

**MONTCLAIR SCHOOL OF ACADEMICS & ENRICHMENT
APPLICATION TO BE DESIGNATED AS AN INNOVATION SCHOOL**

A. MISSION STATEMENT:

At the Montclair School of Academics & Enrichment (Montclair) our mission is to provide all students with a set of experiences that will allow them to become lifelong learners while mastering the content of grade level standards.

Goals.

Our ultimate goal at Montclair is to ensure that all students who begin Kindergarten at Montclair will leave fifth grade at or above grade level in all academic subject areas thereby being well prepared for middle school and beyond. By doing so, our goal is to increase student achievement across all academic areas thereby improving our overall academic rating from Low to Average to High as measured by the Colorado State Accountability Report. All students participate in learning opportunities that are designed to build upon and enhance their individual strengths and talents through enriched instruction that promotes engagement, motivation, and independence. We believe all students should have access to a rich curriculum and be provided with the opportunity to develop their talents and skills in an atmosphere of respect that acknowledges and supports the development of their individual abilities and interests.

Our collective commitment is to provide high quality instruction that meets the varying needs of children, encourages active parent involvement and enhances community engagement. The principal, faculty and staff at Montclair understand that a quality education depends, first and foremost, on the day-to-day efforts of the people who work at our school and that a student's future academic success is built upon a strong foundation. By working together to provide a safe, inviting school, we accept responsibility for ensuring that all measures are taken by to establish such a learning environment. As an innovation school, Montclair will have the appropriate freedom to control of its educational program, budget, staff, time and incentives to ensure that Montclair becomes one of the premier schools in Denver and serves as a model of successful educational reform for schools across the country.

B. INNOVATIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED:

1. School Staffing

Montclair currently serves students from a multitude of ethnicities and across the economic spectrum. To meet the needs of our students and to fully implement our educational program, Montclair requires the flexibility to select and hire individuals that can best meet the needs of our diverse population. This may mean hiring individuals who have appropriate background and experience in a given area on a part-time or temporary basis.

New teachers hired by Montclair 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. Teachers hired from within the District retain their continuing employment rights within the District and under the Act.

2. Curriculum and Assessment.

The education plan at Montclair is centered upon the *Schoolwide Enrichment Model* (SEM) developed by Joseph Renzulli from the University of Connecticut. This model allows for students to become actively engaged in an enriched curriculum where high-end learning and talent development is encouraged for all students. The SEM takes into account the varying abilities, backgrounds, experiences and learning styles of each student and capitalizes upon these strengths and interests so that children are able to meet their greatest potential through an educational experience that is both challenging and individualized.

The DPS and Colorado Model Content Standards serve as the foundation for our instruction. To that we add an extensive enrichment program that helps students deepen their understandings of the curricular content. Our instructional program employs the DPS Literacy Plan, Everyday Math program and daily instruction in Science and/or Social Studies. To extend and enrich the academic program, we add an exceptional Visual Arts program, Physical Education/Dance Movement curriculum and media technology integration.

All students participate in an enrichment program that is comprised of multiple components including enrichment clusters, investigations and brown bag lunches, guest speakers and field trips. Every enrichment activity is selected to complement the curriculum currently under study by the various grade levels. These elements are a crucial component of our educational program and as such, time and resources must be reserved to allow for their implementation.

Occasionally, recommendations are made by the district to implement a program, use an assessment or modify the scope and sequence of curricular content in a way that does not match our educational program or meet the needs of our students. Montclair must have the liberty to make curricular and instructional decisions that are in alignment with our educational plan, with state standards and allow us to provide rigorous, appropriate grade level instruction.

3. Class Scheduling.

Montclair has developed a master schedule that adjusts teacher planning time one day a week to incorporate sufficient time for weekly enrichment activities and collaborative grade level planning. We require flexibility to allow us to make modifications to teacher planning time as necessary so that we can continue to offer these program components to our students.

The teachers at Montclair are dedicated to providing high quality instruction on a daily basis. As such, we require the freedom to make decisions regarding the use of district assigned days for professional development and other purposes (e.g. Late Start days, etc.).

Class assignments at Montclair are based on academic data and configured to meet the diverse needs of our students. We provide accelerated instruction to students who are performing

at or above grade level. Simultaneously, rigorous instruction and interventions are made available to students who do not meet the proficiency levels for a specific grade. Adjustments are made as necessary throughout the school year to ensure that all students receive appropriate support while being challenged to reach their full potential.

