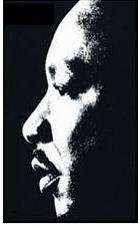


Application for Innovation Status



Martin Luther King, Jr.
EARLY COLLEGE



Submitted to:
Denver Public Schools
Office of School Reform and Innovation



Submitted by:
Innovation Status Planning Committee
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1. A statement of the school's mission and why designation as an Innovation School would enhance the school's ability to achieve its mission.

A. Mission

In the spirit and wisdom of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the mission of Martin Luther King, Jr. Early College is to graduate students who are great leaders, great thinkers, and great communicators. The Early College model is a partnership of students, staff, parents, and the community and its pre-collegiate mission includes: 1) providing a rigorous, pre-collegiate, technology-based curriculum; 2) focusing on student empowerment; and 3) respecting cultural diversity in a safe, productive environment.

B. Goals

The ultimate goal of MLK Jr. Early College (MLK EC) is to prepare students for college, academically, socially, and emotionally, and therefore enter and graduate college without remediation courses. Specific academic goals are to: 1) outperform other middle and high schools in Denver Public Schools by achieving higher growth rates and levels of proficiency on CSAP and ACT tests; 2) maintain 94% student attendance; 3) accept 60% of 8th graders accepted into the 9-12 program; 4) achieve 100% graduation, 100% college acceptance, and 100% post-secondary placement; and 5) every student will graduate with 12 college credit courses. It is expected that all students apply for at least three scholarships and apply to least four colleges prior to graduation.

To be a highly innovative and successful school, the principal, faculty and staff at MLK Jr. Early College believe that a quality education depends primarily on the day-to-day efforts and expertise of the people who work in the school – from the support staff, who make sure the school is an inviting and secure place to learn, to the teachers and staff, who work directly to ensure that students learn, to the principal and assistant principals, who provide the leadership, resources and support needed for all staff to do their jobs well. The key to the success is the collective efforts of the faculty, staff and administrative team, who have sufficient freedom and opportunity to make decisions that best meet the needs of their school community.

We are in the last year of implementing a four-year revitalization plan that was developed with significant community input over the course of nearly a year. At its core, this plan has been about the fundamental transformation of the school's culture and a reconnection of the school with the community it serves. The revitalization plan is organized using the major subject areas being used by the MLK Innovation Committee:

1. Education Program
2. Community Engagement
3. Demographics & Enrollment
4. Fiscal Sustainability

Through the revitalization planning journey we embraced the need to rethink both the “what” and the “how” of learning, and we challenged ourselves to look beyond incremental changes and instead to undertake a “systems approach” to remaking our school. The results of our revitalization plan is that the MLK EC of today is a far different place than it was four years ago. MLK EC has become, through collaborative efforts, a highly focused learning center in pursuit of new and innovative ways for our faculty, staff, and students to acquire knowledge. We came together as a school and

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community in search of ways that we could better serve our kids to prepare them for the rigors of the global marketplace.

We are proud of our accomplishments to date, but we know that there are critical areas of growth ahead. By converting to Innovation status, MLK EC will be able to fully meet its Revitalization Plan goals and fully implement its Early College model, and increase student academic achievement. MLK EC seeks innovation in 10 areas that will help us achieve our goal. They include, developing a course sequence in core content areas based on how students learn best; providing an extended day and school-year to increase student learning; creating a new school governing body; and budgeting to actuals. The combination of innovations around curriculum and assessment, new school calendar, school governance, and budgeting will provide MLK EC the autonomy it needs to meet the goal of the Revitalization Plan.

2. A description of the innovations the school would implement

A. MLK Education Program: 6-12 Early College Model¹

The educational program at MLK EC is founded on a small, highly rigorous early college model. The goal is to prepare students to successfully enter and complete post secondary studies without remediation. What makes MLK unique is the 6th -12th grade continuum, which eliminates the challenges of the transition from middle school to high school and gives the school the opportunity to nurture the academic and career interests of our students through a coherent and articulated seven-year educational program. The MLK EC Revitalization Plan adapts many of the recommendations from the district's high school reform report and aligns with the goals and objectives of the Denver Plan.

