

INNOVATION SCHOOL APPLICATION



**Denver Center for 21st Century Learning at Wyman
Denver Public Schools' Multiple Pathway Center
April 8, 2011
(Revised, March 2014)**

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OVERVIEW

Colorado's Innovation Schools Act is intended to improve student achievement by granting schools a —high degree of autonomy in implementing curriculum, making personnel decisions, organizing the school day, determining the most efficient use of resources, and in general, organizing the delivery of high-quality educational services, thereby empowering each public school to tailor its services most effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of the population of students it services.¶

That Act provides schools the opportunity for increased flexibility by providing a clear path to waive certain state statutes, district policies and union contract provisions that may otherwise inhibit a school's ability to implement strategies and tactics that may produce significant gains in academic performance. For more information on the Innovation Schools Act of 2008, please visit: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdegen/SB130.htm>.

The following document is intended to serve two purposes. First, it is an application for schools to request innovation status from Denver Public School's ("DPS") Board of Education and the Colorado State Board of Education. Second, it is a planning guide to support the development of high-quality innovation school plans that will produce significant gains in academic achievement.

To facilitate the development of an organized, carefully planned, and comprehensive innovation application, schools should thoughtfully respond to each component of this application. Schools are also encouraged to be collaborative and transparent when creating their plans by providing staff and members of the broader community meaningful opportunities to engage in the development process.

Completed applications will be reviewed by the Office of School Reform and Innovation ("OSRI") and an Application Review Team ("ART"). An ART is comprised of 6-10 members, each with expertise in a specific area of school development and management (e.g., teaching and learning, special education, budget, human resources, etc.). The review by OSRI and ART is intended to provide feedback to improve the quality of a plan before conducting a staff vote and before requesting innovation status from DPS's Board of Education.

Schools that secure the necessary support from staff and their community can submit their innovation plan to DPS's Board of Education for review. Plans that are approved by DPS are then forwarded to Colorado's State Board of Education for final review.

Note that Appendix A of this application contains questions that must be answered by applicants who desire to secure district waivers in curriculum, assessments, and/or graduation and promotion policies.

INTRODUCTION

- Provide your school's name, contact information, the date this application was submitted, and a brief overview of how the plan was developed.**

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Date application submitted: April 8, 2011(Revised, March 2014)

Overview of the innovation school plan:

Denver Center for 21st Century Learning at Wyman (DC-21) is one of a handful of Multiple Pathway Centers in Denver Public Schools (DPS). It is housed in the former Wyman Elementary School building in near northeast (NNE) Denver (1690 Williams St.). The school will have a focus on successfully preparing and graduating high-risk students grades 6-12, ensuring that all DC-21 students are postsecondary ready.

DC-21, through its status as a DPS Multiple Pathway Center (MPC) is, by definition, innovative compared to traditional schools and requires innovation status to fully implement its model. DC-21 is asking for continued innovation status to effectively meet both its vision and mission through a school design that is intentionally created to successfully engage high-risk students in a rigorous education that individualizes instruction, accelerates grade-level mastery and graduation while successfully preparing and empowering all DC-21 students for the professional world of the 21st century. The following includes standard design elements of the MPC model that require innovation status:

- A rigorous application and induction process: Our robust admission process ensures students are committed to changing their behavior and successfully attaining their high school diploma or GED
- Student/Parent Contract for attendance and behavior to define our high expectations and assure clear communication between families and school.
- Extended school day to keep the focus on academic instruction
- Extended school year that focuses on activities emphasizing academic catch-up/keep-up and acceleration, college/career readiness, and skills such as interviewing/resume building, conflict management, community service/citizenship, financial literacy, etc.
- Accelerated curriculum allowing students to accelerate the earning of graduation credits in order to earn a full semester of credit every nine weeks
- A competency-based instructional model that requires students to demonstrate mastery of the standard with an emphasis on continuous progress monitoring
- Human resource practices that ensure our ability to hire and retain supportive, relationship-oriented teachers and staff with a talent for engaging our at-risk students; an “all hands on deck” approach to staffing where teachers and staff are able to flex their hours and work outside of their defined roles
- Multiple pathways to graduation including GED Plus, where students understand that the goal is not just their score on the test but the connection to postsecondary options
- Additional mental health supports/p programs including partnerships with community-based organizations to help provide wrap-around services and enrichment services for students and families as needed.

Innovation school plan development:

Due to the fact that DC-21 is the third MPC in the district, DC-21 collaborated with the other two MPCs (Summit Academy and Vista Academy) and the DPS Post-Secondary Readiness team.

INNOVATION: VISION & MISSION

I. Mission and how innovation status would help the school achieve its mission.

A. Vision and Mission

Vision

We are committed to ensuring all students will develop critical-thinking skills, cultural and self-awareness, and global citizenship through:

- *An individualized whole person approach*
- *High expectations and mastery learning*
- *A compassionate, responsive, and collaborative environment*

...to guarantee that 100% of our graduates will be post-secondary ready.

Mission

To empower students by providing multiple opportunities that will challenge them to be leaders in the 21st century.

DC21 Innovation Plan

We are offering a set of structural components that will allow our at-risk students an accelerated path to high school graduation:

- *A rigorous application and induction process*
- *Student/Parent Contract for attendance and behavior*
- *Extended school day*
- *Extended school year*
- *Accelerated curriculum allowing 1 semester of coursework every 9 weeks*
- *Standards/competency based instruction with on-going progress monitoring*
- *Supportive, relationship-oriented teachers and staff with talent for engaging our at-risk students*
- *Additional mental health support and programs*

We feel that this year (our third year) we have made serious progress toward our vision because our school culture is greatly improved. It is evident by walking through the school that students are focused on academics, hallways are quiet, teachers are collaborating, and interventions of all sorts are being implemented. Teachers are following our classroom management plan and support staff members are following through in their support of teaching and learning in the classroom. We have created an academically focused and safe culture for our at-risk students.

B. How innovation will help the schools achieve its mission

Obtaining innovation status will give DC-21 the flexibility to make programmatic decisions closest to our students. In this way student outcomes are the sole responsibility of the school; restrictions presented by state statutes, district policy or collective bargaining agreement provision cannot be invoked as an excuse. It is the intention of DC-21 to be completely innovative through its use of time, staffing, and budget. In this way DC-21 will be able to completely meet the needs of its high-risk student population.

At DC21 we know that many of our students come to us because they have not found success in traditional school settings. We passionately believe that, given the right supports and interventions, our students can succeed and develop the characteristics that will help them thrive as they move into college and career. Innovation status has helped us in achieving this vision because it has.

- allowed us to focus on creating a safe school culture
- given us the opportunity to provide scheduling allows students to acquire credit toward graduation at an accelerated rate
- given us the ability to hire teachers and staff members that have an affinity for our specific student population
- allowed us to provide individualized supports for students' affective needs as well as their academic needs
- allowed us to provide necessary time for teacher collaboration
- allowed for creation of a Middle School program designed to intervene and re-engage students early
- allowed our students access to community partners such as, 'Life Skills- 4Aspects' (to support the development of students' interpersonal skills such as gang prevention, anger management, leadership, drug and alcohol prevention) and PROJECT VOYCE (a student advocacy, leadership and empowerment non-profit)

“Game Changing” Culture

DC-21 is charged with nothing less than completely changing, and in many cases, saving students' lives! DC-21 students will be high-risk; they are not only over-aged and under-credited but also present great risk factors such as gang involvement, drug and alcohol abuse, adjudication, mental health needs, pregnancy, truancy and behavioral issues. DC-21 is a holistic intervention for every student and must be a “game changer” in the sense that every student enrolled at DC-21 must be completely supported academically, socially and emotionally to change his/her life. Without this unique, intensive form of support the “game” for these students will continue to remain the same, as will the cycle of poverty, violence and self-destruction they are taking part in.

To successfully provide a “game changing” culture for ALL DC-21 students, an “all hands on deck” approach must be expected from the entire DC-21 community, including all staff and teachers. In order for DC-21 to succeed in supporting students in reaching their goals, all of DC-21's community must be ready to devote 110% of their talent and skill whenever and wherever it is needed. This will include an extended working day, week and year, and will also require teachers and staff to give students support outside the silo of traditional job descriptions. DC-21 requires innovation status to ensure that it will be able to broaden position descriptions, offer competitive salaries for extended year and/or flex work schedules and completely innovate and extend the time offered to teachers for professional development, ensuring that each teacher has the skills required to work with high risk students.

In addition, innovation status will allow DC-21 to deliver a variety of intensive supports outside the localized effort of the professionals in the building. This includes supports such as affective needs prevention and services, enrichment courses, tutoring and other learning experiences that fall outside the academic core but create the whole child program and culture needed for student success. Ideally the school will require several social workers and psychologists to provide the intensity of support needed by DC-21 students. Unfortunately, this level of professional support is cost prohibitive in a small school setting such as DC-21, therefore the school must be able to extend its hiring to semi-professional and community staff that can support DC-21 students in collaboration with student services staff. This will allow the student services professionals in the building to focus primarily on delivering Tier III intervention and allow other staff to provide triage and strategic prevention supports.

Finally, innovation status will allow DC-21 to truly become a 21st century learning environment by stepping outside the traditional classroom constraints to create effective and rigorous competency-based, blended online /hands-on, project-based programs.

Innovation status has given us the time and resources to build a school culture that is starting to show gains in student achievement. In these first critical years we have been necessary for us to create our culture of high expectations. Innovative status has allowed us to drive improvements in students' behavior, attendance, and ability to stay in school through graduation by allowing us to create systems and structures that meet the needs of our unique population. Innovation status has also given us the tools to adjust our staffing as needed to meet the needs of our students.

The key changes we have made for the 2013-14 school year based on academic performance data are:

- Strategy (1): Implement comprehensive attendance initiative
- Strategy (2): Initiate school-wide student intervention plan
- Strategy (3): Create and implement progress-monitoring systems, designed to ensure on-track graduation for all students

Major highlights of performance in non-academic areas include in 2012-13 include:

- Decrease in out-of-school suspensions
- Decrease in expulsions
- Increase in attendance
- Increase in student satisfaction on survey
- Improved student adherence to dress code and electronics policies leading to better use of instructional time and more academic culture
- Increase of on-track-to-graduate

Here is our vision of “success” for the next three years and how innovation status will help us achieve success:

Student achievement (as measured by MAPS, TCAP and PARCC scores) will indicate more students demonstrating proficiency toward the standards. DC21 will become the first-choice school for students who are serious about accelerating their path to graduation. Instruction in our classrooms will be rigorous and focused and students will be closing the on-track-to-graduate gap. Additionally, students will continue to feel that their social/emotional needs are being met as they build the character skills they will need for college and career success.

We believe that our continued ability to progress monitor and *intervene quickly* with both academic interventions and behavioral and attendance interventions has been a key to our success. Our ability to *staff* our

school with teachers, service providers, and other personal in response to the unique needs of our students has been crucial ingredients of our success. Our ability to communicate with parents on a daily basis, to progress monitor constantly, and to accelerate our delivery of high school curriculum have all been made possible due to our innovation status. It is significant to note that we now have a waiting list and are able to be more specific about who is a good match for our program.

- II. Describe the research-based educational program the school will implement and how the program will produce gains in academic achievement.**
- A. Provide an overview of the school's research-based education program, philosophical approach and culture**

Beginning with the End in Mind...

By the 2015-2016 school year DC-21 will be the premier school for high risk students in both DPS and in the state. It will be a model for innovation and excellence, recognized nationwide as a school that not only prevents dropout but powerfully engages young people to find success in the professional world of the 21st century.

