and Linda Krauker to provide staff with further professional development in their respective areas of expertise during our monthly meeting days. We also hope to invite coaches from the IPC program and the Success For All Foundation to support our staff in implementing these programs. Our staff will also attend professional development sessions offered by experts through the OSSE, in areas related to our curriculum or necessary for our teachers' advancement.

4G. Structure of the School Day and Year

We will adjust the exact structure of the school day based on students' age and grade levels, and refined that structure as we finalize our budget and staffing. The schedule will provide students with a balanced day of academic and extracurricular activities, and will account for developmentally appropriate physical, social, and emotional needs.

The following is a sample schedule for a student in first grade:

8:00	<i>Breakfast</i>
8:45-9:30	<i>Morning Meeting</i> 1. Teacher greets and welcomes students, sets a positive tone and outlines the expectations for the day, and provides students with a visual daily schedule to inform them of what to expect. 2. Students share their experiences and interests. 3. Students will participate in a short music and movement activity prior to the start of their academic work.)
9:35-10:25	<i>Small Group, Multisensory Instruction in Literacy or Math.</i> Students will break up into small groups based on ability and instructional requirements.
10:25-11:00	<i>Physical Education</i>
11:00-11:15	<i>Snack</i>
11:15-12:00	<i>Small Group, Multisensory Instruction in Literacy or Math.</i> Students will break up into small groups based on ability and instructional requirements.
12:00-12:50	<i>Recess/Lunch</i>
12:50-1:30	<i>Science/Social Studies/Technology Thematic/ Arts-Integrated Instruction</i>
1:30-2:15	<i>Art/Music/Drama/Dance.</i> Students rotate, taking an art form during each quarter in the lower grades. (Students in grades 3-8 will have opportunities to choose an art form to pursue.)
2:15-3:15	<i>Science/Social Studies/Technology/Arts-Integrated Thematic Instruction</i>
3:15-3:30	<i>Check in with Classroom Teacher.</i> Students will receive feedback, reminders, and positive reinforcement for progress on individual goals.
3:35-4:30	<i>After-School Programs,</i> including additional academic tutoring, arts classes, creative writing, yoga/exercise, and structured games and activities for preschoolers.
4:30-5:30	<i>Aftercare Services</i> (as needed)

School will open at 8:00 AM and will end at 3:30 PM. Ideally, parents of preschool and Kindergarten students will pick up their children by 3:30 PM, because a longer school day is not developmentally appropriate for those age groups. However, when parents cannot pick up their children due to employment obligations, we hope to offer structured, purposeful activities from 3:35-4:30 PM, and an extended aftercare service/homework help session. On Fridays, students

will be dismissed at 1:00 PM (aftercare services will be provided to those who need to stay longer, up to 5:30 PM). Staff will meet every Friday from 1:00-4:00 PM for professional development and planning.

We will follow the DCPS calendar for holidays and hold professional development days (when students will not attend school) once a month. Students will be in school for a total of 180 instructional days. Student assessment timelines are presented in Exhibit 8, “Creative Minds PCS Student Assessments.”

B. BUSINESS PLAN

1. Planning and Establishment

1A. Profile of Founding Group

The Founding Group includes the following individuals:

Golnar Abedin, Co-Founder and Director of Education

Golnar Abedin is cofounder of Creative Minds Public Charter School; if granted a charter, she will serve as our school's director of education and principal. Golnar is a graduate of the doctoral studies program in Organizational Leadership and Education Policy at the University of Maryland. Recipient of a dean's scholarship, she completed her Ph.D. in May 2010. Golnar's doctoral dissertation research was on the impact of arts-based education on student engagement in a public charter school inclusion setting, within the context of the No Child Left Behind Act and the IDEA policy frameworks. She is currently serving as the Director of academics and instructional coach at the School for the Arts in Learning Public Charter School (SAIL PCS), in Washington, D.C. Golnar holds a M.A. in Special Education from Teachers College, Columbia University, and a B.A. in Psychology (Rutgers University, New Jersey).

During the last 15 years, Golnar has worked with students in a variety of educational settings. As an instructional coach and an inclusion specialist, she has supervised and implemented general education curriculum and standards, as well as special education instruction. Most of her school-based experiences have been teaching students with learning differences within the standards-based, general education curriculum at public schools in New York City and Washington, D.C. She has also taught at top private special education schools (The Gateway School in New York City and the Lab School of Washington, D.C.). Golnar's school-based positions have included working as a bilingual special education teacher, resource room teacher, Spanish teacher, inclusion specialist, and director of special education (prior to her current position at SAIL PCS). Her international experience includes work as a consultant for the United States Agency for International Development in El Salvador, where she conducted teacher education training in the area of inclusive education.

In the spring of 2010, Golnar worked on the Easy IEP/Special Education Database System at the Office of the State Superintendent of Education as a special education consultant, through a short-term contract with Urban Policy Development, a consulting firm. Golnar is also a parent of a child with autism spectrum disorder and has training in a variety of methodologies and interventions (including ABA and Floortime Therapy) for this population of students.

Bob LaVallee, Co-founder and Director of Organizational Capacity

Bob LaVallee has been part of the charter school movement for more than 15 years. As the director of operations and finance for City On A Hill Charter School, he had a key role in developing a school that was part of the first wave of charters in Massachusetts in the mid-1990s. More recently, as a lead staff member of the National Resource Center for Charter School Finance and Governance (a project of The Finance Project), he produced policy briefs and tools

for charter-school operators, authorizers, and policy makers. He has delivered training on these resources to charter-school audiences across the country, including in Colorado, Minnesota, and Louisiana.

In addition to his education reform credentials, Bob is a seasoned nonprofit manager. He has worked in direct service programs and at intermediaries supporting youth-serving organizations. He drew on his lengthy experience when he co-wrote “Beyond the Checkbook: A Financial Management Guide for Leaders of Small Youth-Serving Organizations” and “Assessing Fiscal Health: A Financial Benchmarking Tool for Charter School Operators.” A former Marine Corps officer and team leader for City Year Boston, Bob is an experienced leader of diverse teams.

Jake Greenspan

Jake Greenspan is the co-director of The Floortime Center in Bethesda, Maryland. A graduate of Kenyon College, Jake has worked in the past with the internationally renowned Dr. Stanley Greenspan and colleagues, specifically in the areas of visual spatial, motor, and social skills, as well as Interactive Metronome training. His work included teaching sixth, seventh, and eighth grades at a school specializing in learning differences. During this time, he also worked with children with a range of developmental and learning challenges using the DIR model. Over the past few years Jake has continued the work of the late Dr. Greenspan, presenting workshops on the DIR/Floortime model and helping families of children with sensory processing and autism spectrum disorders as co-director of The Floortime Center.

Davina Soleyman

Davina Soleyman has a strong background in special education and extensive experience teaching in general education classrooms. After completing her master’s degree in Learning Disabilities at Columbia University and teaching special education in New York City, she moved to Jamaica, where she worked with an economically and internationally diverse group of students. After teaching in many different schools, she became an educational case manager to help more children in need, an experience that allowed her to gain experience coordinating parents, teachers, and administrative staff. She also volunteered with a program for homeless children and offered teacher-training workshops in schools.

Davina is presently heading the Extended Support Program in the middle school of the International School of Geneva (LGB Campus). She helped set up this program in the summer of 2009. In addition to teaching students, she coordinates four teaching assistants, a speech therapist, a movement therapist, a psychologist and an occupational therapist. The Extended Support Program is a bilingual center that allows students with severe special needs to be a part of the regular school setting. It provides one-on-one and small-group teaching in an environment adapted to the students’ needs while providing as-needed assistance in the general education classroom.

She has incorporated the DIR/Floortime developmental model into the Extended Support Program and uses it extensively with her students. At the International School, she has had extensive experience working with English language learners, and presently teaches in English

and French. In her previous position as a general education teacher, she worked with the International Primary Curriculum, coordinating with her colleagues to help implement this curriculum into the school program. Davina is very involved in theatre and has taught drama in schools throughout her career. For the last five years, she has directed the eighth-grade musical at the International School, involving up to 60 students.

Julia McNabb

Julia McNabb has a strong background in nonprofit management, resource development and youth services. She is currently the development and outreach services manager at International Baccalaureate in Bethesda, Maryland. Skilled at cross-sector collaboration and partnership-building, she led youth and education initiatives on behalf of the United Way for the Greater New Orleans Area, including the New Orleans Kids Partnership. This group of 35 agencies focused on education, direct service, youth development, mentoring, and community school coordination. Prior to that effort she worked in Massachusetts and Washington, D.C., on community development and educational access issues. A graduate of University of Texas at Austin and The Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, she brings significant skills and perspectives to the Creative Minds PCS team.

Ashton Conklin

Ashton Conklin is serving as the music teacher at Capital City Public Charter School in the Columbia Heights neighborhood of Washington, D.C. The 2010-2011 school year will be his sixth year in this position. As a student, he attended D.C. public schools through high school; Murch Elementary School, Alice Deal Junior High School, and School Without Walls High School. Ashton received his Bachelor of Music in Violin Performance from The Catholic University of America, also located in D.C. As student and teacher, he has been active in the D.C. Youth Orchestra Program. In his current position at Capital City PCS, he is constantly working to discover new ways to increase students' engagement in the arts, which he considers his top priority. He serves general education students and special education students. His approach provides students with many creative opportunities in addition to traditional training. As part of the arts curriculum, he has integrated music into many classroom projects. It gives him great pleasure to be an arts educator in the District of Columbia, the city that supported his development as a musician and teacher. Because of his deep roots in D.C. and his experience as an arts educator, he will be a valuable member of the Founding Group of Creative Minds PCS.

Brett Orlove

Brett Orlove has practiced law in the field of real estate and business for 20 years. His real-estate experience includes extensive work in lease-related matters for tenants and landlords. His firm has represented numerous schools in real estate leasing, real estate acquisition and finance transactions, including representing other D.C. Public Charter schools. His work includes experience in drafting, reviewing and negotiating various types of business contracts and agreements, and providing general business counsel to clients. He is a graduate of George Washington University Law School and is admitted to the Bar in the District of Columbia and Maryland.

Patricia Steele

Patricia Steele has a Ph.D. in Education, Policy and Leadership Studies from the University of Maryland. Much of her work has focused on issues of inequality in access to education, with particular attention to problems faced by students who are underrepresented in higher education. Her master's degree in Human Development, Counseling and Family Studies exposed her to issues related to organizational development, organizational change, human development, and training. It is her hope that her knowledge and experience in education, human development, and organizational theory will be useful in Creative Minds PCS's building, hiring, and strategic planning as it launches and gets established.

The following Founding Group members have official affiliations with other organizations:

Bob LaVallee
Treasurer
Split This Rock Poetry Festival
<http://www.splitthisrock.org>

Jake Greenspan
Chair of the Board
All The Difference
<http://allthedifference.org>

Annual reports/financial information for each organization are not available.

The following organizations were partners in planning and establishing the school:

- *The Floortime Center* of Bethesda, Maryland, provides services to parents and educational institutions using the DIR Model, also known as Floortime. The DIR Model, developed by the late Dr. Stanley Greenspan, is a comprehensive developmental model used to identify a child's unique profile in three main areas: developmental milestones, individual differences, and relationships. The center's co-director, Jake Greenspan (son of Dr. Greenspan) is a member of our Founding Group. During the development of the school, the Floortime Center is providing input and guidance for the creation of the curriculum. The center will also assist in training Creative Minds PCS teachers before the school opens. Once the school has opened, The Floortime Center will continue to provide as-needed training and technical assistance.
- *The Law Firm of Van Ness Feldman* has agreed to provide pro-bono legal counsel to Creative Minds PCS. At present, the firm is assisting the school in the process of obtaining a charter as a nonprofit corporation and obtaining 501(c)(3) certification from the Internal Revenue Service. Based in Georgetown, the firm was founded in 1977 and has over 90 attorneys on staff.

How the Founders Represent and Reflect the Interests of Parents, Teachers, and the Community

The Founding Group combines deep professional expertise with personal understanding of the challenges and possibilities of creating an outstanding school. Most of the Founding Group members are D.C. residents. More importantly, their work in youth-serving organizations often requires them to confront the realities facing children in the District of Columbia. Most of the Founding Group members have extensive experience working with disadvantaged youth in urban environments. Golnar Abedin works as the director of academics at a D.C. charter school (SAIL PCS), and previously worked as the director of special education at Mary McLeod Bethune PCS, also in D.C. Four members of the founding group are parents of D.C. public school students. Patricia Steele, Ph.D., is an advocate of equity in education; she is also a parent of two children who will be attending public schools in D.C.

Golnar and two other members of founding group are currently working or have worked as teachers. Other Founding Group members have worked with young people in a variety of roles: Bob LaVallee's experience includes leading outdoor trips for court-acquainted youth, supervising youth in residential settings, running after-school programs and serving one-on-one as a Big Brother. Jake Greenspan is a therapist and consultant serving children and families from D.C. and Maryland at The Floortime Center. Julia McNabb was director of youth programs for a community-based organization in the distressed community of Lawrence, Massachusetts. Because of their experiences as community members, teachers and parents, the Founding Group's input into the design of the school has been invaluable.

How Founders' and Partners' Efforts Have Added to the Quality of the Plans for the Proposed Public Charter School and How the Group's Continued Participation Will Contribute to the School's Long-Term Success

From the outset, the Founding Group has provided critical support in the process of creating the school. The group brings a remarkable set of skills and experiences to the school. Using their expertise, they have freely provided input into the application and offered feedback. Just as importantly, they have shared information on resources that will be helpful to the school and made introductions to prospective partners and additional Founding Group members.

