

STRENGTHS ACADEMY CHARTER

Application to be a Washington, D.C. Public Charter School

October 26, 2012

Executive Summary

The District of Columbia is committed to early education as a strategy to improve student success and increase the number of students ready for college and careers. The Strengths Academy Charter brings a proven and caring school leader and a thirty-year record of creating early success for young children.

Education in the District of Columbia is a uniquely challenging environment. It requires commitment, a focused plan, and the use of the best educational research to design schools that will develop the potential of each student. Strengths Academy Charter is positioned to blend each of these ingredients for student-based outcomes. Four commitments differentiate our school:

Great teachers and school leaders: The most significant challenge of schools today is the selection of effective teachers. More than any other factor is the talent each teacher brings to the classroom: engaging students, developing relationships, and designing interesting and challenging lessons. Forty years of research by the Gallup organization focused on teacher selection will provide the context for recruitment and hiring of teachers.

A strengths-based school: Schools that pay attention to what each student, and each teacher, does well have higher engagement and higher achievement. StrengthsFinder, rooted in many years of research, identifies the strengths of individuals and provides an on-line assessment that describes the natural talents of people. It provides a common language to expand conversations about what is right with people. Strengths assessment and coaching sessions will be available to school staff and families alike. Every student will have a teacher certified in identifying strengths of young children and creating individual success plans. The tools and approaches embedded in our philosophy keep our focus alive as we strive to continuously measure impact

Dual Language: The dual language instructional approach closes the gap for first language and second language students. It focuses on core curriculum, not language alone. Research by Collier and Thomas concludes it is a model for all students, regardless of first language. Their research also finds that parent participation for all groups is increased, because it is respectful and welcoming. Another finding is that school administration, parents and staff report feeling part of something bigger - noting the difference in student responsiveness and in engagement as well as friendships across language lines.

Performance Accountability: The founding group is committed to operating a school which achieves multiples measures of success. The first is academic success of students. Standards are described in this application. Each teacher will be expected to show growth per student of one year or more. The school leader will be responsible for a scorecard which describes to parents the learning scores and successes. Wellbeing will be assessed and reported for the school. Meeting budget and using reserves wisely is an obligation to taxpayers. Strengths Academy Charter will track the successes of students and report the return on investment relative to per student cost.

The success of Strengths Academy Charter is the commitment of the founding group and its administration's willingness to invest the time for planning and implementation for these goals. The commitment for school reform intersects here with positive strengths-based psychology and a rigorous, respectful, dual-language curriculum.

Strengths Academy Charter will be a community-based school created for families. The selection of great teachers, in conjunction with a dual language model is a formula for success. Studies dating back to the 1990's show both minority and majority language students, in a dual language setting outperform peers by completion of upper elementary grades. The research also suggests that dual language settings tend to promote integration of students, respect for both languages, and an efficient use of resources.

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Part A — Educational Plan

A.1 Mission and Purposes of Proposed Public Charter School

A.1.a Educational Needs of the Target Student Population

The Strengths Academy Charter will serve 440 students from preschool through eighth grade when it reaches its full capacity in 2018. It is probable that 60-70% of students will qualify for free and reduced lunch programs and 40% will be English language learners. According to the 2009 census information, 11% of the Districts' children reside in Ward 1. Ward 2 has 7% of the children. Single mothers head 57% of the households in Ward 1 and 30% of the households in Ward 2. For many families, there are limited options for quality childcare. Strengths Academy Charter expects to enroll students from diverse backgrounds, some with special needs and many with limited experiences. The district's average number of students enrolled who have special or exceptional needs is near 10-15%. We expect to have a similar representation.

Our enrollment plan will begin with PS, PK, K and first grade during the 2012 school year and will add one grade level (two classrooms) each year until 2018. The PS-8 model provides continuity, builds lasting relationships and provides stability for students and their families.

Great challenges exist in today's education. The most significant issue facing schools is the selection and development of effective teachers. Strengths Academy Charter will use a researched-based selection instrument that will identify those individuals most likely to increase student achievement and create student wellbeing. Students who benefit the most from highly effective teachers are those with greatest needs. It is that tenet that gives urgency to open a school in Ward 1 and Ward 2.

Our academy will employ teachers with greatest potential for effectiveness using the Gallup TeacherInsight interview. Hiring candidates who score in the top quartile of TeacherInsight adds an estimated .2 standard deviation of academic gain for students. The Strengths Academy Charter will prepare students for the twenty-first century by ensuring the most effective teachers will be available to them and to their families. A strong component of our curriculum will include an early literacy program that focuses on language development. Using a high quality literacy curriculum combined with effective teachers provides the best opportunity for students to acquire the necessary vocabulary that will enable them to compete with their more economically advantaged peers.

Our culture and climate for students, families and staff will focus on the positive psychology of strengths. Every teacher and staff member will have expectation plans built to their strengths. Every student will have a success plan based on regular observations of what the student cares about and does well. Parents will be included and advised to help their children succeed based on the parents' strengths and the child's strengths. Families will be provided with information and strategies to guide them in their daily parenting duties. Strengths-based instruction creates positive relationships in classrooms and promotes high levels of student engagement*(see Lopez 2010) It is this level of engagement that drives achievement and success for students. (Gordon.)

Strengths Academy Charter will provide curriculum that emphasizes literacy as the fundamental building block for success. We will use the Dual Language model of 50% of the instruction in English and 50% in Spanish. Our teachers will have curriculum and materials that support the needs of children in the District of Columbia and challenge them to excel. Strengths tools will be offered to all families. The inclusion of families in our strengths based initiatives will provide and build on positive parenting, resilience and understanding of healthy child development.

For students with special needs, a strengths approach sees each child individually and recognizes their capabilities. Special education students and any student with great need will have the greatest benefit from highly effective teachers. (Boudin 2010)

The District of Columbia has a stated goal to increase early childhood education and create a higher percentage of preschoolers enrolled than any state. Strengths Academy Charter will lay a strong, family-friendly foundation with a comprehensive target of PS-8 grades. The continuity of effective teachers each year will bring about more significant change than any specific set of standards or curriculum. Selecting the best teachers to teach children of great need is our most focused goal. Unfortunately, the increase in childhood poverty is also on the rise. The depressed overall economic condition of our city is a major factor in limiting the quality of daily experiences for children. One in three children lives in poverty and among black families two in five live in poverty. These statistics must drive our goal to change daily experiences for young children. The failure of our schools to select the best teachers seriously limits educational achievement. With no more important ingredient in each classroom than the teacher, Strengths Academy Charter will select the most effective teachers, develop their talents and provide an environment that retains them and their dedication to our children.

The demographic information on Wards 1&2 and the District of Columbia as a whole are listed below. The risk factors for families are impacted by poverty, limited access to healthcare and low school success by parents.

	Ward 1	Ward 2	District	
% of Children	16%	5%	19%	
Poverty	16%	15%	18%	
SNAP	7%	7%		
SCHIP	11%	14%		
TANF	7%	7%		
Single Mother	57%	28%	53%	
Births to Teen	12%	5%	12%	
Low Birth Weight	9%	7%	11%	
Substantiated cases of child abuse/neglect	147	86	1,830	
				% of Total Children in Poverty
African American children	36%	15%	61.5%	46.7%
Caucasian Children	36%	65%	20.5%	4.8%
Hispanic Children	22%	10%	12.2%	28.8%
Other (non- Hispanic) Children	4.4%	7.4%	5.8%	
All Races				34.3%

Source: DC Ward Profile – Neighborhood Information and Annie E. Casey Foundation

A.1.b Mission and Philosophy

The mission for the Strengths Academy Charter is to bring the energy of the highest quality teachers to students with diverse needs and provide a strengths-based instruction that honors the talents of each child, teacher and family to maximize the achievement, engagement and well-being of every child.

“Our greatest contribution is to be sure there is a teacher in every classroom who cares that every student, every day learns and grows and feels like a real human being.”

–Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D.

Dr. Clifton began the study of outstanding teachers forty years ago. Since that time, over two million teachers have been studied and 50,000 educators have been certified in on selection and development instruments he designed. His work has been substantiated over the years by a variety of researchers including:

Work by Sanders and Horn found that:

- Great teachers can have as long as 4 years effect on students regardless of subsequent teachers.
- They can make the difference between the top three quintile or the bottom three quintile on standardized measures.
- They are more important than class size, racial composition, urban, suburban setting.
- Students of greatest need benefit the most, but top quintile teachers are effective with all students.

Sanders, William L. and Horn, Sandra P. (1998). Research Findings for the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) Database: Implications for Educational Evaluation and Research. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*. 3, 12, 247-256.

The next study to support effective teachers as the most important factor in student outcomes is from the Los Angeles Public Schools.

- There was great variance in the growth of students from one teacher to another.
- There was weak or no relationship between student growth and teacher experience.
 - Education background
 - Licensure
 - Grade levels taught
 - Class size (K-3 19; 4-6 28)
- Teacher effects are 3 times higher than school effects.
- Effective teachers are scattered throughout the district.

Buddin, Richard. (2010). How effective are Los Angeles elementary teachers and schools? Retrieved at <http://www.latimes.com/media/acrobat/2010-08/55538493.pdf>.

Our philosophy is to maximize every child's potential and to equip each with learning that will lead to a happy and productive life. The entire staff at Strengths Academy Charter will be responsible for the success of students. This collaborative approach will incorporate activities that build on the strengths of the overall team and will make it possible to share in decision-making. Leadership must be able to articulate the vision for the school that offers participation by the staff, parents and community.

Great teachers impact student learning and are capable of sustaining that growth over time. The school environment will continue to develop teachers through a strengths based approach and pay particular attention to their ability to motivate and build relationships as well as superior instructional approaches.

It is this belief that drives our efforts to focus on Ward 1 and Ward 2 of the District of Columbia to improve the school day for every child by providing them with great teachers.

Strengths Academy Charter will have its doors wide open for participation of families, volunteers and the greater community. Our philosophy is that more caring adults, focusing on the individual strengths of students and their families will provide the best outcomes. We will strive to work inside and outside the school for opportunities for students and their families. We will build on the participation of many to promote the hope, engagement and well-being of our school community.

Adopting the Common Core Standards for our school will place our students in the center of educational opportunity for learning. A dual language curriculum that provides half-day instruction in English and half-

day in Spanish creates the conditions needed for flexible cognition. Whether the student's first language is Spanish or English, this language-focused curriculum instruction challenges and individualizes to meet the needs of every child. In addition, viewing students in a strengths model will move us from the long litany of what is wrong to what matters. The challenge to improve the educational terrain in the District of Columbia is significant but so is the long research and development of Gallup. Utilizing the tools in their most optimum fashion will produce a school with not just great people ... but the right people to do this awesome job of educating some wonderful kids.

PRINCIPLE	ACCOUNTABILITY	
<p>Every student a success plan based on the student's strengths</p>	<p>Plans are communicated weekly to parents. A student portfolio is updated weekly with pictures and teacher observations. Parents provide feedback weekly.</p> <p>5 million people around the world have their strengths on record. Gallup workplace research shows improved productivity, safety and engagement when workers know what they do well. Gallup school research shows 88% of the students who say their schools are fall in the top quartile of productive engagement at school.</p>	<p>*Documentation of 95% of parents participating</p> <p>*80% attainment of student goals on record in success plan</p>
<p>Every teacher and staff hired for demonstrated ability to develop exceptional parent and student relationships and to accelerate academic achievement.</p>	<p>The founding board (5 of 7 members) have been involved in the 40 year study of outstanding teachers. They have worked with school districts and universities to hire people with the best fit for education. The Gallup TeacherInsight will identify candidates who rank in the top 10% of potential for high student impact</p>	<p>*Every lead teacher will demonstrate a year or more of academic growth for 20 children.</p>
<p>Parents are involved in strengths planning</p>	<p>Each parent or guardian will be invited to participate in the students' success plans by learning more about their own talents and how they can be most effective are parents and teachers to their children. Parents are introduced to other families with the goal of developing five friend families</p>	<p>*Quarterly parent feedback will report 90% participation.</p>
<p>Measurement and accountability produce high student performance</p>	<p>The first accountability is to the student's school progress. Measurement will also be critical for teacher effectiveness and school success. Academic markers, wellbeing measures, parent involvement, teacher effectiveness and engagement, and budget expectations will be part of the online scorecard.</p>	<p>*9-12 month language growth PS-1st 9-12 month growth in reading as measured by BAS guided reading</p>
<p>Dual language supports community and global values.</p>	<p>Highly skilled staff will provide dual language model that supports and immerses students in target language. Music, art, food, dance and from the Spanish culture will be permeate our school, adding to the duality of the environment.</p>	<p>*Students attain above goal and choose dual language for following year.</p>

A.1.c Educational Focus

The defining characteristic of our school is the selection of the highest quality teachers to teach our students. It is that single factor that impacts the classroom more than anything else. Our ability to attract and select the best teachers is the most significant contribution to this process. The talent we select will provide the engine to map our daily success with children. No greater factor exists than what happens minute by minute, each day in each classroom. It is quality and the quantity of that quality that is needed in our city and will set the Strengths Academy Charter apart from other schools.

Continued development of teachers, students and families is essential to success. The focus will be both the individual strengths development of each staff member as well as the development of a well-rounded teaching team. Each staff member will bring his or her gifts and talents to this collaborative setting. The team will nurture and develop their talents to make them strengths. Opportunities around curriculum and standards will build our professional learning teams as a dynamic force in the school.

Providing a dual language instructional model broadens the appeal of our charter. Families from many backgrounds understand the value of learning language at a young age. Commitment to Common Core Standards that provide a broader comparison of our students is an important element to measure our success. A strengths-based approach places each staff member in a unique position to offer what they do best moving our school to greatness. Once staff members write success plans for each student/family they will have the map to foster each of their strengths. Success plans for students/families will provide the level of inclusion necessary for a strong, engaged school community.

Ongoing measures will be in place to monitor classroom engagement. Hiring the most effective teachers is the first step, followed by plans to engage each child and their family in their educational life. Classroom teachers will meet challenges by understanding their own talents and through concentrated efforts will harness them to maximize daily instruction. Teachers own self-knowledge is a lever for building positive relationships with students, staff and community.

Ongoing collaborative discussions will be built into daily/weekly discussions. Gallup science understands and promotes the beliefs that individuals need recognition and reward for their work to maintain high levels of engagement. It is through engagement that real learning will take place at a pace that allows every child the chance to attain their potential, a curriculum that honors their family language and a second language. Staff will experience recognition and reward through our principal's leadership, student body and community. Teachers will model this practice and bring it to each student in their classroom. A balanced curriculum approach that emphasizes the development of language arts, mathematical expressions, problem solving, and scientific discovery from an early age will be the cornerstone of our opening. Teachers will create lessons and experiences for students that allow for both direct and supported language instruction, honoring of course all home languages of students.