Upon acceptance to DC-21 every student will:

- be engaged in a clear pathway that leads to graduation (diploma or GED) and postsecondary readiness be empowered by expert teachers and staff to take control of his/her education and future
- have a positive, mentoring relationship with at least one adult at DC-21 (this may include teachers, staff and/or community)
- accelerate his/her learning and credits by engaging in an extended day/extended year and a competency-based curriculum and through participating in extracurricular credit-bearing activities such as debate, intermural sports, internships, etc.
- know his/her individual credits, grades, graduation date, and standardized assessment scores on an on-going basis
- participate in authentic academic intervention and assessment based on the his/her individualized needs
- develop and demonstrate skill sets consistent with the state's Common Core Standards and 21st Century Standards

DC-21 Educational Plan and Purpose

The purpose of DC-21 is to educationally engage and accelerate high-risk students by collaboratively providing each student with an individually supportive and rigorous education in order to prepare all DC-21 students for all postsecondary opportunities. DC-21 accepts students who are at high risk of eventually disconnecting and dropping out of school based on one or more of the following indicators; low attendance, behavior interfering with academics, failure of core classes and/or low academic levels, over-aged and under-credited, disconnected from the larger school culture due to personal circumstances, reengaging after previously dropping out of school, adjudicated, substance abuse, gang involvement or any other qualities that may be considered high risk. DC-21 is driven by the supports needed by each of its students to become proficient and is not defined by its students' past histories. This intellectual, innovative and professional culture will be demonstrated through an interwoven core of authentic intervention, advancement and relevant 21st century knowledge. This culture will engage all learners in the rigorous pursuit of life-long learning and postsecondary readiness.

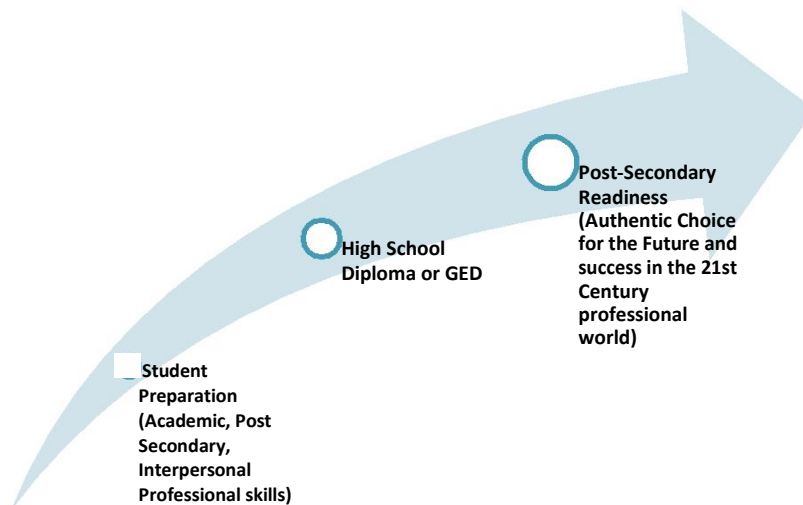
DC-21 offers the following programs and supports; Diploma, GED PLUS, intense math and English support, responsive classrooms and small counseling ratios, CTE Business certifications, mild to moderate and severe needs

SPED, ELA-E programming, integrated technology through hands-on Smart Labs, Credit Recovery, Concurrent Enrollment, Enrichment classes, extended day, week and year, competency-based blended online learning curriculum, Learning to Work internships, and after school tutoring and activities.

High School Diploma/Post-Secondary Program and GED Plus Program

DC-21 offers both a High School Diploma/Post-Secondary pathway and a GED Plus pathway. Both pathways are designed for students to achieve accreditation, and to prepare students for their next steps after graduation. DC-21 believes that neither piece of paper has value if the student is not prepared for college and career success.

DC-21 students who are 17 and older and wishing to study for their GED may take part in the GED Plus program. Students in this program must maintain a full-time school schedule in which they will learn all core tested subjects and continue to participate in DC-21's Business/Entrepreneurial and DC-21 Enrichment courses. After receiving their GED, students may continue for the remainder of the year to take advantage of concurrent enrollment courses and/or Career and Technical (CTE) courses. Students may also choose to earn their high school diploma after they have earned their GED.



Competency-Based Education

“A *competency* is simply a statement of learning outcomes for a skill or a body of knowledge. When students demonstrate a “competency,” they are demonstrating their ability to do something, “they are showing the outcome of the learning process” (College of Public and Community Service 2010). Though competency-based education has been demonstrated and proven to be quality education in private industry since the 1970’s it has just recently gained ground in K-12 education through the work of researchers such as Robert Marzano and John Kendal who refer to this concept as “standards-based education.”

Standards-based learning, requiring students to demonstrate his/her knowledge before moving on, ensures that students are prepared for college as long as the standards used are rigorous. The ACT Policy Report, *Courses Count: Preparing Students for Postsecondary Success* finds a relationship between college remediation rates and a lack of rigor in high school courses (2005). The report argues that students who do not take a college prep course load in high school are much less likely to excel in college. This statement is reiterated by the Piton report (2009). More than just taking the courses however, the reports call for an alignment of coursework with college work. To support a student pathway to college a student must know or demonstrate proficiency of rigorous standards for him/her to succeed in a college setting.

Standards-based learning and grading has over two decades worth of research behind it. Most recently however, the focus of this research has been the dynamic effects standards-based learning is having on at-risk students and students with special needs. Sharon Defur and Lori Korinek in their article *The Evolution toward Lifelong Learning as a Critical Transition Outcome for the 21st Century* describe the advancements made in students with special needs transitioning and succeeding in college due to standards based education (2008). Additionally Lee Ann Jung in her article *Standards-Based Grading and Reporting: A Model for Special Education* found incredible gains for students with special needs in inclusion settings when fundamentals of standards- based grading was used (2007). Due to the high risk nature of DC-21 students and its goal to ensure that all of DC-21 students are post-secondary ready, a standards or competency-based curriculum must be used to ensure accelerated growth and college/career achievement.

In most educational programs, a students’ grade is subjective and is based more on the student’s behavior and attendance, and less on what the student actually knows or does not know. It also does not take into account the learning process as a key component to a student’s skill development. If a student turns in and passes a series of activities the student gets a certain grade, the term ends and the student moves on. If the student earns a C or a D he/she may have turned in A quality work *and* F quality work. With competency-based education this would mean that the student was proficient in one area and not proficient in another. Taking and reporting out the mean of these points in time does not accurately describe the student’s performance, nor does it give the student any motivation to, through the learning process, work to improve the F work until it becomes an A. Instead the student is happy that he/she passed and moves on to the next course. This philosophy is a reason why so many students have educational gaps.

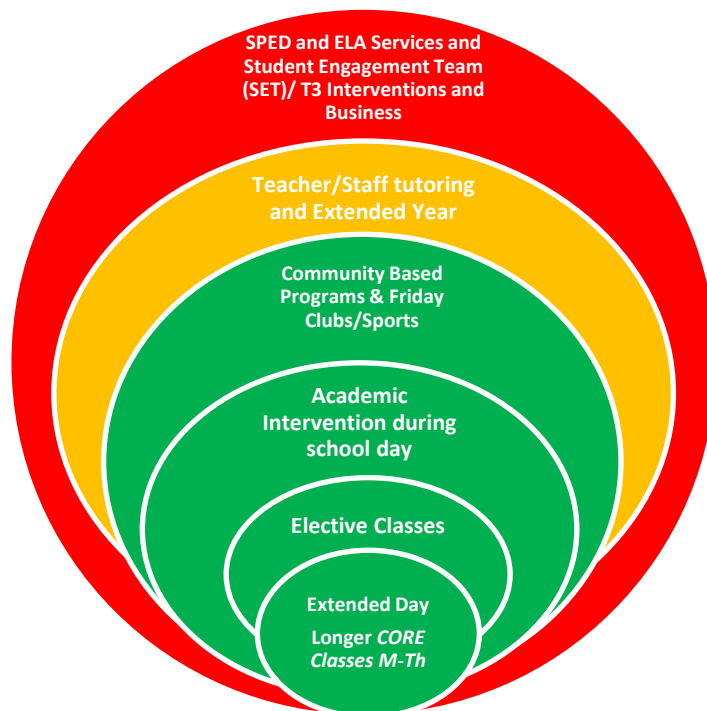
Students must be given the chance to make mistakes, learn from them and then return the previous F work to proficient work. In this way students are allowed to engage in the learning process while being held accountable to the quality of the final product. This mirrors the business world in many ways. In business an employee wanting to keep his/her job would never turn in F work. Instead that person would have to work

independently or in collaboration with another to revise the product until it was to standard.

At DC-21 students will have an opportunity to revise their work until they reach proficiency on the standards for the course. Teachers work with students to revise and resubmit their work. This ensures that all students are competent in their core subjects as well as in their CTE, college and enrichment subjects before they earn their diploma. Such a process guarantees that students are participants in their own education and that teachers are aware, on a daily basis, of how far each student is away from being proficient or advanced in any one outcome. Through this process authentic intervention is possible. Our courses are organized in quarters and a student is able to earn a full semester credit during each quarter. If the student has not shown mastery during the quarter, he will have the option to retake the class during the school year

DC-21 we will be using the Common Core State Standards as well as Colorado Academic Standards. The standards, infused with the 21st Century Standards, will be used as the basis for our curriculum.

Layers of Academic Intervention

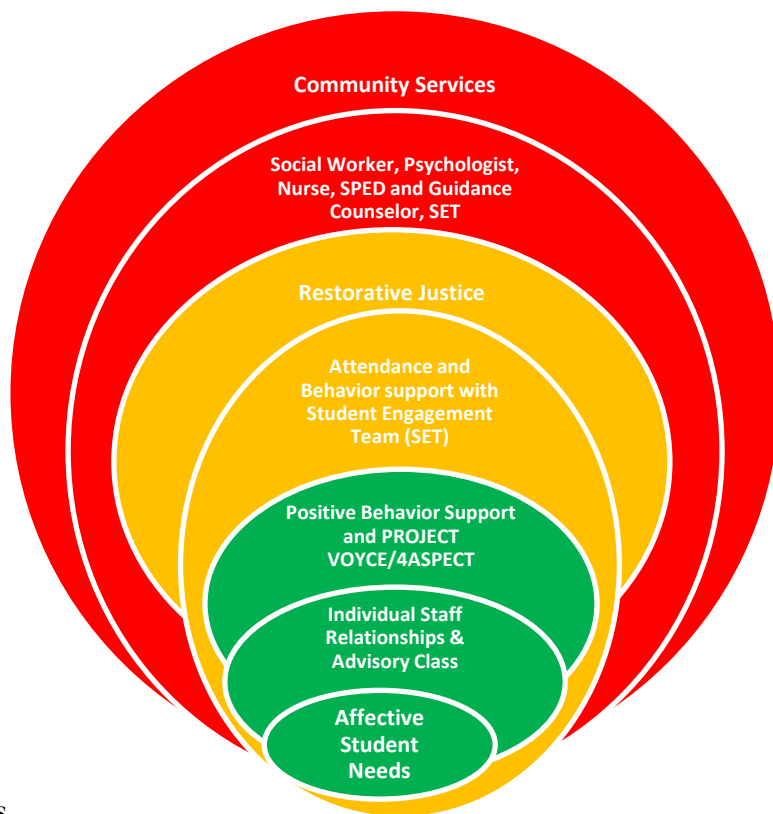


Central to DC-21 is the development of all student learners. This requires DC-21 staff to meet the learner where he/she is academically and affectively while successfully intervening to ensure the student learner is thoroughly prepared for the post-secondary choices that lay ahead. As mentioned earlier, intervention is not a class but a theme and a cultural notion integrated authentically throughout the school day. Instead of one intervention class there are layers upon layers of intervention embedded in all school systems, academic core, elective curricula and throughout the position expectations of every single employee at DC-21. Students may receive only one of these interventions or all of them depending on the Response to Instruction and Intervention model (RtI²). DC-21 will convene a **Student Engagement Team –SET**—(DC-21 utilizes

Student Engagement Team (SET) as its primary participatory governance structure. The SET is comprised of the Principal, Assistant Principal, Dean, and 3 teacher representatives, plus 1 school specialist: counselor, social worker, psychologist. See additional SET description in School Governance section.) on a regular basis to staff students in order to determine which combinations of interventions are successful. It is the SET team, in collaboration with Content Area Data Teams, who determine the intervention at the classroom level and then decide how to better engage the student.