- As the director of education, Golnar Abedin wrote the education plan, including the school philosophy, curriculum, instruction, and assessments.
- Robert LaVallee, the director of organizational development, wrote the business and operational plans for the school.
- Jake Greenspan provided guidance on meeting children's academic and social requirements with sensory-based differences within an inclusive developmental approach to education.
- Davina Soleyman provided input into designing an inclusive education plan, the IPC curriculum, and instructional approach.
- Julia McNabb applied her significant research and writing skills to the task of creating the demographic analysis.
- Brett Orlove has offered preliminary advice on the process for obtaining a facility.

- Ashton Conklin offered advice on arts education and integration based on his experience in these areas of the curriculum at Capital City.
- Patricia Steele provided guidance in the area of fundraising and fiscal responsibility

Going forward, the Founding Group will continue in the efforts we described above. In addition, as many of them transition to formal roles on the Board of Directors, they will provide oversight to the strategic vision and mission of the school and hold the co-founders accountable for operations. Because the Founding Group consists of many seasoned nonprofit managers, they are well-equipped to fulfill their essential roles in ensuring the financial integrity of the organization and the appropriate stewardship of public funds.

Plans for Further Recruitment of Founders or Organizers

Once authorized, the Board of Directors will continue to recruit members, as needed to maintain the appropriate set of skills and perspectives. Emphasis will be placed on recruiting community members who are parents, especially those who have experienced economic challenges. In addition, the following prospective Board members were not able to formally participate in the application process but provided Creative Minds PCS with valuable input and committed to joining the group in the future:

- Omekongo Dibinga - A doctoral student in International Education Policy at the University of Maryland, College Park where I look at issues related to arts education, culturally relevant pedagogy, and social change.
- Christian Bosch – A teacher at SAIL Charter School in Washington, D.C.
- Charlotte Brown- Early child hood educator from the Teach for America Program with three years of experience teaching in Washington DC, including her current position as Kindergarten teacher at Hyde-Addison Elementary.

1B. Planning Process

Planning Process and Formation of the Founding Group

In this section, we describe the planning process that led to the decision to form a school and apply for a charter and how we were able to engage individuals with the requisite skills, competencies, and commitment in the planning process.

The co-founding directors, Dr. Golnar Abedin and Bob LaVallee, share a long experience in youth work, education, and charter schools. For Bob, the process of preparing to write the application for Creative Minds PCS began in 1996, when he accepted the position as director of finance and operations at City On A Hill Charter School in Boston, Massachusetts. (City On A Hill was part of the first group of charters under the new state charter law.) As he continued on to leadership positions in a variety of youth-serving organizations, he envisioned creating a nonprofit administration and finance capacity that actively supported direct service staff while guaranteeing the long-term sustainability of the organization.

Golnar is a passionate advocate for disadvantaged students in urban public schools. She has worked with youth-based organizations and schools in New York City and Washington, D.C.,

for the last 15 years. Her knowledge in the fields of psychology, special education, and education policy, combined with 10 years of teaching experience, informs her vision for Creative Minds PCS. Since she began working as a teacher in public schools, her dream has been to design a program that would provide students in urban public schools with the same high-quality educational opportunities offered to those in private academic programs and successful suburban schools.

When Golnar and Bob met, they found that they each brought a complementary set of the skills necessary to create a high-functioning school. Working in concert, they decided to open a school that combined an innovative and highly effective philosophy and curriculum with sound financial practices and solid logistical support. That school will be Creative Minds Public Charter School.

Having worked at new and young charter schools, the co-founders understand the importance of a founding group that will ensure the integrity of their vision. The co-founders drew upon their extensive professional and volunteer networks as they assembled the Founding Group. After determining the set of competences and perspectives needed to guide the school, the co-founders systematically approached candidates. Because of the appeal of the school's unique approach and philosophy, Founding Group members were eager to support the effort. The co-founders will continue to build the Founding Group.

Involvement of Parents, Teachers, and Other Community Members

We have involved parents, teachers, and other members of the community in developing the school's mission, philosophy, focus, goals, and design. This section describes how we will continue to involve these groups in implementing Creative Minds PCS.

Our diverse Founding Group is the primary means of parent, teacher, and community involvement. This group provided input into the application, shared information on resources, and introduced us to prospective partners. Bringing to the table their deep professional and personal knowledge of education, the Founding Group members combined an awareness of best practices from across the country with their personal experiences as parents, teachers, volunteers, and residents of D.C.'s neighborhoods.

Assembling an application is only the beginning. The co-founders' personal experiences working in new and young charter schools demonstrated to them that a new school model requires constant assessment and adjustment. Parents, teachers, and the community will continue to be involved as members of the Board of Directors and the Advisory Board. In addition, the co-founders and board leadership will continually seek out feedback from parents, teachers, and community members, at monthly Parent-Teacher-Student Association and Board of Directors meetings, and use this advice to inform policy decisions.

In addition, as part of the regular operation of the school, Creative Minds PCS will maintain a database of stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and community members. The individuals in this database will receive a formal survey at the end of each academic year, giving them the opportunity to comment on the school's philosophy, curriculum, and operations. This feedback

will be an important source of input for continuous improvement of the school model and organizational operations.

School Management Firm

Creative Minds Public Charter School will not use a school management firm.

1C. Corporate Structure and Nonprofit Status of the School

Creative Minds PCS is incorporated under D.C. law. The articles of incorporation and bylaws are attached in Section J, "Required Documents." We are in process of obtaining our nonprofit status from the Internal Revenue Service with the assistance of our pro-bono counsel, Van Ness Feldman. We estimate that we will obtain nonprofit status by October 2011.

2. Governance and Management

2A. Board of Directors

Selection Process and Terms of Office of the Proposed Board of Directors

The founders of Creative Minds PCS deeply believe in the importance of an independent, actively engaged Board of Directors. Our founding Board of Directors will be made up of members of the Founding Group and additional directors recruited to provide as-needed essential competencies and perspectives.

At minimum, prospective directors must have:

- High moral standing and unshakeable integrity
- Commitment to the success of the students and the school
- Ability to participate meaningfully in governing the school, both in terms of regular attendance to monthly Board meetings, and competent, ethical leadership
- Understanding of the appropriate role of the board, including the ability to distinguish between matters that should be addressed by board action and matters that are the purview of the school leaders
- Ability to conduct all board interactions with civility and collegiality
- Willingness to take responsibility as a steward of public funds

All directors (and the school leaders) will receive, review and sign a director job description, conflict of interest forms, and make an annual disclosure statement. The new Board of Directors will participate in a D.C. Public Charter School Board governance workshop, plus periodic training to support their service. Possible topics for training include financial report analysis, strategic planning, student assessments, and succession planning.

The Board of Directors will be selected once the charter is awarded. It is expected that the majority of the Founding Group will transition to the Board of Directors. An exception may be where Founding Members will potentially be contractors to the school. We have attached the

name, address, résumé, a statement of interest and qualifications and a Board Member Agreement for each member in Section G.

Once the Board of Directors has been established, a Nominating Committee will be formed within the larger Board. This committee will be responsible for anticipating vacancies in the board and conducting outreach, recruitment, and thorough vetting of potential directors. Directors will serve three-year terms, with initial terms staggered to avoid complete turnover in directors every three years. During the first meeting of the board, directors will choose lots, setting their starting terms. One-third will serve two years, one-third will serve three years, and one-third will serve four years.

The school leaders (Director of Education Golnar Abedin and Director of Organizational Capacity Bob LaVallee) will serve as *ex officio* members of the Board of Directors. This will allow them to provide information and insight for decision-making and will assist them in implementing board policies accurately.

Meaningful Input from Parents on the Board of Directors

Parents of children currently attending the school will have an opportunity to submit their names as candidates for the board. Candidates will create brief biographical statements and statements of interest and qualifications that will be shared with the voting parents prior to the election. If no parents step forward to serve on the Board of Directors, the school leaders will work with the Nominating Committee to conduct outreach that will identify and recruit parent directors. The PTSA will also assist with recruiting parents to participate on the Board. Each family with a child or children attending the school will receive two votes, one for each parent director position. The two candidates receiving the most votes will be appointed to the board.

Composition, Roles, and Responsibilities of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors will consist of nine members and will always include two parents. The school leaders will sit on the board as *ex officio* members.

The following officer positions will be established:

- **President:** Leads the board in its work. To support an effective, positively functioning Board, the President ensures that members understand their jobs and are able to fulfill those expectations. She/he provides structure so that the work of the board and the school can be accomplished and ensures that management tools are developed and implemented. The President convenes and presides over Board meetings. The President is the Chair of the Executive Committee and works with the committee chairs.
- **Vice President:** Performs the duties of president when the president is unable or unavailable to perform those duties. She/he will also assist the president in her/his work as needed.

- Secretary: Ensures that accurate minutes are taken at each meeting and distributed to the board. She/he also ensures that all legally required nonfinancial filings are made to ensure the correct status of the school and nonprofit corporation.
- Treasurer: Lead director for financial issues and chairs the Finance Committee of the board. The treasurer is ultimately responsible for the successful accomplishment of the duties of the Finance Committee. (These duties are explained below.)

The board will establish the following committees:

- Nominating: The Nominating Committee will ensure that the board is consistently staffed with high-quality members with an appropriate array of competencies and perspectives. They will anticipate vacancies in the board and conduct outreach, recruitment, and thorough vetting of potential directors. They will also create and supervise the implantation of a written succession plan for directors and the school leaders.
- Finance: The Finance Committee will be led by the treasurer and will work closely with the director of organizational capacity. This committee will evaluate and ensure the school's financial integrity using a suite of reports and financial metrics and provide regular updates to the larger board on the status of the school's finances including key financial events, trends, concerns, and assessment of fiscal health, and will identify areas requiring attention. They will lead the process for creating and approving the school's annual budget and oversee the development and implementation of the school's financial policies. They will also ensure that appropriate financial controls are in place and that the school is submitting all legally required financial reports.
- Executive: The Executive Committee is composed of the board officers and committee chairs. They will convene only when an urgent decision must be made and it is not practical to convene the entire board. Like all other committees, the Executive Committee will take minutes that will be shared with the larger board.

As their first order of business, each committee will create a charter or written charge. Minutes will be kept for committee meetings and shared with the larger board. The board will meet a minimum of 10 times with a quorum over the course of the first year of operation and will meet a minimum of 4 times a year with a quorum in ensuing years. These meetings will be laid out in a written calendar that will be disseminated to the directors at the start of each academic year. Directors will receive an agenda (created by the board president) and supporting materials prior to each meeting.

In addition to the policies laid out above, the bylaws of the organization will clearly and effectively outline rules regarding procedures, rights, and powers in keeping with good governance practices. As described previously, a baseline set of bylaws is being used by our counsels at the law firm of Van Ness Feldman to establish the nonprofit corporation and obtain 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service. While these bylaws are a sound basis for good nonprofit governance, they will be further tailored during the period following the

awarding of the charter to suit the unique requirements of Creative Minds PCS. Any amendments to the bylaws will be complete before the school opens for operation.

Plans for Providing Strategic Direction, Monitoring of Student Performance, and Succession Planning for the Board and Leadership

Strategic Planning

In addition to the school's written mission, vision, and core values statements, the board will develop and approve a two- to five-year strategic plan. The full board will participate in this strategic planning process and will ensure that appropriate resources to accomplish the plan are identified and assigned. The board may receive outside technical assistance with the strategic planning process.

Monitoring Student Performance

Student performance will be one of the critical measures covered in the annual operating plan described below. As part of the annual operating plan, the board will regularly and formally monitor student performance. Student performance will be made available in an annual report containing data regarding progress based on our various assessment measures including DC_CAS scores in the AYP report (further described in the “Student Assessments” section of the application).

Succession Planning

As described above, succession planning will be managed by the Nominating Committee.

Method for Holding School Leadership Accountable and Ensuring “Demand” for the Proposed School

Accountability

Working with the school leadership, the Board of Directors will develop and approve an annual operating plan. This plan will include specific goals for academics (including student performance), finance, operations/facilities, and governance, and include short-term and long-term objectives. Elements of the plan will be assigned to specific individuals.

Using this plan, the board will conduct a rigorous review of the school leaders at the conclusion of each year. In addition, milestones from the plan will be used to evaluate progress quarterly over the course of the year. The board will provide the school leaders with a formal, written performance evaluation annually. In addition, the full Board of Directors will approve school leader compensation and will periodically benchmark this compensation against similar schools.

Demand

The Founding Group strongly believes that the primary strategy for ensuring continued demand for the school is providing high quality educational services. A record of performance and achievement, plus word-of-mouth from highly satisfied parents, will provide the basis for solid reenrollment. However, given the competitive environment of the D.C. charter schools, high-quality education alone will not guarantee full enrollment and a healthy wait-list. The board will require the school leaders to create an aggressive outreach and recruitment plan and will monitor progress on that plan over the course of the year.

The Board of Directors will have a direct role in outreach and recruitment as well. As ambassadors for the school, Directors will promote the school within their networks of influence and will represent the school at appropriate public forums to foster interest and positive buzz.

Board of Directors Functions in Making Executive Decisions about the Operation of the School

The Board of Directors will be proactive in monitoring school performance, using the annual operation plan to establish the content that will be reviewed regularly at board meetings. Sufficient meaningful data will be presented at each board meeting to allow the board to gauge performance. This data will include leading and lagging indicators and performance benchmarks compared to schools with similar student bodies and life cycles.

Using this data-based approach, the board will develop plans to address areas of concern. This oversight will be a combination of policies and procedures created by the board, as well as direction provided to the school leaders. The board will operate at the strategic and policy levels. The school leaders will put those policies and strategic plans into operation, while being held accountable by the board.

A Board of Directors job description and performance expectations is attached in Section J, “Required Documents.”

Relationship of the Board of Directors to the School’s Structure and Staff, Parents, and Students

Administrative Structure and Staff

The Board of Directors will hire, supervise, and evaluate the school leaders, and will delegate all managerial and operational decision-making to the school leaders. Board meetings will be open to the public and school staff will be encouraged (but not required) to attend. The exception to this will be when the board convenes a closed “executive” session to discuss sensitive matters, such as discipline or the removal of a school leader or director.