Academic Value Proposition

The MLK EC learning community believes that all students can learn and that all students should be prepared for a productive, prosperous life in the 21st century. Because MLK EC utilizes a comprehensive approach—caring adults willing to build relationships and use effective interventions, and strong teachers who offer high-quality instruction through use of best practices and college-oriented programs like AVID—MLK EC students will become both equipped and motivated to succeed at the post-secondary institution of their choosing.

Student Articulation Matrix (6-12)

In partnership with the Community College of Aurora, our partner in the early college, MLK EC is developing a Student Articulation Matrix that provides a roadmap for our students to follow as students move between middle school, high school and college academic work.

All faculty and staff support the development of the skills listed in the matrix by:

- Utilizing a Standards Based classroom model;

¹ The existing education program will remain the same at the school except of the implementation of the innovation described in this proposal.

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- Providing students with a grading system that distinguishes the demonstration of content knowledge (product) from the work habits (process);
- Utilizing common writing rubrics (CSAP for 6-8 and AP for 9-12);
- Maintaining a grade level resource notebook for students and parents which contains the grade level information for each area of the matrix; and
- Holding parent meetings for each grade level to explain expectations and provide resources to parents to support their students in meeting those expectations.

(See Exhibit A: Draft Student Articulation Matrix (6-12))

College Preparation and Advanced Preparation (AP) Courses

All students take college courses through the Community College of Aurora. Please see a sample of course offerings below:

1. Advanced Academic Achievement
2. English Composition 1
3. First Responders
4. General Psychology 1
5. Introduction to Acting, 1, 2
6. Introduction to Computer Applications
7. Introduction to Criminal Justice
8. Introduction to Public Speaking

Current and Proposed Advanced Preparation (AP) courses include:

1. AP Language and Composition
2. AP Literature
3. AP Calculus
4. AP History
5. AP Environmental Science
6. AP Spanish Language
7. AP Spanish Literature
8. AP Human Geonography
9. AP Psychology

Academic Outcomes/Evaluation Strategies and Tools

Middle School Metrics and Interventions

With a relentless focus on student achievement, the middle school faculty relies on a variety of data to implement targeted academic interventions for students. We instituted a series of new and/or expanded educational efforts to support student achievement including, but not limited to: Double Block Schedule, ELA interventions: Read 180, Wilson Language!, and Language Arts Intervention class offerings, and math skill building. In addition, we use AVID strategies and teach students to use student planners. With this relentless focus on student achievement, 100% of MLK EC's first graduating class will graduate this year, and in the DPS "2009 Students on Track to Graduate by School graph", MLK EC had 98.2% of its students on track to graduate; notably, the highest percentage of students on track to graduate in Denver Public Schools.

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High School Metrics and Interventions

The high school faculty use students' 8th grade CSAP scores along with the DPS fall benchmark data to build schedules that are tailored to their individual needs. For example, if the data indicates a student needs math support, she will be double-blocked in mathematics, and because data is reviewed quarterly, we can make timely modifications to that support as students' needs change. In addition, students use SpringBoard and afterschool tutoring for skill-building.

Ultimately, the key outcome for our 12th graders will be high school graduation and matriculation into the college, university, or technical school of their choice, followed by timely graduation from those institutions with an appropriate degree

As we continue to fine tune our high school program, we intend select a series of meaningful metrics to evaluate our success in preparing our students for their high school and post secondary goals. One of the primary methods for tracking each student will be through the use of a Personal Learning Plan (PLP)². Each student will prepare an initial PLP in the spring of each year. PLP's will be updated and monitored. Other indicators used to measure student and school success include:

1. PLAN (pre-ACT)
2. Explore (8th grade)
3. GPA
4. SAT/ACT Scores
5. Accuplacer
6. Dual credits earned while in high school
7. Remediation rates
8. Scholarships awards received
9. College acceptance rates
10. College graduation rates

Advisory and College Preparation: Grades 6-12

MLK EC's advisory program attends to the socio-emotional needs of students, builds cultural capital, and provides structured support for college planning, career planning, life choices, and academic intervention in grades 6-10.³ There are approximately 23 students per class that meet daily for 30 minutes. This daily investment in student advisory is unique among Denver high schools and is a key component in MLK EC's high attendance and on-track-to-graduate rates compared to other schools with similar student populations. Students in grades 11-12 take college courses instead of participating in Advisory.

² DiMartino, J., Clarke, J., & Wolk, D., eds. (2002) *Personalized Learning: Preparing High School Students to Create Their Futures*. Scarecrow Education Press.