Formative assessment is dynamic and ongoing. This assessment is best done on a flexible schedule, determined by the teacher to meet the needs of their individual students, as well as direct daily instruction. Capturing the right information to guide the instructional process is key in these efforts. Strengths Academy Charter will work with staff in developing a schedule for informal and formal assessment, using the information to guide instruction and determine present levels of performance.

A.1.d Goals

As part of honoring the individual strengths of students, SAC will draw from the positive psychology of strengths and the pursuit of individual potential as the fundamental cornerstone. Students will be involved in:

Literacy/Language

Literacy as the key to a strong citizenry, the emphasis for students to speak, read and write well is essential. Our focus would be in honoring languages within our school community by encouraging the continued development of home language, through dual language instruction. Appreciation of expression both self-expression and that of others is part of a strong foundation. Starting with our early childhood students, language and literacy will be the focus and guide in establishing daily routines. Teachers will use pictures/words to label the classroom and use them to develop the daily schedules.

Mathematics

Mathematics, the universal language, gives order and fluency to our world. Solving problems and applying the world of numbers is an essential goal for students. Math begins in the concreteness of counting objects that are both different and the same are critical first steps in classification. Describing objects and sorting by characteristics is early math play. Intentional lessons to develop math concepts are part of the daily routine.

Science and Social Studies

Science and Social Studies are relevant to all children - especially those living in the District of Columbia. These subjects will need to be hands-on, experience-oriented and combine standards from both national councils and the D.C. public schools standards.

Students will apply their knowledge and skills and their natural talent/interest in some subjects to expand their individual potential. As areas of interest evolve students will self-direct activities for projects and portfolios.

Social Performance Goals for Students — Strengths-Based Exploration

Positive psychology in practice honors the individual. Teachers will have strategic reinforcement of this by creating flexible structures, sharing control and expressing emotions.

Students will know that they have talents to respect and will learn to respect and recognize the talents of others. Students' talents and interests for career development will be encouraged from an early age. Self-discovery and opportunities to connect with the larger world will be woven into lesson planning.

Professional Goals for Staff

It's important for SAC to be our students' advocates - the people in their lives who help them see and focus on the best in them. There will always be plenty of people around children who see their weaknesses and label their behaviors in less-than-positive ways. We will be one of the models in each student's life who helps him or her see life from a strengths perspective. This effort should not be considered an exercise or a course. It should be viewed as an ongoing, living, growing part of a student's life.

A.2 Charter School Curriculum

A.2.a Student Learning Standards

The Strengths Academy Charter selected the Common Core Standards as the foundation of our student learning standards. The Common Core Standards build consistency across states and provide teachers, parents, and students with a set of clear expectations that everyone can work toward together. This will ensure that we maintain America's competitive edge, so that all of our students are well prepared with the skills and knowledge necessary to compete with not only their peers here at home, but with students from around the world.

In choosing these standards the founding group believes this national call for standards will serve all our children. The move to focus on rigorous and specific standards is important to our creative and competitive spirit. 21st Century education must include the potential to study language, and Spanish is the obvious choice for our community. Academic standards guide the work of educators. Strengths Academy Charter plans to incorporate Strengths Explorer themes as well that that will help each child in both performance and social development. The Strengths themes will help students:

- Learn more about their unique talents.
- Help each student use his or her natural patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior and apply them to activities within and outside of school.
- Impact students' lives positively.
- Influence each student's achievement.
- Match each student to developmental experiences that foster leaps in growth.

By adopting the Common Core Standards the desire for college and career readiness standards have been incorporated into the complete K-12 standards. The criteria used to develop the college and career readiness standards, as well as these K-12 standards are:

- Aligned with college and work expectations;
- Include rigorous content *and* application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- Informed by top-performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and, are evidence and/or research-based.

For students in our early childhood program we will implement standards from the National Association for the Education of the young Child. These standards lead the nation in development of appropriate content and outcomes.

The curriculum cycle for the Strengths Academy Charter includes the identification of Standards (Common Core) the identification of assessments (both formative and comprehensive) that measure the mastery of standards and the identification of resources/materials used in the instruction process. An example of these resources is the Fountas and Pinnell's *The Continuum of Literacy Learning*, which aligns the standards and provides a framework to teachers for all literacy standards, found in the Common Core.

In both reading and math these standards will position our students to be competitive with students from across the nation. The following subjects and levels will be in place:

- PS/PK National Association for the Education of the Young Child (Math/Reading from Common Core and embellished by the DC)

- K-8 standards for Reading and Math from Common Core Standards
- Standards for Social Studies National Council of Social Studies
- Standards for Science Studies draw from the National Council of Science
- Standards for Art from the National Council of the Arts
- Standards for Health education from the National Council of the Health

Mathematics experiences in early childhood settings should concentrate on (1) number (which includes whole number, operations, and relations) and (2) geometry, spatial relations, and measurement, with more mathematics learning time devoted to number than to other topics. Mathematical process goals should be integrated in these content areas.

Mathematics Learning in Early Childhood, National Research Council, 2009

William Schmidt and Richard Houang (2002) have said that content standards and curricula are coherent if they are: articulated over time as a sequence of topics and performances that are logical and reflect, where appropriate, the sequential or hierarchical nature of the disciplinary content from which the subject matter derives. The Common Core Standards will be adopted in both reading and math. These Standards endeavor to follow such a design, not only by stressing conceptual understanding of key ideas, but also by continually returning to organizing principles such as place value or the properties of operations to structure those ideas.

Although attention to the whole child generally includes these components (a focus on the health and well-being of children, an investment in their civic engagement, and the nurturing of their creative growth and discovery), the very concept of a holistic education begs a limiting definition. Academic standards can serve to guide the work of educators, but when standards are limiting rather than empowering, attention to the needs of children becomes constrained. Each community needs the flexibility to identify aspects of the educational curriculum and structures that are unique and important to the needs of its students.

Engaging Students in the Classroom

Simply purchasing a program or adopting a curriculum cannot address instruction for the whole child. Instead, classroom instruction must be constructed with the students, as well as the course content, in mind. How the student will interact with and access the curriculum is as important as the curriculum content itself; teachers wanting to address the holistic needs of children structure their classes in such a way as to facilitate student involvement and engagement in learning activities.

Our school will fully engage the individual child and build on the connections between students, adults, and the community. The Wingspread conference in 2003 synthesized a diverse body of research on student engagement. The ideas from this conference support constructs from the Gallup Student Poll. The results tell an important story: high expectations for all students, positive adult-student relationships, and ensuring students' sense of physical and emotional safety.

The Wingspread Declaration on School Connections highlights specific areas for schools to focus on:

- Implementing high standards and expectations and providing academic support to all students.
- Applying fair and consistent disciplinary policies that are collectively agreed upon and fairly enforced.
- Creating trusting relationships among students, teachers, staff, administrators, and families.
- Hiring and supporting capable (effective) teachers skilled in content, teaching techniques, and classroom management to meet each learner's needs.
- Fostering high parent/family expectations for school performance and school completion.
- Ensuring that every student feels close to at least one supportive adult at school. (Wingspread Declaration on School Connections, 2004)

SAC staff will reflect on engagement findings to build understanding of their importance and characteristics.

A.2.b Resources and Instructional Materials

In a dual language setting many considerations in text selections must be considered in pursuit of text support in both Spanish and English. A criterion rating list taken from the work of Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe will be used when materials and resources are reviewed for use: The following list captures the intent of the process:

1. Do the materials really stay focused on big ideas? Or do they just mention them in passing and focus on content?
2. Do the materials continually revisit big ideas? Or is each idea addressed once, superficially?
3. Does the work require the “six facets of understanding”, students must explain, interpret, apply, consider varied perspectives, empathize, and explore their own perceptions
4. Do the materials consistently require learners to draw inferences beyond what is stated in the text? Or are the learning activities predominantly low-level and devoted mostly to learning content without larger purposes or tasks?
5. Are there real problems that require strategy and careful thought, not just simple exercises that only reinforce the content just taught?
6. Do the materials include many assessments of student understanding (meaning-making and transfer)? Or are most of the assessments focused on recall and “plugging in” of the recently covered content?
7. Are there opportunities to transfer tasks that require students to apply their learning in varied and realistic contexts, mindful of purpose, audience, and setting
8. Do the materials contain interesting, challenging, and varied learning activities? Or is the material as presented in the text likely to encourage too much teacher talk, dull exercises, and/or passive and purposeless learning?
9. Is the advice to teachers explicit on how to use different instructional strategies and classroom structures to make learning engaging as well as effective
10. Do the materials encourage increasing student autonomy and strategic decisions in students’ work? Or are students just expected to march through content in a highly directed way?
11. Are the activities and assessments that require increased student strategic thinking about what is being asked by a question, how to plan, what materials and past content to use, what to do when stuck on part of the text?

These questions will raise the level of scrutiny for materials approved for purchase and will help staff make important decisions.

Early Childhood

The early childhood curriculum will be guided by the NAEYC guidelines. A dual language environment provides for expanded cognitive and conceptual growth needed for flexible reasoning. Beyond the rigor that accompanies a language rich environment, quality positive relationships are a must. The emphasis on positive relationships among teachers and families and between teachers and children is the primary criteria for nurturing classroom environment. A strengths-based approach in nurturing the development of young children supports the national guidelines and the mission-specific criteria. Teachers will differentiate their responses to individual children and help them as needed to be independent learners. This will promote self-help skills and awareness of the feelings of others. Cultural sensitivity for all students will begin in the early childhood years, by honoring the language, literature, art and music of diverse cultures.

Our educational approach is based on the construct that young children build their knowledge of the world through interactive settings. Children discover through their interactions with people, objects, events, and ideas. Learning by pursuing interests is most motivating to young children with appropriate scaffolding by adults. Child-centered classrooms, allow the interests to guide the exploration and learning. The materials-rich classrooms are accessible to students and have multiple purposes. They foster creativity and stimulate language and thinking. Materials are built for kids use and allow for discovery and collaboration with peers. Students create their own play and manipulate their environment growing language, relationship and concepts. The adults are play partners not directors.

Parents and family members will be involved in classroom learning. Giving families the support to see how language and learning are important will be necessary. A program to lend books in English/Spanish will extend the learning and give families a role in the day-to-day learning of their child. Many opportunities will be provided to families to participate and see firsthand how children learn from doing.

Language/literacy in a dual language program includes a print-rich environment that labels and lists the daily activities and learning for little eyes. Bringing experience to print displays reinforces the purpose for and interest in literacy. Books, poems, songs and scribed stories in both languages strengthen each child's literacy foundation and develop pre-reading skills.

Math/Science activities will be hands-on and develop the necessary vocabulary to describe number sense and discovery. The combining of these subjects provides a framework for real world learning. Counting friends, discovering patterns and relationships in daily activities lays the foundation for the authentic application of science and math. Children will be encouraged to notice and classify their world to bring order and see relationship.

Social Studies are the vehicle for the worldview we encourage in the very young. Washington DC provides many opportunities to expand the experiences this age group. Positive relationships will be a focus of each classroom and the development of learning communities starts here. Chores and housekeeping roles are the first step in developing social responsibility and care for others. A robust early childhood classroom shapes the interactions for the young child. Labeling the feelings and encouraging self-expression is a natural fit for this setting. Noticing community helpers and the roles each plays in the bigger neighborhood shapes understanding of the bigger world.

SAC classrooms will combine both three and four year olds and provide instruction and conversation in both languages. Classrooms of mixed ages provide a setting that will scaffold instruction and maximize opportunities for peers to "teach" and support "friends".

Literacy K-5

Through small-group instruction, teachers begin where students are and engage them in specific instruction to support the expansion of their language and early reading abilities. Language development in the early years is the key to literacy. Effective teachers will provide support and meaningful activities that will foster this development. Literacy will be advanced by teacher directed interactive-read-alouds, and shared reading experiences. Students learn to apply phonics skills to take words apart while reading for meaning. During the reading block, 50% of this instruction is done in English and 50% in Spanish. Students learn to read with accuracy, fluency and understanding, meeting the demands of texts at each level and reading more difficult texts (in both languages) over time with instructional scaffolding. In their introductions to texts, teachers point out the features of informational texts (e.g., headings, legends) and teach students to use tools such as glossaries and indexes to find important information.

Highly effective teachers are more able to take quality curriculum and engage the student in passionate on-going learning. Thoughtful planning is essential in developing a plan for literacy in the K-5 arena. Reading comprehension and writing instruction promote self-expression. Students will be exposed to

genre reading and writing from an early age. They will understand what good readers and writers must do.

When teaching non-fiction, teachers use informational texts to answer questions, make connections among ideas, think critically about several texts on the same topic, and identify and synthesize new information and ideas. Non-fiction instruction requires a different emphasis, than fiction here are some ways it is different. The pages in non-fiction have fonts that vary on one page, *italics* and words in **bold** are a signal that the information is important. The chapters are divided to develop content. Instruction in multiple literacies is important and will be taught to our students.

A guided reading program matches students to text and keeps students moving forward in more complex text. Exposing all students to grade level materials in both English and Spanish will build capacity and comprehension. At every grade students learn to identify evidence in the text to support learning. Modeled, shared and guided learning comes well before independent and stresses the collaborative nature of a strengths-based classroom.

A significant aspect of our literacy strategy is to build stamina in our students. Building stamina means to increase the amount of time students can read in a sustained setting. Students would have time during the school day to read text at their instructional level every day. Increasing this time prepares students for academic learning in more complex texts. Students will read non-fiction from the very early levels. Reading non-fiction from the beginning is a great interest tool for sustained reading times. Every effort will be made to provide students with a wide variety of books that develops their love of reading.

Literacy 6-8

Reading and language arts instruction for grades 6-8^t continues the emphasis on high quality literature, multiple genres and innovative novel-based program. Connecting background experience with flexible and leveled libraries is essential in dual language settings. Providing student's choice in novel selections will promote our strengths-based focus and give students responsibility around reading both fiction and non-fiction. Students will be encouraged to go deeper in their reading to make connections with the text to text, text to self, and text to the world. Stamina will be a focus for this age-group so testing situations can be improved and true performance can be measured.