Layers of Affective Intervention

As with DC-21’s academic interventions, affective interventions are identified and addressed on a continuous basis as well. Integrating the intervention into the whole of the school’s system or creating a culture of support is critical to meeting each student where he/she is. Due to the nature of DC-21’s population it is important that all of these interventions are layered upon each other to allow the system to be responsive to all needs. This includes the discipline systems and the truancy systems.



Layers of Individualized Affective Interventions

Advisory is used at the beginning of the day as a check in period for a cohort of students who will maintain the same advisor all year long. This cohort of students will remain with each other throughout the day in order to support one another. The teachers are responsible for all their advisory students and will require weekly progress reports from each of the students to be signed by his/her teachers.

These advisories will be times for the student to share a good or bad day and allow the teacher to know what to look out for that day and what to communicate to other teachers and staff. Teachers will regularly call or contact his/her advisory students’ parents and be mindful about each of them as he/she works with other teachers and staff. In addition Advisory teachers will also conduct at least one home visit per advisory student per year.

DC-21 will partner with community programs that will help solidify and intensify the affective supports given. The first is PROJECT VOYCE (<http://projectvoyce.org/>), a student advocacy, leadership and empowerment non-profit. 4ASPECTS is a leadership program that educates and teaches students anger management skills, self-esteem and how to avoid gangs, drugs/alcohol and other peer pressures. Other outside tutoring programs will partner with us for similar affective support of our students. All of these programs will be classes throughout the day and have afterschool leadership/mentoring groups. In addition to these programs DC-21 will partner with DPS' Student Board of Education (SBE) to provide a leadership class. From this class DC-21 will elect two members to the Board and engage with these members around a school improvement project. Each program is designed to empower students to know and understand how to use their own power as leaders in their school and in their community. Working collaboratively with teachers and staff, these partners are integral to the layered interventions that must occur to support our students' success.

Restorative Justice and Positive Behavior Support (PBS) techniques will be used to strengthen a consistent intentional culture. Dress code, behavior expectations, and student/parent contracts will help to create an expectation of professionalism and achievement. Practices such as the DC-21 School Culture Curriculum /Orientation as well as "Confidence Saturdays" (to recognize student achievement) PBS program, Continuation Ceremonies and the final Graduation Ceremony will symbolically support a culture of high expectations, academic achievement, student engagement and positive/empowering peer support. Additionally, advisories, student cohort groups, frequent student feedback, transparent communication and consistent student support will allow for the development of positive, trusting student-adult relationships.

Teaching through Integrated Technology

DC-21 is committed to providing students with the most cutting edge technology and innovative uses in the district. In 2011, technology and its applications are endless. Smartlab technology will explicitly support student learning. Other examples of learning through technology may include: using the students' cell phones for educational applications, using Mimeo or Promethean Boards to present PowerPoint's and podcasts or developing projects through the use of a free Microsoft online applications. Each of DC-21's students will have abundant access to netbooks and other personal technologies. At DC-21, 21st Century skills begin with proficiency in technology and end with the higher level skills that will be necessary in using technology as a tool to successfully communicate, collaborate, think and create in a global society.

Blended Online Learning

Though online learning has made the news in the last decade, blended online learning is quickly being seen as the classroom of the future, allowing students to have —the best of both worlds. NACOL supports the use of blended learning stating that this form of learning has limitless potential for students due to the fact that it develops all of the skills students will need for the 21st century (2010). Alfred P. Rovai and Hope Jordan in their article [*Blended Learning and Sense of Community: A Comparative Analysis with Traditional and Fully Online Graduate Courses*](#) (2004) found that blended courses produced not only greater achievement from the students but also produced a stronger sense of community among students than either traditional or fully online courses. Our blended learning takes place in our Credit Recovery classes which currently use Apex Online

Post-Secondary Readiness: Preparing for College and Career

Once students demonstrate grade level learning DC-21 will collaborate with other institutions to offer various CTE programs while also partnering with local community colleges to engage students in concurrent enrollment courses. All 10th grade level students who test at grade level in MAP and Acuity will take the ACCUPLACER to ensure they will qualify for concurrent enrollment or 030, 060 and 090 courses. Credit Recovery will be offered through APEX learning online. A study done by the Piton Foundation regarding the state of education and college success in DPS found a high correlation between those who enrolled in at least two or more college or accelerated classes in high school fared much better in both enrolling and graduating from college (Buckly, P, April 2009).

In the past three years, innovation status has impacted our ability to provide high quality instruction despite the challenges we have faced along the way. Providing high quality instruction to meet the needs of our specialized population of students has been our *most important* goal. The innovation plan has allowed us to progress toward this goal by giving us the tools to create a more academic school culture. Creating this culture was our greatest and most important challenge. One tool has been implementation of a more robust intake process wherein students spend the first two weeks on our campus participating in a special culture curriculum session before they enter our academic classes. This enrollment process begins with the prospective student and his parent/guardian visiting DC21 to fill out an application. Next, they will schedule an enrollment interview to review the Student-Parent Contract detailing all DC21 academic, behavior and attendance policies. If the interview is satisfactory, the student will be invited to attend a one-week *Culture Curriculum* program at DC21. Upon successful completion of the program (no absences or behavior issues during the week) the student will meet with an administrator to discuss whether or not DC21 is the best option for the student. Once accepted for enrollment in DC21, both student and parent will sign the *Student/Parent Contract*. In the event that the student is not accepted, the administrator will assist the student in either returning to the home school or exploring other options.

In the first years of implementation we were able to show our students that we had high expectations for them and that this was a place to come to learn, free of distractions and full of supports. This year we find that students are attending class more regularly and are showing more focused effort toward earning course credit and toward mastery of the standards. Halls and classrooms are quiet and students have both the academic and behavioral supports they need in order to stay in school learn. Our innovation plan also allowed us to personalize instruction for our students. Due to our plan, teachers are able to get to know students better due to both smaller classes and the fact that many teachers teach the student in more than one subject. The plan also allows us to have additional support staff for interventions as well as special service providers to deliver specialized programs. We now have a waiting list for students wishing to enroll. The biggest challenge we face in providing high quality instruction is student engagement. As educators we must be learners too, discovering and implementing teaching strategies that will *engage* our students while providing the *rigor* that is expected from the Common Core.

Nine of the total 18 classroom teachers are new to DC21 this year. Although our retention rate is only 50%, there are many reasons for the turnover, including our use of Innovation Status Waivers in order to replace teachers promptly with others who could better meet the needs of our student population. Pregnancies, mobility, and career enhancement of our young staff accounted for much of the turnover, but we

do credit our hiring system with allowing us to quickly fill the vacancies with quality teachers who are passionate about serving our students.

Our innovation waivers have allowed us to be quickly responsive in filling vacancies and providing the best for our students. Mid-semester last year we were able to replace struggling teachers with teachers who were more able to manage (and teach!) our students. Our waivers allowed us to move quickly so that students did not continue to lose valuable instructional time.

B. Summarize the school's culture and learning environment (e.g., classroom-based, independent study, etc.). What innovations, if any, will the school implement?

DC-21 Collaborative Professional Culture

According to the Encarta online dictionary, a *professional* is “businesslike, conforming to the standard of skill, competence, or character normally expected of a properly qualified person in a work environment” (2011). As determined in the vision, DC-21 will be a place for the development of all DC-21 Trailblazers to engage in the professional world of the 21st century. This development will be defined through an intentional culture of professionalism throughout all aspects of the school. It is also the “game changing” result that must be developed in each of our students in order for them to truly be successful in the 21st Century workplace. It is the expectation of DC-21 that all members of the DC-21 community act professionally toward each other. This expectation will be present throughout all systems and structures in the school including language, dress and conduct.

The DC-21 professional culture will be comprised of collaborative, collegial and reciprocal dialogue in all aspects of decision making at DC-21. Examples of “genuine engagement” may include students trained to lead lessons with the support of a teacher, student participation in teacher evaluation, community members leading professional teacher learning and parents participating in parent-leadership institutes, while also learning from their students during student lead conferences. Teachers will be afforded time to collaborate daily.

Primary to this culture is also a focus on belonging. Students as a whole in the school should feel that they not only belong to the culture of the school but that they are empowered to create the culture of the school. This will be accomplished through several leadership opportunities in the school as well as ensuring that all school members in the building feel like a family in that they can trust each other and rely on one another for support. This belonging for students is symbolically signified through our intake and orientation process where new students will be welcomed into the school by their peers, teachers, parents and community.

As our vision reminds us, we are committed to ensuring *all* students are able to learn in a compassionate, responsive, and collaborative environment. We feel that this year (our third year) we have made serious progress toward our vision because our school culture is greatly improved. It is evident by walking through the school that students are focused on academics, hallways are quiet, teachers are collaborating, and interventions of all sorts are being implemented. Teachers are following our classroom management plan and staff members are following through in their support of teaching and learning in the classroom. Innovation status has given us the opportunity to focus on creating a safe school culture and given us the opportunity to provide scheduling, staff, and programs necessary for this culture.

Innovation status has given us the time and resources to build a school culture that is starting to show gains in student achievement. In these first critical years we have been necessary for us to create our culture of high expectations. Innovative status has allowed us to drive improvements in students' behavior, attendance, and ability to stay in school through graduation by allowing us to create systems and structures that meet the needs of our unique population. Innovation status has also given us the tools to adjust our staffing as needed to meet the needs of our students.

Our school culture has been enhanced by key initiatives including, implementing comprehensive attendance plan; Initiating school-wide student intervention plans for both academic and affective domains; Creating and implementing progress-monitoring systems designed to ensure on-track graduation for all students. We have seen a decrease in out-of-school suspensions; decrease in expulsions; increase in daily attendance; increase in student satisfaction; improved use of instructional time; a more academic culture; and finally, an increase of on-track-to-graduate.

The new Common Core State Standards require that students engage in literacy skills across the content areas and at increasingly higher cognitive levels than ever before. Since this is the final outcome for all DC-21 students, DC-21 leadership will ensure that these two focused strategies will be present throughout the entire DC-21 culture including lesson planning and practiced teaching, grading and curriculum designed activities.

C. Describe class size and structure, core curriculum and supplemental curriculum. What (innovations, if any, will the school implement?)

Class size will cap at 1:20 in advisory and core classes and at 1:25 in CTE and Enrichment courses. The typical classroom will have space for whole group, small group, and individual instruction.

The following is an overview of the core curriculum, instructional philosophy and approach and assessment. Across the curriculum teachers will focus on two priority strategies; *academic language and demonstration of higher level thinking skills through written expression*. Recent research has identified both skills as leverage points, leading to post-secondary readiness.

Middle School:

The outcome for all DC-21 middle school students is to be prepared for an accelerated high school experience leading to post-secondary success. This is defined as demonstrating catch-up or keep-up growth projection in both their formative MAP assessments and Acuity and finally on the TCAP/PARCC. At DC-21 each assessment will be extremely important to the student as he/she understands that demonstrating proficiency on the test is the key that will open doors in high school (i.e. their ability to leave campus to participate in other CTE programs and/or earn college credit through concurrent enrollment and AP classes.)

Middle School students will be taught by a *partner team* of two teachers who will teach all core classes. These teachers will be carefully chosen for their ability to create the systems and structures as well as the relationships that will enable student learning for a high needs population of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders.

It is the school's intention to have each middle school student develop enough interpersonal growth that by the time he/she reaches high school the student has intrinsically developed his/her own motivation to graduate and be prepared for college and/or career. Though this will, of course, be a process that will first demand extrinsic, immediate rewards, DC-21 is confident that through a collaborative teacher/student model students will understand why proficiency is so vital to their future.