³ Killin, T.E., & Williams, R.L. (1995) Making a difference in school climate, counseling services, and student success. *NASSP Bulletin*. 79 (570), 44-50. See also Oshofsky, D., Sinner, G., & Wolk, D. (2003) *Changing Systems to Personalize Learning: The Power of Advisories*. The Education Alliance at Brown University.

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By converting to innovation status, MLK EC will be able to enhance its current educational program to personalize and meet the needs of its student body. Below are the innovations we seek to enhance our educational program.

- B. **Curriculum Autonomy.** (*DPS Policies to be Waived: Voluntary School Initiated Design, Curriculum Development; Statutory Considerations: Plan to Adopt and Implement Content Standards, Determine Educational Program and Provide Textbooks*)

The education plan at MLK EC is a college-preparatory program that prepares students to meet or exceed Colorado State high school graduation requirements. Below are the innovations we seek:

- i. Course Sequences - Develop course sequences in core content areas based on how students learn best. For example, research on high performing schools nationwide shows, for example, that an “integrated spiral” in mathematics—where select topics from different mathematical subjects are taught every year—rather than the traditional linear sequence of mathematics courses, may be more effective in comprehension and retention of mathematical skills and concepts. We want the flexibility to explore more innovative and research-based course sequences, specifically aligned to student strengths. In particular:
 - *English/Language Arts:* We would like for most students to follow the course sequence outlined in the Collegeboard’s Springboard™ curriculum. Students would take World Literature and Composition (Level 5) prior to taking American Literature and Composition (Level 6) to ensure mastery of important analytical concepts. All students would take a college-level English course their senior year (either AP or concurrent enrollment). For students who demonstrated advanced proficiency in Language Arts during their freshman year, we would waive the Introduction to Literature graduation requirement and place them directly into World Literature, allowing them to take at least two college level English courses prior to graduation.
 - *Mathematics:* We would allow students to test out of the Algebra I graduation requirements in order to pursue more advanced courses, such as AP Calculus earlier. In addition to all current mathematics graduation requirements we would require all students to take a financial literacy course prior to graduation. We would like to allow middle school students to test into more advanced mathematics courses, including skipping one or more grade levels of the Connected Math Program.™
 - *Social Studies:* To ensure that all students at MLK develop a sense of social and civic responsibility, we would like to require all freshman to take Civics, rather than waiting until the junior year. In addition, we will require at least one college level social sciences course for graduation through either AP or concurrent enrollment.
 - *Science:* In order to allow students to go more deeply into the area of scientific research, we will require all students, starting with the class of 2014 to take a science research course as a graduation requirement. To assist students in developing deeper understanding of science, we would like to offer two tracks of classes, a physical science and a life science track. Students taking the physical science track would take Earth Science, Chemistry, Physics, and a college-level

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course in an area of their choosing. The life sciences track would include Biology, Chemistry, AP Environmental Science, and a college-level course of their choosing.

It is important to note that these options meet or exceed the current DPS graduation requirements and therefore, any students leaving MLK will be on track for graduation at any of the traditional high schools in DPS. For students entering MLK after the start of their freshman year, a transcript evaluation will be completed by the counseling department and the admissions counselor to determine the feasibility of meeting the additional graduation requirements. The administration will retain the flexibility to waive any of the MLK graduation requirements that exceed the DPS graduation requirements.