Students will be instructed in how to read different texts. The traditional left to right progression is not possible when reading a math or science text. Students will be instructed on techniques of text search, looking at legends and maps to gain the necessary information in different presentations. "Literacy standards for grade 6 and above are predicated on teachers of ELA, history/social studies, science, and technical subjects using their content area expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective fields. It is important to note that the 6–12 literacy standards in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects are not meant to replace content standards in those areas but rather to supplement them." Common Core website.

Writing K-8

In conjunction with Common Core Standards, the range of genres grows and the expectations and complexity within genres increase at each level. The Writers Workshop will include instruction and understanding in three areas: craft, conventions, and process. Teachers use these curriculum constructs to plan whole- group mini-lessons, small- group lessons, and individual student conferences.

Learning to be a writer starts at a preschool level. The use of quality children's' literature to create a love of story is the first step. The study of the writing craft includes learning the characteristics of genres and text types as well as what writers do to make writing understandable and interesting. After studying what good authors do, students learn how to hook their audience, organize the content of their writing, use descriptive language, create sentences, and draw conclusions for their readers. Writing narratives fosters

voice, emotion and the development of one's ideas. Conventions are taught at each grade level, increasing in complexity spelling, punctuation, paragraphing, text organization, and coherence of thought. The writing process is nurtured and developed by the workshop format. The workshop provides instruction and guidance for creating drafts, making revisions, editing and publishing finished products. Daily writing is the key in creating capable readers and writers.

In middle school students will use the many technology advancements to see how information is available for research and projects. Students will use technology to enhance their writing craft and share their work with others around the world.

Math K-8

SAC's goal is to have mathematically capable students who can explain the meaning of problems and looking for entry points to solutions. For young students our teaching will focus on number sense and relationships. Numbers will create another language to share ideas, make decisions and draw conclusions. Counting will give them needed information to perform duties and chores within the classroom. It will help them think more abstractly. Our instruction will include shapes and geometric applications in the world of little ones. In time they will analyze givens, constraints, relationships and goals.

Mathematically capable students use their verbal skills to explain correspondences between equations, tables, and graphs. Younger students will rely on objects or pictures to make meaning and solve problems. Students will use math to solve problems of daily life and will be comfortable relying on math as a means to make predications and draw analogies. Older students will use their number sense to apply higher-level operations (addition, subtraction, multiplying and dividing). Once these operations are mastered, the approach will be the use of math to solve more complex problems. Math literacy creates the importance of math in the everyday. Teachers will facilitate thinking and talking mathematically to extend the development of math content and application.

Science K-8

Primary

Students will learn science through a combination of hands-on discovery and inquiry. Scientific principles and concepts will bring students in contact with materials and situations that build on concepts and explain relationships in the real world.

Intermediate

Students will build on their scientific understanding by building content knowledge and discovery through labs and experiments. Using their skills in math students will predict and measure experimental situations that bring understanding of principles close to home. The example of magnets and motors will help students understand the polarity of magnets and its place in the earth's layers.

Middle School

Students at this level will follow the Common Core Standards as they are finalized and the National Science Education Standards. By doing so, the following positive impact will be derived:

- Develop curiosity about the natural world and include "hands-on, minds-on" inquiry-based science instruction.
- Engage students in laboratory investigations a minimum of 80 percent of the science instruction time as specified in the NSTA position statement Laboratory Science.
- Incorporate independent and cooperative group learning experiences during the study of science, and encourage informal learning experiences to support the curriculum.
- Integrate science with other curriculum subjects in a multidisciplinary approach, such as through theme-based learning.

NSTA recommends that we:

- Provide students with real-life experiences, such as mentoring and apprenticeships that enable them to develop an awareness of science-based careers and an understanding of how science is relevant to their lives.
- Provide opportunities for decision-making activities (e.g., debate or research papers) and for involvement in community-based problems.
- Promote societal goals for scientific and technological literacy.

NSTA recommends that the assessment strategies used in middle level science programs:

- Include a variety of assessment methods that can be used to evaluate overall student achievement and guide decisions about instruction and practices.
- Be continuous and embedded in the instructional materials.
- Capture the interest of students to better engage them in the assessment process.
- Occur frequently to allow for modification, enrichment, and remediation.
- Include questions that are sensitive to gender and varied cultures.

Social Studies standards from: the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies recommend the following units of study:

- Culture - provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity.
- Time, Continuity, and Change - provide for the study of the past and its legacy.
- People, Places, and Environments - provide for the study of people, places, and environments.
- Individual Development and Identity - provide for the study of individual development and identity.
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions - provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.
- Power, Authority, and Governance - provide for the study of how people create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance.
- Production, Distribution, and Consumption - provide for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.
- Science, Technology, and Society - provide for the study of relationships among science, technology, and society.
- Global Connection - provide for the study of global connections and interdependence.
- Civic Ideals and Practice - provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.

Arts/Dance/Music: D.C.P.S. standards will be used.

Resources Under Consideration for PS through PK				
Core Content	Resources & Materials	Base Criteria for Selection	Mission-Specific Criteria	Other Considerations
Language Arts/ Literacy/ Language Acquisition	Creative Curriculum High Scope	Scientifically based Aligns to the NAECY standards Emphasizes adult-child interaction,	Honors creativity Appropriate for all early learners	Books and materials in Spanish and English Supportive reading for teachers: Ballantyne, Keira G., Sanderman, Alicia R., D'Emilio, Timothy, McLaughlin, Nicole. (2008). Dual language learners in the early years: Getting ready to succeed in school
Math	Creative Curriculum High Scope	Scientifically based Aligns to the NAECY standards Research based Teachers and students are active partners in shaping learning	Honors creativity Appropriate for all early learners	Supportive reading for teachers Espinosa, Linda M. (2008). Early literacy for English language learners In Ed Bruin-Parecki, A. (2008) Effective early literacy practice: Here's how, here's why (pp. 71-86). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Pub. Co.; [Ypsilanti, Mich.]: High/Scope Press
Science	Creative Curriculum High Scope	Scientifically based Aligns to the NAECY standards Carefully designed learning environment	Honors creativity Appropriate for all early learners	Books in Spanish and English
Social Studies	Creative Curriculum High Scope	Scientifically based Aligns to the NAECY standards Strengthens initiative and self-reliance in children and young people.	Honors creativity Appropriate for all early learners	Books in Spanish and English

Resources Under Consideration for K through 5 th Grade				
Core Content	Resources & Materials	Base Criteria for Selection	Mission-Specific Criteria	Other Considerations
<p>Language Arts/ Literacy/ Language Acquisition</p>	<p>Houghton Mifflin series: Invitations/ Invitaciones Reading and Writing Workshop Classrooms will be text-rich, displaying, among others elements: labels, charts, word</p> <p>Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) Benchmark Assessments Systems (BAS)</p> <p>Classroom libraries in both languages are essential for enhanced literacy.</p> <p>Guided reading series in both English and Spanish leveled according to Fountas and Pinnell will be available for teachers to use during small group guided reading or literature circles instruction.</p> <p>The school library will include grade appropriate collections in both English and Spanish and provide resources to support expeditions, exposing students to new genres.</p>	<p>Aligns to Common Core LA Standards English language proficiency</p> <p>Aligns with NAEP</p> <p>Balanced literacy framework with five essential components for reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary instruction, and comprehension.</p> <p>Emphasis on writing well and writing as a tool for learning.</p> <p>LLI provides assessment, instruction, intervene (with supplementary materials for scaffolding).</p> <p>Monitor student progress with integrated tools.</p> <p>Use of a variety of language experiences to engage students including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction in phonics. 	<p>Support literacy and language development in both English and Spanish.</p> <p>Dual language learners develop reading and writing skills through literature in English and Spanish.</p> <p>Supports relevance and rigor for all students.</p>	<p>Resources for Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fountas and Pinnell, including Guiding Readers and Writers, Word Matters, Guided Reading, and Interactive Writers • Lucy Calkins/Columbia University's Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, including Units of Study for Teaching Reading and Units of Study for Teaching Writing. • On comprehension – Harvey/Goudvis, Strategies that Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding. • WIDA's Instructional Design: Promotes both communicative and academic native language proficiencies; provides continuity of Language Arts instruction across the grades; promotes and sustains language support for academic purposes; and anchors assessment and instruction.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided reading and writing. • Shared reading and writing. • Independent reading and writing. • Interactive writing. 		
Math	<p>Math Solutions</p> <p>Intervention Math Solutions – Do the Math</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align to Common Core Math Standards • Align to NAEP • Ensure that students finish eighth grade with a deep understanding of mathematics and complete the equivalent of Algebra 	<p>Comprehensive 4-Step approach increases teacher effectiveness</p> <p>Available in English and Spanish</p>	<p>Provides on-going staff development</p> <p>Text available in both English and Spanish</p>
Science	<p>Designed for each grade level.</p> <p>Full Options Science System (“FOSS”) kits: reusable scientific materials that introduce basic scientific skills that students will build upon during the expedition.</p> <p>Facing the Future’s Curriculum.</p> <p>Hampton Brown: Quality, highly visual non-fiction texts in English and Spanish that integrate science, math and social studies. Appropriate for K-3rd, and 3rd-8th. Emphasize literacy development, academic language, content based literacy and increased comprehension skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align to D.C. and the National Science Education • Hand-on Learning • Science Literacy • Scientific Inquiry 	<p>FOSS: Each kit is designed to work with two grade levels, a good fit for our mixed-age classrooms and looping.</p> <p>Proven successfully in bilingual settings.</p>	<p>Complement with various community resources, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chesapeake Bay Foundation • Washington Parks and People • Discovery Creek/Living Classrooms • Youth Garden/Friends of the National Arboretum • National Zoo & natural parks • Various museums

Resources Under Consideration for 6th through 8th Grade				
Core Content	Resources & Materials	Base Criteria for Selection	Mission-Specific Criteria	Other Considerations
All	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

The research supports dual language programs as a rigorous and effective in closing achievement gaps and beneficial for both LEP children and EP children. The design of our program will evolve as we respond to the needs of our students. The actual decision of how much time or subjects will be presented in English and Spanish will be part of the work of our curriculum development team. Considerations include: Science instruction in Spanish only by sixth through eighth grades. History, due to content standards may best be taught in English. Math in Spanish only by middle school is also a consideration. For students entering SAC in our upper grades, programs for sheltered instruction will be necessary. Textbooks and materials for dual language programs will increase in the next five years. Current leaders are: Hampton Brown, National Textbook Co., and Scott Foresman, Ediciones SM.

A.2.c Methods of Instruction

Our commitment to our students and their access to effective teachers is part of the Strengths Academy Charter. Students are our priority and meeting their individual needs is integral in our schools mission. Every student at SAC will have a success plan. Their individual strengths and interests will be part of that document. We will have a Special Education teacher/coordinator that will be instrumental in observing students and providing additional instructional support. The selection of the most effective teachers is the most significant strategy in assisting students with delayed development or special requirements to be successful. In our early childhood classrooms 2 adults will be assigned. The Lead Teacher and the Fellow will provide a 10 to 1 ratio will make small group instruction and individual support possible.

Inclusion

Inclusion of students in every aspect of our instructional model is a goal of the Strengths Academy Charter. The Special Education coordinator will support this effort and plan with classroom staff in differentiating instruction, adjusting schedules and classroom arrangements. The curriculum for early childhood is designed to focus on developmental milestones and language. This focus will help determine if services of speech pathologists are needed on a contractual basis the first year.

LEA Status

Strengths Academy Charter will act as its own LEA. Services from psychologists, occupational and physical therapists will be provided on a contract basis.

Pre-referral Process

The classroom teacher will prepare a list of concerns for the student and their ability to be successful in the classroom.

The pre-referral step is a classroom observation followed by a team meeting. The meeting highlights current issues that are of concern to the lead teacher and fellow and any solutions for these. Such meetings focus on instructional adjustments that might of surfaced during the observation and show result in the short-term. This will be referred to as a TAT, teacher assistant team. These early concerns are often solved using a collaborative model of expertise in providing adjustments as support. The next step, which does include school staff and parents, would be a closer review of student functioning within the classroom. Data is used to outline and support classroom concerns and is in a written format. Parents are asked to share their insights and input regarding the concerns. The special education coordinator will observe the students and provide a narrative of that observation. During this Student Assistance Team (SAT) meeting Lead teacher, Fellow, Special Education coordinator and parents will develop a plan to address concerns.

The pre-referral process includes strategies for assistance and a timeline to meet and review the strategy data. The time allowed is based on the group decision and the severity of the concern.

Initial Assessments

If the SAT team determines that further assessment is needed, to determine special education eligibility, a licensed school psychologist will be contacted to meet with the SAT team and determine the extent of the testing necessary. Once that determination has occurred, and parent consent to test has been secured, the assessment will be scheduled and performed. Great need will be taken to make the testing situation as comfortable as possible for the student.

Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)

This document is developed in conjunction with the psychologist, the classroom teacher, special education coordinator, the parents, school administrator and when appropriate the student. The plan will focus on goals and objectives needed to assure the success of the student within the regular classroom. If a student enrolls who has an IEP, a meeting will be held to review the content and make adjustments as needed in a new situation. The special education coordinator, classroom teacher, parent and school administrator will participate in the review. Focus of all meeting is to build success for the students.

Delivery of Services

During years 1 & 2 the special education teacher/coordinator will manage the IEP process, SAT team meetings and direct support to students. An additional special education teacher will be added in year 3. In year 3, a review of duties will be done, to determine need for more direct student services. If the need for more special education support occurs prior to year 3, adjustments in teacher distribution plans will be done.

Monitoring the Progress of Special Education Students

The Special Education coordinator, the principal and the classroom teacher will monitor student progress toward IEP goals. The review will occur quarterly as the reports of progress are made to all parents. A formal IEP conference will be held each year to address the need to change goals and objectives. Parents can request an IEP meeting at any time to adjust or discuss the content.

Exiting Special Education

The goal of SAC would be to exit students from Special education services as soon as the student has shown the necessary progress on IEP goals and objectives. The overall goal is successful grade level performance in all areas. Until that time the necessary accommodations will be made to ensure the success of the student. Close attention to all student assessment data and strategic responses within the classroom are essential to the success of the student.

Anticipated Population and Planning in Year 1

Based on special education projections city-wide, we expect our special education students to be 12-15% of our overall population. Since our students configuration is for a PS-1, in the first year, fewer students with special education needs is possible. Early intervention in the lives of students is positively correlated with language and cognitive development. The strength of this model is to provide a quality instructional environment, as a means of eliminating delays.