Board committees will work closely with appropriate staff members. School staff will support the board by providing necessary information in a complete, accurate, and timely fashion. An ethic of candor and mutual respect between the staff and the board will be cultivated from the very start. In addition, the board will create a “whistle blower” policy that will identify the process for staff members to report fraud, waste, or abuse. The policy will protect “whistle blowers” from retribution by school managers or directors.

Parents and Students

The Founding Group deeply believes in the importance of the role of parents in their children’s education. Parent directors will be critical in ensuring that the school supports and communicates with parents and that the needs and concerns of parents are heard and addressed. The board will also establish criteria and a process for parental appeal of decisions made by the school leaders.

Because the Board of Directors will be actively engaged in the life of the school, its members will be able to observe students during visits to the school during school hours and at special events after hours. However, directors will not have direct supervision of students or be expected to directly respond to student questions or concerns. Rather, directors will forward student inquiries to the director of education, who will address each issue as she deems appropriate.

2B. Rules and Policies

At this writing, the Creative Minds PCS rules and policies are being formulated, pending approval of tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service. The baseline bylaws will be tailored to meet this school's unique needs. Building on the finalized bylaws, the board and school leaders will work together to establish a thorough, written set of rules and policies. Using best-practice examples from successful charter schools, these rules and policies will address the full range of school activities, from employment to operations to financial controls, and beyond.

2C. Administrative Structure

Administrative Structure of the School

The school will use a two-leader model, dividing leadership duties between a director of organizational capacity and a director of education. Both of these positions will be hired by, and report to, the Board of Directors. The Founding Group believes that, given the challenges of opening and running a school, this co-leadership approach will ensure that the different skills sets required will be represented in school leadership, increasing the likelihood of success. This model has been embraced by many charter support organizations, including the Building Excellent Schools fellowship program based in Boston, Massachusetts. The school leaders will both be *ex officio* members of the Board of Directors, working with board committees as needed.

The director of organizational capacity will be responsible for ensuring structures are in place to support teaching and learning, and for ensuring the school's finances are sustainable. Specifically, he will:

- Develop and implement the school's administrative systems and procedures
- Develop and implement the school's technology and data collection plan
- Oversee all financial activity and reports
- Ensure that all District of Columbia and federal reporting requirements are met
- Create and execute the school's financial sustainability plan
- Oversee the school's human resource function
- Manage the school facility, including acquisitions, leases and renovations
- Manage relationships with external stakeholders and promote the school appropriately
- Supervise non-instructional staff and vendors
- Support the work of the director of education

The director of education will be responsible for all teaching and learning. Specifically, she will:

- Design and operate the school's education plan
- Recruit students
- Hire teachers
- Plan and provide professional development to the instructional staff
- Set academic standards and assessment measures
- Evaluate teachers
- Monitor and report student data

- Oversee all school personnel involved in instructional delivery
- Respond to parents' and students' needs and concerns
- Support the work of the director of organizational capacity

The director of student services will assist the director of education in matters related to special education and English language learners, including management of related service providers, and all matters related to students' individualized education programs. Her role will include providing professional development in the area of special education and teaching English language learners, as well as collaborating with the director of education on matters regarding instruction, assessment, and teacher evaluations.

To reduce administrative costs and allow for maximum flexibility during the first years of operation, the school will engage outside contractors to support administration. A back-office services organization with experience in charter-school finances will be hired to manage accounting, payroll, and human resources. In addition, a development consultant will be retained to support the writing of grant proposals and reports. The role of these two vendors may expand or contract as the capacity and size of the school change over time. As needed, other contractors may be engaged. Teachers will be asked to take part in evaluating service providers, assistant teachers, interns, or volunteers working for the school.

Nature and Extent of Teacher, Parent, and Student Input into Decisions that Affect the School

The director of education and/or director of student services will hold weekly staff meetings to discuss all matters related to curriculum and instruction, and monitoring student performance. Teachers will be asked to report on all matters related to students' response to instruction and performance on both informal and formal assessments. Teachers and administrators will collaborate to solve problems related to all matters affecting students' performance and well-being. In addition to evaluating teachers' performance, the directors of education and student services will conduct weekly classroom observations to monitor students' level of engagement in learning, teacher-student interactions, and students' responses to curriculum and instruction, to evaluate the effectiveness of materials and methodologies implemented. The director of education will conduct informal interviews with older students (grades 3-8) about their educational experiences at the school and take into account their levels of motivation in response to particular programs.

Parents and guardians will be involved through a Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA) that will hold regular biweekly or monthly meetings. The PTSA leader will communicate on a regular basis with the director of education subsequent to meetings to ensure parent input is considered in decisions that affect the school. In addition, parents will be able to provide input and feedback during monthly "Parent Involvement" meetings hosted by the school.

Finally, teachers and parents will receive a survey about the school's performance at the end of each academic year. Survey responses will be taken into account in planning for the subsequent school year.

2D. School Management Contracts

Creative Minds PCS will not engage the services of a school management company.

3. Finance

3A. Anticipated Sources of Funds

Exhibit 9 lists the funds (based on the assumptions below) Creative Minds Public Charter School anticipates receiving during the planning year and the first two years of operation.

Exhibit 9. Funding for Planning Year and First Two Years of Operation

	Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2
<i>Student Enrollment</i>			
Pre-school		28	28
Pre-Kindergarten		28	28
Kindergarten		14	28
Grade 1		14	14
Grade 2		14	14
Grade 3		14	14
Grade 4		0	14
<i>Total Students</i>		112	140
<i>Percentage Special Education</i>			
		20%	20%
<i>Percentage LEP/NEP</i>			
		10%	10%
<i>Per-Pupil Allocation</i>			
Pre-School		11,987	11,987
Pre-Kindergarten		11,629	11,629
Kindergarten		11,629	11,629
Grade 1- 3		8,945	8,945
Grade 4 - 5		8,945	8,945
Per Pupil Facilities Allowance		3,000	3,000
<i>Per Pupil Revenue</i>			
Total Per Pupil Allocation		1,199,757	1,487,799
Total Facilities Allocation		336,000	420,000
Total Special Education Funding		285,537	356,921
Total ELL/NEP Funding		45,085	56,356
<i>Total Per Pupil</i>		1,866,379	2,321,076
<i>Other Public Revenue</i>			
Federal Entitlements	180,000	418,093	457,616
<i>Total Other Public</i>			
<i>Private Grants and Donations</i>			
		80,000	
Total Income	180,000	2,020,432	2,356,380

Based on the strong demand for preschool and pre-Kindergarten services and the demand for schools with small class sizes and individualized instruction, we expect to meet these modest

enrollment goals. For the purposes of this budget, we assume flat funding levels from District of Columbia and federal sources.

Funding from the District of Columbia will constitute 75 percent of the overall revenue in Year 1. Non-English proficient/limited English proficient (NEP/LEP) is assumed to be 10 percent. Special education is assumed to be 20 percent. The special education allotment is distributed evenly across the levels, with 5 percent each at Levels 1 through 4.

Federal funding in Years 1 and 2 will be approximately 20 percent of the overall revenue, but constitutes 100 percent of revenue in the planning year, in the form of a Title V B grant.

Amount and Sources of Additional Funds, Property, or Other Resources Available for Planning, Start-Up, and Operation

Private funding and grants will make up a modest 5 percent of the planned revenue in Year 1, and will not be required in Year 2.

The planned grant revenue in Year 1 will be applied for upon receiving the charter. No commitments exist as of the writing of this application.

Contingencies in place in the event that funds for per pupil allocations are not available as early as expected, or are lower than expected:

In the event that funds are not available as early as expected, or are lower than expected, Creative Minds PCS will consider the following alternatives:

- Reducing the number of teachers and teacher's aides would save approximately \$50,000 per teacher and \$35,000 per teacher's aide, plus benefits (calculated as 25 percent of salary).
- Reducing the service hours of the educational professionals. In the current budget, we provide for an occupational therapist, speech therapist, psychologist, and school nurse at 50 percent in Year 1, with that full-time equivalent increasing each year as enrollment increases. Such reduction may vary across the positions, depending on the needs of the student body.
- Reduce the hours of the director of student services.
- Explore ways to reduce the cost of furnishing classrooms and offices, budgeted at \$69,800 total in Year 1. A 20-percent reduction would save almost \$14,000.

Any decision to reduce expenditures would be considered with the best interests of the students in mind.

Specific Financial Goals and Objectives for the Projected Five-Year Budget

Creative Minds PCS has the following financial objectives for its first five years of operation:

- Support the growth of staff to meet the needs of a growing student body, including additional arts teachers, teacher’s aides, and increasing therapist support.
- Create an operating reserve that will ensure positive cash flow.
- Consistently generate an annual surplus to create a reserve that can be used purchase a building or acquire a long-term lease.

3B. Planned Fundraising Efforts

Planned Fundraising Efforts to Generate Capital or Supplement the Per-Pupil Allocation for Operating Expenses

In his former position at The Finance Project, the Director of Organizational Capacity Bob LaVallee prepared and delivered training on financial sustainability to charter-school leaders. He intends to apply the lessons he taught there to Creative Minds PCS. Far from being the conventional approach of endlessly writing grant proposals, this sustainability model takes a holistic approach that includes the following elements:

- Developing a compelling vision to share with potential funders
- Building a results orientation that creates evidence of the success of the organization’s approach
- Using a strategic financing process that examines the needs of the schools and matches the school’s model with funders that best fit that model
- Observing and adapting to changing conditions in the political economy of the funders
- Developing a broad base of support in the community
- Cultivating key champions among community leaders in business, government and civic life
- Building strong internal systems like financial reporting to support fundraising
- Moving all these elements forward simultaneously by creating a sustainability plan

Mr. LaVallee will lead this effort but will be assisted by members of the Board of Directors, several of whom have significant development experience with both public and private funders.

Plans for Raising Funds to Cover Planning and Development Prior to Opening the School

The school leaders will pursue foundation funding from local and national sources, including the Walton Family Foundation, the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, and other groups.

3C. Financial Management and Accounting

Financial Management and Internal Accounting Procedures, including the Fiscal Controls

Creative Minds PCS will establish and maintain its financial accounting system on an accrual basis using Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. Working with the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors, the director of organizational capacity will establish financial policies

and procedures that guarantee the integrity of the school’s financial operation while providing the data to allow school managers to make fact-based decisions.

Solid financial controls rely on the following elements: strict division of duties, transparent processes (including board oversight), and a professional audit. Creative Minds PCS will use these elements as it creates controls for receipts, disbursements, petty cash, payroll, contracts, and investments. In addition, Creative Minds PCS plans on using an outside vendor to staff its accounting function. One criterion for vendor selection will be the ability to professionally implement and support the school’s financial controls.

The school will also create a fiscal health assessment tool that will provide actionable information on the school’s short-term, medium-term, and long-term financial position. Based on a publication co-written by the director of organizational capacity (*Assessing Fiscal Health: A Financial Benchmarking Tool for Charter Schools*⁴⁹), this assessment will include a suite of measures, including:

- Indicators of budget expenditures and cash flow
- Gauges of the effectiveness of internal controls and policies
- Big picture measures of items that may affect the school’s long-term sustainability

Cash-Flow Management Plan

To ensure a positive cash flow throughout the first year, Creative Minds PCS will establish a \$100,000 line of credit with a local bank or through the Nonprofit Finance Fund’s Washington, D.C., office. This process will begin during the planning year. In addition, the director of organizational capacity will work with vendors of large upfront purchases (e.g., textbooks or classroom furnishings) to implement lines of credit or installment payment plans. Such plans would level spikes in expenses and balance expenses across the fiscal year.

3D. Civil Liability and Insurance

Using a local vendor, Creative Minds PCS will procure insurance policies that meet or exceed the levels recommended by the PCSB. These include:

Type	Estimated Amount
General Liability	\$1 million per occurrence, \$2 million aggregate
Directors and Officer Liability	\$1 million
Educators Legal Liability	\$1 million
Student Accident	Per-student basis
Umbrella Coverage	\$3 million
Property/Lease Insurance	100% of replacement cost
Boiler and Machinery Insurance	\$1 million (if appropriate), or actual loss
Auto Liability Insurance	\$1 million
Worker’s Compensation	As required by law

⁴⁹ Crocker, LaVallee, and Stewart, December, 2009.

3E. Provision for Audit

Creative Minds PCS understands the importance of conducting an annual audit as part of its system of financial controls. Every year, a full audit of the school's financial systems and transactions will be undertaken by an outside certified public accountant who is otherwise unaffiliated with Creative Minds PCS. The auditor will be chosen from the list of pre-approved firms provided by the D.C. PCSB. The audit process will be fully supported by the board Finance Committee and the school staff. A copy of the audit will be provided to the D.C. PCSB by the published deadlines.

4. Facilities

4A. Identification of a Site

Creative Minds PCS wishes to be centrally located, to better serve children and families from across the city. As charter school veterans, the school leaders understand the significant challenges in identifying and acquiring a suitable facility and will remain flexible on the school's location during the search.

We have identified the following features for a suitable first facility:

- 10,000 square-foot minimum for Year 1, with room to expand to at least 20,000 square feet by Year 3
- Appropriate configuration for classrooms, rest rooms, offices, large group convening and a sensory room
- Access to outdoor space
- Handicap accessible
- Proper space for a re-heat kitchen
- Reasonable access to public transportation or convenient parking and pick-up/drop-off
- Available for less than or equal to the school's per-pupil facility allowance
- Relatively free of issues regarding zoning, building codes, change of use, neighborhood opposition, or other significant obstacles to occupancy

Our plan is to lease for a period of three to five years, then purchase a permanent home or negotiate a long-term lease that justify the costs of significant leasehold improvements. We suggest a range of years because we are aware that the appropriate opportunity may not materialize on schedule.