- ii. Grade Promotion Requirements - Institute grade promotion requirements that reflect our school's high expectation for student performance. At both the 6-8 and 9-12 grade divisions, students are required to achieve a GPA of 2.5 or higher each quarter, positive behavior, consistent attendance (95% attendance at grades 6-8 and 95% attendance in grades 9-12). The GPA requirement is written to provide guidelines and consistency for students, parents, and teachers in regards to the expectations we have for each student. The selection of the 2.5 benchmark reflects our commitment to ensuring that students are adequately prepared for admission into a post-secondary institution of their choice. We acknowledge that students with disabilities, both high and low incidence, may have unique learning needs and that in order for us to hold students accountable to any GPA requirement, we must ensure that the student has been provided the appropriate accommodations and modifications outlined in the IEP on a consistent basis. In addition, in order to graduate from MLK EC, seniors must have applied to four colleges or universities and three scholarships. (See Exhibit B: MLK 6-8 Promotion Requirement and Exhibit C: MLK 9-12 Promotion Requirements and Exhibit XX: MLK Promotion Requirements and Students with Special Needs)
- iii. Acceleration - Allow for acceleration of all students through grades 6-12 by allowing students in middle school to receive credit for courses taken at the high school level. Currently, students who demonstrate advanced proficiency in mathematics and English can take high school courses, but do not receive credit for them and therefore must re-take them in high school to meet graduation requirement. We would like to allow those students to receive the high school credit while in middle school so that they can accelerate their progress once they are in high school, allowing them to take more college-level courses as upper-classmen. Students who will be enrolled in these courses will be assigned a faculty advisor who will monitor their progress and ensure that they have the necessary academic supports, such as tutoring or peer-mentoring, necessary to succeed in the advanced courses.
- iv. Curriculum - Choose curriculum that is researched based and proven most effective that includes innovative instructional practices with corresponding assessments. The faculty is in the process of reviewing and evaluating its current curricula. Any requests for curricular changes will be made through the District's existing approval processes.

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- v. Development of Additional Courses - Develop courses and course titles that prepare students for college. This includes Public Speaking and Presentation Skills for entering 6th and 9th graders. Every Freshman will take a writing course in addition to Springboard. And 9th and 10th graders will take courses that teach students to conduct science research.
- vi. Acceleration and Concurrent Enrollment - Provide high school level math and English courses to middle school students have access to high school courses. Encouraging accelerated students to complete their high school requirements early allows more opportunity for them to take college level courses in their Junior and Senior years.
- vii. Extended Day and Remediation and Acceleration - Develop 'extended day' courses that provide additional support for students. Staff will design and lead courses for acceleration and remediation for the extended day program, which will require modification of DPS curriculum and supplementing it with additional content in English, math, and presentation skills.
- viii. MLK Course Catalogue - Create own course catalog in Infinite Campus to better manage scheduling.

By converting to Innovation status, MLK EC will be able to tailor and personalize their academic program to build student academic skills and prepare them for college.

C. Extended School Calendar and Schedule. (DPS Policies to be waived: Transportation, Professional Staff Contracts and Compensation, School Day and School Calendar, Promotion, Retention and Acceleration of Students; DCTA Policies to be Waived: Professional Standards, Contract Year, Number of Preparations, Teaching Load; Statutory Considerations: School Schedule and Calendar, Actual Hours of Teacher-Pupil Contact)

The School Governing Board (SGB) will collaborate with the faculty and staff at MLK EC to establish a calendar and schedule focused on improving student achievement. The SGB will make hours of employment clear to all employees, and make adjustments only with their participation. *The PD hours will be dedicated by need not time.* Additional courses taught during extended day or summer programming will be compensated by a stipend. Class scheduling will be designed to meet the remediation and acceleration need of students. Students who are assessed as being below grade level will be double blocked in math and English⁴ and will be scheduled into skill-building courses instead of Electives until they reach grade-level proficiency. In addition, the school day will be extended 75 minutes longer (until 4pm) to provide additional academic support for students who need more support and, for students who score above grade level, to provide Middle School Honors courses that earn high school credit. *All students will be able to participate in the extended school day, dependent on transportation availability*

(See Exhibit D: MLK Innovation Annual Calendar and Exhibit E: MLK Innovation Daily Schedule)

⁴ For research supporting double periods for remediation, see, e.g., Quint, J. (2006). *Meeting Five Critical Challenges of High School Reform: Lessons from Research on Three Reform Models*. Washington D.C.; MDRC.

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By converting to Innovation status, the new school governing body will collaborate with the faculty to ensure that the new school schedule and school year calendar meet both the needs of students and faculty. In addition, MLK EC will be able to establish a consistent extended day and summer program with its faculty, which will build student academic skills and accelerates learning. Currently, both programs are inconsistently staffed and this affects student achievement.

D. Actual Budgeting and Contracting. (Statutory Considerations: Handling of Monies)

MLK EC will receive an annual budget allocation based on the number of students enrolled on October 1. The district and the principal will establish the budget based on actual salaries and use remaining funds for instructional materials and stipend pay. The principal, in consultation with the SGB, will create a school budget dedicated to improving the student achievement of all students at MLK EC. MLK EC will be able to purchase administrative services, such as transportation, food services, facility management, maintenance, student services and substitute teachers from DPS, based on a pricelist that will be provided by DPS to the principal or designee, or from other providers.