4. Staffing and Use of Financial and Other Resources:

To ensure that all staff agree to a common set of expectations, Montclair staff members are required to sign the Montclair School of Academics & Enrichment general job description (**Attachment 1**).

Montclair will have control of its budget so that it can appropriately hire and utilize staff, available time, and incentives (in the most effective fashion).

5. Principal Leadership

The principal of Montclair reports to an assigned Instructional Superintendent. The principal's responsibilities are to the students and faculty of Montclair. In order to be a true instructional leader, the principal, with the advice of the Leadership Team, must be able to make full use of time, money and resources to meet the requirements of this Plan. In the event of a change in leadership, the Montclair Leadership Team, with the agreement of the faculty, will make every effort to secure a principal who understands the nature of the innovation status and will honor the provisions within this application.

6. Participatory Leadership

All faculty members at Montclair will work with strong instructional leaders to share the decision-making responsibility in order to provide professional leadership and expertise needed to ensure high student achievement. Although the principal will always remain accountable as the final decision-maker at Montclair, there is a commitment to participatory leadership in all aspects of school operations, especially instruction. This commitment includes a strategic, deliberate induction plan in the event of leadership turnover.

7. Montclair Leadership Team

The principal will continue to lead an instructional leadership team which includes the Assistant Principal, Enrichment Coordinator, facilitator, the DCTA representative or designee, and rotating staff members. The leadership team will be responsible for establishing the conditions for student learning at the school, including the following:

- Identifying student academic needs, based on all available student performance data;
- Setting academic goals and priorities, based on student academic needs;
- Monitoring and managing consistent delivery of high quality curriculum to every student;
- Providing instructional support to all teachers;
- Building the master calendar and the student schedule;
- Establishing assignments, job responsibilities and work loads for all staff and faculty

- members based on the needs of students;
- Making decisions about ongoing professional development;
- Identifying creative solutions to problems faced in the operation of the school;
- Revising the Beacon School Strategic Plan (**Attachment 2**), the School Improvement Plan (**Attachment 3**), the Faculty Handbook (**Attachment 4**) and the School Handbook (**Attachment 5**), as needed and based on student performance data;
- Monitoring progress toward the goals of the School Improvement Plan;
- Reviewing the principal's recommendations for extra duty compensation or incentives if the rates exceed those established in the DPS/DCTA Agreement;
- Establishing community and parent involvement activities;
- Monitoring the school budget;
- Making recommendations regarding general school governance.

In addition to the above noted responsibilities, the Leadership Team will meet on a monthly basis with identified parent representatives to seek input and review items of concern. An effort will be made to ensure that all facets of our parent community are invited, represented and encouraged to participate.

8. Professional Learning Community

The principal, faculty and staff at Montclair will collaborate to promote the professional growth of all staff members, including programs for peer assistance and ongoing professional development for all staff. The professional growth system will incorporate practices vital to improve the achievement of all students at Montclair and ensure teachers the professional latitude necessary to enact the mission of Montclair and the Denver Plan. Professionals and coaches may be hired on a contract or short-term basis to meet the school's and faculty's professional development needs.

9. Positive Work Environment

A supportive working environment for staff is integral to providing a positive learning environment for students. The parties will establish a mission-driven school culture that is focused on student achievement and an environment that rewards and celebrates excellence and accomplishment.

10. Hours of Work

The Leadership Team will collaborate with the faculty and staff at Montclair to establish a calendar and schedule focused on improving student achievement. The Leadership Team will make hours of employment clear to all employees, and make adjustments only with their participation.

11. Assignment of Staff

To create and maintain an outstanding school, Montclair will assemble a faculty and staff who will work together to improve achievement for every student. We expect this committed workforce to remain stable over time.

The principal at Montclair, in consultation with the Leadership Team, will prepare job descriptions for all staff and faculty assignments at the school. The principal may use standard District job descriptions, but is in no way limited to them. **(see Attachment 1 for general job description).**

The principal at Montclair, in consultation with the personnel committee, will select all school staff and faculty as soon as possible after a vacant assignment is determined. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, all faculty and staff will meet minimum district requirements. In cases where a faculty or staff member does not meet district requirements, the employee must complete a plan to become qualified in no more than a year.