The search process will be led by the director of organizational capacity, who formerly worked as a realtor in Boston, Massachusetts, and oversaw more than \$500,000 of renovations in his role as director of operations and finance at a charter school in Boston. He will be supported by Brett Orlove, Esq., a member of the Founding Group. Mr. Orlove has practiced law in the field of real estate and business for 20 years. His real-estate experience includes extensive work in lease-related matters for both tenants and landlords. He has represented numerous schools in real-estate leasing, real-estate acquisition, and finance transactions, including representing other D.C. public charter schools. His work includes experience in drafting, reviewing, and negotiating various types of business contracts and agreements and providing general business counsel to

clients. His experience and knowledge of the local real-estate environment will be invaluable to the process.

We are pursuing three strategies for securing a space:

1. Incubator. We have met with Tom Porter from Building Hope and will work with them immediately upon receiving a charter to assess the availability and suitability of incubator spaces.
2. Co-location. We will initiate conversations with existing charter schools and other nonprofit organizations to assess the possibility of sharing or subletting facilities.
3. Commercial real estate market. Although this option can be both expensive and difficult to secure, we wish to remain open to the possibility of success. We have held preliminary conversations with Eric West, a principal with West, Lang & Schlager Commercial Real Estate Brokerage. Mr. West has significant experience serving nonprofits, and has procured spaces for DC charter schools in the past.

Our time frame for acquisition and occupation of school site is:

Site search	Ongoing
Site selection	December 2011
Lease negotiation and formalization	January 2012
Architectural planning, if necessary	February 2012
Renovation out to bid, if necessary	March 2012
Selection of contractor, if necessary	April 2012
Completion of renovation	June 2012
Occupation by Creative Minds PCS	July 2012

4B. Site Renovation

Specific plans for site renovation will depend on the site selected. We wish to procure a space that will not require extensive renovation, but have designated modest amounts in each budget for the first five years to account for necessary renovations.

When we begin the process of establishing a permanent space, we will engage an architect and a general contractor to design and execute the renovation. We will select these professionals according to applicable procurement law and regulation and ensure that any renovation meets all required building and safety codes and zoning mandates.

4C. Financing Plans for Facilities

Creative Minds PCS expects to begin by leasing a facility, but intends to buy a facility that will ultimately house the full student body. Ideally, the first leased space will allow for staged growth and staged increases in annual rent. However, we are aware that the school may need to begin by leasing excess space and growing into it as it adds grades and classes.

When the school begins the process of securing financing for procuring a facility, it will be guided in the process by the expert counsel of Brett Orlove. The school Facility Procurement Team will explore financing from a variety of sources, including nonprofit financing organizations such as the Nonprofit Finance Fund and Building Hope, conventional commercial mortgage brokers, and programs available through the Office of the State Superintendent of Education's Office of Public Charter School Financing and Support. These include the Credit Enhancement Fund and the Direct Loan Fund.

4D. Building Maintenance

The school leaders at Creative Minds PCS emphatically believe that a safe, healthy, aesthetically pleasing facility is an essential support for learning. Building maintenance will consist of two elements: upholding the cleanliness and hygiene of the facility, and ensuring the proper operation of the building's various systems. Portions of these responsibilities may be covered by a landlord under the terms of a lease, but any areas not provided for will be covered by the school. In Years 1 through 5, the operating budget has designated funds for building maintenance and repairs as well as contracted building services.

5. Recruiting and Marketing

The founders of Creative Minds PCS know that effective outreach is critical for developing the school's standing in the community, recruiting students, and engaging supporters (both financial and nonfinancial). It is not an overstatement to say that the very survival of the school depends on engaging the community in a meaningful way. The outreach strategies for each of these groups will overlap and blend, just as an outreach recipient could be an enrolling parent, a financial supporter, *and* a community official.

5A. Outreach to the Community

In this section, we describe how we will publicize Creative Minds PCS and its program throughout the community, whom the school plans to serve, and how the school can become a resource to the community.

Creative Minds PCS's outreach campaign will include:

Message Creation (May-June 2011)

The Founding Group will work together to craft a succinct, accessible description of the school that we can easily tailor for a variety of formats. This will include developing a catchy, summarizing tag line. A graphic designer will create logo and a color scheme. All Creative Minds PCS materials will have the same "look and feel" to help the school stand out from its competitors.

Creation of Collateral Materials (June-July 2011)

The Founding Group will oversee the creation of a variety of materials for promoting the school. These include (but are not limited to):

- Brochures
- Glossy mailing cards
- One-page descriptions of the school
- The Creative Minds PCS official website
- Signs and banners
- T-shirts

Printed and electronic versions of these materials will facilitate ease of use and consistency of message across any media, from fliers distributed at a community meeting to official press releases promulgated over a neighborhood List-serves.

Audience Identification and Contact (June 2011 and beyond)

The Founding Group will compile a list of organizations that connect to potential supporters and parents of students. Once the location of the school facility is finalized, particular attention will be focused on groups residing in and/or serving the nearby neighborhood. Examples of these groups include youth-serving organizations, infant/toddler child-care centers' pediatricians and health-care centers in general, neighborhood associations, churches, and parent organizations.

Once we identify these groups, the Founding Group will scan their personal networks for contacts within these groups, and approach those groups without Founding Group contacts for introductory meetings. Because communities are dynamic, the audience identification and contact process will be a permanent part of the business of the school.

Marketing "Channels" (July 2011 and beyond)

Channels — the means by which the school's message is delivered — can range from face-to-face encounters to asynchronous contacts such as print and online media. Specific channels include:

- The Creative Minds PCS website
- Student recruitment information sessions
- Social media (e.g., Facebook)
- Advertisements in neighborhood newspapers
- The annual Charter School Expo
- List-serves for any civic group (e.g., U Street News Digest)
- Community meetings (e.g., ANC meetings)
- Open houses
- Community events (e.g., street fairs and parades)

Serving Students

When the school opens, Creative Minds PCS will serve children — from pre-school through third grade — whose parents want their child to receive individualized instruction in small classes that balance cognitive and non-cognitive learning, an international project-based curriculum, and a developmental approach to education.

Serving the Community

While Creative Minds PCS will focus primarily on the challenging task of educating its students, the school aspires to be an asset to the community as well. The school leaders foresee providing the following services to the community:

- Parent training, created for the parents of student enrolled at Creative Minds PCS but open to parents of non-enrolled students, will be a service to the community as well as a recruiting opportunity. Topics will include, for example, assisting a child with homework and supporting children with special needs. These events will also create opportunities for networking and sharing advice.
- Community service projects: Developing a spirit of public service is an important part of education. Creative Minds PCS will identify and coordinate age-appropriate community service activities to support local organizations; for example, performances at local senior centers and fundraisers for partner organizations.
- Sharing space: Just as a charter school may struggle to find an adequate facility, some community-based organizations, especially grassroots organizations with little in the way of finances, need space for meetings, training, and other convenings. If capacity exists, Creative Minds PCS sees sharing space as a way to engage with the neighborhood, cultivate partnerships with kindred organizations, and conduct outreach for student recruitment and support.

Relationships with Community Organizations that Will Assist with Outreach and Recruitment

The process of building relationships with community organizations has only recently gotten underway. Using the strategy described above, CMPCS will create a vibrant array of meaningful connections with the community that they serve. For example, 826DC has already agreed to be a supporter and partner with CMPCS. 826DC recruits, trains and coordinates volunteers to teach creative writing in schools in DC. They also operate a storefront drop in program in Columbia Heights. (A letter of support from 826DC is included in the appendix.) CMPCS looks forward to establishing many more relationships like this.

5B. Recruitment of Students

Outreach Efforts with Potential Students and Their Families and Steps to Recruit Students

The Creative Minds PCS Founding Group understands that parents have increasingly meaningful choices about where to send their children to school. Our recruitment efforts will focus on presenting an accurate and appealing message about the school to any potential family in the District of Columbia. The student recruitment effort will be based on the outreach strategies we described above.

Involving Founders, including Parents in Recruitment Efforts

The Creative Minds PCS Founding Group consists mostly of D.C. residents with deep roots and extensive networks in the community. They will lead the word-of-mouth effort that will generate interest and result in student enrollment. The founders will work together to construct a message and will have the school’s collateral materials. Some of their efforts will intentionally target the groups described above, especially when a Founding Group member has a personal connection to a group. Other efforts will be opportunistic; when a member meets a parent or community member who may be interested, they will be prepared to deliver the Creative Minds PCS message and materials.

The specific student enrollment timeline will proceed as follows:

Conduct outreach campaign (described above)	May 2011 and beyond
Accept student applications	May 2011-April 2012
Conduct public lottery, as needed	April 2012
Confirm registration	April-May 2012
Collect student registration information from parents/previous schools	May-August 2012
Conduct orientation sessions	July-August 2012
School year begins	September 2012

Recruiting Students Whose Parents/Guardians Have Not Approached the School

The Founding Group understands that parents and students are unlikely to actively approach a new school without solicitation — a passive approach will not work. That understanding is the basis for our active, aggressive outreach campaign, to be conducted in partnership with community agencies and described above.

Recruiting, Enrolling, and Retaining Students Identified as Homeless or “Wards of the State”

Creative Minds PCS’s approach to education is especially suited to children who have experienced the trauma and disruption of homelessness. As a former family shelter manager, the director of organizational capacity keenly understands the issues facing these families. The Founding Group will specifically contact agencies serving homeless families, such as the Latin American Youth Center, Central Kitchen, and Bright Beginnings, to ensure they are aware of the unique opportunities presented at Creative Minds PCS and give them every opportunity to enroll.

Process for Enrolling Students if More Students Apply than the Negotiated Enrollment Level

Should demand for student slots exceed the supply planned for the first year, Creative Minds PCS will be prepared to conduct a public lottery in April 2012. Any applicants not selected in the lottery will be placed on a waiting list in the order of their drawing number. Each grade will have its own waiting list. Should students selected in the lottery choose not to attend Creative Minds PCS, we will contact students on the waiting list and offered them the available slots. This process will continue into the beginning of the school year, until the end of January 2013. Per regulation and law, no offers will be made to ineligible students.

The exceptions to participating in the lottery are those students who fall into a preferred category, including siblings of students selected in the lottery, siblings of students already attending the school, and children of Founding Group members (not to exceed the lesser of 10 percent of enrollment or 20 children).

Neighborhood-Based Recruitment Strategy

Because we have not yet determined the location of the facility, it is too early to relate our recruitment strategy to a specific neighborhood.

Impact of Enrollment on Surrounding Schools

Until we determine the location of the Creative Minds PCS facility, we cannot predict our impact on specific schools. Our hope is that we will contribute to a growth in meaningful choices for parents. Ideally, these meaningful choices will include high-quality schools that offer a variety of approaches to meet each family’s unique needs. Decreased enrollment at low-performing schools in proximity of our school facility drops will be evidence that the system is working.

Effect of Lower-than-Expected Enrollment on the Viability of Creative Minds PCS

The school leaders understand the very real possibility of under-enrollment in the first year. We have created contingency plans that will allow the school to function true to its mission and approach, even with a reduced enrollment. Options include reducing staff and cutting equipment/furnishing costs. These plans are described in more detail in the “Finance” section.

Targeting a Specific Population

All students are welcome at Creative Minds PCS. The school does not target a specific population.

5C. Future Expansion and Improvements

Creative Minds PCS plans on the following expansion of grades and classes served:

Exhibit 10. Grade Expansion: Years 1-5

Grade	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Preschool	28	28	28	28	28
Pre-K	28	28	28	28	28
Kindergarten	14	28	28	28	28
1	14	14	28	28	28
2	14	14	14	28	28
3	14	14	14	14	28
4		14	14	14	14
5			14	14	14
6				14	14
7					14
<i>Special Education</i>	22	28	34	39	45

<i>LEP/NEP</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>22</i>
Total	112	140	168	196	224

Creative Minds PCS’s ultimate goal is to serve two 14-student classes each for preschool through grade 8. As described in the “Facilities” and “Finance” sections, we plan to procure space in the short term (three to five years) that will allow us to grow and stabilize our enrollment and our finances. Beginning in Year 3 of operation, our expansion focus will turn toward acquiring a permanent or long-term space, including all the resource acquisition that comes with that process.

C. PLAN OF OPERATION

1. Student Policies and Procedures

1A. Timetable for Registering and Enrolling

Creative Minds PCS's timeline for registering students is as follows:

Execute outreach campaign to promote recruitment	May 2011 and beyond
Applications accepted	May 2011-April 2012
Final date for accepting application	April 1, 2012
Conduct lottery, if necessary	April 2012
Confirm completion of registration packets, drawing from wait list as needed	April-August 2012

The calendar for accepting "typical" students and students identified as homeless will be the same. The school understands that, given the instability of residency of homeless students, extra effort and support on the school's part will be required to maintain contact through the process.

1B. Policies and Procedures for Enrollment, Withdrawal, Suspension, and Expulsion of Students

Once a parent has chosen to enroll her/his child (or if the child has been selected via the lottery) the parent must complete the full registration packet, including health information, permissions, and any additional required forms, such as proof of D.C. residency. The registration packet will be created prior to the registration process.

District of Columbia residency will be verified according to D.C. law and regulation, per the Office of the State Superintendent of Education guidance.

Parents will be required to attend an orientation session prior to the start of the new school year.

Parents who choose to withdraw their child from the school will be required to fill out and sign a withdrawal form. Parents will be invited to give the reason for withdrawal and provide feedback to the school leaders, in writing or in a face-to-face meeting. Because the school leaders wish to be sensitive to parent concerns, they will take withdrawals unrelated to a change of residence very seriously.

Suspension, Expulsion, and Other Disciplinary Policies and Procedures

As described in the safety section of the education plan, Creative Minds PCS takes a "logical consequences" approach to discipline. Teachers and administrators will respond to misbehavior in a way that allows children to fix and learn from their mistakes while preserving their dignity. Suspensions and expulsions will only be implemented as a last resort, in cases in which a student has exhibited consistently dangerous behavior. Should a suspension or expulsion be proposed, Creative Minds PCS will notify students and families provide them with an opportunity to meet with school leaders. All suspensions and expulsions will conform to all applicable laws and regulations, including those applying to children with special needs.