By converting to Innovation status, the school budget will organized to represent the specific needs and priorities of the school community.

E. New Governance Structure/School Governing Board (SGB). (DPS Policies to be Waived: Collaborative School Community; DCTA Polices to be Waived: Required Committees; Statutory Considerations: Local Board Powers to Terminate Employees)

MLK EC will create and implement a School Governing Board (SGB) to replace its School Leadership Team (SLT) and Community School Committee (CSC) in order to build participatory leadership at the school. As a united school governance team, the SGB will a single body dedicated to support the mission of MLK EC. (See Exhibit F: School Governance Board By-Laws).

The SGB will be comprised of teachers, staff, parents, and administration and a student representative. Each member will be selected through an election process except for the Principal and the parent SGB member, who will automatically be the PTA (PAWS) President or his/her designee. Although the principal will always remain accountable as the final decision-maker at MLK EC, is the SGB will express a commitment to participatory leadership in all aspects of school operations, especially instruction.

See Exhibit F: School Governing Board By-Laws (Description of SGB)

By converting to Innovation status, the new school governing body will become a collaborative body that uses shared decision making.

F. Professional Development Autonomy. (DPS Policies to be Waived: Professional Staff Training, Workshop and Conference Attendance)

The SGB will make decisions for professional development that promote the growth of all staff members, which may include implementing peer assistance programs and hiring professionals and coaches on contract or on a short-term basis to meet the School's and faculty's professional unique development needs. The professional growth programs will support practices vital to improve the achievement of all students at MLK EC and ensure teachers the professional latitude necessary to

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realize the mission of MLK EC. MLK staff will continue to participate in the District professional development as well.

By converting to Innovation status, professional development can be tailored to the strengths and needs of our staff so that they can better support our students.

G. STAFFING, HIRING, and EVALUATION

To meet the needs of our students, improve student achievement, and fully implement our educational program MLK requires the flexibility to select and hire individuals that further our mission, vision, and academic goals. Furthermore, we need the flexibility to evaluate, support and compensate staff in alignment with our educational program. Toward that end, we are requesting waivers to the appropriate district, state and DCTA policies as to allow us to:

- Hire staff in real time – as and when needed
- Hire staff outside of the DPS hiring cycle
- Waive direct placements of teachers, unless we put teachers into the unassigned pool
- Create non-traditional job descriptions, including the ability to add roles to any job description
- Create and/or revise the district’s teacher evaluation system
- Create our own remediation system for teacher performance
- Create our own staff dismissal processes
- Contract staff to teach specialized courses without the requirement of licensing (but within the requirements of “highly-qualified” criteria)
- Establish our own compensation rates and systems and/or to use district pay scales and rates

See Implementation Calendar for details on articulating and developing these changes (See Exhibit L – MLK Innovation Implementation Plan)

We are committed to seeking and hiring candidates: who understand the nuances of working within a culturally-diverse community; who understand the challenges and best practices in supporting students in college going atmosphere. We do not currently have the flexibility to hire part-time individuals who have appropriate background and experience in a given area on a part-time or temporary basis. In specialty areas, we could hire an expert through a third-party contract, or hire someone who is highly qualified but who may not be licensed. All teachers that teach classes at MLK will be licensed. However, we work with CCA and their faculty may not be licensed but can teach college courses. Currently, we have 8 courses being taught where students are concurrently enrolled. Any staff would be required to pass appropriate background checks through the district.

In addition, we are subject to a district direct placement process that does not allow us to ensure that every staff member is reflective of our mission and can best meet the needs of our students. Furthermore, under the current staffing cycle, we must hire under a given time frame. With innovation status, we could access the open market, recruit, and make early offers as soon as we

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know a vacancy is available. We could control the type and amount of student service providers that are allocated to our school. We could also consider having non-certified staff assist with duty and substitute coverage.

New teachers hired to MLK from outside the District will not be subject to the Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act of 1990, § 22-63-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S. and will not have any employment rights within the School District. These teachers will be considered “at-will” employees.