A.2.d Students with Exceptional Needs

“The ideal school program for the gifted child fosters his/her ability to evaluate facts and arguments critically; to create new ideas and originate new lines of thought; to reason through complex problems; to associate and interrelate concepts; to understand other situations, times, and people; to work independently on research projects; and to develop an interdisciplinary approach to subject matter.” U.S. Department of State website

With this description of an ideal program for gifted and talented students, SAC would encourage all students from an early age to excel in areas of their own interest. A strengths-focused model allows for students to lead with talents and interests. Student-directed learning creates a potential for deeper and more extensive learning. It will be the responsibility of teachers to write a success plan for each child. This plan will consider areas of talent and giftedness for each child including intellectual, physical and artistic.

The identification of students will be a collective effort of staff, community and families. Multiple-measures will be used to determine the individual needs of each student. Through the student success plan, the

uniqueness of each child will be honored and additional instructional strategies will be applied. A team of teachers will help to provide a holistic plan for students. Just a plan might help to identify the need for support; all plans will work from an advantage model, as well as strengths.

Parents and teachers must be strong advocates for their children in order to enable these young people to find satisfying expression of their special gifts. Gallup's deep belief in a strengths approach makes articulation of student strengths an ongoing basis. The best advantage for gifted and talent students, as with all students is to have a highly effective teacher. Parents input to staff regarding their child's giftedness will be given much attention.

Enrichment activities will be integrated into daily lesson, units and curriculum. A challenging environment will speak to the possibility of each child. A dual language setting will offer much in the way of flexible thinking, vocabulary building and cultural nuances. SAC will provide a multitude of experiences for students to be challenged to: make valuable judgments about qualitative relationships, recognize that problems in life can have more than one solution, celebrate multiple perspectives, understand and recognize that small differences can have large effects and say things in new and different ways.

Students with special gifts will be recognized for them and will find an environment that nurtures uniqueness in all children. Staff will build a foundation that supports exceptionality and provides language and understanding around uniqueness. Each child's plan will focus on their particular talents, and clearly define goals unique to each child's development. Vertical teams within the school, as well as parents on a quarterly basis review student success plans. Parents will be part of the plan development and will be encouraged to suggest and be involved in any and all activities. A focus on success for each child will provide monitoring of progress for every child not just those who perform, above or below a grade level standard.

Special Education Students

The special education students enrolled at SAC will find effective teachers working to deliver instruction in an inclusive model. The students will have additional support from their special education teacher, who develops and monitors the goals and objectives with the classroom teacher. The IEP team will provide input on the best strategies to meet the goals. A strengths approach for special education will shift team thinking away from deficits toward the strengths of the individual student. It will bring the discussion to a proactive model that uses areas of strengths to make progress, and still gives time and consideration to goals.

Working from a strength-based model of development, researchers consider strength-based assessment to be founded on the following principles:

- All children have strengths.
- Focusing on children's strengths instead of weaknesses may result in enhanced motivation and improved performance.
- Failure to demonstrate a skill should first be viewed as an opportunity to learn the skill as opposed to a problem.
- Service plans that begin with a focus on strengths are more likely to involve families and children in treatment. (Epstein et al., 2003)
- The SAC will provide the environment of every child has strengths.
- Focus on strengths gives rise to confidence and energy to practice a skill.

A.2.e. English Language Learners

We have included English Language Learners throughout this document. Dual language programming addresses the needs of English Language Learners (ELL) and provides opportunities for English speakers to learn a second language. A dual language program creates a language-rich environment for students. Small class sizes on PS-3rd grade are supported by research. SAC plans to maintain a 1 to 10 ratio in these grades using teacher assistants (college graduate students) to keep our ratios low. When students enter SAC beyond the first grade additional support will be provided to help them with their second language learning. It is more difficult to acquire the second language; however every attempt would be made to assist the new student in language acquisition.

A.2.f. Strategies for Providing Intensive Academic Support

SAC will provide a wrap-around school model that brings service to students/families to the school. Collaboration with health providers will be a feature that builds confidence and partnerships with families. Quality health care is critical in the lives of young child as a preventive step in learning problems. Models of school health care address both physical and mental health needs. Assisting families find and manage these needs will be a focus of our school leadership team.

In addition to health support for students with academic/social needs will be addressed through our student success planning. Plans for differentiated instruction will involve a team approach and will involve specialists in literacy and math. Students will be provided instruction that considers their needs, not based on a deficit model of performance. Attention to progress will be monitored and success plans adjusted on an on-going basis.

Selection of highly effective teachers will bring the most vulnerable students top- notch educators. The selection process will raise the effectiveness of the staff to develop and implement instruction for all students. Collaborative and inclusive practices will allow many minds and voices to weigh on strategies that are most effective. Professional Development to maintain our edge for dual language and common core standards response will be on going. A speech/language pathologist, as a full-time staff member will help support students of all backgrounds and assist in measuring progress in both languages.

Staff will decide specific staff development each quarter. Their input on personal development is key to response to student performance. Adjustments to strategies, groupings, schedules and materials will need a broad view.

A.3 Student Performance

A.3.a Student Progress and Achievement

As evidenced in the research summary, of Creative Curriculum's Gold 32 objectives focus on key predictors of school success in the areas of social-emotional, physical, cognitive, oral language, literacy, and math development and learning. The remaining objectives help teachers plan instruction in science and technology, social studies, and the arts, and enable teachers to assess children's English language acquisition. In our dual language program additional language assessment will be done with the Early Language Listening and Oral Proficiency Assessment. This tool will go deeper into areas of oral fluency, grammar, vocabulary and listening comprehension of children learning a second language in school.

These assessments would help to identify students whose development may be lagging behind. If a student's progress were of concern additional tests would be administered under the direction of our curriculum specialist and special education teacher.

Gallup is known for measurement, but more important measuring the right things. Assessment is important if the results are predictive and useful and if they are used to benefit learning. Formative assessments, administered by teachers are the best providers of performance and have the largest impact on learning. Such measures will be determined in detail once staff selection is complete, however, each grade level and subject area will need flexibility. A proposed chart is included. SAC will follow a plan of summative assessments required by the PCSB, and the District. Our focus is to measure the achievement of our students over time and use the data to adjust instruction for better outcomes.

For our youngest students, the Creative Curriculum Gold instrument will be used to record developmental milestones, observable during classroom activities. Observation of behaviors and skills in the following areas will be recorded: Social emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science and technology and English language acquisition. This instrument will be suitable for monitoring the progress of students with disability and English Language Learners. Observations and photos of developmental performances are easily uploaded with this system. Other measures will be used specific to dual language goals.

ACUITY for Mathematics

Acuity is designed to support both interim and formative assessment programs with a unique integration of classroom-friendly assessments, instructional resources, reporting, and customization opportunities. These tests would be administered to gauge progress in the grade level curriculum and could be administered three times during the year. Acuity provides a both predictive and diagnostic test to assist with struggling math students.

Portfolios

Diane Hart defines a portfolio as "a container that holds evidence of an individual's skills, ideas, interests, and accomplishments." Strengths Academy Charter's use of portfolios is to aid our students in becoming independent and self-directed. Year-long portfolio collections provide an accurate view of students' work, their interests and will demonstrate their growth over the academic year. This practice is aimed at individual growth, not sorting or competing against others.

Self-evaluation is an integral to portfolio development, and relies on the student's honest and strengths-based approach. Portfolios supplement, traditional assessments and give a more authentic view of each student's work. The students will create portfolios. They select their best work that demonstrates their mastering of standards in selected subjects. The portfolio process is a collaborative teacher-student

effort, with the teacher consulting and coaching. Portfolios are shared in many ways with parents, other students and even the community. Teacher's conference with their students to select entries during the portfolio's development and engage students' own assessment of the work. The value of portfolios derives from the students' reflection on the portfolio content and management throughout the year.

	Formative	Summative	Language	
Early Childhood PS/PK	Creative Curriculum Gold	GOLD Profile	ELLOPA PPVT	
Schedule	On-going	2x per year	3x per year	
K-2	Formative	Summative	Language	
Reading	Fountas and Pinnell	Portfolio DR2	Sitton word List	
Writing	Anchor papers	Portfolio 6 trait rating		
Schedule	3x per year		3 x per year	
Math	Teacher/Text	Curriculum based	Ongoing	
WIDA 3-5				
	Formative	Summative	Language	Schedule
Reading	BAS Fountas and Pinnell	Portfolio DC cas DRA	English and or Spanish	3x per year
Writing	Six trait/genre writing	Portfolio	English and or Spanish	2x per year
Math	ACUITY	DC cas	English and or Spanish	3x per year
Science	Text/teacher made test	Portfolio end of the yr	English and or Spanish	Ongoing
Social Studies	Text/teacher made tests	Portfolio end of the yr	English and or Spanish	Ongoing
6-8	Formative	Summative	Language	Schedule
Reading	ACUITY	Portfolio DCcas 1x	English and or Spanish	3x per yr
Writing	Six trait /genre writing Research	Portfolio Ongoing Yearly Project	English and or Spanish	2x per yr
Math	ACUITY	DC cas 1x	English and or Spanish	3x per yr
Science	Text/teacher Made tests	Portfolio/end of the yr	English and or Spanish	On-going
Social Studies	Text/teacher made tests	Portfolio/end of the yr	English and or Spanish	On-going

How Assessments Will Be Used to Tailor Instruction

The purpose of assessment is twofold first it helps direct future learning and secondly at specific times measures student growth. Summative assessments give a snapshot of what students know at a point in time. It is how schools are measured and rated. More important is the assessment for learning, a way to weigh and measure what other series of learning must occur before a student has mastered a designated standard. Ongoing assessments help students frame their own learning and inform teachers and parents of the current status.

Assessment data will be part of each child's success plan. It will inform teachers about modifications to the instructional day and best practice. Students will be involved in their assessment data. They will set personal goals around their own performance and help record and articulate the results. Students' ownership of their results is key to developing authentic personal goals. The assessment results will be an integral part of student-led conferences. This "report" of progress is a significant communication that includes students in the process and keeps the information transparent and real.

Externally Validated Measures and Instruments

The Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) is an example of a teacher-administered instrument that measures students' progress in reading and uses written comprehension testing as an additional component. This Benchmark System uses leveled materials to identify a student's current reading level and progress along a gradient of text levels for each child. The word "benchmark" means a standard against which to measure something. Teacher's working with the system will provide an intimate knowledge of student's need and performance. This model is one that allows the assessment to drive the instruction. BAS is administered three times a year, for every student K-8th grade.

Other assessments in the kit will be used when needed to monitor progress in phonemic awareness, phonics, letter learning, and high frequency word knowledge for emerging readers. The kit has options for teachers to use additional tests when performance is lagging.

The Grade –Level Equivalency chart gives comparisons to performance on basal, Rigby and DRA levels. This chart eliminates the need to over-test students yet provides the reliability needed. Fountas and Pinnell research states, "Simply going to a remedial reading group will not make enough difference. But, our experience suggests that daily intensive teaching as an extra intervention can make a difference." The Strengths Academy Charter will ensure that instruction is specific to each child and thoroughly planned and implemented accordingly.

BAS Fountas and Pinnell benchmark system will be used 3x each year to DC –CAS for grades 3-8th in reading and math will be administered each spring. ACUTIY testing for grades 3-8 in math and 6-8 in reading will be administered 3 times during the year. Language Assessments: WIDA 3-8th, ELLOPA (PK-2), PPVT, TVIP.

Proposed Outcomes and Indicators

- All students will be fluent readers and writers in both Spanish and English.
- All students will be proficient in grade level math standards.
- All students will use strengths language to describe themselves and others.
- All students will identify personal goals from a strengths-based perspective and demonstrate how strengths are used in their daily lives.

Student Information Systems

Strengths Academy Charter will use to manage all student information. Student information during enrollment will be housed in our SIS. This system will track our attendance, assessments, grades,

schedules and other demographic/cumulative data. Our own Data Manager will manage this system. A secure SIS provides a safe environment for important information for students to be housed overtime. Access to this system will be determined by our Data Manager and will be based on function and need.

A.3.b Gateway Measures

Strengths Academy Charter believes authentic tasks and evaluation are worth the struggle to complete and will help shape future behaviors for work enjoyment. Our Academy will have a sense of urgency around ways to make every student successful. The flexibility of the multi-grade classes gives students time and support to meet grade level proficiency on an individual basis. Arbitrary points are rigid don't provide for more time to focus or practice of skill or concept. Our students are viewed as individuals whose talents, skills and knowledge are evolving.

Promotion to the next level will be determined by a combination of information that measures student progress from year to year, which is a value-add approach. Proficiency measures are low level and do not challenge or expect excellence. We will evaluate the whole child and the progress from school year to school year. Teachers will understand this measure and will own the student growth as a result of their effectiveness in the classroom.

Promotion to the next grade level will factor external requirements as well as those each grade level team sets and shares with the school community. Parents will be actively involved in decisions in the school day. Parents are part of the on-going, their input and support will be honored. Notification of concern will be part of an on-going conversation, not news as the mid-year approaches. The emphasis will be on individual achievement and performance. Decisions around promotion will not be made in isolation, but rather by team review.

Students exiting our 8th grade class will be prepared to enter high school with a strong background in dual languages. This will allow them access to a college prep high school track. Our eight graders will have been operating in a context where they know their strengths and are eager to lead with them. This will indeed give them an edge entering any high school.

A.3.c Leading indicators

Gallup has been studying well-being (Wellbeing) globally for the last decade. Five elements emerge which have a strong impact on school and work success. SAC would place a strong expectation for daily attendance at school. As families enroll in at the Academy, a staff member will have initial conversations about these values and how they will be shared between the school and family. We would also expect families to become certified in Wellbeing. This would be accomplished by having three family conferences each year with the child and the teacher. Parents would also participate in 3 of 5 family learning sessions' series covering the five elements of Wellbeing. The best way for families to begin is the health support (Physical Wellbeing) our school would seek for every child. SAC will assist families in securing appropriate care for their children. Providing opportunities for families to gather and enjoy each other and their school will be offered monthly. Social Wellbeing activities give parents from our school community the relationships needed to enjoy their children and their life. Career Wellbeing and Financial Wellbeing seminars will be offered to provide guidance around these areas for a more full life.

Wellbeing: The 5 Elements

"These elements are the currency of a life that matters. They do not include every nuance of what's important in life, but they do represent five broad categories that are essential to most people.

1. The first element is about how you occupy your time or simply liking what you do every day: Career Wellbeing.
2. The second element is about having strong relationships and love in your life: Social Wellbeing.