Assignments at Montclair are annual. The performance of each employee is of critical importance for the decisions regarding each annual appointment. Year-to-year decisions regarding returning staff will be made in timely fashion for departing staff to participate in the DPS teacher staffing cycle. The recruitment and selection process for new staff will be rigorous and focused on best meeting student needs.

Under extraordinary circumstances, and with just cause, the principal may discharge an employee during the school year.

As noted above, new teachers hired by Montclair 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 District. Teachers hired from within the District retain their continuing employment rights within the District. Teachers with continuing employment rights within the District leave Montclair, they will continue to have the right to bid on an assignment in accordance with the DCTA Master Agreement.

12. Compensation

Staff at Montclair will receive professional compensation that reflects their commitment to the school and their success at improving student learning. This compensation and benefits package will have, as its foundation, the salary systems established in the DPS/DCTA Master Agreement and the ProComp Agreement. The principal will have the discretion to exceed these minimum base salary expectations according to a bonus structure developed by the principal and Leadership Team. Montclair will be responsible for developing the compensation package for teachers and will be exempt from § 22-63-401, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

All full time employees at Montclair will participate in the Denver Public Schools Retirement System (DPSRS). Should any staff or faculty member transfer from Montclair to another DPS assignment, all pension benefits will be portable and there shall be no loss of benefit.

Following the rules of the DPSRS, part time employees and temporary staff will not participate in the retirement system.

13. Leave

All employees at Montclair will receive the same long leave entitlements granted under district policy. Annually, all employees at Montclair will receive 14 days of short leave to be used for any purpose. Notification procedures for sick leave and personal leave are outlined in the Faculty Handbook (**Attachment 4**). Unused leave days accrue according to district rules. The district and school may provide additional leave days for the purpose of professional development or instructional development.

14. Budget

Montclair will receive an annual budget allocation based on the number of students enrolled on October 1. The District and the principal will agree on the terms for the budget allocation annually in the spring.

The principal in consultation with the Leadership Team will create a school budget dedicated to improving the student achievement of all students at Montclair. Montclair will be able to purchase administrative services, such as transportation, food services, facility management, maintenance, student services and substitute teachers, from Denver Public Schools, based on a pricelist that will be provided by DPS to the Principal or designee, or from other providers. (see **Attachment 6 - 2009-2010 Budget**). The budgeted funds provided by DPS will be supplemented by Montclair fundraising and grants.

15. Management Evaluation

The principal, faculty and staff will engage in ongoing collaborative evaluation of the performance of the school, the Leadership Team and the principal. This evaluation will include an annual formal review focused on accountability for student achievement, (overall student performance and student achievement growth).

16. Teacher Evaluation

The principal or designee will evaluate teachers at Montclair through a process that is directly tied to the school's mission, goals and innovations. The evaluation instrument will meet or exceed the standards specified by state statute and District policy. Montclair is requesting a waiver of the Licensed Personnel Performance Evaluation Act, § 22-9-101, *et seq*, C.R.S.

17. Employee Handbooks

General practices and procedures applicable to the school, and articulated in the Beacon School Plan and the School Improvement Plan are incorporated into this Plan, and will be modified when necessary to be consistent with this Plan. Consistent with the mission of the school, ongoing development of the Faculty Handbook (see **Attachment 4**) will be collaborative, incorporating the voices of school leadership and staff as well as parents.

18. Dispute Resolution

The principal, faculty and staff at Montclair are committed to solving problems in good faith and at the lowest possible level. Therefore, if faculty or staff member(s) believe that the terms of this Plan have been violated, or they have some dispute that they want resolved, they are expected to raise this matter with an appropriate member of the Montclair Leadership Team who will collaborate to resolve the dispute. If the dispute is not resolved to the satisfaction of the faculty or staff member, an appeal can be made to the Principal and the Principal's decision will be final. If the dispute involves the Principal, the faculty or staff member should raise the matter with the Instructional Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee and that person will collaborate to resolve the dispute. The decision of the Instructional Superintendent or Superintendent's designee, as applicable, shall be final in such instance.