New teachers hired to MLK from within the District with probationary or non-probationary status will operate under the guidelines of the MLK Innovation Plan while employed at MLK by signing the Teacher Offer Letter. These teachers will not be subject to the Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act of 1990, § 22-63-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S. and will not have any employment rights within the School District, while at MLK. These teachers will be considered “at-will” employees, while at MLK. If these teachers return to a position at a different DPS school, and they are in good standing, they will resume their position with the district at their previous status.

Current teachers employed at MLK who are of probationary status at the time of approval will continue to advance towards non-probationary status using current district criteria, if in good standing.

Current teachers employed at MLK who are of non-probationary status at the time of approval will remain as a non-probationary teacher within the district, provided they are in good standing.

MLK will retain the flexibility to administer a teacher evaluation system that is in alignment with our mission, vision, values and educational program. MLK intends to use the district’s evaluation process as a foundation and may adapt or adopt an alternative evaluation system. Such changes would need to be developed by the SGB and approved by a vote of 75% of the teaching staff.

If a complaint is received by a teacher, the Principal will follow the procedures outlined in the district’s Basic Fairness and Due Process procedures (DCTA). If it is determined that a teacher has committed an offense that warrants corrective action, the Principal will follow the procedures outlined in the district’s Basic Fairness and Due Process procedures following the DCTA appeal ladder.

i. PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES FOR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS

The evaluation, remediation, and non-renewal process would be different for different teachers as follows:

For teachers hired to MLK **before** Innovation teacher vote:

Probationary: Teachers will be formally evaluated every year. If the principal has concerns of the teacher’s performance, the principal shall provide detailed feedback to the teacher. The teacher will be provided a reasonable amount of time, no less than four (4) weeks, to show improvement. Teacher may be non-renewed if sufficient improvement is not demonstrated.

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Non-Probationary: Teachers will be formally evaluated every three years. The principal will have full discretion to initiate a formal evaluation for any MLK teacher at any point in the school year. The principal will have the option of initiating a remediation plan for improvement as outlined in Article 10 and in state statute (TECDA).

For teachers hired to MLK **after** Innovation teacher vote:

Probationary: Teachers will be formally evaluated every year. Teachers will sign an employment offer letter indicating acceptance of conditions of this Innovation plan. These teachers will be considered “at-will” employees while employed at MLK. If the principal has concerns of the teacher’s performance, the principal shall provide detailed feedback to the teacher. The teacher will be provided a reasonable amount of time, no less than four (4) weeks, to show improvement. Teacher may be non-renewed if sufficient improvement is not demonstrated.

Non-Probationary: Teachers will be formally evaluated every year. Teachers will sign an employment offer letter indicating acceptance of conditions of this Innovation plan. These teachers will be considered “at-will” employees while employed at MLK. If the principal has concerns of the teacher’s performance, the principal shall provide detailed feedback to the teacher. The teacher will be provided a reasonable amount of time, no less than four (4) weeks, to show improvement. Teacher may be non-renewed if sufficient improvement is not demonstrated.

If a teacher is dismissed mid-year, a severance package may be negotiated with the school.

H. Staffing and Compensation. (DCTA Policies to be Waived: Extra Duty Compensation; Statutory Considerations: Teacher Employment and Compensation)

Staff at MLK EC will receive compensation through stipends for working in the extended day programming for academic remediation or acceleration five days a week and a two week, full-day, summer orientation for the entering 6th and 9th grade classes that will focus on skill-building. All staff will be encouraged and invited to participate and join the extended day program which requires a semester long commitment. Flexibility will be provided as needed.

This compensation package will have, as its foundation, the salary system established in the DPS/DCTA ProComp Agreement. A stipend structure will be developed in collaboration with the SGB to exceed these minimum salary expectations according to a stipend structure developed by the principal in collaboration with the SGB. All full time employees at MLK EC will participate in the Denver Public Schools Retirement System (DPSRS), now PERA. Should any staff or faculty member transfer from MLK EC to another DPS assignment, all pension benefits will be portable and there shall be no loss of benefit. This structure will be outlined in the revised Employee Handbook.

To build consistency for students in the extended-day program and summer-school, we will use a new budgeting process to provide stipends to current faculty for these additional responsibilities, and which also includes professional development activities, club sponsorship, and other duties designated by our School Governance Board. The new stipend policy and faculty roles and

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responsibilities will be outlined in the *MLK EC Employee Handbook* (See Exhibit G: Employee Handbook and Exhibit H: MLK Budget 09-10).