High School:

Similar to the middle school outcome, the high school outcome can be stated simply; students will be prepared by graduation, for any and all post-secondary options. This will be assessed through the same assessments used in the middle school but will also be additionally ascertained through proficiency on the ACT and Accuplacer tests. In high school, the stakes, in terms of demonstrating proficiency, are even higher due to the fact that they are tied to credit and graduation. Constant feedback and formative assessment is essential to ensure that the student remains on track. Additionally interpersonal development in preparation for the student to succeed in a professional world is crucial to the post-secondary success of all students. This form of education will be supported in several ways. The culture that will exist at DC-21 will be a culture of professional conduct; the school will support students in this area using several organizations to match upper high school students with internships, while also teaching work-ready career skills.

Finally, the critical ingredient to both the middle school and the high school is college. Students at both levels will be exposed to a culture of college expectations in that all students must be college ready before graduation. This means that the student will be able to attend any college in the state without remediation.

Additionally 100% of our student graduates will be required to apply to college or another post-secondary institution such as a vocational institute. The purpose of this is to not only ensure that students are prepared, but to convince the students themselves that they are college material. In the end it is critical that the student knows that he or she, from the point of graduation on, will always have a choice to attend college.

DC-21 Academic Core:

- **Standards (CCSS & CAS) based curriculum:** DC 21 teachers will use Common Core State Standards and Colorado Academic Standards to backward-plan instruction designed to teach essential concepts and prepare students for end-of-course assessments in order to earn credit. This process will be overseen by our Dean of Instruction/Curriculum Director and the DC21 Administrators with assistance from the Teacher Effectiveness Coach. Core classes will last 90 minutes each day and will allow students to earn a full semester of credit each 9 weeks. (Please see Appendix A for details.)
- **Apex Learning:** DC-21 will use APEX Learning, a DPS approved, research-based online curriculum (worth 60% of a student's grade) for its high school credit recovery program (www.apexlearning.com). Digital curriculum from Apex Learning makes it possible to individualize instruction to address diverse student needs. Students can progress at their own pace, taking as much — or as little — time as necessary to master the material. Direct instruction incorporates multimedia — in the form of images, audio, video, animations, and interactive elements — along with instructional text to provide students with multiple representations of concepts as well as address their different learning styles. Formative assessments help students to gauge their understanding and improve performance, while summative

assessments chart progress and skill development. Unit-level diagnostics allow students to move quickly over material they have previously mastered. Apex Learning digital curriculum is designed to support academic success for all students, including those who have not been successful in traditional programs. Foundations courses meet the needs of students who are not prepared for grade-level academic challenges and need to develop basic skills in math, reading, and writing before tackling high school academic courses. Apex Learning Core courses meet the needs of a range of students as they endeavor to master rigorous content and earn credits toward graduation.

- **Middle School:** DC21 will use the DPS approved Middle School curriculum, scope and sequence. Connected Math, Springboard, and TCI curricula will be used.
- **SmartLabs:** SmartLabs are research-based 21st century learning labs designed for the exploration of STEM, digital media arts and other academic topics through applied technology. SmartLabs are fully-integrated classroom systems that include hardware, software, scientific and media equipment, hands-on construction kits and flexible furniture systems. SmartLabs are full turnkey programs including curriculum and assessment systems, professional development and ongoing technical and professional support. SmartLabs meet each student where they are and take them as far as they are able to go. The student-centered approach in a SmartLab challenges and empowers learners to explore topics of personal interest. Projects are open-ended and appropriate to the ability of each learner. As a result, SmartLabs succeed in engaging learners of all abilities and interests in STEM – including girls and underrepresented minorities. Based on a recent survey of SmartLab schools, SmartLabs have had unparalleled success in reflecting the diversity of the schools they serve. The proportion of girls in SmartLab programs is approximately three times higher than Project Lead the Way. The proportion of African-American enrollments is 62% higher, Hispanic enrollments are 250% higher and Native-American enrollments are 400% higher.
- **CTE Business/Entrepreneurial:** This curriculum will teach both a business and entrepreneurial curriculum engaging students in everything from basic computer skills, marketing, financial literacy, business planning and data analysis.
- **Enrichment:** DC-21 offers student choice in Enrichment classes including (but not limited to) Physical Education, Systems Leadership and Change, Life Skills, DPS Student Board (only 11th and 12th graders) Learning to Work and STEM/STEAM. Each class is one semester long and worth 5 credits.
 - *Physical Education*—Students will be taught wellness and the importance of physical activity to a healthy lifestyle
 - *Systems Leadership and Change*—PROJECT VOYCE will partner with DC-21 to provide this class that is meant for students to empower themselves through learning by taking a critical view of their world while defining themselves as part of that change
 - *Life Skills*—4Aspects will partner with DC-21 to support the development of students' interpersonal skills and how to create a healthy and happy lifestyle. Some topics to be covered are gang prevention, anger management, leadership, drug and alcohol prevention and personal responsibility
 - *Learning to Work (WES)*—Students learn work readiness skills and are matched with an

internship

- *DPS Student Board*—Students will take on a problem in their school such as low morale, uniforms, TCAP participation etc. and work to become leaders in solving this problem. Two students from this class will become DPS Student Board members.

D. Describe how the program will serve English language learners. What innovations, if any, will the school implement?

English Language Learners (ELL)

Though there will be some true ELL students at DC-21, many of the DC-21 student learners will be former ELLs who had previously been exited. They are what we call “informal Ells.” Many of these students speak basic English but lack the knowledge and use of academic language. Some of these “informal ELLs” were never slated for ELA classes or programming because their parents speak English. Their struggle with language is generational, due often to the limited acquisition of their parents and grandparents. “Informal ELLs,” like our formal ELL students, will demonstrate their language deficiencies strongly in their writing, reading and academic language. In many cases this struggle has led to the student disconnecting from school, demonstrating negative behavior and/or refusing to attend class.

Due to this knowledge of our population all ELL strategies must be school-wide. As with students with special needs, these students will be intentionally accounted for in all instruction that occurs at DC-21. Academic language and writing across content areas will be a requirement throughout all courses. Teachers will include a “language” component to their daily learning objectives, writing Content Language Objectives (CLOs) designed to support our English Language Learners.

Additionally DC-21 is intentionally hiring as many dual certified ELA teachers as possible and training the rest of the teachers to become experts in teaching ELA students as well. This training will occur in the DPS ELA Summer Institute. For students with current ELA designation, the district’s curriculum (*Edge*) will be used as an intervention. DC-21 will follow all DPS ELA protocols and federal guidelines.

E. Describe how the program will serve special education students. What innovations, if any, will the school implement?

Students with Special Needs

As it should be in all schools, the Individual Education Plan (IEP), or in some cases a 504 Plan is the most important document in measuring the academic achievement of a student with special needs. Because the IEP is a competency-based document, this plan will determine what competency goals the DC-21 teaching team will focus on first during the inclusive, but individually classes throughout the day. Unless the student’s learning goals are so far outside the classroom that the IEP team does not feel the student can be served inclusively, it is DC-21’s goal to include all students in every part of the day.

For students who require more intense or explicit work around literacy, *Language!* will be used as a tool. ALEKS will also be purchased and used as an online tool for math, while the school will purchase math manipulatives (available in the Smartlab) and other math tools to allow mathematics to become more concrete for all learners who have difficulty in math. Compass Learning will also be used to provide

intervention in all subject areas. Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) will be used as a consistent assessment to determine how far students are from reaching their IEP goals and other academic requirements. As with all students at DC-21, daily assessment data will be available and used in conjunction with the student. Like their peers, students with special needs, will be required to lead their parent teacher conferences and will be responsible for working with their SPED teacher to update their IEP goals, which, due to the acceleration of the learning at DC-21, should be updated much more frequently than on an annual basis. It is the intention of all DC-21 teachers and staff to work with all students using a strength-based approach that allows the team to scaffold each student's learning until he/she becomes an independent learner. This intention remains consistent with students with special needs.

With all students, but especially with those students with special needs, transition is extremely important. DC-21 will be developing a Learning to Work model that not only sets students up with internships and job shadows, but also works with students to become "work ready." This may include working with a student on tardiness or language use or helping the student determine what type of professional dress is appropriate for the situation. Additionally all students will be taking a Business/Entrepreneurial course that will both be focused on the transition of DC-21 students. All IEP transition goals will be integrated into these programs for IEP specific students.

Understanding the intended population of DC-21, we are aware that the school may attract some students who have moderate to severe affective needs. It is our intention to serve their needs in an intentionally inclusive way throughout the day. Fortunately we have a psychologist and social worker on staff who can work with our students with affective needs as top priority, but it is also important that DC-21 creates a culture that welcomes and accepts these students, creating underlying systems to help our students stay on track. Examples of this may be frequent check-ins with a trusted adult throughout the day or a safe way to allow students to stop, breathe and step away from a situation if needed. All IEP recommendations will be followed not only in the classroom, but throughout the school as a system of support.

For those students who cannot access their education through inclusive strategies within the general curriculum, DC-21 will offer an Affective Needs (AN) Center program which will serve those students with more severe emotional disabilities. Even though Center programs are highly restrictive environments, DC-21's mission will continue to include every student. Students in this center will be automatically involved in enrichment activities and through a structured system of inclusion that allows students to demonstrate their ability to ready themselves for more inclusive instruction students will reduce their LRE (Least Restrictive Environment) quickly to join the rest of their peers.

As with all of our instructional programs, outstanding teachers bring this program its quality and depth. DC-21 is committed to the educational and affective achievement of all of our students with special needs. During our hiring process a call for dual certified SPED teachers will go out to intentionally have as many SPED experts in the building as possible. Additionally all teachers and staff participate in a yearly PDU, facilitated by teacher leaders and our Teacher Effectiveness Coach, that will focus on affective needs of students. SPED teachers (as a team) at the school will lead regular professional learning with the intention that all staff become experts in teaching ALL of our students

IV. Describe the school’s assessment plan and how it is critical for the school to produce gains in academic achievement.

A. Provide an overview of the school’s proposed assessment plan. Describe any assessments that will supplement assessments required by DPS and the state.

The following assessments will be used by DC-21 to measure and evaluate individual students, cohorts and the school as a whole. Although we do administer DPS Middle School Interim Assessments, we are requesting a waiver for High School Course Assessments.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Assessment

One Size Doesn’t Fit All! Each child learns differently. NWEA has developed computerized adaptive assessments that test differently, allowing teachers to see their students as individuals – each with their own base of knowledge. NWEA Measures of Academic Progress® (MAP®) tests present students with engaging, age-appropriate content. As a student responds to questions, the test responds to the student, adjusting up or down in difficulty. The result is a rewarding experience for the student, and a wealth of detailed information for teachers, parents and administrators. The underlying data driving the assessment ensures remarkable accuracy, based on over 24 million assessments given over our 30+ years. Our equal-interval RIT scale increases the stability, providing grade-independent analysis of a child's learning. For educators, it means at last having timely information that, used well, can change the course of a student's school year — and life. MAP assessments will be used at the beginning of each trimester to review the progress of our students.

Acuity Assessment

Acuity is a comprehensive online assessment system that provides a variety of assessment options for teachers and students. Currently, DPS is utilizing the Acuity Predictive and Diagnostic Assessments.

- The **Acuity Predictive Assessments** are online tests given to 6th through 10th grade Language Arts and Math students in order to predict their performance on the upcoming TCAP exam. The Predictive Assessments are given in September, November, and January to provide teachers with predictions of expected performance, as well as information that can help identify students’ strengths and weaknesses to better target instruction.
- The **Acuity Diagnostic Assessments** are developed according to state standards and provide timely feedback to guide instruction. The district will be creating two custom diagnostics for high schools and one custom diagnostic for middle schools, which will be 10-15 multiple choice questions and will align to state standards and synced with the district curriculum. Schools can also customize tests using item banks provided by Acuity.
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Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP)

TCAP will be given per DPS/State requirements through Spring of 2014.

ACCESS

All students (both middle school and high school) who are designated as English Language Learners will take this yearly in order to assess their progress toward proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening to the English Language.