3. The third element is about effectively managing your economic life: your Financial Wellbeing.
4. The fourth element is about having good health and enough energy to get things done on a daily basis: Physical Wellbeing.
5. The fifth element is about the sense of engagement you have with the area where you live: Community Wellbeing.

While 66% of people are doing well in at least one of these areas, *just 7% are thriving in all five*. If we're struggling in any one of these domains, as most of us are, it damages our well-being and wears on our daily life. When we strengthen our wellbeing in any of these areas, we will have better days, months, and decades. But we're not getting the most out of our lives unless we're living effectively in all five."

A close watch on school attendance is a leading indicator that communication is strong and that engagement is occurring. Any absences would require communication about the absence. This is not only a safety measure but is often a warning about other potential issues. Our practices will be well defined and records of attendance and participation will be part of our measure for success. Our own Q12 measure for climate within our academy will help measure engagement of staff, students and families. Early registration for the next year and the commitment by families to return are strong measures of effectiveness and engagement. Our strong commitment to the family would be demonstrated by our willingness to give siblings preference in the enrollment process.

The withdrawal from our school would be a cause of great concern to our staff. We would indeed meet with the family, and try to remedy issues that are causing the desire for withdrawal. The interview should help our school check the performance of all in creating the environment that brings consistency, security and rigor to our learning and well-being. Feedback from parents would not be taken lightly or dismissed as biased.

A.4 Support for Learning

A.4.a Parent Involvement

Community-based Schools are critical to the success of our children. Gallup has developed programs to educate families about strengths-based education and child rearing. It has offered the positive psychology of Dr. Clifton in shaping its mission to provide an effective teacher in every classroom that treats children as human beings. The child's family, too, must become engaged and involved in their child's education. Opportunities to be close to the learning will be encouraged by each staff member. Whenever families find time in their schedule to visit, volunteer or just be part of the learning, will be encouraged and valued.

Our school staff will know all families and provide a welcoming environment for all families. The feeling of acceptance and value will be the backdrop for all communication and information sharing. Families will understand the vision of a dual language, strengths-based school. We will ask for their expertise as we evolve and grow.

Our Well-being program for families will emphasize our relational need to have a happy life through positive, frequent communications. Our staff will have expert professional development around well-being research. Gallup researchers will provide in depth insight into the elements of Wellbeing and bring those constructs to life in the context of our own school. The purpose of Gallup's research in students is explained from the website:

Purpose

Through years of research, Gallup discovered three true indicators of student success; hope, engagement, and wellbeing. These three key factors drive students' grades, achievement scores, retention, and future employment.

Hope: the ideas and energy we have for the future. Hope drives attendance, credits earned, and GPA of high school students. Hope scores are more robust predictors of college success than are high school GPA, SAT, and ACT scores.

Engagement: the involvement in and enthusiasm for school. Engagement distinguishes between high-performing and low-performing schools.

Wellbeing: how we think about and experience our lives. Wellbeing tells us how our students are doing today and predicts their success in the future.

By measuring students' hope, engagement, and Wellbeing, the Gallup Student Poll will help create a more hopeful story about American education in which students and teachers get to do what they do best every day, students' Wellbeing and success matter to the community, and their personal flourishing leads to school success.

The survey itself takes less than 10 minutes to complete. In addition to several demographic questions (age, grade, gender, etc.), students are asked 20 core questions about what they do, how they think, and how they feel about their home, school, and community life. The following questions are examples that the survey intends to answer about America's students.

- Do your teachers make you feel your schoolwork is important?
- Did you learn or do something interesting yesterday?
- Can you find lots of ways around any problem?
- Do you energetically pursue your goals?

All data collected by the Gallup Student Poll is stored, aggregated, and analyzed by Gallup. Under no circumstances will Gallup reveal a student's individual responses to anyone.

Armed with this new and ongoing research, parents, school districts, communities, states, and the nation can pursue student success goals with proven and actionable data that can lead to significant improvements.

Our own school will have access to the student information down to the specific child. We would use Hope, Engagement and Well-being measures from parents to gauge the indicators in our students' Ps-3rd grade. These measures will help us know and build our community. Our families will be informed about issues of the whole child as well as the NCLB requirements for proficiency on or AYP performance. Our focus on strengths and advocacy in the lives of our students will help students set their goals and become more interested in their performance on such measures.

Making Parents Aware of NCLB Teacher Qualifications

SAC has developed sample notification letters that will provide "right to know" provisions regarding the teacher's educational credentials, Part A to provide teacher professional qualifications of each classroom teacher and in addition the Title 1 notification (regardless of target-assisted or school-wide status) that their child was taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks, by an individual that was not considered highly-qualified.

Please see sample letters: A & B

Strengths Academy Charter
February 1, 2011

Sample Letter A

(Letterhead)

To: All Parents in School that receive Title 1 Funds
From: School Principal Strengths Academy Charter
Date: (insert)
Subject: Notification of Parents of Teacher Qualifications – Compliance P.L. 107-110, Section 111(h) (6)
(A)

The Federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires school districts that receive federal Title 1 funding to notify parents of their right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct their child.

As a recipient of these funds Strengths Academy Charter will provide you with information in a timely manner if you request it. You have the right to request the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers.

- Does the teacher meet state qualifications and licensing for grades and subject taught?
- Does the teacher have provisional or emergency status due to special circumstances?
- The teacher's college major, advanced degrees, field of discipline, certification or degree held.
- Does a paraprofessional support instruction for your child, and is so, their qualifications.

Strengths Academy Charter is committed to a quality education for your child. We employ the most effective teachers, based on Gallup selection science. If you want any information listed above regarding your child's teacher, please contact (school secretary), at (school number).

Sincerely,

Principal, Strengths Academy Charter

Sample Letter B

(Letterhead)

Date

Dear Parent or Guardian:

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed the No Child Left behind Act of 2001 law. This law brings changes to public schools throughout the nation. One such change requires that, schools receiving Title 1 funds must notify parents if their child is taught by a not yet “highly qualified” teacher four or more consecutive weeks.

The law defines highly qualified as:

- Obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher
- Obtained full state certification – in the District of Columbia with either preliminary, initial, or professional teaching license and has
- Demonstrated competency in the core academic subject area(s) taught

All teachers, teaching in core academic subject areas had until June 30, 2006 to comply except DC charter teachers. The DC charter system does not required to teacher certification. Many states have licensing and certification requirements different than the federal law, thus the allowance by law.

As of today, your child’s teacher (Mr. /Ms. _____) has met the (Select: bachelor’s degree requirement, state certification requirement, and subject matter competency requirement). He/she is, currently working to meet the new requirement and Strengths Academy Charter has confidence in (his/her) ability to teach effectively in their current assignment.

If you have any questions regarding (teacher’s name) qualifications, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Principal, Strengths Academy Charter

A.4.b Community Participation

Partnerships start with our school families and then move out into the community. Education sessions about parenting and teaching with strengths will be offered. Building the community network is key to our mission for a positive culture that makes the school the center of family life. Partnerships with Howard University, Thurgood Marshall College Fund, George Washington University, LULAC and For the Love of Children and other organizations will help us create resources for our families. Our school will provide space to hold evening classes for parents working on languages and GED coursework. Opportunities to host weekend health and dental clinics as well as a recycling center for children's clothing, toys and books will be established. A bulletin board for families to post items to donate, or items they need such as baby beds, furniture or other household goods. A school pantry will stock emergency food items for families experiencing food scarcity. Our school social worker will be instrumental in forging relationships with local agencies to assist in the navigation of basic needs of our families.

A.4.c School Organization and Culture

The Strengths Academy Charter will open with PS-1st grades. The curriculum of dual language and strengths-based learning is individualized and rigorous. Our early childhood classrooms will have a multi-age configuration that uses students' strengths to socialize and support learning. Teachers are advocates for their students and will create an environment that builds on relationships as the first layer of competency.

The children's day is designed to support families and a "good start" for the day. The before school program will provide breakfast, positive early talk and conversations between staff and families. Learning will begin as students eat and chat. Parents are encouraged when possible to be part of the breakfast experience. It provides a time to build relationships and trust. Staff will encourage family style eating with good habits at the table. Healthy eating will fit directly into our Well-being model. When it is time for class to begin, children will move to their room with their teachers and follow routines in caring for their belongings and getting the day off to a just right start.

The instructional day has no real beginning or ending since learning along the way is key for the whole child. Staff too will benefit from the Wellbeing model and enjoy that same warm and encouraging feel from the administrative team. The early childhood classrooms will use the Creative Curriculum design for centers and play. In the PS/PK setting the two times are integral for learning. As the grade levels progress, flexibility for classroom arrangements will depend on teacher/student preference. Teachers are encouraged to teach with their strengths, thus classroom design will reflect those themes.

In alignment with our Wellbeing model, the physical needs of our children will be a priority. Having both an indoor and outdoor space to play and exercise is important. A space where children can both run and move is necessary as is a space where children will be creative outdoors. Partnering with agencies that can help with this goal is very important. Creative, physical play is very

Gallup has studied workplace/school place conditions for some time. The findings from employee engagement measurement will help give input to the leadership team about meeting the basic needs of the school community to thrive. These elements are standards for our school environment.

The 12 Elements of an Engaged Workplace:

- I know what is expected of me at work.
- I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.
- At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
- In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
- My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.

- There is someone at work who encourages my development.
- At work, my opinions seem to count.
- The mission/purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.
- My associates (fellow employees) are committed to doing quality work.
- I have a best friend at work.
- In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
- This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

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When staff can answer agree with these constructs, the workplace is positive and hopeful. Engaged staff affects student engagement, like nothing else. Focused plans will be developed to improve lowest scoring areas. Maintaining a positive school climate is essential for the Strengths Academy Charter. The Q12 interview and research will help us maintain a great school environment.

A.4.d Extracurricular Activities

The Strengths Academy Charter's goal for students is the development of their unique talents. After school and intersession activities will include opportunities that maximize the location of the school. Selection of offerings will come from the interests of our students and their families. . The point of learning about your natural tendencies for certain activities is part of the self-discovery of our mission. In the beginning our students will be early childhood and primary ages. They will need exposure to an array of enrichment to discover what really excites them. Our process for this discovery will include specialized art classes (dance, music and instrument exploration), strategic thinking activities such as checkers, chess and science labs. As grades are added the expanse of these after school interests will grow. Because we will use student input for the development of the after school sessions, our curriculum is limitless.

The goal is to have as many community partnerships as possible bring their talents to our school. Students will see that careers and hobbies are part of how we grow and who we are. Intersession and summer programs will create the sense of community-based education we seek. Students will have those days above and beyond the regular school year not remediate, but to advance their interests and learning, not looking back but forward to what is possible.

Our goal is to make before and after school sessions available to any family. It will be more learning, more exploration of language and talent. It will welcome and invite students from universities and colleges to engage with our students as role models and advisees. They will have Strengths training and will be another adult who shows interest and excitement about our students' goals. The coordinator for the morning and afternoon setting will be a staff member who is part of the school, not separate. The alignment for these experiences must be documented and cultivated to maximize growth and potential.

A.4.e Safety, Order and Discipline

One of the tenets of strengths psychology is that prevention is the best defense against social/behavioral problems. Prevention strides have been rooted the in the science and development of individual competencies. Through the work of Dr. Clifton, and others, it has been discovered that a set of human strengths is the best driver to foster virtues in young people. Strengths discovery for our students will be a positive support to their own development. Strengths language honors differences in each person and promotes common good.

Other researchers like, Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) conclude: Engagement is associated with positive academic outcomes, including achievement and persistence in school; and it is higher in

classrooms with supportive teachers and peers, challenging and authentic tasks, opportunities for choice, and sufficient structure. As part of a positive climate model, SAC would consider the Positive Behavioral Support program as systematic range of supports for the individual needs of each student. The PBS program has its beginning as a special education initiative; its success in school-wide implementation is growing.

U.S. Department of Education states:

“Research has shown that the implementation of punishment, especially when it is used inconsistently and in the absence of other positive strategies, is ineffective. Introducing, modeling, and reinforcing positive social behavior is an important part of a student’s educational experience. Teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding.”

“The purpose of school-wide PBS is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm. A major advance in school-wide discipline is the emphasis on school-wide systems of support that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments. Instead of using a patchwork of individual behavioral management plans, a continuum of positive behavior support for all students within a school is implemented in areas including the classroom and non-classroom settings (such as hallways, restrooms). Positive behavior support is an application of a behaviorally-based systems approach to enhance the capacity of schools, families, and communities to design effective environments that improve the link between research-validated practices and the environments in which teaching and learning occurs. Attention is focused on creating and sustaining primary (school-wide), secondary (classroom), and tertiary (individual) systems of support that improve lifestyle results (personal, health, social, family, work, recreation) for all children and youth by making problem behavior less effective, efficient, and relevant, and desired behavior more functional.”