By converting to Innovation status, the new school governing body and the principal will compensate faculty by stipend for participation in the extended-day and summer-school program. The new stipend policy will be added to the new Employee Handbook and budget. Currently, no one is compensated for afterschool, but innovation status will allow us to provide additional compensation to staff for providing additional services in our students' educational program.

I. Dispute Resolution. (DCTA Policies to be Waived: Grievance Procedures)

Collaborative Resolution Process. The principal, faculty and staff at MLK EC are committed to solving problems in good faith and at the lowest possible level. Therefore, if faculty or staff members believe that the terms of the Innovation Plan have been violated, or they have some dispute that they want resolved, they are expected to raise the matter with the appropriate member of the SGB who will help to resolve the dispute. If the dispute is not resolved to the satisfaction of the faculty or staff member, an appeal may be made following DPS/DCTA ladder. However, the SGB will make the final decision. If the claim or dispute involves the principal, the faculty or staff member should raise the matter with the Local Instructional Superintendent (LIS) to resolve the dispute. The decision of the LIS shall be final in such instance.

(See Exhibit F: School Governing Board By-Laws)

By converting to Innovation status, this allows the SGB to be the main governing body to resolve issues.

J. Enrollment.

Grades 6-8 Managed Enrollment. Students who wish to enroll in grades 6-8 must attend an information session over the summer with their parent or guardian and sign a contract and attend summer orientation (for 6 graders only). 7th and 8th graders entering MLK EC are required to attend extended day skill building for one semester if they are below proficiency in core subject areas. The 6-8 program will be capped at 700, with approximately 233 per grade. Beginning in the Fall of 2010, the school will enroll up to 165 freshmen every year, and students who wish to enroll in the high school grades will be required to submit an application. The school will have no more than 1,331 students. As MLK approaches capacity they will work diligently with the district to ensure that all additional students are enrolled in the best educational option for them. All enrolling students and their parents must sign the Student/Parent Contract and abide by all terms of the contract. (See Exhibit K: Parent Involvement Contract) All existing students are affected by this new policy. Student and parents of existing students will attend an Orientation over the summer to learn about the new policy and sign the contract.

Entering 6th grade Summer School will be for two weeks, five full days a week from July 26- August 6. The focus will be to build student academic skills and orient them to the expectations of being a MLK EC student.

By converting to Innovation status, entering 6-8 students will be better prepared for MLK EC and will help keep students in the school instead of transferring out in the 9th grade.

3. A list of programs, policies, and/or operational documents at the school that would be affected by innovations, and how these would be affected (e.g., educational program, calendar, graduation policies, assessment plans, budget, staffing plans)

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- A. Curriculum: curriculum would be enhanced and modified to meet student needs; course sequence changes, thus schedule and program
- B. Class scheduling: length of school day and school year.
- C. School governance: new governing body (SGB) to replace SLT and CSC. This governing body will now be responsible for hiring new staff and recommending staff to new positions in the school. They will also have discretion over curriculum and assessment changes.
- D. Budget: budget now based on actuals with an anticipated funding increase to pay faculty stipends.
- E. Employee Handbook: modified to address innovation status and will now become the school policy guide.

4. A description of the improvements in academic achievement that the school expects to see as a result of the innovation plan, if any.

Expected Academic Improvements

The *MLK EC School Improvement Plan and School Performance Framework (SPF)* which details the improvements to date on CSAP scores showing significant longitudinal gains in reading and writing and a reversal of the downward longitudinal trend in reading. With a longer school day, required supplemental and additional skill building courses, 9th and 12th grade classes offered to 6-8 students, all supported by stipend-funded MLK EC teachers, we will move our school from “yellow” to “green” on the SPF.

(See Exhibit I: MLK SIP 2009-2010)

Evaluation of Innovation Plan. (*DPS Policy to be Waived: Collaborative School Community; DCTA Policy to be Waived: Required Committees*)

Innovations Reflection and Learning: The principal, faculty and staff will engage in ongoing collaborative evaluation of the performance of the school, the SGB and the principal. This evaluation will include an annual formal review focused on accountability for student achievement and the school performance framework (overall student performance, student achievement growth and, where appropriate, graduation and college going rates). Two retreats will be held annually for the SGB to reflect upon the school year and to review what worked and what didn't work, and to set goals for the school and by department for the upcoming school-year.