Policy on Enrollment and Tuition Reimbursement for Nonresident Students

Students who reside outside the District of Columbia may enroll only if there are open slots after all eligible D.C. resident students have been given an opportunity to enroll first. Families of nonresident students must pay tuition at the rate established by the Office of the State Superintendent.

2. Human Resource Information

2A. Key Leadership Roles

Names and Qualifications of the Persons Who Will Hold Critical Positions or Roles

As the key academic leader, the director of education will be responsible for all curriculum, instruction, and learning at the school. Golnar Abedin, Ph.D., will be the director of leadership. Dr. Abedin's biography and qualifications are described above.

The director of organizational capacity will be responsible for all finance and operations, as well as external relationships. Bob LaVallee, M.B.A., will be the director of organizational capacity. Mr. LaVallee's biography and qualifications are described above.

The director of student services will be responsible for coordinating all therapeutic services delivered to students and for managing delivery and documentation of special education services. Ms. Sollyman's biography and qualifications are described above.

Legal services will be provided by Daniel Press, Esq., and the law firm of Van Ness Feldman. Van Ness Feldman has graciously agreed to provide pro-bono legal services to Creative Minds PCS. A letter of retainer is included in the appendices.

2B. Qualifications of School Staff

As required by No Child Left Behind Act, Creative Minds PCS will ensure that all elementary and secondary core curriculum subject area teachers (grades 1-12) hired are "highly qualified."

For No Child Left Behind purposes, academic or core-curriculum subject areas are defined as:

- English
- Reading or Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Foreign Languages
- Civics and Government
- Economics
- Arts (visual, theater, dance, and music)
- History and Geography

Per the NCLB Act, Creative Minds PCS will consider a teacher “highly qualified” if the following guidelines have been adequately satisfied.

For Early Childhood Teachers (Head Start, Pre-School, Pre-K thru Grade 3):

- Bachelor’s Degree; and
- Passed Early Childhood Education Praxis (021)
- Passed the Elementary Education: Content Knowledge (014) exam

For Elementary Teachers (Grades 1-6):

- Bachelor’s Degree; and
- Passed the Elementary Praxis II (014)

Secondary Teachers (Grades 7-8)

- Bachelor’s Degree; and
- Passed the Praxis II in each academic subject taught; or have completed an undergraduate academic major; or a graduate degree in the subject area taught; or have completed coursework equivalent to an undergraduate major (33 hours with 18 hours in the upper division in D.C.); or advanced certification or credentialing in each academic subject taught

We will seek out teachers with professional backgrounds, depth of experience, and personal qualities that will help Creative Minds PCS implement our mission, apply our philosophy of education, and meet our goals. While the Founding Group understands that good teachers can arrive from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, all teachers hired by CMPCS will share these personal qualities:

- They are intrinsically motivated.
- They have an intuitive understanding of and connection with students.
- They are able to engage students in learning.
- They are willing to continue professional development and attend conferences recommended by the school leadership.
- They have experience working with students with special needs and/or English language learners.
- They show positive affect and approach.
- They possess professional work ethics (e.g., arriving on time).

We will employ the following recruitment strategies to achieve the desired quality of our staff:

- We will hire teachers who embrace a child-centered approach to education, as assessed by their responses to interview questions, writing sample, and a demonstration lesson.
- We will recruit aggressively, using the following avenues to attract teachers:
 - Word of mouth through our extensive personal networks
 - Outreach to regional schools of education
 - Advertising in print and online
 - Participating in the Charter School Expo and similar events

To ensure that background checks are conducted on all school personnel, including volunteers, prior to the beginning of their employment or service, we will require all staff and volunteers will be required to submit to a background check prior to employment. No employee or volunteer may begin service at Creative Minds PCS until the school leaders possess satisfactory results of that background check.

2C. Staffing Plan

The anticipated number of staff and their positions are listed in Exhibit 11. Although Creative Minds PCS’s objective is to maintain a classroom size of 14 students, enrollment, staffing, and budget issues may prevent us from meeting that goal.

Exhibit 11. Anticipated Staffing: Years 1-5

Position	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Director of Education	1	1	1	1	1
Director of Student Services	1	1	1	1	1
Teachers	8.5	10.5	12.5	14.5	16.5
Teacher Assistants	3	4	5	6	7
Occupational Therapist (FTE)	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	1.0
Speech Therapist (FTE)	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	1.0
Social Worker	1	1	1	1	1
School Nurse	1	1	1	1	1
Director of Organizational Capacity	1	1	1	1	1
Administrative Assistant	1	1	1	1	1
Receptionist	1	1	1	1	1
Development Consultant (FTE)	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25

To accomplish the mission and goals of Creative Minds PCS, we will provide teachers with professional development and ample opportunity for guided planning of their curriculum units before the start of each academic year. Subsequently, teachers will be supported by weekly check-in time with the director of education and director of student services, weekly all-staff meetings with the directors and their colleagues, monthly professional development days that include guests specialized in various areas of our curriculum, and frequent classroom observations and feedback by the director of education. All staff will participate in joint professional development prior to the opening of the school year. Weekly all-staff meetings and frequent supervisor feedback will assist in developing a common language, culture and ethic for the school.

2D. Employment Policies

Personnel Policies and Procedures

Creative Minds PCS has not yet created its personnel manual laying out policies for salaries, contracts, hiring and dismissal, evaluation of staff, benefit plans (including pensions), and other

matters related to staffing. We will create a personnel manual according to the following timeline:

Collect samples; begin to develop personnel policies/procedures	June 2011-September 2011
Develop employee benefit package, including retirement	June 2011-January 2012
Research policies and procedures for staff taking leave from DCPS	August 2011-January 2012
Finalize personnel policies and procedures	January 2012
Collect samples and design employee handbook	June 2011-February 2012
Print employee handbook	March 2012

Competitive Salaries and Benefit Plans

The Founding Group of Creative Minds PCS understands that teachers are the number-one driver of quality for the school. Hiring and retaining the finest teachers possible is a major priority for the school leaders. The school’s budget assumes an average annual salary of \$50,000 in Year 1, with COLA increases in the following years. We hope this is a competitive wage, and believe that the professional satisfaction of helping to start a new school and working with lower-than-average class sizes will make Creative Minds PCS an attractive place to teach.

Policies on Equal Employment Opportunities and Maintaining a Drug-Free Workplace

Diversity is highly valued at Creative Minds PCS; the school will be an equal opportunity workplace. The school will not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, pregnancy, marital status, disability, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender, identity or expression, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, source of income, status as a victim of interfamily offense, place of residence or business, or any other protected category. Creative Minds PCS will be a drug-free environment.

Assuring Protection of the Rights and Benefits of Current Employees of the DCPS

Current DCPS employees may wish to work at Creative Minds PCS. To facilitate that process while protecting the rights of those individuals, the school will include in its employee policies provisions that address their unique status. DCPS employees may request a two-year leave of absence from DCPS that can be renewed for an unlimited number of two-year terms. The employee will have the choice of participating in the Creative Minds PCS’s retirement plan, or the school can pay into the DCPS plan the employee’s behalf.

2E. Volunteers

Creative Minds PCS will recruit and welcome volunteers from the community and interns from institutions of higher education. Volunteers will be especially helpful in providing additional support to students who may need one-on-one attention during literacy and math blocks in order to be fully engaged.

Creative Minds PCS will screen volunteers to check for the alignment of the individual’s philosophical orientation and practical experiences with the school’s mission and needs. Volunteers will be interviewed by the director of education, who will check their references and ask for two letters of recommendation. Creative Minds PCS will give back to the volunteers by providing them with training in the aspects of our school program (e.g., arts integration, DIR/Floortime interventions, and the International Primary Curriculum) at the beginning of their service at the school and during teacher professional development days. Teachers will serve as

immediate supervisors of all interns and volunteers, reporting on their performance to the director of education during weekly staff meetings and as needed. The director of education will also monitor volunteers during classroom observations. Interns will have monthly check-in time with the director of student services, who will answer questions and ask about their experiences. All volunteers and interns will receive background checks.

Creative Minds PCS will include the following programs, community-based volunteer organizations, and institutions of higher education:

- 826DC
- The Reading Buddies Program
- American University
- George Washington University
- Howard University

Golnar Abedin will use her contacts with professors in the school of education at the listed universities, who will recommend Creative Minds PCS for students who are interested in internships at the school. 826DC is a community organization that will provide Creative Minds PCS with volunteers who will specifically focus on writing. The Founding Group will advertise opportunities to serve as a reading buddy at their diverse work places. Reading buddies will come to the school once a month to read with students, starting in first-grade students.

3. Arrangements for Meeting District and Federal Requirements

Health and Safety

Creative Minds PCS will adhere to all applicable health and safety laws and regulations, pursuant to §38-1802.0. (11) and §2204(c)(4) of the D.C. School Reform Act, and will comply with all required or requested health and safety inspections by government officials. In addition, CMPCS's staff will be trained in first aid and CPR to maintain the health and safety of students and staff.

Safety

Creative Minds PCS will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and all requirements of the D.C. Code §5-501 et seq. for fire safety.

Transportation

Creative Minds PCS will inform all students' parents/guardians of the eligibility for reduced fares on the Metrobus and Metrorail Transit System on the same terms and conditions as are applicable to any student attending a D.C. public school. Staff will arrange for the transportation of students with disabilities through the D.C. Public Schools. If necessary, Creative Minds PCS will consider contracting with a private transport vendor, if the school cannot be easily reached using public transportation.

Enrollment Data

Creative Minds PCS will maintain accurate daily enrollment and attendance records for all students. The school will record and compile this information and provide copies to the appropriate authorities in accordance with §2204(c)(12) of the D.C. School Reform Act.

Maintenance and Dissemination of Student Records

Creative Minds PCS will use a computerized student information system to maintain student data and records. This system will be used for internal purposes and to record and report student information in accordance with the D.C. School Reform Act, Parts B and D, and other applicable laws, including D.C. Code §31-401 et seq. (Compulsory School Attendance); D.C. Code §31-501 et seq. (Immunization of School Students); D.C. Code §31-601 et seq. (Tuition of Non residents); D.C. Code §29-501 et seq. (Nonprofit Corporations).

Compulsory Attendance Laws

Creative Minds PCS will be vigilant in keeping enrollment and attendance records to ensure that every student is accounted for every day. School leaders will take appropriate steps to address persistent violations of school and D.C. requirements.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Rehabilitation Act of 1973:

Creative Minds PCS will comply with all federal regulations concerning special education. The school's special education programs and services will be developed by professionals who are thoroughly familiar with the requirements of federal law pertaining to students with special needs.

Title I of the Improving America's Schools Act

Any funds Creative Minds PCS receives through this program will be used to provide intensive academic support programs within the school in accordance with D.C. and federal requirements.

Civil Rights Statutes and Regulations of the Federal Government and the District of Columbia

Creative Minds PCS will comply with all federal and D.C. civil rights regulations to ensure that students, employees, and volunteers will not be discriminated against in any unlawful manner.

Other

Creative Minds PCS will ensure that the school meets any applicable requirements of D.C. Municipal Code 29, Public Welfare, Excerpt: 3 Chapter 3, Child Development Facilities, as well as the guidelines of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission regarding playground equipment.

4. Implementation of the Charter

4A. Timetable and Tasks for Implementation of Charter

Creative Minds PCS will execute the tasks required to open the school according the following timetable:

Exhibit 12. Timetable and Tasks for Implementation of Charter

Activity	Begun	June-Aug. 2011	Sept-Dec. 2011	Jan.-March 2012	April-July 2012
Accountability					
Begin work on comprehensive mission accomplishment plan	√	√			
Begin developing one-year and five-year academic and non-academic goals and outcomes	√	√	√	√	√
Determine data collection needs and reporting requirements	√	√	√	√	√
Identify and research hardware and software options for managing student, personnel, and financial information and reporting requirements		√	√	√	
Research, refine and establish annual and five-year academic and non-academic goals and targets	√	√	√	√	√
Select student, staff, and school assessment instruments for academic and non-academic goals	√	√	√		
Select or develop satisfaction surveys and measures		√	√	√	
Purchase hardware and software for managing student, personnel and financial information		√	√	√	
Finalize student records and forms templates			√	√	
Establish suspension and expulsion policies	√	√	√		
Admissions					
Collect examples and begin designing application and registration forms		√			
Establish actual student application period	√	√			
Establish an impartial lottery procedure for selecting students if application exceed available seats			√		
Develop confidentiality policy for student records			√		
Collect samples and develop student/parent handbook			√	√	
If building is not ready during enrollment period, secure temporary space where parents/guardians can enroll students by phone or in-person; designate contact person for interested applicants		√	√	√	
Accept student applications and acknowledge receipt of applications		√	√	√	√
Enter application information into student information system		√	√	√	√
Conduct lottery and establish waiting lists				√	√
Send confirmation of admission or waiting list status; notify parents/guardians of deadline for completing registration				√	√
Conduct student registration, ensure receipt of all required or necessary information (including school calendar, dress code or uniform requirements, promotion requirements, school code of conduct) and that commitment are executed by each student and parent/guardian					√
Move applicants off waiting list into accepted status and continue registration until school is fully enrolled					√
Create form letter for requesting records from previous school and begin requests as students enroll				√	√
Hold an open house and parent/guardian and student			√	√	√