TLAP

The TLAP (8th Grade Technology) Pre and Post Test will be given according to DPS requirements.

ACT and SAT

The ACT (American College Test) and SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) are the two standardized tests accepted by most colleges and universities for admissions purposes. The ACT and SAT Practice test and actual test will be given in accordance to district and test guidelines.

Accuplacer

This is the college entrance exam given in Colorado. This will be given to 10th graders demonstrating proficiency on other exams. This test must be passed in order for the student to earn college credit when he/she takes concurrent enrollment or 030, 060, 090 courses.

- B. **Explain how the school will measure and evaluate academic progress of individual students, student cohorts, and the school as a whole throughout the school year and at the end of each academic year.**

With the daily formative assessments given in the classroom, DC-21 will use MAP and Acuity to triangulate actual student progress. This, along with transcript evaluation, will inform student groupings. Teachers will use this data to make decisions about their students on a daily basis and core department data teams will meet weekly to analyze data and determine academic interventions for students.

- C. **Explain *how* and *how frequently* the school will collect and analyze diagnostic, formative, predictive, and summative student academic achievement data, use the data to refine and improve instruction, and report the data to the school community.**

MAP: This assessment will be given to all students and analyzed 3 times a year. This serves as formative growth data. This data will be used on a daily basis to inform the academic decisions and interventions. These scores will be given to families three times a year.

Acuity: This predictive will be given to grades 6-10 as a formative predictive assessment of TCAP achievement. This information will be available in real-time from the teacher portal and used on a daily basis to inform the students' progress. These scores will be given to families three times a year.

TCAP, TLAP, ACT, SAT, Accuplacer – These are all summative data points that will be used and

reported on a yearly basis. All of these test data will be used as historical information to formulate and update the students' academic plans.

DC21 Student Data Tracker –Teachers collect and record student data (attendance, behaviors, grades, interventions, communications with family, goals, action steps) on a Student Tracker spreadsheet and examine this data collaboratively at team meetings.

INNOVATION: GRADUATION AND PROMOTION

V. Describe the school's proposed graduation and promotion policies.

A. Explain policies and standards for promoting students from one grade to the next.

DC21 will be exceeding DPS's graduation requirement. In the rest of DPS, students are required to simply "pass" their classes with a D in order to receive credit. At DC21, in order to earn graduation credit, students must achieve an A or B for a final course grade.

DC-21 will be on a quarter system, where mid-term reports will be communicated quarterly. Students will move from one grade to another once the student has successfully completed the required credits for that grade. Grades will be assigned once a student has demonstrated 80% or more of the outcomes for the course. Each outcome must be attained at 80% proficiency. If a student has not attained the outcomes for the course by the end of the semester the grade will be left blank and a note will be sent to the parent. The student has until the end of the extended year (June 30th) to complete each course or the grade will change to an I. DC-21 does not accept any grade lower than a B as a passing grade. Promotions will occur at any time throughout the year.

B. Provide the school's exit standards for graduating students.

To graduate from DC-21 the student must successfully meet all DPS High School Requirements for Graduation, the expectations of the DPS Board of Education, as well as meeting the additional DC21 requirement to pass all classes with an A or B for the final grade.

C. Describe how and when promotion and graduation criteria will be communicated to parents and students.

Promotion and graduation criteria will meet DPS requirements. Parent will be informed of DPS promotion and graduation requirements at the time of enrollment. Parents will be informed of their student's progress quarterly and will have an opportunity to meet with each teacher at the quarterly conference. When a student is close to promotion or graduation a Promotion/Graduation Form will be filled out by the counselor and signed by the parent and the student.

D. Explain what policies and processes the school will implement for students at risk of dropping out of high school and/or not meeting the graduating criteria proposed (i.e., credit recovery, etc.)

All of DC-21's students are at high risk of dropping out. It is crucial that there is a daily check-in system and that students have a clear plan for how and when they will graduate and attend college. Beyond advisory time, an assigned advisor will track students' attendance, behavior, and course progress. Advisors will have a ratio of 1:15. Advisors will meet with students daily and call parents as needed to communicate progress. As stated in the educational section of this application there are both academic and affective layered supports that will be in place to ensure that a student makes it across the graduation stage and into college or the career option of their choice. All teachers will monitor progress on a weekly basis on the DC21 *Progress Monitoring* Spreadsheet.

VI. Describe the goals and specific gains in academic achievement the school will commit to as a result of securing innovation status.

A. Outline the clear and measurable annual achievement goals the school commits to through innovation status in order to meet or exceed District expectations for the School Performance Framework indicators.

1. Complete the Academic Goals Worksheet in Appendix D.

B. Describe how the school will engage in continuous quality improvement in order to meet or exceed these achievement goals. What innovations, if any, in continuous quality improvement will the school implement?

As required by DPS and the state of Colorado a Unified Improvement Plan will be developed every year. This plan will be updated monthly by the school's Student Engagement Team (SET) and used to formatively measure where DC-21 is in terms of its goals for improvement. DC-21 will also use the DPS Instructional Superintendent's team (IS, School Improvement Partner, Data Partner) to continuously improve the school to meet the set goals.

C. Attach the school's Uniform School Improvement Plan (UIP) and briefly explain how the proposed innovation plan aligns with UIP goals.
Attached UIP

INNOVATION: TIME

VII. Describe how the school will use time strategically to support the vision, mission and education program so as to produce gains in academic achievement.

- A. Describe any innovations to the school's calendar and schedule under innovation status and how such changes will lead to increased student achievement.**
- 1. Attach the school's proposed calendar and daily schedule of classes under innovation status. Include both a teacher and student schedule.**

Extended School Day, Week and Year

In the last decade research has demonstrated that extended day and extended year programming, with the support of highly qualified teachers, can drastically close achievement gaps demonstrated by low socio-economic students. Because DC-21 students will often, upon starting at the school, have tremendous gaps in

their education, an extended day and extended year is absolutely necessary to close these gaps quickly, supporting all DC-21 students in their quest to be academically proficient and prepared for postsecondary readiness.

The school will work on an extended academic calendar with classes beginning in August. The school calendar will be established annually. All students and teachers will be required to attend this extended year program.

Students and teachers will also have an extended academic day of 8.75 hours (this includes a half hour lunch as well as passing periods) Monday-Thursday, with a 4 hour day on Fridays of which 2 hours is tutoring for students and professional development for teachers while the other 2 hours include mandatory clubs for all. This, including a 4 hour Saturday event 4 times a year, will give students additional learning time month.. All students will have a school schedule from 7:30 to 4:15. GED Plus will be available throughout the schedule. In addition, teachers arrive at school 15 minutes earlier than students, adding another hour onto their actual work week. Teachers will receive a stipend, determined yearly based on DC21 budget, for this extra duty.

GED Plus students will be required to engage in full time programming to ensure postsecondary readiness. DC-21 students living in the NNE area will be able to take the NNE shuttle service from 6:30 am to 6:30 pm. Those not living in the area will be provided RTD bus passes at either half price or free depending on the student's location and free and reduced lunch status. Out-of-district student will be able to purchase a bus pass at half price.

Additionally, students not meeting their academic goals will be required to participate in after school activities that include mandatory tutoring and/or credit recovery. Students wishing to participate in credit bearing extra-curricular activities may also participate in after school activities. Intramural sports and clubs (art/mural club, dancing, debate, service learning, leadership, college league and other engaging avenues of interest developed by school staff, community and the students themselves) will be available after school from 5:00 to 6:00. All school activities will be available for students to earn credit. DC-21 will partner extensively with community-based organizations such as Project VOYCE, 4 Aspects and Young Life in the Enrichment classes and afterschool activities.

Attached 2011-2012 (Sample/ Add extended year in June), 2012-2013(sample)

Attached Master Schedule

2. Summarize the length of the school day, including start and dismissal times.

Students and teachers will also have an extended academic day of 8.75 hours (this includes a half hour lunch as well as passing periods) Monday-Thursday, with a 4 hour day on Fridays of which 2 hours is tutoring for students and professional development for teachers while the other 2 hours include mandatory clubs for all. This, including a 4 hour Saturday event 4 times a year, will give students additional learning time All students will have a school schedule from 7:30 to 4:15. GED Plus will be available throughout the schedule.

1. Summarize the total number of hours and days of instruction for core subjects

such as language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Explain how the calendar will support the success of the innovation program.

The Extended Day/Extended Year calendar supports the success of DC-21 students because it allows for extra time on-task and shorter more frequent breaks. This is beneficial in three ways. First it allows students who may have difficulty with truancy and behavior to recuperate time on task. This allows for students who are having difficulty academically more time for intervention. In addition, this calendar allows for a great deal of team planning time and professional development for teachers every day. This allows them more time to work together around the achievement of each individual student. Finally it allows for frequent but shortened breaks, providing both the students and the teachers time to take a breath so that neither one burns out. It also ensures that students do not regress academically or behaviorally.

2. Summarize the total number of hours and days allocated for tiered interventions, enrichment, tutoring and other non-academic activities.

Including afterschool tutoring and activities, the total number of hours for tiered intervention, enrichment, tutoring and other non-academic activities is 14 hours per week.

INNOVATION: STUDENT ENROLLMENT

VIII. Describe the enrollment procedures and practices of the school with innovation status.

A. Describe how enrollment practices will provide equal access to any student in your attendance boundary who is interested in attending the school, including students in poverty, academically low-achieving students, students with disabilities, and other youth at risk of academic failure.

DC-21 is a DPS Multiple Pathway Center. To become a student at DC-21 you must be considered over-aged and under-credited, dropped out, describe yourself as being disengaged from another school setting, or be on-track to become at high risk for becoming over- aged and under-credited or dropped out based on low attendance, behavior and/or failure of courses. The school accepts self-referrals and school/organizational referrals with a successful application and interview process.

Students who wish to attend DC-21 will complete an application and be interviewed by DC-21 staff. The purpose of the interview and application is to successfully begin the student's journey to becoming a DC-21 Trailblazer. Through this process the student will make an informed decision as to whether he/she would like to attend the school or not. The student will in turn feel that the school is choosing them as well. This process will be strengthened further by having the student attend a week long school culture orientation before formal enrollment.

The interview process (**detailed enrollment process attached**) sets the student up to ensure a positive and successful educational experience at DC-21. This process confirms that the student is choosing to enroll in the school and is committed to changing his/her life while engaging in the rigorous nature of the program. Without this initial buy-in from the student there is little chance for success at DC-21 because

the student is not ready to participate in his/her education. Without this process the student may feel “dumped” into the program and may feel abandoned by his/her comprehensive school. This interview and acceptance process is based on attitude only and is not subject to any form of academic testing.

This interview process was incorporated into the MPC model after several visits to Transfer Schools (schools for high risk students) in New York City. In every instance the students responded to the observer that he/she liked the fact that there was an interview because it made them more serious about attending. One student said that when she first applied she was denied admission to the school. She admitted that it was because she was not ready for the school yet and wanted to continue messing around with her friends. Though she was denied, the school continued to urge her to try again once she was ready. When she was ready, she interviewed again and got into the school. She is now one of the school’s top student leaders and advocates.

Additionally DC-21 will host an Affective Needs Center for severely affected students with emotional disabilities. This center’s capacity will be 15 students. These students will be the only student’s placed at DC-21 and be referred to the center through DPS’ Student Services. Though students will be placed in this center an interview and acceptance letter will be sent to these students as well.

- B. Please attach any written enrollment documents, including the Student Handbook, and/or forms that will be provided to or required of students and families.**

Attached Student Application

Attached Student Enrollment Process

Attached Student/Parent Contract

INNOVATION: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- IX. Describe the proposed plan for staffing, recruiting, selecting, and developing employees, the school’s personnel policies, and the school’s leadership structure. Explain how they will be changed by innovation status, and how these changes will lead to increased student achievement.**

- A. Describe any innovations in the school’s personnel policies under innovation status and how these changes will produce gains in academic achievement.**

To meet the needs of all students and to achieve the academic performance goals outlined in Section XI and in **Appendix D**, DC-21 requires maximum flexibility to design and implement human resource policies and procedures that align with the vision, mission and education plan of the school. DC-21 is committed to hiring outstanding individuals who understand and are prepared to meet the demands of creating a school that produces significant gains in academic achievement for all students.