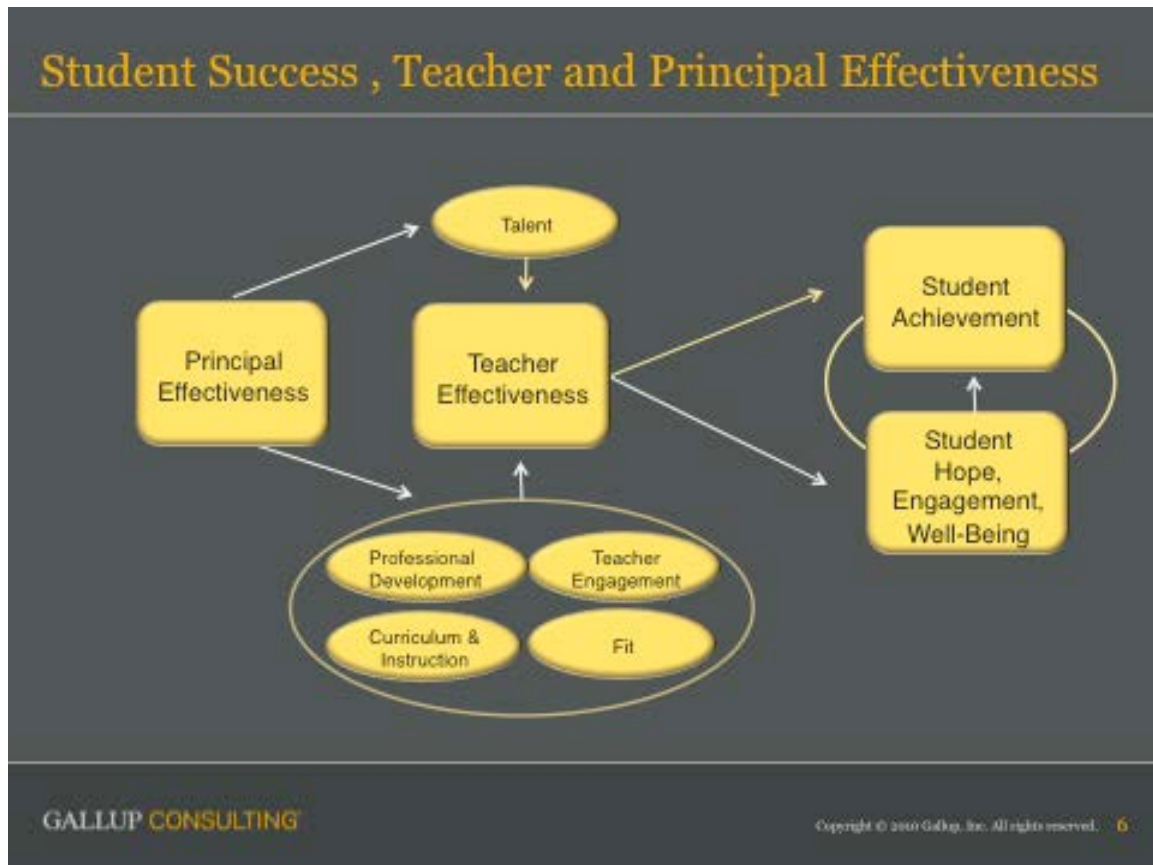
SAC would use the seven components of the PBS program to lay the groundwork for our own school-wide system for encouraging a climate with high student/community engagement, hope and well-being. Our school-wide plan will have these common elements:

- agreed upon and common approach to discipline,
- positive statement of purpose,
- small number of positively stated expectations for all students and staff,
- procedures for teaching these expectations to students,
- continuum of procedures for encouraging displays and maintenance of these expectations,
- continuum of procedures for discouraging displays of rule-violating behavior, and
- procedures for monitoring and evaluation the effectiveness of the discipline system on a regular and frequent basis.

As we work with families on the Gallup Student Poll constructs of hope, engagement and well-being, we will focus on promoting healthy social and emotional experiences each day. Our school will create an environment that enhances the well-being of our entire school community. Strategies for multiage classrooms and cooperative learning are examples of how the sense of community will be developed.

Responding to behavior issues and promoting social and emotional development is the charge of every school. Healthy behaviors must be taught. The learning can and should be done in the context of a school-wide system design that addresses barriers to and supports the (re)engagement of students for learning. What we know is the higher level of teacher/student engagement increases achievement and social competency in children.

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



This is the model for the SAC professional development

The graphic helps us focus on why we need staff development ... to improve student achievement and well-being. The best practice for determining an effective process for professional development is to first recognize its purpose. Professional development is implemented to improve the competency of school staff with the goal of improving achievement in students. Content and process for these activities must ensure that the student learning goals are met.

Some important features for establishing the process in our school would be to interact with all stakeholders:

- Include the voices of stakeholders in plan development; stakeholders would include: all staff members, students, parents and community. For some activities may be offered to our families and beyond.
- Make the plan clear and show its connection to long-term goals for students. As we develop our dual language program, our teachers and support staff will give input toward further program elements that might require additional learning. Cultural and linguistic content may be areas to explore as well as literacy –based strategies that affect our student outcomes.
- Determine the evaluation tool for overall plan and activities to ensure our efforts are sustainable and produce the desired results in student achievement. Collaborative sessions for peer observation and rating would assist in bringing desired proficiency for all.
- Determine the schedule for content delivery, implementation and evaluation with the needs of students, staff and families in mind. We would take staff/family input on the best time for PD. The

calendar for the PD would need to be developed so everyone would be aware of its importance and timing. Sharing the learning with our families is an excellent way to recognize the importance on ongoing learning and help to frame the direction for improvement.

- Articulate the PD plan to staff, parents and students. Presenting information to families about our on-going learning will make our school more inclusive. Communicating goals effectively and accepting our family's role in meeting our goals is essential.
- Creating close relationships with local universities and groups that can assist in content and research opportunities. Gallup's role in the research process and in data collection will be an additional resource for assisting in both needs assessments and evaluation efforts.

Professional development is one element to improve teacher effectiveness. Our efforts at the Strengths Academy Charter will use PD sessions to gather input and allow staff to strengthen curriculum and delivery of instruction. The format of groups and sessions will be dynamic and reflect the overall needs of our students, families and community. Areas of study will range from academic, cultural and social competencies for staff. Using our strength-based model for development keeps our focus individualized and authentic. One-size fits all learning doesn't work for children or adults.

PD activities development will emphasize the need to have an engaged staff in order to sustain the engagement of our students. Understanding the elements that keep our students engaged is essential. Staff will take the learning from these sessions to build student success plans that have stronger and sustainable outcomes.

A.4.g Structure of the School Day and Year

School Day

Strengths Academy Charter will follow the calendar of the Washington DC Public Schools. The schedule will include 182 days of the regular school year. This decision is based on our belief that a community-based school establishes practices that are family-friendly. A family-friendly calendar is built from a school day that gives students rigorous instruction, interest-driven enrichment and healthy extended-day experiences. Extending the time for students is not the most significant factor under consideration. It is the quality of the time and focus that will really make the difference for our students.

Early care 7:00

Breakfast will be offered to students between 7:40-8:10

Classes begin at 8:15

Instructional Day 8:15-3:30

After school 3:35-6:00

Early Start 7-7:40 moves into Breakfast Program

Working families in our district need the social supports schools can best provide by providing a healthy start to the day. In our opening year we will be serving the youngest of children. We will offer a before school program that prepares students for the rest of their day. The day will bring students into a welcoming space with books, puzzles and paper so they can ease in to social interactions with others. This program will open to children by 7:00 a.m. The ratio for staffing will be determined by the number of parents that sign up for this program. Breakfast will begin by 7:40 and will give ample time for students to eat in welcoming environment.

After School 3:35-6:00

After school programs will be available for every child in our school. We plan to attract students to extend their day by offering a variety of enrichment opportunities as well as safe supervision until families can pick up their child.

Our community-based school philosophy will attract the partnership of other agencies to benefit and engage our students beyond the established school day. Some of our after school events will invite families to join in on the fun and learning. Tapping the myriad of groups in the DC area will build interest in our students and mission of strengths-based education.

Daily Communication

Communication with families is a vital to a successful school. Information will be shared with each family on each child daily. A Success notebook will follow the child home. Teachers will provide pertinent information to families and students will assess their day in the notebook too. The Success notebook will allow parents who are not available to see staff will have important information provided in a consistent manner. Requests for extended chats or meeting can easily be arranged in the Success notebook.

Summer School

A summer session will begin after the close of the regular year, and run for 4 weeks. This session will focus on enrichment for all students to include lessons and field trips that mirror some of the advantages of the affluent. Our school realizes that summer loss is really about an opportunity gap. Developing a program with great opportunity and directed by student-interest is a goal.

Teacher Schedule

Our current schedule will have time for planning and professional development. Teacher hours will be 8-5:00. The 1.5 hours after dismissal will provide built in hours for planning, collaboration and professional development. Some of our staff may choose to be involved in after school as well.

Part B — Business Plan

B.1 Planning and Establishment

B.1.a Profile of Founding Group

Founding group members come from diverse backgrounds that add to the richness of our charter themes and goals. The group is very invested in the design model of the Strengths Academy Charter, and the positive impact it will have for the children of the District of Columbia. The founders include the following individuals:

Nancy Oberst has over 30 years' experience in elementary education, including a 15-year career as an urban principal, 3 years as Director of Elementary Education for the Omaha Public Schools. She has a BS in Elementary Education and Special Education, a MA in Educational Administration. Nancy spent time working as an early childhood teacher of children with disabilities. She has had experience in two different start-up schools in Omaha. Both schools were in high poverty neighborhoods and served students from Spanish speaking families. Her work in Omaha was in building community schools that brought services to children within the school and created a network of partnerships for the school community. Nancy and her husband Matt live near 14th and Florida, NW.

Robyn Seals has 14 years' experience in education, at the university level and currently as a learning and development consultant with Gallup University. She holds an MA in education from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. Her work at Gallup has been in many east coast school districts, teaching them about selection, engagement and development of employees. She has experience in writing success plans with a large number of adults. Robyn has lived in the district for several years and is an active community volunteer. She is currently a weekend volunteer at the Newseum. Robyn and her husband reside in Washington D.C. SE.

Consuela T. Moya brings 28 years of experience to our group in educational professional client services and 18 of those years in international settings of Asia, Europe and Central and South America. She is currently working to advance the employment opportunities of Latinos for the Centro Fox Education initiative in Mexico. Consuela offers her strong background in bilingual education and doctoral work in linguistics. Her work with the Latino community will assist the Strengths Academy Charter with recruitment of students and staff.

Connie Rath leads the education division of Gallup. Her career began as a teacher of preschool and elementary students, and a high school counselor. She was a founding director of the Child Development Center which has served children of Gallup parents for thirty years. At Gallup, she has been responsible for the selection and development divisions of the company. Almost two million teachers have been participated in success profiles designed and studied by the group. She has led the development of the Gallup Student Poll, a national measure of student hope, engagement and wellbeing. She is currently involved in the launch of school scorecards to track success measures in public schools. As Dean of Gallup University, she is responsible for graduate programs in leadership and strengths education. She has an Ed. D from the University of Southern California. She is a Logan Circle resident who is committed to involving parents and the community in increasing success for more children

Joelle Davis Carter is a professor at George Washington University, in the School of Business. She is currently focused on student success in college at the undergraduate level. She previously was professor at Morgan State College, and has a long history teaching coursework in educational and business leadership, community service, diversity, cultural competencies and mentoring. She has vast experiences in public speaking, writing grants and in fund raising.

Ilka Oberst is a supervisor of World Languages for the Omaha Public Schools. She has an undergraduate degree in Latin American Studies, Elementary Education, and a Masters in Special Populations. She has worked with teachers from Mexico and Latin America as they have transitioned into U.S. teaching positions and has extensive experience with immigrant populations. Ilka speaks and writes in four languages.

B.1.b Planning Process

SRI Institute is a 501(c) (3) formed in 1994 with a school license. It was established by officers and owners of Gallup to contribute research and education services. The Donald O. Clifton Child Development Center, begun by the SRI Institute, has operated for thirty years and is a model for young children which deserves replication. It is currently an operating division of Gallup. Today, SRI Institute offers graduate courses and certificates in strengths-based development to educators. The school is dedicated to helping educators understand students and design plans which accelerate their success. The SRI Institute wants to start a school in Washington DC which can serve a community in an exemplary way. At the heart of the interest is a chance to build a school with a dynamic, well-proven school leader of startups in low-income, wide diversity neighborhoods. The longer term goal is to establish strengths-based school centers across the country.

The founding committee is tasked with designing a school community plan which will expand involvement post-petition stage. The founding group consists of the experienced school leader, a bilingual educator with significant experience in startup operations, a higher educator who has built strengths academic programs for low achieving students, a research executive with business and education experience and a business educator who has designed hundreds of school and career plans for adults and students. Each is interested in creating a school in this city which is exemplary in growing students and their families.

Parents, teachers and community members have been interviewed to guide the planning and principles of the school model. Parent and community leaders will be selected for the Strengths Academy Charter board at the point of decision.

B.1.c Corporate Structure and Nonprofit Status of the School

The SRI Institute will support Strengths Academy Charter. The certificate and bylaws are attached. Steven D. O'Brien is the registered agent on the nonprofit established in 1994. He has been a district resident for ten years. He is currently filing for separate status for Strengths Academy Charter. Mary Reckmeyer is listed as president of SRI Institute. She is executive director of the Donald O. Clifton Child Development Center and serves as a founding advisor to the SAC. The founding group acknowledges the responsibility for having a separate organization which meets this requirement. Steve O'Brien is the registered agent filing for the Strengths Academy Charter nonprofit status.

B.2 Governance and Management

B.2.a Board of Directors

The Board of Directors will be established once the Charter approval has been granted.

B.2.b Rules and Policies

The following expectations and practices will guide the board. Timelines and schedule are provided.

1. Oversight:

Adherence to mission

The full board discusses and approves the mission including vision and values. The board members and school leaders share understand of the mission and how it translates into school programs and goals. Board members agree on clear indicators of success for students, financial, and organizational progress.

June 2011

The board regularly refers to mission in making strategic and financial decisions. The board regularly discusses whether new programs or financial decisions are in line with the mission.

Quarterly meetings

Financial and legal oversight

Board approves multi-year financial plan and annual budget. Both reflect key priorities.

June 2011

Monitors school's financial health by reviewing internal statements.

Members are selected with adequate competency to interpret financial statements. The board ensures management has instituted appropriate financial controls and complies with legal and tax requirements.

Quarterly meetings

Ensures an independent audit.

The board has a separate audit committee. At least one financial expert serves on the audit committee. The auditor will report to the audit committee, not to management. Audit committee ensures it receives an annual report from the staff on the use of the audit.

Audit committee established by Oct. 2012

Ensures legal policies in place and enforced.

Policies include conflict of interest definition, self-dealing policies, document retention and fundraising policies. Board members are expected to stay informed about changing state and regulatory environment.

*Policy guidelines completed and approved by Oct. 2012
Annual review at June meeting*

Executive director and board oversight

The Board will set standards for the executive director's performance and have approval authority over all personnel actions, including hiring, promotions, firings and disciplinary actions

Sets standards for executive director performance.

Sets executive director compensation and review.

June 2011

Annual review of board performance with process to review individual board contributions.
Process for selection of new members.

Annual spring review

2. Board Leadership

Support and Expertise

Each member provides support in a key area of expertise. The inaugural meeting defines the contributions of each member.

June 2011

All members participate appropriately in meetings to assure clear tracking of progress and decisions for future success. They provide operational support to executive director as needed.

Quarterly meetings

Fundraising

Board understands funding and fundraising. Ongoing assessment of financial needs informs board responsibility for additional revenue or growth. Board member may seek potential donors or hold fundraising events.

Ongoing with annual fall emphasis

Community Support

Directors are responsible for understanding the key constituents (parents, children, staff, charter board, taxpayers). The board uses stakeholder information to make decisions. The board is responsible for promoting the school's positive image.