(See Exhibit I: MLK SIP 2009-2010)

By converting to Innovation status, the management evaluation system will facilitate an inclusive process to evaluate school performance that reviews the SIP and its outcomes on SPF. In addition, this design will facilitate stronger collaboration and promote an environment of transparency.

5. An estimate of the cost savings and increased efficiencies that the school expects to see as a result of the innovation plan, if any.

While the primary goal of the Innovation Plan is to improve student achievement, the underlying mechanism that drives this mission is streamlined, focused planning and efficient use of human and financial resources:

- A. *Using actual budgeting vs. traditional.* Enable the principal and the SGB to “budget from actuals.” The Early College employs a relatively young faculty (lower on the pay scale); so

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on the whole, the school's personnel budget is larger than the actual wages paid out. That so-called "extra" money is what the SGB will apportion as stipends.

- B. *Not spending extensive resources on recruiting, interviewing, and hiring.* The participatory leadership model, site-based decision making, stipends for tutoring and coaching, multi-year assignments, and discontinuation of direct placements all will create a positive work environment and greater long-term investment by staff members. Nearly 97% of the Early College's faculty and staff returned for the 2009-2010 school year. The Innovation Committee anticipates that the proposed innovations will continue to build on this highly satisfactory atmosphere, thereby minimizing hiring costs.
 - C. *Not wasting resources on students scheduled in the wrong classes.* Our Innovation Plan capitalizes on the Early College's 6-12 model, which provides students accelerated and/or remediation courses based on their needs and strengths. For example, a student who shows proficiency in mathematics at the 6th or 7th grade could be scheduled into a high-school level *Algebra* course, which could place that student on track to take college-level mathematics in the junior or senior year. Likewise, the Early College's demographics include a significant number of bilingual students. Enabling them to progress through *Spanish for Heritage Speakers* and into college-level world language courses is very cost-effective. Conversely, students who score unsatisfactorily or who need to recover high school credit shall not be promoted until they demonstrate proficiency. Resources—including tutoring paid for from the stipends—will be targeted to ensure they reclaim their proper pace for matriculation instead of stalling in the educational system. Additionally, managing the Early College's enrollment will enable the school to plan for the proper number of teachers, classrooms, and sections, therefore preventing weeks and weeks of overcrowding with students losing precious instructional time in the wrong classes.
 - D. *Not overspending on general services.* Another advantage of autonomy is allowing site-based decisions for transportation, food services, facility management, maintenance, student services, professional development and substitute teachers. Far northeast Denver is unique. It is located more than 10 miles from downtown. It has its own educational, social and operational challenges that are not necessarily the same as the rest of DPS. The principal and SGB will be incentivized to select the best value services for the school in order to make the most of the budget.
6. ***Evidence that a majority of the following groups consent to designation as an Innovation School (this may be shown through individual signatures or through the signature of a person authorized to act on behalf of the group, for example):***
- a. Middle School Student Council (See Exhibit K 1)
 - b. Evidence of teacher vote (See Exhibit K 2)
 - c. Evidence of administrator support - All administrators voted to approve innovation. These administrators included: Moria Coogan, Araceli O'Clair, Nick Dawkins, Prudence Daniels
 - d. Evidence of CSC Support (See Exhibit K 2)

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7. ***A statement of the level of support for designation as an Innovation School demonstrated by the following groups (note that this does not require evidence of majority support).***
- a. Council Hancock (See Exhibit K 3)
 - b. Senator Johnston (See Exhibit K 3)
 - c. Foundation for Educational Excellence (See Exhibit K 3)
 - d. Montbello 2010 Committee (See Exhibit K 3)
 - e. GVR Community Advisory Board (CAB) (See Exhibit K 3)
8. **A description of state and district policies that need to be waived before the innovations can be implemented, which may include:**
- Provisions of state statute contained in Article 22 of the Colorado Revised Statutes(except those that can't be waived) NA
 - Provisions of state regulations adopted by the State Board of Education (see attached)
 - District Policies, such as rules adopted by the local board of education or requirements established by district administration (see attached)
9. ***A description of any collective bargaining agreement provision that applies to personnel at the school that needs to be waived before innovations can be implemented.***
(see attached)