The innovation plan includes waivers from state statute and the DPS/DCTA collective bargaining agreement, including but not limited to, waiver of the Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act of 1990

Employment Status.

Teacher's employment with DC-21 and the Denver Public Schools will be "at-will" and will not be subject to the Teacher Employment Compensation and Dismissal Act of 1990, § 22-63-101, *et seq.* The teacher will have a right to end his/her work relationship with DC-21 and the Denver Public Schools for any reason at any time. DC-21 and the Denver Public Schools will have the right to end the work relationship with the teacher at any time in accordance with personnel policies in the Employee Handbook.

Teachers employed by the Denver Public Schools who obtained non-probationary status in the Denver Public Schools prior to their employment at DC-21 will be at-will as described in the preceding paragraph. Such teachers will regain their non-probationary status with DPS upon securing, without break in service, a mutual consent position within another DPS school. Such teachers will have the right to participate in the DPS staffing cycles available to all DPS teachers, but will not be guaranteed placement in any other school or further employment beyond their employment at DC-21 if they do not secure a position through mutual consent.

The employment of secretaries and paraprofessionals with DC-21 and the Denver Public Schools will be "at-will." Secretaries and paraprofessionals will have a right to end his/her work relationship with DC-21 and the Denver Public Schools for any reason at any time. DC-21 and Denver Public Schools will have the right to end the work relationship with secretaries and paraprofessionals for any reason at any time in accordance with personnel policies in the Employee Handbook.

The employment of custodians and facilities managers with DC-21 will be "at-will." DC-21 can release custodians and facilities managers from the school for any reason at any time, provided school leadership proposes, and the District approves, an alternative custodial and facilities management solution. The employment rights of custodians and facilities managers with the District that have been released from DC-21 will be determined by District policy and the applicable collective bargaining agreement or memorandum of understanding.

As described in this document, including in **Appendix E**, DC-21 is requesting maximum flexibility to:

- Recruit and hire all staff, including teachers, administrators, and other support personnel, using practices that will ensure employee fit with the school's Innovation Plan.
- Post all vacant positions and recruit and hire all staff as the need arises, even if such need falls outside the District's standard hiring cycle.
- Not receive direct placements of teachers by the District.
- Create non-traditional job descriptions, which may include adding roles and responsibilities to any job. Establish the calendar, work year, work week, work day, job assignments, class size and teaching loads to align with the Innovation Plan.
- Create a governance and leadership structure that aligns with the Innovation Plan.
- Engage contractors and/or part-time staff to teach specialized courses without the requirement of state licensing; the school will hire teachers who meet the highly qualified requirements for all core content classes.
- Create a professional development program that supports the Innovation Plan. The School will have the option to participate in District-provided professional development.

- Create a process to address under-performing employees.
- Establish compensation rates and other methods of rewarding performance and extra work time, including additional bonuses and/or incentives. These rates can be negotiated between the teacher/staff member and the Administrative Team.
- Implement other programs and policies, such as a dress code and employee and student conduct expectations, that will support the school's culture as described in the Innovation Plan.

Such flexibility will be limited only by federal law, and the Colorado statutes, Collective Bargaining Agreement provisions and District Board policies not waived in this application.

Effective teachers are the single most important factor in raising student achievement, especially with low-achieving students. The flexibility to staff the school with the most effective and committed teachers, afforded by the innovations in personnel policies, will allow DC-21 to reach its goals of high academic growth.

- B. **Describe any innovations in the school's staffing plan under innovation status and how these changes will produce gains in academic achievement.**

Teaching Time vs. Non-Contact Time

Though all staff will have a standard 40 hour week (except when they work the 4 hour Saturday 4 times a year), they will work nine hour days four days a week and a four hour day on Friday. Monday – Thursday teachers will have 3 hours of free planning time and 3 hours of common planning time along with 2 hours of professional development on Fridays. The total of non-student contact time will be 8 hours per week.

Attach a copy of the school's organizational chart with innovation status.

- a. **Highlight any changes in the organizational structure with innovation status and how these changes will lead to increased student achievement.**
- C. **Describe any innovations in the school's process for identifying, recruiting, and selecting new staff under innovation status and how these changes will lead to increased student achievement.**
1. **Explain the strategies and processes to identify and recruit faculty, support staff and administrative staff.**

DC-21 will use the DPS web site and job fairs to recruit staff. DC-21 will recruit and select personnel as needed, at any time in the year, potentially outside of DPS hiring cycles.

2. **Describe selection criteria and other qualifications for faculty, support staff, and administrative staff that will ensure fit with the vision, mission and academic language of the school.**

Teachers selected to teach at DC-21 will participate in a robust selection process. Elements of the interview process may include: Teaching a lesson, responding to a set of data, including writing a plan for next steps in using the data, a group interview, a formal face to face interview and robust reference

checking.

The job description and performance criteria for the interview will include evidence of strong mastery of content, student academic growth, collaboration and teamwork, impact in community, and project-based learning. Additionally, teachers will need to demonstrate a commitment to the DC-21 program and participation in the collaborative learning community.

- D. Describe any innovations in the school's compensation system under innovation status and how these changes will lead to increased student achievement.**
- 1. Describe any incentive or reward programs and how they align with the vision and mission of the school.**

Staff at DC-21 will receive additional compensation for extended year programming. Retreats and additional extra time will be compensated through stipend. All staff are expected to participate in the Saturday parent conferences 4 times a year for 4 hours each. These days will be considered part of the 181 day school year. Flexibility will be provided as needed. This is communicated to staff through the Staff Handbook before the time of hire.

This compensation package will have, as its foundation, the salary system established in the DPS/DCTA ProComp Agreement. All full time employees at DC-21 will participate in PERA. Should any staff or faculty member transfer from DC-21 to another DPS assignment, all pension benefits will be portable and there shall be no loss of benefit.

- E. Describe any innovations in the school's professional development plan under innovation status and how these changes will lead to increased student achievement.**

DC-21's professional development plan focuses on four main priority areas. These focus areas are:

Learning and Instruction--including standards based curriculum design and delivery, differentiation, and data driven/assessment based instruction. This will be done in PLCs during the school day under the supervision of the Dean of Instruction with assistance from the Teacher Effectiveness Coach.

Intentional School Culture—including proactive, social skills development and behavioral expectations, and the strategies to support our students in achieving the skills and fulfilling the expectations.

Family and Community Engagement—including strategies for fully engaging our families and community by providing expectations, strategies, and techniques that ensure that all of our families are supporting the learning of our students in ways that are most appropriate for the individual family.

Professional Culture—including the development of a professional culture for success based on research-based and proven strategies that result in a true, highly functional Professional Learning Community (PLC). DC-21's PLC will have four main priorities:

- A focus on learning, as opposed to teaching, to ensure that our instructional methods and techniques result in high levels of student growth and achievement;
- A collaborative culture, with our staff working interdependently to achieve shared goals;

- A focus on results, as measured by multiple assessment instruments;
- The use of timely, relevant data to drive instruction and provide the means for differentiated instruction for our students.

F. Explain how the school will demonstrate a spirit of collaboration so as to share innovative practices across the entire district. Professional Development Autonomy.

DC-21 will collaborate with the rest of the district in the following ways:

- Teacher Leaders will participate in DPS Teacher Leadership Academy
- Teachers will have the opportunity for Instructional Coaching and support from a DPS Teacher Effectiveness Coach who will assist with creating and implementing the school's PD Plan/Calendar
- Teachers will have the opportunity to study and share together in yearly school-wide PDU
- Collaboration with other schools in monthly Intensive Pathways Network meetings
- SmartLab Demonstration School
- Teacher Effectiveness Coach will implement DPS recommended professional development, sharing DPS initiatives as well as DC21 innovations
- Teachers will host student interns and student teachers from MSUD, DU and others

G. Describe any innovations in the school's performance management system under innovation status and how these changes will lead to increased student achievement.

1. Describe policies and procedures for establishing individual employee goals.

DC21 will have the flexibility to administer a teacher evaluation system that is in alignment with its mission, vision, values and educational program. DC21 intends to use LEAP, the district's teacher evaluation process, as a foundation and may adapt LEAP or adopt an alternative evaluation system in the future.

Although we are using LEAP as a teacher evaluation model (and our instructional model this year is more—though not totally-- compatible with the LEAP framework) we are making a small adjustment to the times for administrative observations. Our administrators will visit classrooms far more often than is required by LEAP, but the observations will be for shorter periods of time. Administrators will be visiting classrooms on an almost daily basis in order to collect data, provide feedback, and offer support in the domains of Learning Environment, Instruction, and Professionalism. Formal LEAP evaluations will be done two times a year by DC21 Administrators and two times a year by Peer Observers. Teacher Effectiveness Coach will work with individuals on specific LEAP indicators in order to support them in improving instruction.

Additionally, we are looking forward to an Intensive Pathway Appendix to the LEAP framework.. We are aware that most of our students are here because they were not successful in their "traditional" school settings. Consequently, we strive to create 'non-traditional' learning environments which do not always synch with the LEAP rubric for effective teaching in a traditional classroom. Nonetheless, we hold ourselves to high standards and have made visible progress over the past three years in creating the academic culture in our school that is defined by the LEAP framework rubric.

2. Describe policies and procedures for evaluating staff, providing feedback and celebrating excellence.

Teachers will be evaluated using the DPS LEAP evaluation frameworks, which include student growth data as measured on standardized assessments, principal observations and student feedback. All teachers will be evaluated 4 times per year using the DPS effective teaching framework and student progress monitoring. Two of these evaluations will be done by DC21 Administrators and two will be done by DPS Peer Observers.

3. Describe who is involved in the evaluation process, how feedback will be provided, and how often.

Consistent with the DPS LEAP evaluation system, the principal, the assistant principal, and peer observers will be involved in the evaluation process. Teachers will be evaluated 4 times per year and will receive feedback on progress toward individual growth goals and student achievement gains. Formal feedback meetings with administrators will take place twice a year while informal feedback will happen on an almost daily basis one-on-one as well as during collaborative planning meetings and in emails.

4. Explain how the school will handle unsatisfactory leadership and teacher performance.
a. Describe employee remediation policies and procedures.

Teachers will be provided with differentiated professional development and support as determined by their supervisor. Teacher Effectiveness Coach will be available for instructional coaching. Teachers will be notified in daily Common Planning meetings about expectations for turning in lesson plans and student data. Reminders will be sent by the Dean of Instruction and follow-up support will be provided by the dean and administrators.

Remediation and dismissal procedures will be consistent with the DC-21's innovation plan and as outlined in the Employee Handbook. The school leader will have final decision-making authority on all remediation and dismissal procedures.

5. Describe how the performance management system will be used to drive improvements in teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

Frequent observation and feedback will be used to drive instructional improvements that will result in increased student achievement. Administrators will be visiting classrooms on an almost daily basis in order to collect data, provide feedback, and offer support in the domains of Learning Environment, Instruction, and Professionalism. Teacher Effectiveness Coach will work with individuals on specific LEAP indicators in order to support them in improving instruction.

H. Describe any innovations to the school's leadership structure as a result of innovation status and how these changes will lead to increased student achievement.

The leadership structure that is a result of innovation is that of adding the Academic Dean position. The dean visits classrooms on a daily basis and meets with groups of teachers (Academic Teachers, Middle School, Electives, Special Education) three times a week in order to make sure that there is consistency of

instructional practice as well as academic rigor throughout the school. The dean gathers the progress monitoring documents from teachers and makes sure that students who need help are being identified and attended to. This is one of the areas that seems to be reaping the most benefits as the school culture is becoming more “academic” every day. This academic culture is clearly evident as one walks through the school. Students are in class; they are engaged; they are learning and earning credit.