Activity	Begun	June-Aug. 2011	Sept-Dec. 2011	Jan.-March 2012	April-July 2012
orientation					
Continue development of student/parent handbook			√	√	
Establish plan for recording and compiling attendance information			√	√	
Communication, Marketing and Recruitment					
Develop community outreach and student recruiting strategy, to include determining advertising and information materials needed, targeted neighborhoods, special events, distribution methods, print/media contacts and opportunities	√	√	√		
Hold meeting with key community, private sector, religious and political leaders	√	√	√	√	√
Develop fact sheets on school design and curriculum		√	√		
Develop website		√	√	√	
Begin development of brochures and other promotional materials			√		
Issue press release announcing planned school and opening date		√			
Create social media strategy			√		
Update/expand website as needed			√	√	√
Hold open houses and parent forums. Participate in other community events		√	√	√	√
Run ads, distribute literature, and promote school via special events and activities in targeted neighborhoods; prepare materials in other languages		√	√	√	√
Develop and implement strategy to elicit parent and community volunteers and college student interns		√	√	√	√
Education Program Development					
Continue to develop and refine educational program to assure it is aligned with educational goals and accountability		√	√	√	√
Facilities					
Identify and secure an interim school site		√	√	√	√
Negotiate and finalize lease				√	
Identify and address all applicable zoning requirement/restrictions			√	√	
If renovating or building:					
1. Secure financing for build-out			√	√	
2. Commence construction documents and issue RFPs				√	
3. Select general contractor/subs and finalize construction documents/architectural plans				√	
4. Obtain building occupancy permits as needed				√	
5. Establish "drop dead" deadline for occupancy vs. alternative plans			√		
6. Create contingency plan if "drop dead" date not met			√		
Complete all inspections (fire code, health and safety, ADA, asbestos, etc.)				√	√
Obtain certificate of occupancy				√	√
Install security system and train staff				√	√
Acquire furniture and materials (see procurement)				√	√
Procure and manage telecom/internet installation			√	√	√
Move in furniture and fixtures, arrange classrooms, office, library and other space					√
Open building for public access					√
If building not ready, secure space for pre-opening activities			√		
Financial Management					

Activity	Begun	June-Aug. 2011	Sept-Dec. 2011	Jan.-March 2012	April-July 2012
Engage back-office services vendor		√			
Develop protocols for operations with back-office services vendor		√	√		
Develop one-year and five-year operating and capital budget for Board of Directors approval		√	√		
Establish school bank accounts and other financial services		√			
Develop financial management systems and polices, establish internal controls		√	√	√	
Determine insurance needs and obtain policies		√			
Engage payroll vendor		√			
Develop and implement internal fiscal health assessment system				√	√
Select independent auditor					√
Food Service					
Determine level of food provision (breakfast, lunch, after-school snack)		√			
Select food service vendor		√			
Ensure facility meets food service requirements and code				√	√
Governance					
Assemble Founding Group	√	√	√	√	√
File to establish nonprofit corporation status in D.C.	√				
Apply for 501(c)3 status with Internal Revenue Service	√	√			
Establish board, develop board meeting schedule		√			
Define and establish Advisory Board		√			
Adopt bylaws and amend as needed		√	√	√	√
Establish and activate Board committees			√	√	√
Establish Board of Directors and recruit new members		√	√	√	√
Schedule first board meeting		√	√		
Conduct election of remaining board members		√		√	
Establish plan for transition from start-up board to ongoing governance body		√	√		
Health and Safety					
Get student medical and health forms, including most recent physical exam, TB tests, immunization records from previous schools					√
Check student medical and health forms for completeness and conduct follow as necessary					√
Establish policy for addressing noncompliance by parents/guardians regarding medical and health information required by statute or regulation				√	
Provide all staff with first aid training and ensure that school has adequate first aid supplies inventory					√
Establish evacuation routes/procedures; schedule fire drills					√
Create emergency preparedness plan				√	
Legal and organizational					
Receive approval of charter application	√				
Negotiate and sign contract with chartering authority		√			
Parent Involvement					
Ensure ongoing and meaningful involvement of parents in school governance, committees, classrooms and other areas				√	√
Create parent support and training plan			√	√	√

Activity	Begun	June-Aug. 2011	Sept-Dec. 2011	Jan.-March 2012	April-July 2012
Establish and carry out process for choosing parent directors				√	√
Personnel					
Collect samples; begin to develop personnel policies and procedures		√	√		
Develop employee benefit package, including retirement			√	√	
Collect samples and design employee handbook			√		
Determine staffing needs, including for specialized staff	√	√	√		
Collect samples and design employment applications and employment contracts		√	√		
Develop job descriptions	√	√	√		
Develop timeline for hiring staff	√	√	√		
Research requirement for background checks and potential vendors		√			
Conduct search for teachers and staff; interview candidates		√	√	√	√
Research policies and procedures for staff taking leave from DCPS	√	√			
Advertise for staff opening, conduct interview and hire staff. Have employment contracts signed and on file		√	√	√	√
Finalize personnel policies and procedures and employee handbook			√		
Develop staff professional development plan and schedule for year, including pre-opening activities			√	√	√
Establish salary scale/compensation structure	√	√	√		
Conduct background checks				√	√
Create personnel files			√	√	√
Assign classrooms and offices					√
Conduct employee orientation and pre-opening professional development activities					√
Distribute employee handbooks					√
Establish staff evaluation policies and forms				√	
Distribute class lists and cumulative records to teachers as appropriate					√
Procurement					
Order/Manage delivery of textbooks, instructional materials			√	√	√
Order/Manage delivery of desks, furniture, classroom equipment			√	√	√
Order/Manage delivery of officer equipment and supplies			√	√	√
Order/Manage delivery of computer and other technology			√	√	√
Order/Manage delivery of kitchen/cafeteria, gym/recreational and other equipment and supplies			√	√	√
Special Education					
Obtain cumulative files (including existing IEPs) and suspension reports for all students from previous schools				√	√
Identify students with IEPs				√	√
Create special education record keeping process, ensuring confidential records are kept in locked cabinet			√	√	
Establish pre-referral and referral process for students with potential special needs			√		
Develop a description of special education program and service delivery approach	√	√	√		
Sustainability					
Begin creating sustainability plan, including strategic financing plan	√	√			

Activity	Begun	June-Aug. 2011	Sept-Dec. 2011	Jan.-March 2012	April-July 2012
Finalize sustainability plan, begin executing			√	√	√
Technology					
Determine computer/other technology procurement for Year 1		√	√		
Continue developing technology plan			√	√	√

4B. Maintenance and Reporting of Academic and Non-Academic Performance Data

Use of Technology Structure or Plan to Enhance the Educational Environment

Creative Minds PCS will create a technology structure to support the following goals:

- Collecting, aggregating and reporting student information, including enrollment information, attendance, discipline and classroom performance
- Maintaining employee records, including employment data, compensation, benefits, evaluations and professional development
- Recording and aggregating financial transactions and other critical financial data to meet reporting requirements and to conduct fiscal health assessments
- Sharing information with families and the larger community via public and non-public sections of the school's website
- Supporting collaboration between teachers via shared curriculum
- Allowing for the age-appropriate use of technology in classroom teaching

The director of organizational capacity will lead the technology effort, while working closely with the director of education and the school staff. Upon receiving a charter, the director of organizational capacity will begin creating a detailed technology plan. Given the potential expense technology investments represent in terms of money and staff time, the technology plan will strive to adopt simple, easily updated, and accessible technology solutions that meet the school's needs. All teachers and full-time staff will have computers.

The director of education and the director of organizational capacity will have ultimate responsibility for data required by stakeholders. They will be assisted in the effort by the director of student services, the administrative assistant, and other teachers and staff as appropriate.

4C. Major Contracts Planned

Potential major contracts equal to or exceeding \$25,000 include:

- Facility lease
- Textbooks
- Classroom and office furnishings
- Accounting services
- Food service

All major vendors will be contracted in accordance with applicable law and regulation. No commitments have been made as of the writing of this application; however, potential contractors include:

- EdOps – Accounting services
- Revolution Foods – Food service
- Building Hope – Facility lease

4D. Orientation of Parents, Teachers, and Other Community Members

Parents/Families

Creative Mind PCS considers families essential partners in the education of their children. Parents/families will participate in a mandatory orientation prior to the opening of the school year. This orientation will introduce parents to school staff, review expectations for parents and children, and provide an opportunity for parents to get to know each other and the school. All families will receive a copy of the parent handbook upon registration.

Teachers

As described above, teachers will participate in extensive professional development prior to the opening of the school year. This intensive training will build the team, develop a common ethos, and set expectations. Teachers will work in small groups related to their areas of focus. Teachers and staff will receive a copy of the employee handbook when they are hired.

4E. Services Sought from the District of Columbia Public Schools

As of the writing of this application, Creative Minds PCS has no plans for using DCPS services. However, as specifics about this school's facility, student body, and other considerations emerge, the school leaders may consult DCPS officials about services.

D. PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENT PLAN

On the pages that follow, we present our Mission Accomplishment Plan for Creative Minds Public Charter School. The plan includes the following elements:

- Goals against which the school's success will be judged
- Assessment measures
- Performance indicators
- Collection, storage, and reporting of performance and progress data
- A timeline for implementation

Exhibit 13. Creative Minds PCS Mission Accomplishment Plan

Goals	Assessment Measures	Performance Indicators	Collection of Baseline Data	Annual Performance and Progress Data Reporting
<p>Students will demonstrate strong English Language Arts and literacy skills</p>	<p><i>All Students:</i> SRI (Scholastic Reading Inventory) for grades K-8, Classroom-based informal assessments based on grade-level standards outlines in the Common Core Standards, DC- CAS</p> <p><i>ELL Students:</i> ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State) in addition to other assessments</p> <p><i>Students with Special Needs:</i> QRI (Qualitative Reading Inventory) in addition to above mentioned assessments; DC Alternate Assessment for those who cannot participate in DC-CAS</p>	<p>The SRI and QRI test for reading comprehension. Students' performance is matched to a Lexile Score. Lexile Scores are endorsed by the Common Core Standards. The Common Core Standards provide text complexity grade bands and associated Lexile bands, make it possible to translate Lexile Scores to grade-level information based on the Standards. The SRI also provides information based on the RTI model, grouping students into Tiers I, II, and III to help with instructional grouping for our literacy blocks.</p> <p>The QRI, used for students with learning disabilities, provides grade level information and tests reading fluency, sight word recognition, and reading comprehension.</p> <p>For the purpose of their report cards, disseminated once quarterly, students will receive a number from 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest) to indicate their degree of proficiency. This information will be contextualized in each students' performance analysis included in individual portfolios. The parents of students with special needs will also receive progress reports based on IEP goals.</p>	<p>The SRI or QRI will be administered three times a year, in September, January, and June in order to track students' progress.</p> <p>ACCESS will be administered in each fall to determine the ELL student's level of English proficiency and corresponding service hours.</p> <p>The DC-CAS scores from each April are used as students' baseline information for this standardized test and used as a benchmark for student's progress monitoring for the following academic year.</p>	<p>At the end of each academic year (or as requested by supervising authorities), data from the mentioned assessments will be presented in an annual report. The report will include raw student data, analysis of student performance, explanation, and lessons for future adjustments for the subsequent academic year.</p>
<p>Students will demonstrate understanding of math concepts, computation, and problem solving</p>	<p><i>All Students:</i> SMI (Scholastic Math Inventory) for grades 2-8, informal classroom assessments based on Common Core Standards for each grade, DC-CAS (grades 3-8).</p> <p><i>ELL Students:</i> SMI and DC-CAS with required accommodations.</p>	<p>The SMI provides student assessment results based on the Quantile Framework, making it possible for students with similar scores to be grouped together for our math groups. The SMI also groups students into the 3 tiered RTI Model which also helps with instruction and planning as well as</p>	<p>The SMI will be administered three times a year, in September, January, and June in order to track students' progress.</p>	<p>At the end of each academic year (or as requested by supervising authorities), data from the mentioned assessments will be presented in an annual report. The report will include raw student data, analysis of student</p>

Goals	Assessment Measures	Performance Indicators	Collection of Baseline Data	Annual Performance and Progress Data Reporting
	<p><i>Students with Special Needs:</i> SMI and DC-CAS with accommodations for those who can participate; DC Alternate Assessment will be administered to students with severe disabilities that prevent them from being able to participate in the DC-CAS.</p>	<p>setting goals for each student.</p>		<p>performance, explanation, and lessons for future adjustments for the subsequent academic year.</p>
<p>Student progress in social/emotional, cognitive, and developmental learning</p>	<p>Informal assessment based on DIR/Floortime developmental milestones (listed in Appendix K-1) and assessed by teachers trained in the model (for students in preschool-3rd grade).</p> <p>Classroom-based assessments and qualitative analysis of each student's social/emotional and cognitive strengths and challenges for students in 3rd grade and above.</p>	<p>DIR/Floortime lists indicators for reaching each of the developmental milestones; a descriptive analysis based on each indicator will be used in students' portfolio assessment for students in preschool- 3rd grade.</p> <p>Descriptive analyses of students' social/emotional and cognitive strengths and challenges for students in 3rd grade and older will be based on observations by teachers' and the school psychologist (when applicable)</p>	<p>Assessment information will be collected and reported quarterly on students' report cards, and in portfolio assessment reports in the 2nd and 4th quarter.</p>	
<p>Arts Education and Integration into the Curriculum</p>	<p><i>Arts Education-</i> annual report on the school's incorporation of the DC Arts Standards in the art forms taught at the school (music and dance in the first year; visual arts and theater incorporated in subsequent years based on the school budget). Annual report will be based on performance-based, portfolio assessments, and other classroom tests of concepts related to each art form as reflected on the DC Arts Standards</p> <p><i>Annual report</i> on the degree of arts integration accomplished by the school through an analysis of curriculum components related to the arts, and comparison with DC Arts Standards related to interconnecting the arts within</p>	<p>Number of staff dedicated to teaching the arts</p> <p>Indicators from the DC Arts Standards will be used to report individual students' levels of creativity, performance, analysis and response in each art form taught; Students will be assigned a number from 1-4 on their report card and portfolio assessments to indicate their proficiency in each area</p> <p>Students' response to and use of the arts within the curriculum will be included in their individual portfolio assessments to keep track of students' areas of strength and interests</p> <p>To assess school-wide arts integration,</p>		