C. LISTING OF PROGRAMS, POLICIES AND OPERATIONAL DOCUMENTS AFFECTED BY INNOVATION

1. Research-Based Educational Program the School Would Implement. The program to which Montclair is committed is summarized in Section B.2 and includes:
 - High performance and expectations requiring academic rigor;
 - High-quality, differentiated instruction designed to meet the needs of each individual learner;
 - Creative, enrichment-based approach that encourages students to develop their content knowledge, independence and oral and written communication skills through a challenging curriculum;
 - Professionalism of staff in communication, appearance and conduct
 - Decision-making criteria for adopting or modifying curricular and instructional practices based on evidence that it increases achievement, meets the needs of our learners, aligns with State and District standards, supports and accommodates accelerated learning and attends to the needs of students targeted for specialized instruction.
2. Length of School Day and School Year. See section B.3.
3. Student Promotion and Graduation Policies. Montclair is currently in the process of defining a promotion process that outlines expectations that must be met to proceed to next grade level.
4. Assessment Plan. The Montclair School Improvement Plan (SIP) provides an analysis of CSAP scores and the significant improvements that have been achieved to date. It also defines achievement targets and refers to progress monitoring assessment plans.
5. Proposed Budget. See Attachment 6 for the 2009-2010 budget.

D. IMPROVEMENTS IN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE MONTCLAIR EXPECTS TO ACHIEVE IN IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIONS.

See section B.2 and the Montclair School Improvement Plan (Attachment 3) for specific details regarding achievement goals for Literacy, Math, Attendance and School Culture.

E. COST SAVINGS AND INCREASED EFFICIENCIES.

See section B.1, B.4 and B.12. The possibility of paying actual vs. average salaries would promote the efficient use of school funds and possibly extend the resources currently available.

F. ADMINISTRATOR, TEACHER AND COLLABORATIVE SCHOOL COMMITTEE SUPPORT.

On February 17, 2009, of the teachers employed at the school voted 22 to 2 in favor of designating Montclair as an innovation School. At a meeting of the Collaborative School Committee on November 5, 2008 the CSC stated unanimous support of designating Montclair as an innovation school (see **Attachment 7**). The Principal and Assistant Principal are in full support of Montclair's request to become an Innovation School.

G. LISTING OF STATUTORY, REGULATORY AND DISTRICT POLICY REQUIREMENTS THAT NEED TO BE WAIVED.

1. Statutory Sections to be Waived (see **Attachment 8**).

Section 22-9-106, C.R.S., local board duties concerning performance evaluations for licensed personnel;

Section 22-32-109(1)(f), C.R.S., local board duties concerning selection of personnel and pay;

Section 22-32-109(1)(g), C.R.S., handling of moneys

Section 22-32-109(1)(n), C.R.S., schedule and calendar

Section 22-32-109(II)(A), C.R.S., actual hours of teacher-pupil instruction and contact

(B) school calendar

Section 22-32-109(t), C.R.S., determine educational program and prescribe textbooks

Section 22-32-109(aa), C.R.S., adopt content standards and plan for implementation of content standards

Section 22-32-109(jj), C.R.S., identify areas in which the principals(s) require training or development

Section 22-32-110(1)(h), C.R.S. local board powers concerning employment termination of school personnel;

Section 22-63-201, C.R.S., Teacher Employment, Compensation and

Dismissal Act of 1990; Employment-license required – exception;
Section 22-63-202, C.R.S., Teacher Employment, Compensation and
Dismissal Act of 1990: contracts in writing – duration – damage provision;
Section 22-63-203, C.R.S. Teach Employment, Compensation and Dismissal
Act of 1990: Probationary teachers – renewal and nonrenewal of employment
contract;
Section 22-63-206, C.R.S., Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal
Act of 1990; Transfer of teachers – compensation;
Section 22-63-301, C.R.S., Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal
Act of 1990: Grounds for dismissal;
Section 22-63-301, C.R.S., Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal
Act of 1990: Procedures for dismissal of teachers and judicial review;
Section 22-63-401, C.R.S., Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal
Act of 1990: Teachers subject to adopted salary schedule;
Section 22-63-402, C.R.S., Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal
Act of 1990: License, authorization of residency required in order to pay
teachers; and
Section 22-63-403, C.R.S., Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal
Act of 1990: Payment of salaries

Montclair will have a system of due process for new teachers who are not covered by the TECDA, Section 22-32-201, *et seq.*, C.R.S. (*see* Sections B.1, 7 and 11 above) and may have a stronger compensation and incentive pay system for all staff members (*see* Section B.12 above), with full input and involvement of the Leadership Team, composed mainly of teaching staff and administrators (*see* Section B.7 above). Montclair will utilize the District’s evaluation procedures until, or, if it so chooses, to develop its own evaluation procedures that will be more specifically geared to the programs at Montclair. The details with regard to the school calendar, school day, choice of curriculum and textbooks have all been specified in this Plan and in the detailed attachments (**see Attachment 8**).