- I. **Describe the qualifications and capacity of school leadership (i.e., skills, experience, and available time) to identify and respond to the needs of the school and to ensure the innovation plan is successfully implemented.**

(See attached Resume for Christian De La Oliva)

- J. **Provide a detailed leadership succession plan which engages the school’s parents and teachers to ensure consistency and stability in implementing the mission and vision of the innovation plan.**
 1. **If there is a change in leadership, describe the process the community will engage in to identify and recommend qualified candidates.**

In the event that the current school principal vacates the position, the Collaborative School Advisory Committee (CSAC), which includes the school leadership team, a business community representative, two core teachers, one paraprofessional, the business/office manager, three parent representatives, three student representatives will be responsible for implementing the principal selection process. The school leadership team will select their two top candidates in consultation with CSAC and make recommendations to the DPS Superintendent. Potential applicants who currently work at the school will not be able to participate in or attend any selection related meetings. A neutral person will be invited to facilitate all faculty and parent/community meetings.

The selection process will include: a faculty meeting to identify characteristics and criteria of desired new leader that are consistent with the innovation plan; a parent/community meeting to identify characteristics and criteria of desired new leader that are consistent with the innovation plan; development of a job description based on faculty and parent/community input; posting of position of DPS website and other related sources; development of interview questions and selection criteria rubric based on job description and input on criteria; application screening and scoring; reference checks on top candidates; conduct interviews including performance tasks; host a public symposium for finalists; conduct site visits to finalists current schools; school leadership team selects final candidates; submits recommendation of two finalists to Superintendent for final selection; announce position acceptance to staff, students, parents, and community. Furthermore, the DC21 will collaborate with DPS Human Resources Department to implement the selection process.

INNOVATION: SCHOOL GOVERNANCE & PARENT ENGAGEMENT

X. Describe proposed changes to the school's governance structure and parent engagement strategy. How will these changes produce gains in academic achievement?

Y.

A. Describe your plan to ensure a robust and participatory governance structure that will provide accountability and support to the school.

DC-21 will utilize a Student Engagement Team (SET) as its primary participatory governance structure. The SET will be comprised of the Principal, Assistant Principal, a teacher representative for each grade level and content area, school specialists (e.g., counselor, and administrative staff). The SET will meet once a week to address matters including but not limited to:

- Instruction, assessment, student learning outcomes, and student success
- School culture and climate
- Professional development
- Budget, finance, and resource development
- Recruitment and hiring
- Family and community engagement

In addition to the SET, DC-21 will create a Collaborative School Advisory Committee (CSAC) that will include representatives from the SET and be expanded to include parents, students and community representatives. Parents will be recruited to represent the broad range of DC-21 students. Community representatives will be recruited to provide guidance and assistance in developing resources that directly support the mission and academic and social skills building components of DC-21. The full CSAC will meet on a quarterly basis to provide advice and feedback to DC-21 primarily with regard to the academic success of our students, and the development of a strong resource base to support the overall instruction at DC-21.

B. Describe the parent and community engagement plan that will be implemented to support the school's mission

The families of DC-21 students will represent a very wide cross section of our community and we know that ALL of our families want to support their students' in the best way possible. As such, each family will have its own, unique set of assets that can support their students' learning, as well as a unique set of challenges that may, in some form, limit their level of engagement and participation. Therefore, DC-21 will provide our families with a varied and diverse set of options for directly supporting student learning and success. This "menu" of options will range from a set of expectations for creating time and space at home for school assignments/homework, reading, etc. to directly supporting school based learning activities such as help in classrooms and other activities and events that take place in our school and community . The key is that each family commit to that level of support that is appropriate to their life situation.

C. Describe how innovation status will be used to leverage parental involvement.

DC-21's Innovation status will directly impact our family engagement options such as providing

them additional opportunities to spend time at our school learning about and directly support their students' learning (e.g., regular Saturday conferences and events).

Parent communication and partnership will occur often and deliberately in both positive contexts and during needed student growth opportunities. Home visits, phone calls, text messages, newsletters, website, etc., will be used to create positive family support relationships in addition to an open school-family daily relationship that will intentionally promote trust and transparency between the school's teachers/staff and families. Our intention is to build out our Saturday conference sessions to include family potlucks along with achievement ceremonies.

- D. **Describe any community partnerships needed to implement the school's innovation plan.**
1. **Describe any other community partnership or services you anticipate developing as a result of innovation status.**

Community partnerships are integral to our innovation status. These partnerships are created to provide enrichment opportunities for the students and will evolve as need arises. Current partnerships include:

- Project VOYCE
- 4 Aspects
- Young Life

INNOVATION: BUDGET

- XI. **Provide a budget and an estimate of potential cost savings and increased efficiencies as a result of innovation status. Explain how the school's allocation of resources, as reflected in the budget, supports the vision, mission and education plan.**

Overview:

Similar to Summit Academy and Vista Academy, two other Multiple Pathway Schools in DPS, DC21 is funding using the district's SBB+ model that ensures adequate funding for schools that serve higher-risk students. Although the SBB+ number (Student Base Budget plus subsidy) is not identical to Vista or Summit Academies, the process was similar in arriving at a —suggested|| first year operating budget reflecting the mission and needs of the school.

A. Financial Model and Stability- The model as developed with assistance from the Instructional Superintendent and the Budget Office will provide stability in year one and on-going through program growth. Although future *desired* activities and program enhancements will require new resources, there is no operational shortfall in FY 2011 or in future years.

B. Budget Narrative- Allocation of resources including staff, non-salary, and projected expenses are shown in the attached five year budget. Budget is a reflection of the Instructional Superintendents and school leader's guiding principles for what is needed to drive student achievement. Additionally, the vision, mission, and plan of the school are directed in large part by those guiding principles for each multiple pathway site and are

outlined below.

1. Revenue and allocation of resources

- All MPC's should have a competency based curriculum that allows students to demonstrate mastery and accelerate their learning and earning of credits.
- All MPC's are to require students to participate in learning during extended hours – both after school and Saturday in very structured activities emphasizing academic catch-up/keep-up and acceleration, college/career readiness, and soft skills such as interviewing/resume building, conflict management, community service/citizenship, financial literacy, etc.
- All MPC's should require students to earn college credit as a part of their graduation requirements, either through concurrent enrollment or AP courses.
- All MPC's should connect all students to CTE courses – there will be differences here based on in building programs – CLA and Wyman should have strong partnerships with CEC and EGOS
- All MPC's should have strong credit recovery programs and GED Plus programs – the Plus emphasizes college and career planning and entry over just earning a GED score. Student understands that the goal isn't just the score but the connection to postsecondary options.
- All MPC's should provide all students with strong support with college/career planning and have individualized learning plans for all students where students are very clear of their program required for graduation and when they graduate.
- All MPC's should have the highest expectations for student behavior and academic performance, value student voice, require student buy-in through the signing of a contract and not compromise on these expectations.
- All MPC's should have a robust admission process that tries to ensure students are committed to the learning plan developed for them and the extended hours to help ensure they graduate college and career ready.
- All MPC's should work to develop partnerships with community based organizations to help provide wrap-around services for students and families as needed – I recognize that some partnerships will be limited initially due to some economic challenges – it's important that partnerships with non-profits and for profit organizations are explored, including but not limited to organizations that support parents, students, dropouts, mental health, etc. The point is to assist in providing wrap around services for students in addition to those available at the school.
- All MPC's should have strong relationships with the other high schools so that we are transitioning students from other schools to MPC's without them first having to dropout or having to be sent away. The lion's share of this work should be done each 2nd semester of each year beginning now so that MPC's are at least 80-5% of capacity by October and at capacity (schools may go slightly over) by December.
- All MPC's should hire teachers who are committed to the mission of the school and doing what's necessary to uphold the mission, high expectations, develop and

contribute to a positive school culture, and build relationships with students and communicate with their parents.

- All MPC's must have strong tutoring and mentoring programs available to support students throughout the day and after school on day one – beyond – a classroom teacher, counselor, administrator who makes connections with the students beyond the school day and helps to ensure they are receiving the intensive supports MPC's are expected to provide.
- Teacher to student ratio's remain do not exceed 20:1 (450 student school) whenever possible. 15:1 is preferable desirable

2. Revenue Sources- There are no additional revenue sources that are in the budget or essential to operation of the school as defined by the above guiding principles.

3. Additional Operating Costs- Additional operating costs are defined in the staffing projections model in the budget and are shown in the non-salary and Innovative Activities Status tabs. These costs (Intervention staff, CTE programs, tutoring, etc.) are inclusive and are estimated at \$2500-\$3000 per student/per year. One time implementation costs are shown (\$322,000) in the budget attachment. These costs are defined in the staff and non-salary tabs. These costs are covered by the District's General Operating Funds.

4. Cost Savings- Long term savings in staff and general operating costs will be enhanced through contracted services such as 4 Aspects and Project Voyce. These organizations will be providing staff members at approximately 20%-40% of full-time DPS staff. Other cost saving measures connected to the innovative status will include the use of pro-tech staff where appropriate and inclusion of GED Test Centers thus saving and potentially generating revenue for DC-21. Year-round programming will also provide a more efficient use of staff in relation to providing services to more DPS students. This model could provide additional FTE (Full Time Equivalent) to DPS and may also lead to a larger student October count thus offsetting some of the additional subsidy costs.

C. Policies and Processes to Ensure Sound Financial Management-

Financial management at DC-21 will be reviewed and audited by District Financial partners assigned to DC-21 by the Budget Office. Management of the day-to-day financial activities, contractual obligations, budget planning and execution, and budget development for the next school year will be through the DC-21 Office Manager. DC-21 has determined that a staff person with previous school and management experience will be the sound use of DC-21's resources. Additionally, DC-21 will hire an Office Support II position to work with the Office Manager.

INNOVATION: OTHER PROGRAMS, POLICES, OPERATIONAL DOCUMENTS

XII. Describe any other innovations not yet explained in the application and how such innovations will lead to increased student achievement.

- A. Describe any other programs, policies, and/or operational documents at the school that would be affected by the proposed innovations, how these programs, policies and/or operational documents would be affected, and how the changes will lead to increased student achievement.

DC21 does not have additional innovations, other than those explained in this plan.

WAIVERS

XIII. Describe the waivers you are requesting from DPS policies, collective bargaining provisions and state statutes. Clearly describe the replacement policies and practices that the school is proposing for each waiver.

See attached Appendix E.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FACULTY SUPPORT

XIV. Provide evidence of administrative and faculty support

Administrators, faculty, and other staff employed by the school will receive a copy of the Innovation Plan. By accepting employment at DC-21, employees are showing their belief in and commitment to the innovation plan.

Letters of support for DC21 Innovation Plan Renewal attached.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

XV. Provide evidence of community support

See Attachments for Letters of Support (These were for initial plan approval)

- a. PROJECT VOYCE
- b. 4ASPECTS

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS

- Teacher Schedule
- Student Schedule
- Student Handbook
- Personnel Policies
- Written Enrollment Documents and Forms Provided to Families
- Organizational Chart
- Committee Descriptions (NA)
- By Laws (NA)
- Five-Year Budget
- Evidence of Administrative Support
- Evidence of Faculty Support (NA)
- Letter of Support from CSC (NA)
- Letters of Support from Community Based Organizations

APPENDIX A

Request Waivers in Curricular Materials & Instructional Design

- Class sizes vary from a 1:20 in advisory and core classes and 1:28 in CTE and Enrichment courses. The typical classroom will have space for whole group, small group, and individual instruction.
- DC21 may request the flexibility to revise curriculum to meet the unique needs of our quarter system and our unique population of students as directed by the District.
- The School's education program will meet or exceed the minimum standards of the District and state.