Goals	Assessment Measures	Performance Indicators	Collection of Baseline Data	Annual Performance and Progress Data Reporting
	academic learning	indicators based on DC Arts Standards for each art form will be used to guide art-based learning and qualitative description of annual accomplishments		
Implementation of the International Early Years and Primary Curriculum and Foreign Language Instruction	<p>IPC Self-Review and Accreditation Protocol to assess school's move from Getting Started to Getting Better and to Going Deeper provided by the IPC curriculum</p> <p>Spanish language instruction by a part time instructor in the first year</p> <p>Full-time staff to teach Spanish within 3-5 years</p> <p>After-school language classes based on parent interests and availability of staff</p>	<p>9 rubrics to evaluate school's implementation of the IPC at the starting point and monitor progress through the years</p> <p>School will receive a score of Beginning , Developing or Mastering for each indicator on the rubric</p> <p>Hours of foreign language instruction during the school day</p> <p>Hours of foreign language instruction after school</p> <p>Number of foreign languages taught at the school</p>		
Positive classroom and school learning environments	<p>Classroom Environment Checklist</p> <p>School-based Indicators</p>	<p><i>Classroom Indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students are actively engaged in learning the majority of the time - Student understanding is checked frequently - Students receive positive feedback for successful learning and social interactions on a daily basis - Daily class schedule is posted and visible to students - Multiple opportunities for learning through various modalities - Multiple opportunities for all students to feel successful and recognized - Transitions are structured and described clearly - Adaptations and modifications are made for individual student needs <p><i>School Indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual School Survey 	<p>The Classroom Environment Checklist assessment will be administered by the Director of Education or the Director of Student Services during quarterly formal observations.</p> <p>Teachers' progress on the indicators will be compared over time.</p> <p>Information on the School Annual Survey disseminated to all staff and parents will be compared over time in order to ensure that we are making progress towards our goal of</p>	<p>Our annual performance report will include an analysis of our school environment based on the indicators listed.</p> <p>Each teacher will be assessed based on the indicators on the Classroom Environment Checklist as part of his/her evaluation. Teachers will be provided with support to enhance the learning environment for their unique groups of students based on frequent classroom observations by the Director of Education and the Director of Student Services.</p>

Goals	Assessment Measures	Performance Indicators	Collection of Baseline Data	Annual Performance and Progress Data Reporting
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance rate - Number of crisis situations and suspensions related to students' social and emotional challenges - Accessibility to all students and staff with asthma, environmental, learning, and developmental disabilities - Students are actively engaged in school activities - Respectful and positive interactions among peers and staff and between teachers and students 	creating a positive and collaborative school community.	
Collaborative decision-making and community involvement	<p>Annual School Survey</p> <p>Quality of community involvement with regards to student gains directly related to services provided based on student interviews and surveys (completed by students 4th grade and older)</p>	<p>Attendance rates at Board Meetings, school events, and parent workshops</p> <p>Level of collaboration and mutual support between CM PCS PTSA and school administration</p>		
Financial Sustainability: We will maintain a positive financial position.	School leaders will use the "Assessing Fiscal Health" benchmarking tool. ⁵⁰	<p>Examples of indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating results • Cash flow analysis • Months of cash on hand • Various expenses as a percentage of total expenses 	Using a combination of interviews of staff and reviews of school records, the Board Finance Committee will compile and issue a report quarterly.	The first report will be issued January 2014.
Financial Sustainability: We will use practices that ensure its financial integrity.	School leaders will use the "Assessing Fiscal Health" benchmarking tool.	<p>Examples of indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execution of budgeting process • Adherence to internal controls • Timely reporting and payment of tax obligations. 	Using a combination of interviews of staff, results of the annual audit and reviews of school records, the Board Finance Committee will compile and issue a report annually.	The first report will be issued September 2014.
Financial Sustainability: We will anticipate long-term financial threats and	School leaders will use the "Assessing Fiscal Health" benchmarking tool.	<p>Examples of indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in enrollment demographics • Changes in political leadership • Degree to which public revenue is 	Using data from a wide variety of sources, the Board Finance Committee will compile and issue a report on	The first report will be issued in December 2014.

⁵⁰ A copy of the benchmarking tool is available at <http://www.charterresource.org/index.cfm?page=21>.

Goals	Assessment Measures	Performance Indicators	Collection of Baseline Data	Annual Performance and Progress Data Reporting
opportunities.		fully maximized	long-term financial threats and opportunities annually.	
Fundraising	School leaders will assess if potential grant opportunities are being appropriately identified and pursued.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of submitted proposals • Dollar value of proposals • Outcome of proposal 	The Board Finance Committee will compile and issue a semi-annual report detailing the proposals submitted and the outcome of the submission.	School leaders will begin collecting data immediately. The first report will be issued in January 2013.

E. CERTIFICATIONS (ASSURANCES FORM)

F. BUDGET

**G. RÉSUMÉS, BOARD MEMBER AGREEMENTS, AND STATEMENTS OF
INTEREST AND QUALIFICATIONS OF FOUNDING MEMBERS**

H. CONFLICT OF INTEREST FORMS

I. DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS FORM

J. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- Charter School Board of Directors Job Description
- Charter School Individual Director Performance Expectations
- Conversion Endorsement Certification (if applicable)
- Articles of Incorporation
- Bylaws
- Code of Ethics
- Board Conflict of Interest Statement
- Management Agreement and Related Documents (if applicable)
- Letter of Intent for Facility (if applicable)
- Description of Curriculum

K. OPTIONAL DOCUMENTS

Creative Minds PCS Pre-Operating Budget

DESCRIPTION				
REVENUES				
				Notes
1	Per Pupil Charter Payments			
2	Per Pupil Facilities Allowance			
3	Federal Entitlements		180,000	Title V b
4	Other Government Funding/Grants			
5	Total Public Funding		180,000	
6	Private Grants and Donations			
7	Activity Fees			
8	Loans			
9	Other Income (please describe in footnote)			
10	Total Non-Public Funding		0	
11	EMO Management Fee (= line 73, col. G)			
12				
13				
14	TOTAL REVENUES		\$180,000	
EXPENSES				
				Notes
Personnel Salaries and Benefits				
15	Principal/Executive Salary		100,000	Director of Ed and Director of Org Cap @ \$50K per
16	Teachers Salaries			
17	Teacher Aides/Assistance Salaries			
18	Other Education Professionals Salaries			
19	Business/Operations Salaries			
20	Clerical Salaries			
21	Custodial Salaries			
22	Other Staff Salaries			
23	Employee Benefits		20,000	
24	Contracted Staff			
25	Staff Development Costs			
26				
27	Subtotal: Personnel Costs		\$120,000	
28				
Direct Student Costs				
30	Textbooks			
31	Student Supplies and Materials			
32	Library and Media Center Materials			
33	Computers and Materials			
34	Other Instructional Equipment			
35	Classroom Furnishings and Supplies			
36	Student Assessment Materials			
37	Contracted Student Services			
38	Miscellaneous Student Costs			
39				
40	Subtotal: Direct Student Costs		\$0	
41				
Occupancy Expenses				
43	Rent			
44	Mortgage Principal Payments			
45	Mortgage Interest Payments			
46	Building Maintenance and Repairs			
47	Renovation/Leasehold Improvements			
48	Utilities			
49	Janitorial Supplies			
50	Equipment Rental and Maintenance			
51	Contracted Building Services			
52				
53	Subtotal: Occupancy Expenses		\$0	

Creative Minds PCS Pre-Operating Budget

EXPENSES					Notes
54					
55	Office Expenses				
56	Office Supplies and Materials			500	
57	Office Furnishings and Equipment				
58	Office Equipment Rental and Maintenance				
59	Telephone/Telecommunications			5,000	Website
60	Legal, Accounting and Payroll Services			22,500	Accounting, Reporting, Audit
61	Printing and Copying			10,000	Student and teacher recruitment
62	Postage and Shipping			1,000	Student and teacher recruitment
63	Other			15,000	Student and teacher recruitment
64					
65	Subtotal: Office Expenses			\$54,000	
66					
67	General Expenses				
68	Insurance				
69	Interest Expense				
70	Transportation				
71	Food Service				
72	Administration Fee (to PCSB)				
73	EMO Management Fee				
74	Other General Expense			5,000	Contingency
75					
76	Subtotal: General Expenses			\$5,000	
77					
78	TOTAL EXPENSES			\$179,000	
79					
80	EXCESS (OR DEFICIENCY)			\$1,000	
	NOTES:				

Creative Minds PCS Planning Year Monthly Cash Flow Projection

DESCRIPTION	Month 1 July	Month 2 August	Month 3 Sept	Month 4 Oct	Month 5 Nov	Month 6 Dec	Month 7 Jan	Month 8 Feb	Month 9 March	Month 10 April	Month 11 May	Month 12 June	Total
Office Expenses													
Office Supplies and Materials	\$100		\$100			\$100			\$100		\$100		\$500
Office Furnishings and Equipment													
Office Equipment Rental and Maintenance													
Telephone/ Telecommunications		\$1,000		\$1,000		\$1,000		\$1,000		\$1,000			\$5,000
Legal, Accounting and Payroll Services	\$1,542	\$1,542	\$1,542	\$1,542	\$1,542	\$1,542	\$1,542	\$1,542	\$1,542	\$1,542	\$1,542	\$5,542	\$22,500
Printing and Copying	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$10,000
Postage and Shipping	\$83	\$83	\$83	\$83	\$83	\$83	\$83	\$83	\$83	\$83	\$83	\$83	\$1,000
Other	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$15,000
Occupancy Expenses													
Rent													
Mortgage Interest Payments													
Maintenance and Repairs													
Renovation/Leasehold Improvements													
Utilities													
Janitorial Supplies													
Equipment Rental and Maintenance													
Contracted Building Services													
General Expenses													
Insurance													
Interest Expense													
Transportation													
Food Service													
Administration Fee													
Other General Expense	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$5,000
6. Total Expenses	\$14,225	\$15,125	\$14,225	\$15,125	\$14,125	\$15,225	\$14,125	\$15,125	\$14,225	\$15,125	\$14,225	\$18,125	\$179,000
7. Fund Balance (end of month)	\$165,775	\$150,650	\$136,425	\$121,300	\$107,175	\$91,950	\$77,825	\$62,700	\$48,475	\$33,350	\$19,125	\$1,000	

**Creative Minds PCS
Year 1 Monthly Cash Flow Projection**

DESCRIPTION	Pre-Opening	Month 1 July	Month 2 August	Month 3 Sept	Month 4 Oct	Month 5 Nov	Month 6 Dec	Month 7 Jan	Month 8 Feb	Month 9 March	Month 10 April	Month 11 May	Month 12 June	Total
1. Cash on Hand (start of month)		\$1,000	\$191,851	\$44,661	(\$100,375)	\$330,003	\$182,781	\$78,700	\$248,078	\$132,796	\$35,715	\$214,593	\$98,911	
2. Cash receipts														
Per Pupil Charter Payments		\$296,585			\$296,585			\$296,585			\$296,585			\$1,186,339
Federal Entitlements	\$180,000				\$46,455	\$46,455	\$46,455	\$46,455	\$46,455	\$46,455	\$46,455	\$46,455	\$46,455	\$418,093
Per pupil Facilities Allowance		\$84,000			\$252,000									\$336,000
Grants and Donations				\$20,000			\$20,000			\$20,000			\$20,000	\$80,000
Activities Fees														
Other Income														
3. Total Receipts	\$180,000	\$380,585	\$0	\$20,000	\$595,039	\$46,455	\$66,455	\$343,039	\$46,455	\$66,455	\$343,039	\$46,455	\$66,455	\$2,020,432
4. Total Cash Available	\$180,000	\$381,585	\$191,851	\$64,661	\$494,664	\$376,457	\$249,236	\$421,739	\$294,532	\$199,251	\$378,754	\$261,047	\$165,366	\$2,020,432
5. Expenses														
Personnel Salaries and Benefits														
Principal/Executive Salary	\$100,000	\$15,833	\$15,833	\$15,833	\$15,833	\$15,833	\$15,833	\$15,833	\$15,833	\$15,833	\$15,833	\$15,833	\$15,833	\$190,000
Teachers Salaries			\$38,636	\$38,636	\$38,636	\$38,636	\$38,636	\$38,636	\$38,636	\$38,636	\$38,636	\$38,636	\$38,636	\$425,000
Teacher Aides/Assistance Salaries			\$9,545	\$9,545	\$9,545	\$9,545	\$9,545	\$9,545	\$9,545	\$9,545	\$9,545	\$9,545	\$9,545	\$105,000
Other Education Professionals Salaries			\$6,364	\$6,364	\$6,364	\$6,364	\$6,364	\$6,364	\$6,364	\$6,364	\$6,364	\$6,364	\$6,364	\$70,000
Clerical Salaries		\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$30,000
Custodial Salaries														
Other Staff Salaries		\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$40,000
Employee Benefits	\$20,000	\$5,417	\$19,053	\$19,053	\$19,053	\$19,053	\$19,053	\$19,053	\$19,053	\$19,053	\$19,053	\$19,053	\$19,053	\$215,000
Contracted Staff				\$20,500	\$20,500	\$20,500	\$20,500	\$20,500	\$20,500	\$20,500	\$20,500	\$20,500	\$20,500	\$205,000
Staff Development Costs			\$15,000					\$5,000						\$20,000
Direct Student Costs														
Textbooks		\$20,000				\$8,000								\$28,000
Student Supplies and Materials		\$18,000				\$15,040								\$33,040
Library and Media Center Materials														
Computers and Materials		\$14,000												\$14,000
Other Instructional Equipment														
Classroom Furnishings and Supplies		\$40,000				\$4,800								\$44,800
Student Assessment Materials		\$4,200				\$4,200								\$8,400
Contracted Instructional/Student Services				\$3,360	\$3,360	\$3,360	\$3,360	\$3,360	\$3,360	\$3,360	\$3,360	\$3,360	\$3,360	\$33,600
Miscellaneous Student Costs				\$1,400			\$1,400			\$1,400			\$1,400	\$5,600