Quarterly meeting as agenda topic

3. People and Operations

People

The Board will consist of 7 members initially and can grow to 15. The Founding Group will be solicited for interest in serving on the Board of Directors. Two positions on the Board will be reserved for parents with children who attend SAC. The Board Officer positions will consist of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. The initial Board membership will be divided into 3 groups with initial commitment for 1, 2 or 3 years respectively. This will provide for a managed rotation of Board membership. After a board members' initial term, membership on the Board will be a 3-year commitment and an existing member can apply to serve more than one term.

Selection complete May 2011

Inaugural meeting June 2011

Board members' skills and assignments are targeted to school needs and goals. The board maps its ability to support each priority.

June 2011 inaugural meeting

The board and executive director create and demonstrate mutual trust and respect. Respectful differences are tolerated on all issues.

Decision-making and structures

The decision-making roles of the board and executive director will be clearly defined in writing.

June 2011 inaugural meeting

Board committees are established to meet described needs
June 2011 inaugural meeting

Board receives regular reports tied to key measures. These reports are prepared by the administration and reviewed at each quarterly meeting. An agenda covers ongoing goals and special topics each time. Calendars are set a year to 18 months in advance.
June 2011 and ongoing

B.2.c Administrative Structure

Executive Director: committed to the academic achievement and personal development of all students.

- Reports to the Board of Directors, attend Board meetings, Maintains close communication with Board, Provides input as need.
- Oversees development of administrative procedures, monitors federal and district requirements.
- Support the principal in selection and evaluation of staff.
- Manage collecting, reporting of data, with assigned staff.
- Represent Strengths Academy Charter in the DC community and with all stakeholders. Spokesperson for the school, public relations and marketing.
- Manages the fund raising efforts, developing relationships with individual and corporate supporters.
- Communicates with parent group(s).
- Create a positive school climate for all stakeholders.

Principal: committed to excellence in educational and instructional performance. Proven success as a principal.

- Collaborates with Executive Director, to select and evaluate staff. Recommends continued employment.
- Guides curriculum development and professional development of staff.
- Collects and submits required assessments to DCPS, and other agencies.
- Guides curricular practices in response to student performance.
- Ongoing communication with families, accessible and open.
- Creates a positive school community for all stakeholders.

Instructional Facilitator

- Facilitates the development of curriculum that reflects schools philosophy and goals.
- Manages the assessment process.
- Facilitates staff discussions on data in response to student achievement.
- Monitors compliance of: PCSB, OSSE, NCLB and other regulatory groups.
- Works collaboratively with teachers and staff to develop curriculum that supports the goals of SAC.

Business Manager: reports to the Executive Director

- Works with the Board and executive Director to develop financial policies, develops budget, manage data reporting.
- Oversees day to day budget management.
- Manages: facilities, leases, acquisitions, renovations and maintenance.

Development Manager:

- Collaborates with Executive Director in fund raising efforts.
- Authors all grant applications.
- Manages events to support all fund raising efforts.

B.2.d.1-10 School Management Contracts

This section is not applicable to our submission since no School Management Contracts are currently being contemplated. Strengths Academy Charter will be self-managed.

B.3 Finance

B.3.a Anticipated Sources of Funds

Based on the need for early childhood education and interest in dual language programming, we anticipate meeting our enrollment goals for the first year. Retention of families in our school is important to student achievement and success. It is our intention to support our budget from revenues received from District funding, federal entitlement programs and limited fund raising efforts. As shown in the table above, the initial needs will be covered but fund raising opportunities will begin in earnest once the petition has been approved. The grant committee will select applications and forge relationships within the District and beyond. Balancing the financial obligations of the school will be a joint effort with the Founding Group, the future Board of Directors and the school's leadership team.

Our revenue projections are estimated based on student enrollment. With the high need for early childhood education PS and PK numbers should fill immediately, and create a waiting list. In the event other grade levels fall short of the projected numbers, early childhood capacity could be increased.

Federal entitlements and other Federal Funding projections increase the budget by an estimated \$287,000. Also included in the first year budget is the Title V.b funding (\$120,000) for which an application will be submitted upon approval. Application to the Walton Family (\$250,000), not in the first year budget, will be pursued for use in the planning year and the opening year. Fund raising efforts will focus on grants emphasizing early childhood education, dual language, family involvement and innovation.

Contingency Planning

The following actions would be taken in the event of a lower than expected payment or a delay in allocation arriving.

- Reduce of teachers by 1 and save \$80,000 salary plus benefit
- Increasing teacher to student ratio in the early childhood classrooms by 3
 $6 \times 14,986 = \$89,916$ (PS) $14,629 \times 6 = \$85,614$ (PK) \$175,530 in revenue to our budget.
- Reducing the number of books for the school library by half, \$50,000
- Reduce the number of computers to be purchased by half - a reduction of \$5,000

B.3.b Planned Fundraising Efforts

We will apply for various federal grants as soon as our petition has been approved. We will apply for the Walton family Foundation Start Up grant for 250,000.

Members of our Board have contacts and experience in fund raising, and will develop local interest in our mission and support.

Our Board will assume responsibility for fundraising and will develop an information packet to be used for solicitation of funds from corporate and foundation donors. The following grants will be applied for immediately after petition approval.

- Federal Competitive Grants
- Charter School Planning Grants
- FLAP Foreign Language Assistance Grants
- Partner grants with University to support both campuses

B.3.c Financial Management and Accounting

Over the next six months, the SAC Founding group in conjunction with accounting personnel from SRI Institute will develop financial management and accounting procedures that adhere to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. In accordance with oversight requirements of DCPCS, monthly financial statements detailing expense vs. budget, capital expenditures and cash flow projections will be prepared and reviewed.

Financial records will be based upon an accrual basis. In order to support our development efforts, a thoughtful examination will be undertaken as to the adoption of certain standards such as Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 116 *Accounting for Contributions Received and Contributions Made* that allows for contributions to be recognized as revenue when they are received or unconditionally pledged.

In accordance with reporting requirements of a 501(c) (3) organization, Net assets of SAC will be reported as “Unrestricted”, “Temporarily Restricts” or “Permanently Restricted”. Donated services will be recognized as revenue if the services received create or enhance non-financial assets or require specialized skill and those individuals providing the service possess those skills that normally would have to be purchased if they were not donated. These are important considerations when dealing with development of policies and procedures, reporting and information technology services for a school.

We want the principal to have a degree of autonomy when it comes to operational needs of the school, but we recognize the need for sound financial separation of powers. The Board of Directors will establish an expenditure amount over which the purchase will require Board approval.

B.3.d Civil Liability and Insurance

Strengths Academy Charter will secure the following types and levels of insurance coverage. Chubb is an insurance carrier we have contacted

Type	Estimated Coverage
General Liability	\$1,000,000 per occurrence \$2,000,000 aggregate
Director and Officers Liability	\$1,000,000
Educators Legal Liability	\$1,000,000
Student Accident	Per student basis
Umbrella Coverage	\$3,000,000
Property/Lease Insurance	100% of replacement cost
Boiler and Machinery Insurance	\$1,000,000 or actual loss
Auto Liability	\$1,000,000
Workers Compensation	As required by law

B.3.e Provision for Audit

In accordance with Section 38-1802.02(6)(A) of the DC School Reform Act, and audit of financial statements must be made annually by a Certified Public Accountant licensed in the District of Columbia. Strengths Academy Charter will adhere to this requirement by assembling an audit team consisting of the Principal and Business Manager in conjunction with a representative from one of the firms listed on the DC PCSB Approved Auditor List to provide all records and documentation that may impact the audit. Upon completion of the audit, a copy will be submitted to the DC Public Charter Board in accordance with published deadlines. Amounts of \$6,000 in the pre-opening year budget and \$15,000 for subsequent years have been budgeted for this effort.

B.4 Facilities

B.4.a Identification of a Site

In order to best serve its target population, Strengths Academy Charter will ideally be located in Ward 1. The founding members group has initiated an intensive search for a suitable facility, which will have the following features:

- Space for 12 classrooms, depending on initial enrollment;
- Space for computers and library resources;
- Space for a common and/or dining area;
- Space for administrative offices;
- Restrooms;
- A kitchen facility, although this could, if necessary, be located off-site;
- Handicapped accessibility; and
- Either on-site facilities or convenient access to facilities for related and extra-curricular activities.

The Strengths Academy Charter will probably lease its site initially, although as the student population grows to scale and fundraising expands, acquisition of a site may be considered. Use of an existing non-school facility will require renovation to configure the space to serve the needs of the students and staff. The FMB also recognizes that an interim site located outside the targeted community may be necessary in order to commence operations on schedule while a permanent facility is secured. In such an eventuality, the Strengths Academy Charter will work closely with the target community, its support network, and local transit authorities to ensure that the student population is drawn from the target community and that transportation and other resulting complications are addressed.

The FMB recognizes that space is somewhat limited in Ward 1. To identify a suitable site, the FMG is pursuing or will pursue the following possibilities:

- Founding Member Nancy Oberst has viewed potential school space at 21st and New Hampshire, 4115 16th Street NW and 1328 Florida Avenue NW.
- Connie Rath and Nancy Oberst met with Greg Lubar, Brokerage Managing Director at Jones Lang Lasalle to explore possible facilities in the Washington, D.C. area. Lubar has specific experience working with charter school developments in Washington, D.C.
- The FMB has also begun contacting other private, for-profit developers, brokers and real estate attorneys for assistance in identifying potential sites. These include Steven A. Teitlebaum, a seasoned real estate attorney at Jones Day.

The FMB will continue in its efforts to identify potential sites during the application review period. Upon approval of its charter, the Strengths Academy Charter anticipates the following time frame for identification, lease, and, if necessary, renovation of a site:

Site search	Ongoing
Site selection	May 2011
Lease negotiation and formalization	June 2011
Architectural planning, if applicable	July 2011
Renovation out to bid, if applicable	August 2011
Selection of contractor, if applicable	September 2011
Completion of renovation	October 2011
Occupation by Academy	November 2011

B.4.b Site Renovation

It is likely that even in an incubator space some site renovation will be required.

B.4.c Financing Plans for Facilities

Strengths Academy Charter plans to inhabit an incubator space for the first three years. Financing for costs beyond available funds will be arranged with SRI Institute A plan will be created in the next year for more permanent facilities.

B.4.d Building Maintenance

A custodian or service will be hired to maintain the building on a daily basis. Our facilities team will direct the development of a plan that will meet all health and safety guidelines for schools. The creation of a checklist will ensure that all necessary requirements will be met.

B.5 Recruiting and Marketing

B.5.a Outreach to the Community

Outreach to our community is a fundamental belief of our founding group. We have attended ANC meeting in our wards to be aware of issues surrounding our prospective wards. We have been in contact with universities as a beginning point for our outreach. The institutions of higher learning can bring many resources to bear in our community. Howard University, George Washington University and the Thurgood Marshall College Fund have all discussed plans to partner with the Strengths Academy Charter.

Our conversations with groups such as the Perry center help build the engagement of our community. Perry's mission to improve outcomes for youth easily aligns with the Strengths Academy Charter. We have had numerous conversations with parents who have specific aspirations for their child's education.

B.5.b Recruitment of Students

Ward 1 & Ward 2 are areas rich in diversity and with a population of Spanish speakers. The opportunity to provide strengths education to a larger group in the District of Columbia is very appealing to our founding group. Both wards selected have families needing hope and support to meet the challenge of quality early childhood education. Its population of children has steady growth, with the number of single mothers growing. Both wards demographics support the need for a PK-8 configuration. Although the Ward 1 is the smallest, it is the most densely populated. Ward 2 is larger and has increasing diversity.

The Founding Group selected wards One and Two as its potential charter sites for many reasons. The increasing number of young children, needing a great start in learning is certainly a mission of our group. Our research tells us that the group that benefits the most from effective teachers is the one with the greatest challenges. The dense population creates a need for more choices for families in the educational landscape.

The Strengths Academy Charter would have the resources of Gallup to create a school that focuses on the strengths of the individual child and the community. The families attending our school would benefit from these resources daily.

The Strengths Academy Charter will be attractive to families interested in the dual language education for their children that have not been able to attend bilingual schools in Ward 1 or Ward 2. The design of our charter is to build from the earliest years to enable students to have the enrichment that a dual language setting provides. Family meetings will be held in various locations, including groceries, shopping areas to present the details of our program. A translator will be available in all settings to establish the bridge of a dual language understanding for families. Every media format from print, radio and Internet notification will be established and used to reach families.

Now through June	Contact potential community groups, generating and adding to email lists, informal/formal discussions and the development of community partnerships
May-June	Finalize development of message for engagement of interested families and friends to the school
August to March	Present to groups at events, churches, libraries and community centers
September	Expand to fall events in the community to inform about the design and opportunity of our school
January – April 2012	Applications accepted and individual meetings to connect with families begin
Late April	Public Lottery held, parents informed of results
May 2012	Confirmation of applications with families, meetings and orientations tours of the site

Our initial enrollment classes starting with the (PS) preschool group of three-year olds will open with 2 classrooms of 20 children. The second grade level of PK pre-kindergarten group of four year olds will open with 2 classrooms of 20 children. We anticipate these will be the student groups easiest to fill. Attracting kindergarten and first grade students will require more time to help families understand the additional features provided in our setting. The public lottery to be held will also help to determine when adjustments in number at grade levels will be made. At this point the notification process the application would be complete and families will be asked to complete an enrollment packet. The enrollment packet will provide the school with important demographic and educational information to our staff to further plan for the needs of or incoming students. Part of our responsibility is to help families see their role in the education of their children. Our strengths-based strategies have roles for families and staff in leading the way to a positive school environment.

Enrollment adjustments will be considered as the applications are finalized. The number of students is what drives our financial stability. That stability will be of great focus for our school.

B.5.c Future Expansion and Improvement

Future Expansion and Improvements – Strengths Academy Charter

Strengths Academy Charter will open in 2012, with 160 students from PS (three year olds) to 1st grade. Each subsequent year we will add one grade of 40 students through 8th grade. We are still in search of incubator space in Ward 1 and Ward 2. We want to have a permanent home by 2015, when the size of the school would reach 300 students. The Ward 1 or Ward 2 location, for a dual language program, would support the large ELL population and the increase in population of children less than 5 years of age. We will build relations with Carlos Rosario International PCS and Education Strengthens Families PCS, as entities that may have families with extended needs for early childhood education.

The growing Spanish speaking population will have interest in dual language opportunities as will English speaking families. Dual language 50:50 instructional model provides a rigorous curriculum and a positive influence on the community at large. It builds respect and appreciation of groups. English students report feeling smarter because they are learning in two languages, Spanish speakers recommend dual language programs to their friends.