2. Regulatory Sections to be Waived.

Montclair is requesting a waiver of all CDE regulations related to the statutory provisions specified in subsection 1 above.

3. District Policies to be Waived.

The District and the Principal have agreed that all District policies that impede the implementation of this Innovation School Plan will be waived.

H. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT PROVISIONS TO BE WAIVED.

On April 17, 2008 the Montclair faculty voted 22 to 1 in favor of the Montclair Autonomy Agreement and requested waivers from certain sections of the DCTA Agreement. Licensed employees have the choice to become members of DCTA; the District will continue to deduct dues, assessments, and other contributions toward a union program or fund, from pay checks of all licensed employees who have given written authorization as specified in the DPS/DCTA Agreement. The District will continue to transfer all such deducted funds to the DCTA in accordance with the DPS/DCTA Agreement.

I. PROCEDURE TO RESCIND INNOVATION STATUS.

This agreement will remain in full force and effect unless a recommendation to discontinue is presented to the Leadership Team and supported by a vote of 50% +1 of the Montclair faculty.

J. SUGGESTED INNOVATIONS (THE ACT LISTS THE FOLLOWING AREAS IN WHICH THE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHOULD STRONGLY ENCOURAGE THAT INNOVATIONS BE CONSIDERED:

1. Curriculum and academic standards and assessments. See Section B.2. Instructional practices are based on research and proven to be effective in schools that have followed through with their implementation. The practices include high expectations, academic rigor, differentiated instruction, class scheduling and configuration, enrichment, investigation of ideas and completion of projects based on student interest; professionalism in conduct; and Decision Making Criteria for adopting curricular and instructional practices that aligns with State and District standards, supports and accommodates accelerated learning and accommodates students with special needs, supports English language acquisition.

2. Accountability measures to more accurately present a complete measure of student learning and accomplishment may include:
 - a. Progress reports to document student performance
 - b. Assessment data collected at the beginning, middle and end of year
 - c. Student work/Learning Portfolio reviews
 - d. Performance as measured by the DPS School Performance Framework
 - e. State and national accountability measures
 - f. Percentage of students progressing to the next grade level at proficiency
 - g. Percentage of students continuing enrollment at Montclair over time

K. PROVISIONS OF SERVICES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO (some of these are already covered above):

The focus of the education plan is described in Section B.2. Additionally, Montclair will continue to provide all of the district-wide programs for special education students, gifted and talented students and English Language Learners. Support for interventions and accommodations will be made available to students with identified needs.

Montclair will participate in District Title I programs and comply with all expectations of the plan. Should the district change its Title I plan, Montclair retains the right to enact its own plan, in alignment with its Innovation Plan, with the oversight of the District Federal Programs Office, informed in part by the School Performance Framework.

The District will delegate to Montclair the responsibility of complying with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), informed in part by direct District oversight and in part by the School Performance Framework.

The Positive Behavior Support model and Restorative Justice have been adopted and implemented by Montclair and serve as the backbone of our discipline system. Students are held accountable for their behavior and learning.

L. TEACHERS:

The recruitment, preparation and professional development of teachers are described in Sections B.1, 4, 8, 16. All teachers must sign the Montclair Job Description and may be required to attend professional development and/or a staff retreat during the summer months. Dates and times will be communicated with all teachers well in advance. Based on performance and survey data, the Principal and Leadership Team will identify professional development needs, establish schedules, locate resources and collect information to ensure that the teachers have access to the tools and training required to meet the needs of all students and increase student achievement.

M. TEACHER EMPLOYMENT is referenced in B.1, 4, 11 and 12.

N. PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES FOR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS. See B. 15 and 16.

O. COMPENSATION FOR TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS AND OTHER SCHOOL BUILDING PERSONNEL, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO: Performance pay plans, total compensation plan and other innovative approaches are contained in Sections B.1, 4, 11 and 12.

P. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND THE ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS OF PRINCIPALS IN INNOVATION SCHOOLS.

The Principal is the Instructional and Administrative Leader at Montclair. The Principal, working collaboratively with the Leadership Team and with input from faculty and staff, parents, and community representatives, is responsible for decisions on curriculum, instruction, assessment, the selection, assignment and evaluation of all faculty and staff, development of the budget and compensation system, as well as general administrative duties for Montclair. *See*, also Sections B.5, 6 and 7.