**Creative Minds PCS
Year 1 Monthly Cash Flow Projection**

DESCRIPTION	Pre-Opening	Month 1 July	Month 2 August	Month 3 Sept	Month 4 Oct	Month 5 Nov	Month 6 Dec	Month 7 Jan	Month 8 Feb	Month 9 March	Month 10 April	Month 11 May	Month 12 June	Total
Office Expenses														
Office Supplies and Materials	\$500	\$1,000	\$4,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$500	\$500	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$14,000
Office Furnishings and Equipment		\$20,000					\$5,000							\$25,000
Office Equipment Rental and Maintenance		\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$5,000
Telephone/ Telecommunications	\$5,000	\$208	\$208	\$208	\$208	\$208	\$208	\$208	\$208	\$208	\$208	\$208	\$208	\$2,500
Legal, Accounting and Payroll Services	\$22,500	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$40,000
Printing and Copying	\$10,000	\$250	\$250	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$200	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$200	\$1,700
Postage and Shipping	\$1,000	\$92	\$92	\$92	\$92	\$92	\$92	\$92	\$92	\$92	\$92	\$92	\$92	\$1,100
Other	\$15,000			\$2,000			\$500			\$500			\$1,000	\$4,000
Occupancy Expenses														
Rent		\$25,200	\$25,200	\$25,200	\$25,200	\$25,200	\$25,200	\$25,200	\$25,200	\$25,200	\$25,200	\$25,200	\$25,200	\$302,400
Mortgage Interest Payments														
Maintenance and Repairs		\$292	\$292	\$292	\$292	\$292	\$292	\$292	\$292	\$292	\$292	\$292	\$292	\$3,500
Renovation/Leasehold Improvements		\$10,000					\$2,500							\$12,500
Utilities		\$917	\$917	\$917	\$917	\$917	\$917	\$917	\$917	\$917	\$917	\$917	\$917	\$11,000
Janitorial Supplies		\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$3,000
Equipment Rental and Maintenance														
Contracted Building Services		\$1,167	\$1,167	\$1,167	\$1,167	\$1,167	\$1,167	\$1,167	\$1,167	\$1,167	\$1,167	\$1,167	\$1,167	\$14,000
General Expenses														
Insurance		\$800	\$800	\$800	\$800	\$800	\$800	\$800	\$800	\$800	\$800	\$800	\$800	\$9,600
Interest Expense														
Transportation					\$500							\$500		\$1,000
Food Service				\$8,736	\$8,736	\$8,736	\$8,736	\$8,736	\$8,736	\$8,736	\$8,736	\$8,736	\$8,736	\$87,360
Administration Fee		\$2,526			\$2,526						\$2,526			\$10,102
Other General Expense	5,000							\$5,000						\$5,000
6. Total Expenses	\$179,000	\$189,734	\$147,190	\$165,036	\$164,662	\$193,676	\$170,536	\$173,662	\$161,736	\$163,536	\$164,162	\$162,136	\$164,136	\$2,020,202
7. Fund Balance (end of month)	\$1,000	\$191,851	\$44,661	(\$100,375)	\$330,003	\$182,781	\$78,700	\$248,078	\$132,796	\$35,715	\$214,593	\$98,911	\$1,230	

Operating Budget Year One

DESCRIPTION		BUDGETED AMOUNTS			Column D Expenditures as a Percent of Total Public Funding
		Column A 501(c)3 School Applicant	Column B Education Management Organization	Column C Total Revenues by Funding Source	
REVENUES					
1	Per Pupil Charter Payments	1,186,339		1,186,339	
2	Per Pupil Facilities Allowance	336,000		336,000	
3	Federal Entitlements	418,093		418,093	
4	Other Government Funding/Grants			0	
5	Total Public Funding	1,940,432		1,940,432	
6	Private Grants and Donations	80,000		80,000	
7	Activity Fees			0	
8	Loans			0	
9	Other Income (please describe in footnote)			0	
10	Total Non-Public Funding	80,000		80,000	
11	EMO Management Fee (= line 73, col. G)			0	
12					
13					
14	TOTAL REVENUES	\$2,020,432		\$2,020,432	
EXPENSES					
Personnel Salaries and Benefits					
15	Principal/Executive Salary	190,000		190,000	10.3%
16	Teachers Salaries	425,000		425,000	22.9%
17	Teacher Aides/Assistance Salaries	105,000		105,000	5.7%
18	Other Education Professionals Salaries	70,000		70,000	3.8%
19	Business/Operations Salaries	40,000		40,000	2.2%
20	Clerical Salaries	30,000		30,000	1.6%
21	Custodial Salaries				
22	Other Staff Salaries				
23	Employee Benefits	215,000		215,000	11.6%
24	Contracted Staff	205,000		205,000	11.1%
25	Staff Development Costs	20,000		20,000	1.1%
26					
27	Subtotal: Personnel Costs	\$1,300,000		1,300,000	70.2%
28					
29	Direct Student Costs				
30	Textbooks	28,000		28,000	1.5%
31	Student Supplies and Materials	33,040		33,040	1.8%
32	Library and Media Center Materials				
33	Computers and Materials	14,000		14,000	0.8%
34	Other Instructional Equipment				
35	Classroom Furnishings and Supplies	44,800		44,800	2.4%
36	Student Assessment Materials	8,400		8,400	0.5%
37	Contracted Student Services	33,600		33,600	1.8%
38	Miscellaneous Student Costs	5,600		5,600	0.3%
39					
40	Subtotal: Direct Student Costs	\$167,440		167,440	9.0%
41					
42	Occupancy Expenses				
43	Rent	302,400		302,400	16.3%
44	Mortgage Principal Payments				
45	Mortgage Interest Payments				
46	Building Maintenance and Repairs	3,500		3,500	0.2%
47	Renovation/Leasehold Improvements	12,500		12,500	0.7%
48	Utilities	11,000		11,000	0.6%
49	Janitorial Supplies	3,000		3,000	0.2%
50	Equipment Rental and Maintenance				
51	Contracted Building Services	14,000		14,000	0.8%
52					
53	Subtotal: Occupancy Expenses	\$346,400		346,400	18.7%

Operating Budget Year One

EXPENSES				501(c)3 School Applicant	Education Management Organization	Combined Total	Expenditures as a Percent of Total Public Funding
54							
55	Office Expenses						
56	Office Supplies and Materials			14,000		14,000	0.8%
57	Office Furnishings and Equipment			25,000		25,000	1.3%
58	Office Equipment Rental and Maintenance			5,000		5,000	0.3%
59	Telephone/Telecommunications			2,500		2,500	0.1%
60	Legal, Accounting and Payroll Services			40,000		40,000	2.2%
61	Printing and Copying			1,700		1,700	0.1%
62	Postage and Shipping			1,100		1,100	0.1%
63	Other			4,000		4,000	0.2%
64							
65	Subtotal: Office Expenses			\$93,300		93,300	5.0%
66							
67	General Expenses						
68	Insurance			9,600		9,600	0.5%
69	Interest Expense					0	
70	Transportation			1,000		1,000	0.1%
71	Food Service			87,360		87,360	4.7%
72	Administration Fee (to PCSB)			10,102		10,102	0.5%
73	EMO Management Fee						
74	Other General Expense			5,000		5,000	0.3%
75							
76	Subtotal: General Expenses			\$113,062		113,062	6.1%
77							
78	TOTAL EXPENSES			\$2,020,202		2,020,202	109.0%
79							
80	EXCESS (OR DEFICIENCY)			\$230		230	
81	Excess (or deficit) retained by school			\$230		230	
82	Excess (or deficit) retained by EMO						
	ASSUMPTIONS						
	Student Enrollment			112			
	Facility Size (square footage)			10K - 15K			
	Average Teacher Salary			\$ 50,000			
	Student/Teacher Ratio			14 to 1			
	Other Major Assumptions						
	NOTES:						

Operating Budget Year Two

DESCRIPTION		BUDGETED AMOUNTS			
		Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
REVENUES		501(c)3 School Applicant	Education Management Organization	Total Revenues by Funding Source	Expenditures as a Percent of Total Public Funding
1	Per Pupil Charter Payments	1,478,764		1,478,764	
2	Per Pupil Facilities Allowance	420,000		420,000	
3	Federal Entitlements	457,616		457,616	
4	Other Government Funding/Grants				
5	Total Public Funding	2,356,380		2,356,380	
6	Private Grants and Donations				
7	Activity Fees				
8	Loans				
9	Other Income (please describe in footnote)				
10	Total Non-Public Funding				
11	EMO Management Fee (= line 73, col. G)				
12					
13					
14	TOTAL REVENUES	\$2,356,380		\$2,356,380	
EXPENSES		501(c)3 School Applicant	Education Management Organization	Combined Total	Expenditures as a Percent of Total Public Funding
Personnel Salaries and Benefits					
15	Principal/Executive Salary	195,700		195,700	8.3%
16	Teachers Salaries	537,750		537,750	22.8%
17	Teacher Aides/Assistance Salaries	143,150		143,150	6.1%
18	Other Education Professionals Salaries	72,100		72,100	3.1%
19	Business/Operations Salaries	41,200		41,200	1.7%
20	Clerical Salaries	30,900		30,900	1.3%
21	Custodial Salaries				
22	Other Staff Salaries				
23	Employee Benefits	255,200		255,200	10.8%
24	Contracted Staff	223,150		223,150	9.5%
25	Staff Development Costs	22,000		22,000	0.9%
26					
27	Subtotal: Personnel Costs	\$1,521,150		\$1,521,150	64.6%
28					
29	Direct Student Costs				
30	Textbooks	30,000		30,000	1.3%
31	Student Supplies and Materials	35,400		35,400	1.5%
32	Library and Media Center Materials				
33	Computers and Materials	2,000		2,000	0.1%
34	Other Instructional Equipment				
35	Classroom Furnishings and Supplies	19,700		19,700	0.8%
36	Student Assessment Materials	9,270		9,270	0.4%
37	Contracted Student Services	36,000		36,000	1.5%
38	Miscellaneous Student Costs	6,000		6,000	0.3%
39					
40	Subtotal: Direct Student Costs	\$138,370		138,370	5.9%
41					
42	Occupancy Expenses				
43	Rent	378,000		378,000	16.0%
44	Mortgage Principal Payments				
45	Mortgage Interest Payments				
46	Building Maintenance and Repairs	5,000		5,000	0.2%
47	Renovation/Leasehold Improvements	15,000		15,000	0.6%
48	Utilities	13,000		13,000	0.6%
49	Janitorial Supplies	3,500		3,500	0.1%
50	Equipment Rental and Maintenance				
51	Contracted Building Services	16,000		16,000	0.7%
52					
53	Subtotal: Occupancy Expenses	\$430,500		430,500	18.3%

Operating Budget Year Two

54								
55	Office Expenses							
56	Office Supplies and Materials		15,000			15,000		0.6%
57	Office Furnishings and Equipment		7,500			7,500		0.3%
58	Office Equipment Rental and Maintenance		7,000			7,000		0.3%
59	Telephone/Telecommunications		3,500			3,500		0.1%
60	Legal, Accounting and Payroll Services		40,346			40,346		1.7%
61	Printing and Copying		2,500			2,500		0.1%
62	Postage and Shipping		1,500			1,500		0.1%
63	Other		5,000			5,000		0.2%
64								
65	Subtotal: Office Expenses		\$82,346			82,346		3.5%
66								
67	General Expenses							
68	Insurance		12,000			12,000		0.5%
69	Interest Expense							
70	Transportation		1,000			1,000		0.0%
71	Food Service		93,600			93,600		4.0%
72	Administration Fee (to PCSB)		11,782			11,782		0.5%
73	EMO Management Fee							
74	Other General Expense		50,000			50,000		
75								
76	Subtotal: General Expenses		\$168,382			168,382		7.1%
77								
78	TOTAL EXPENSES		\$2,340,748			2,340,748		99.3%
79								
80	EXCESS (OR DEFICIENCY)							
81	Excess (or deficit) retained by school		\$15,632			\$15,632		
82	Excess (or deficit) retained by EMO							
	ASSUMPTIONS							
	Student Enrollment		140					
	Facility Size (square footage)		15K - 20K					
	Average Teacher Salary		51,214.29					
	Student/Teacher Ratio		14:01					
	Other Major Assumptions							
	NOTES:							

Five-Year Estimated Budget Worksheet

DESCRIPTION	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
REVENUES					
Per Pupil Charter Payments	1,186,339	1,478,764	1,734,155	1,992,767	2,251,378
Per Pupil Facility Allowance	336,000	420,000	504,000	588,000	672,000
Federal Entitlements	418,093	457,616	237,139	276,662	316,186
Income from Grants and Donations	80,000	0	160,000	145,000	260,000
Activity Fees					
Other Income					
TOTAL REVENUES	\$2,020,432	\$2,356,380	\$2,635,294	\$3,002,429	\$3,499,564
EXPENSES					
Personnel Salaries and Benefits	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,765,034	1,987,201	2,312,212
Direct Student Costs	167,440	167,440	138,204	166,760	188,072
Occupancy	346,400	346,400	501,600	584,700	665,800
Office Expenses	93,300	93,300	86,529	97,036	101,968
General Expenses	113,062	113,062	141,896	164,852	188,283
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,020,202	\$2,020,202	\$2,633,263	\$3,000,550	\$3,456,335
Net	\$230	\$336,178	\$2,031	\$1,880	\$43,229

Creative Minds PCS Capital Budget

	FY 11-12 (start-up)	SY 12-13	SY 13-12
Teacher Computers			
		14,000	2,000
Classroom Furnishings and Supplies			
		44,800	19,700
Office Furnishings and Equipment			
		25,000	7,500
Renovations and Leasehold Improvements			
		12,500	15,000
Total Capital Expense		96,300	44,200