Middle School:

The outcome for all DC-21 middle school students is to be prepared for an accelerated high school experience leading to post-secondary success. This is defined as demonstrating catch-up or keep-up growth projection in both their formative MAP assessments and Acuity and finally on the TCAP. At DC-21 each assessment will be extremely important to the student as he/she understands that demonstrating proficiency on the test will open doors in high school (i.e. their ability to leave campus to participate in other CTE programs and/or earn college credit through concurrent enrollment and AP classes.)

It is the school's intention to have each middle school student develop enough interpersonal growth that by the time he/she reaches high school the student has intrinsically developed his/her own motivation to graduate and be prepared for college and/or career. Though this will, of course, be a process that will first demand extrinsic, immediate rewards, DC-21 is confident that through a collaborative teacher/student model students will understand why proficiency is so vital to their future.

High School:

Similar to the middle school outcome, the high school outcome can be stated simply; students will be prepared by graduation, for any and all post-secondary options. This will be assessed through the same assessments used in the middle school but will also be additionally ascertained through proficiency on the ACT and Accuplacer tests. In high school, the stakes, in terms of demonstrating proficiency, are even higher due to the fact that they are tied to credit and graduation. Constant feedback and formative assessment is essential to ensure that the student remains on track. Additionally interpersonal development in preparation for the student to succeed in a professional world is crucial to the post-secondary success of all students. This form of education will be supported in several ways. The culture that will exist at DC-21 will be a culture of professional conduct; the school will support students in this area using several organizations to match upper high school students with internships, while also teaching work-ready career skills.

Finally, the critical ingredient to both the middle school and the high school is college. Students at both levels will be exposed to a culture of college expectations in that all students must be college ready before graduation. This means that the student will be able to attend any college in the state without remediation.

Additionally 100% of our student graduates will be required to apply to college or another post-secondary institution such as a vocational institute. The purpose of this is to not only ensure that students are prepared, but to convince the students themselves that they are college material. In the end it is critical that the student knows that he or she, from the point of graduation on, will always have a choice to attend college.

DC-21 Academic Core:

Standards (CCSS & CAS) based curriculum: DC 21 teachers will use Common Core State Standards and Colorado Academic Standards to backward-plan instruction designed to teach essential concepts and prepare students for end-of-course assessments in order to earn credit. Core classes will last 90 minutes each day and will allow students to earn a full semester of credit each 9 weeks. Across the curriculum teachers will focus on two priority strategies; *academic language and demonstration of higher level thinking skills through written expression*. Recent research has identified both skills as leverage points, leading to post-secondary reading.

- **Apex Learning:** DC-21 will use APEX Learning, a DPS approved, research-based online curriculum (worth 60% of a student's grade) for its high school credit recovery program (www.apexlearning.com). Digital curriculum from Apex Learning makes it possible to individualize instruction to address diverse student needs. Direct instruction incorporates multimedia — in the form of images, audio, video, animations, and interactive elements — along with instructional text to provide students with multiple representations of concepts as well as address their different learning styles. Formative assessments help students to gauge their understanding and improve performance, while summative assessments chart progress and skill development. Unit-level diagnostics allow students to move quickly over material they have previously mastered. Apex Learning digital curriculum is designed to support academic success for all students, including those who have not been successful in traditional programs. Foundations courses meet the needs of students who are not prepared for grade-level academic challenges and need to develop basic skills in math, reading, and writing before tackling high school academic courses. Literacy Advantage courses integrate literacy scaffolding to support below-proficient readers in mastering required content in high school math, science, English, and social studies courses. Apex Learning Core courses meet the needs of a range of students as they endeavor to master rigorous content and earn credits toward graduation.
- **Middle School:** DC-21 will use the DPS approved middle school curriculum, scope and sequence. Connected Math, Springboard, and TCI curricula will be used.
- **SmartLabs:** SmartLabs are research-based 21st century learning labs designed for the exploration of STEM, digital media arts and other academic topics through applied technology. SmartLabs are fully-integrated classroom systems that include hardware, software, scientific and media equipment, hands-on construction kits and flexible furniture systems. SmartLabs are full turnkey programs including curriculum, and assessment systems, professional development and ongoing technical and professional support. SmartLabs meet each student where they are and take them as far as they are able to go. The student-centered approach in a SmartLab challenges and empowers learners to explore topics of personal interest. Projects are open-ended and appropriate to the ability of each learner. As a result, SmartLabs succeed in engaging learners of all abilities and interests in STEM – including girls and underrepresented minorities. Based on a recent survey of SmartLab schools, SmartLabs have had unparalleled success in reflecting the diversity of the schools they serve. The proportion of girls in SmartLab programs is approximately three times higher than Project Lead the Way. The proportion of African-American enrollments is 62% higher, Hispanic enrollments are 250% higher and Native-American enrollments are 400% higher.
- **CTE Business/Entrepreneurial:** This course will teach both a business and entrepreneurial curriculum engaging students in everything from basic computer skills, marketing, financial literacy, business planning and data analysis.

- **Enrichment:** DC-21 offers five classes for students to choose from: Physical Education, Systems Leadership and Change, Life Skills, DPS Student Board (only 11th and 12th graders) and Learning to Work. Each class is one semester long and worth 5 credits.
 - Ⓟ *Physical Education*—Students will be taught wellness and the importance of physical activity to a healthy lifestyle
 - Ⓟ *Systems Leadership and Change*—PROJECT VOYCE will partner with DC-21 to provide this class that is meant for students to empower themselves through learning by taking a cr critical view of their world while defining themselves as part of that change
 - Ⓟ *Life Skills*—4Aspects will partner with DC-21 to support the development of students’ interpersonal skills and how to create a healthy and happy lifestyle. Some topics to be covered are gang prevention, anger management, leadership, drug and alcohol prevention and personal responsibility
 - *Learning to Work*—Students learn work readiness skills and are matched with an internship
 - Ⓟ *DPS Student Board*—Students will take on a problem in their school such as low morale, uniforms, CSAP participation etc. and work to become leaders in solving this problem. Two students from this class will become DPS Student Board members.

APPENDIX B

Request Alternative Benchmark Assessment Program

The school is not requesting to waiver any district assessments.

APPENDIX C

Request Alternative Graduation & Promotion Standards

Schools requesting waivers from DPS's graduation and promotion standards are required to complete the questions in Appendix C. Note that the approval process for securing waivers in these areas is separate from the approval process for securing innovation status. Waivers in curriculum, assessments, and/or promotion and graduation policies are granted by the Chief Academic Office, the Instructional Superintendent, and Assistant Superintendent. Requests for waivers in this application will be forwarded to the CAO and appropriate IS for review.

- 1. Explain the school's policies and standards for promoting students from one grade to the next. Describe how and when promotion and graduation criteria will be communicated to parents and students.**

DC-21 will be on a quarter system, and reports will be communicated quarterly. Promotion to the next grade level is based on the credits acquired and student move up to successive grade levels as soon as they earn the required credit for that grade level. Awarding credit will be based demonstrating 80% proficiency on course outcomes. If a student has *not* attained 80% of the course outcomes by the end of quarter, the student will be counseled one-on-one and the grade will be left open with an Incomplete. The student will then have until the end of the extended year (June 30) to complete the work. DC-21 core classes do not give any grade lower than a B. Promotions will occur at any time throughout the year. Middle School students will be promoted to the next grade level when they pass all required academic classes.

Promotion and graduation criteria will be given to parents in the Parent/Student Handbook before the student enrolls at DC-21. Parents will receive regular communication regarding their student's progress.

- 2. Provide the school's exit standards for graduating students. Exit standards should clearly set forth what students in the last grade you anticipate serving will know and be able to do.**

Student will meet all DPS Board Graduation Requirements.

- 3. Explain how graduation and/or promotion requirements will ensure student readiness for college and other postsecondary opportunities.**

DC-21's mission is to prepare all of its students for post-secondary readiness. Our chief means of accomplishing this goal is our core curriculum which is based on students achieving proficiency on Common Core State Standards and Colorado Academic Standards. The Common Core is intentionally and expressly designed for the purpose of College and Career Readiness in the 21st Century.

Additionally, our students need a great deal of support with life skills in order to allow them to succeed in college and career. We use human resource practices that ensure our ability to hire and retain supportive, relationship-oriented teachers and staff with a talent for engaging our at-risk students; an "all hands on deck" approach to staffing where teachers and staff are able to flex their hours and work outside of their defined roles.

Students earn credits by demonstrating 80% proficiency in each course taken. Due to this expectation the student can only earn an A or a B. Grade point averages will be calculated once a student has completed a course. If a student has not completed the course the student will receive a "no grade." This will not be factored into the student's GPA.

Transcripts will only reflect DPS course numbers and course titles; this includes all elective courses as well.

APPENDIX D
School Performance Framework Goal Setting Worksheet

DPS School Performance Framework Indicators	Innovation School Annual Achievement Goals and Measures
<p><i>Academic Performance & Success</i></p> <p><u><i>Due to enrollment trends at the school throughout the year, DC-21 will strive for, but cannot guarantee the same results for students beginning at the school after October 1st.</i></u></p>	
<p>Student Growth Over Time Toward State Standards, including the following measures: TCAP and other assessments chosen, including assessments in compliance with the Colorado Basic Literacy Act</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of all DC-21 students will meet the state's Catch UP/Keep UP growth projections based on TCAP <p>80% of all DC-21 students will improve 2 RIT points on the MAP test from Fall to Spring</p>
<p>Student Achievement Level/Status, including the following measures: CSAP and other assessments chosen, including assessments in compliance with the Colorado Read Act Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Achievement gaps (FRL, ELL, Special Education, and ethnic subgroups)</p>	<p>After receiving a base-line for TCAP, DC-21 will improve in all subject and grade areas by 10% or more per year</p> <p>DC-21 will meet AYP</p> <p>80% of all DC-21 students will meet the state's Catch UP/Keep UP growth projections based on TCAP to close the achievement gaps</p>
<p>Post-Secondary Readiness (for high schools), including the following measures: Colorado ACT scores Graduation rate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College acceptance rate • • 	<p>80% of students taking the ACT will have a score of 20. DC-21 will improve their rate of students passing with a score of 20 by 5% per year</p> <p>Among students who start the 9th grade at DC-21, DC-21 will have an 80% graduation rate</p> <p>Among those students who start later than 9th grade DC-21 will have an 80% completion rate</p> <p>DC-21 will have a 80% college acceptance rate</p> <p>Average Yearly Credits 140 credits</p>

<p>Student Engagement, including the following measures:</p> <p>Attendance rate Student satisfaction</p>	<p>Attendance Improvement 75% Student Satisfaction 90%+ Truancy Rate >77% Parent Satisfaction Survey 90% Parent Response Return 80% HS Attendance Rate (ADA) 86.2%</p>
<p>School-Specific Educational Objectives (must be based on <i>valid, reliable</i> measures)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT composite will increase from 14-16 • The number of students scoring Proficient and Advanced on TCAP (all grades and subjects) will improve by 5%
<p><i>Organizational & Financial Viability</i></p>	
<p>School Demand, including the following measures:</p> <p>Enrollment rate Re-enrollment rate Continuous enrollment rate</p>	<p>DC-21 will meet its projected enrollment on a yearly basis by Oct.1</p> <p>Based on DC-21's Alternative Education Campus Status the school will not be held accountable for a re-enrollment rate</p> <p>DC-21 will have 80% continuous enrollment</p>
<p>Financial Fundraising goals Reserves Other</p>	<p>There are no fundraising goals at this time</p> <p>DC-21 will have a positive DPS audit every year</p>
<p>Leadership & Governance Quality</p>	<p>DC-21 will have a Collaborative School Advisory Committee (CSAC) with at least 2 community members, 2 parents, 2 students and 2 teachers; a School Leadership Team (SET) made of Administrators, Support personnel and teachers will meet regularly to ensure smooth daily operations.</p>

Parent & Community Engagement,
including the following measures:

Parent satisfaction

Parent response rate on DPS

Parent Satisfaction Survey

DC-21 will have a 90% parent satisfaction survey

DC-21 will have an 50% or better parent response rat

APPENDIX E
Waiver Request Template

Additional Attachments