Outcomes of Dual Language for Teachers, Administrators, and Parents

“The astounding effectiveness of dual language education extends beyond student outcomes, influencing the school experience of all participants. As the program develops and matures, teachers, administrators, and parents in formal and informal interviews all express awareness that they are part of something very special. Most adults connected to the program begin to view it as a school reform, where school is perceived positively by the whole school community. The respect and nurturing of the multiple cultural heritages and the two main languages present in the school lead to friendships that cross social class and language boundaries. Teachers express excitement, once they have made it through the initial years of planning and implementing an enrichment dual language model that they love teaching now and would never leave their jobs. They feel they have lots of support, once the staff development and teacher planning time is in place for this innovation. Teachers can see the difference in their students’ responsiveness and engagement in lessons. Behavior problems lessen because students feel valued and respected as equal partners in the learning process.”

–Collier & Thomas / The Astounding Effectiveness of Dual Language Education for All

The Grid below forecasts future expansion:

Grade	Yr. 1 2012	Yr. 2 2013	Yr. 3 2014	Yr. 4 2015	Yr. 5 2015	Yr. 6 2016	Yr. 7 2017	Yr. 8 2018
PS	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
PK	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Grade K	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Grade 1	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Grade 2		40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Grade 3			40	40	40	40	40	40
Grade 4				40	40	40	40	40
Grade 5					40	40	40	40
Grade 6						40	40	40
Grade 7							40	40
Grade 8								40
Total	160	200	240	280	320	360	400	440
LEP/NEP (60%)	96	120	144	168	192	216	240	264
#Sp Ed (10%)	16	20	24	28	32	36	40	44

Part C. — Plan of Operation

C.1 Student Policies and Procedures

C.1.a Timetable for registration and enrolling

Timetable for registration and admitting students to Strengths Academy Charter	
February thru August	Develop relationships with potential partners, groups and organizations to build a network for recruitment
June — July	Recruitment materials developed/printed
Present schools mission/vision to community groups, churches and organizations	September – February 2012
Media blitz on SAC opening	October – March 2012
Implement plan for further recruitment district wide	October – March 2012
Student Application Accepted	February – March 2012
Student Application Deadline	March 30, 2012
Notification of Lottery	April – May 2012
Address Verification	June 30, 2012
Parent Orientation	August 29, 2013
Open House	September 4, 2012
First Day of School	September 5, 2012

C.1.b Policies and Procedures for enrollment, Suspension, and Expulsion

Enrollment Eligibility for Students:

An open enrollment policy for Strengths Academy Charter is in place. Diversity is strength in educational settings. We are committed to a quality education for all students. Our enrollment policy reflects a belief in the dignity and value of each person regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, and citizen/economic status. Prospective students will be enrolled based on age eligibility and space in grade level classes. Students enrolling, whose residency is outside the District of Columbia, will be given consideration after residents' enrollments are complete.

Admission Meetings:

After the enrollment process is complete, families will be asked to attend a meeting with the principal, school counselor and classroom teacher to review program features and expectations for parent/family participation. These meetings will help our staff focus on the individual gifts of each child. It will help us develop relationships quickly and efficiently. Our goal is to build on each child's strengths and to give parents/families a deeper understanding of the rigors of dual language curriculum with our strengths-based approaches.

Other Requirements:

Verification of residency will be a part of the final enrollment process. Health information and immunization records will be collected. Any additional educational information or records will be provided to the school at this time.

Withdrawal:

A family's decision to withdraw their child from our school is a concern for staff. An exit interview will be held with family, student and key staff. During this interview, the withdrawal decision and its relationship to school climate will be discussed. The intent of this meeting is to reveal any issues or relationships that have negatively impacted the student. All withdrawals will be tracked and help in climate and school improvement work.

Suspension and Expulsion of Students:

Our school community plans to select a program, such as Positive Behavioral Support s that teaches students how to manage their own behaviors. Systems such as these require a school –wide approach and training for staff, instruction to students and families. Despite such training behavioral expectations and the implementation of a data driven- management system to track success, the need to establish protocols for dangerous or illegal behaviors is necessary. The goal of SAC is to be proactive and positive with all students. Staff's goal is to establish relationships, routines, rewards and expectations so the message is clear and consistent.

School teams will develop a code of conduct that provides guidance to staff and can be communicated to parents prior to the opening of the school. Suspension from learning is an overused consequence in our educational world. As we move through the process of selecting a behavioral success plan for school-wide implementation proactive plans for students needing additional support will begin early. Analysis of the antecedents for behavioral difficulties will be studied. All efforts will be made to provide additional services for high-needs students. The school has as its number one charge to provide safety for its students and staff. As a last result, suspension and or expulsion may be required.

Due process:

Parents/families may contest the decision of the principal to suspend or expel the student. Strengths Academy Board of Directors will be available to meet with parents/families to review procedures and policies concerning the disciplinary action. We are advocates for all our students. Students with identified disability will be provided all protection required by law in any disposition.

Development of Discipline Guidelines and Behavioral Expectations:

Well-designed expectations and guidelines to create an environment of positive school behaviors will be established. This development will be an effort by our staff, our students and their families. It is important that SAC articulate the guidelines that shape the relationships and behaviors in a positive manner. The development of a handbook will evolve overtime and expansion of older students begins.

C.2 Human Resource Information

C.2.a Key Leadership Roles

The Strengths Academy Charter will staff the school using the many tools developed by Gallup for selection of staff: principal, teacher and support staff. Our model will work with the following roles:

Administration

The Executive director-Principal of Strengths Academy Charter is will provide the overall leadership to the school. Nancy Oberst, founding member will serve in this position. As a special education teacher Nancy, taught in early childhood programs for more than ten years. She has fifteen-years' experience as a public school principal and three years' experience elementary director of elementary education. Nancy opened two schools in high poverty areas. In both of these settings, the population of Limited English Proficiency was over 60%. As Director of Elementary Education, Nancy worked with dual language programs in areas of curriculum, assessment and teacher training. In this position the Executive Director-Principal will seek guidance from the Board in areas of: finance, legal counsel and real estate. The day-to-day management of the school will be the responsibility of the Executive Director- Principal.

Instructional Leadership

The key curriculum leader will have experience and specialization in language and cultural development. The curriculum specialist will provide leadership in curricular development, thematic unit writing, assessments and lesson planning.

Business Manager

Business manager will be a position for an individual with expertise in finance and banking. The Business manager and principal will collaborate to establish a budget plan to include: finances in the day to day operation, fiscal planning and projection as well as a long-term plan for capital campaigns and fund raising.

Legal Counsel

Generously provide pro bono legal counsel in matters of investment, real estate, human resources and corporate and governance issues.

C.2.b Qualification of school staff

Standards, Qualifications, and Backgrounds of School Staff

Standards as follows:

The SAC will select teachers using a Gallup tool, *TeacherInsight 2.0* that predicts the teacher potential to be effective as a teacher and in improving student achievement. Research has found that:

There is weak or no relationship between student growth and the following:

- Teacher experience
- Education background
- Licensure
- Grade levels taught
- Class size (K-3 19; 4-6 28)

“Knowing that the single most important factor in the classroom is the teacher, it is imperative for school systems to find the best candidates for teaching in today’s classrooms. The need to identify during the pre-employment process candidates that have the greatest likelihood to bring about success in student learning is key. The research evidences that the Gallup Organizations TeacherInsight™, is an instrument that effectively measures a candidate’s likelihood of bringing about academic achievement growth. The research for the past two years has demonstrated that the reliability of this instrument is highly significant.”

– Dr. Paul Kirk, St. John’s County School District,

Florida

For Teachers

Our qualifications will include a score of 70 or higher on the TI instrument; High score on TI will increase the probability of their success as teachers and teacher leaders.

- Minimum of a bachelor’s degree (for middle school, preference for degree in academic subject area)
- Bilingual (Spanish speaking 50%) staff will be needed for a successful dual language program.
- Passed the Praxis at the assigned level (early childhood, elementary and middle)

For Paraprofessionals

Our qualifications will include a score of 70 or higher on the **SupportInsight SI, this tool is**

- Completion of a two-year program or associate’s degree
- Completed a rigorous assessment covering: reading, writing and mathematics

For Teaching Specialists in Literacy and Special Education

These individuals will need to meet the above 3 requirements and in addition demonstrate expertise in their area. Our Literacy Coach will be an expert in the field of literacy and demonstrate the leadership talent for influencing others in their practice.

In addition to the **TeacherInsight 2.0** they will score above 70 and above on *Principal Insight*. Scores on both measures will increase the probability of their success as teachers and teacher leaders. The role of both is to influence practice of teachers to embrace new ideas and to be open to all students.

For Principal/For Executive Director

Our standards for school administration will include:

- Our qualifications will include a score of 70 or higher on the *PrincipallInsight* PI instrument; a high score on this measure will increase the probability of success as a principal.
- Minimum of a master’s degree in educational administration

Staff Recruitment Strategies

The Strengths Academy Charter will attract educators through their interest in or affinity for Strengths-based development. More than a million copies of StrengthsFinder 2.0 have been sold. Numerous school districts in our area and in surrounding districts use Strengths and other Gallup tools in selection, development and engagement of educators. The success of the Gallup Student Poll and its partnership with Americas Promise Alliance tis an effective tool for community discussion and planning to turn the tide for graduation rates.

The Strengths Academy Charter will harness the research and study of the myriad of Gallup’s work to attract, select, engage and develop staff to create the highest probability for affecting the lives of the students in our school as well as their parents. The construct of hope and engagement will be well developed in our staff through climate and development. Teachers will understand that hope is a bigger

predictor of college success that high school GPA. They will develop plans and language to help the early process for positive psychology in students. They will be advocates for their students and their family. This positive engagement will spill out into the community and build on its strength.

Background Checks

Employment at Strengths Academy Charter will require clearance on the individuals background check. This procedure will provide pertinent data to our human resource team on prospective applicants. The information gathered through the investigation will help protect our students and provide important input to the screening process.

C.2.c Plan of Operation HR information Staffing Plan

Strengths Academy Charter

Instructional Staff	Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Instructional Facilitator		1	1	1	1	1
Grade Level Teachers (Spanish and English)		8	10	12	14	16
Support Staff		9	11	13	14	15
Wrap-Around Staff		4	4	5	5	6
ELL teacher		1	1	1	2	2
Special education teacher / coordinator		1	1	2	1.5	2
Literacy Specialist			1	1	1	1
Specialist teachers (Art, Music , Health and PE)		1	2	2	2	2
Social Worker		1	1	1	1	1
Library/Media/Technology			.5	1	1	1
Contracted Staff		2	3	4	4	5

During the early years our staffing will require a creativeness that provides all the opportunities to our students yet is affordable for our growing school. The Instructional Leader will assume literacy development responsibilities during the first year. Language development is key during the first year of our school being open. For some of the enrichment activities we will solicit community grants and programs that can help. We will also develop relationships with local universities such as Howard to provide experiences with Strengths advocates in their program.

Strengths advocates at local high schools may be used on before and after school programming. Small adult to child ratios during before and after school sessions provides an added dimension for student advocacy, engagement and security for our students.

The staffing must remain fluid to respond to growth and needs for instructional success. Support staff will also have a balance of Spanish and English skills to compliment classroom and other settings to both help with instruction and also converse with parents and community.

Staff will find time to collaborate after school is dismissed from 3:30-5:00, each day. Having this consistent time each day provides time for curriculum writing, collaboration and planning. Staff trainings will be held during the 3:30-5:00 time frame as much as possible. When adjustments to the schedule are necessary, staff will be surveyed to determined preferred time.

Leadership Staff	Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Executive Director	.5	.5	.5	1	1	1
Principal	.5	.5	.5	1	1	1
Business Manager	.25	1	1	1	1	1
Administrative Assistant		1	1	1	1	1
Office Manager		1	1	1	1	1
Development Manager		.25	.5	1	1	1

Administrative staff will balance needs over time and may need to help in other areas. The Development Manager’s duties and responsibilities may be assumed by the Executive Director, Principal and Business Manager initially. This is an important area and will not be neglected during the phasing in as a full-time position.

Total Staff	Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Administrative Staff	1.25	4.25	4.5	6	6	6
Teachers / ELL, Special Education (Spanish and English)		15	17.5	20	22.5	24
Support Staff) classroom assistance, office, nutrition,		13	15	18	19	21
Wrap-Around Staff		4	4	5	5	6
Contracted Staff		2	3	4	4	5
Social Worker		1	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	1.25	32.5	45	54	58.5	63

Contract services may fluctuate between teaching/assisting/clerical roles. The ability to respond to these needs with flexible staffing is important. Our specialist will take on dual roles such as health/PE, art/drama, and vocal music/instrumental.

C.2.d Employment Policies

Strengths Academy Charter will work with their board and legal counsel in developing human resource policies. Policies will cover areas of: selection, evaluation, and rubrics will be developed and articulated for staff. All school background checks will be collected on applicants as the process begins. Gallup research and tools will help guide this portion of the manual. Further detail and articulation of these policies will be further developed with the Board and Leadership staff.

Employees will be selected based on performance potential on *PrincipalInsight*, *TeacherInsight*, and *SupportInsight*. Applicant scores on the instruments will determine the next steps in the interview process. All selection tools referred to meet the EEO requirements for non-adverse impact to all protected groups.

The Q12 instrument will be used to measure employee engagement at the workplace. These results will inform school improvement efforts and guide efforts to support communication and employee growth and development. This instrument will be the guide to school leadership in efforts to engage, develop and retain staff.

Salaries and Benefits

Salaries and benefits will be comparable to those in the DC Public School system. Additional compensation for summer sessions and other curricular duties will be studied and scheduled prior to schools opening. Provisions for hiring DCPS teachers on leave will be considered as part of our recruitment plan for selecting the most effective teachers.

Evaluation of Staff

All employees will have some level of 360-degree review. Surveys will be developed to gain input from employees, supervisors, subordinates, peers, students, parents and community. Another aspect of evaluation is to use student achievement measures as a component in determining the effectiveness of all staff members.

Further work by the Board and Leadership will be necessary to determine thorough evaluation tools. The following descriptions capture researched areas for evaluation and include student achievement as defined success. Data-driven measures of success for all staff must include student achievement, using value add indexes. This index will be developed and articulated so staff will understand and embrace their work in the context of student outcomes and results.

Leadership Staff

- Review annually during the first two years
- Able to articulate beliefs and vision of the school to all publics
- Able to develop relationships that attract, develop and engage staff, students and community
- Able to impact school by stimulating collaboration, communication, focus and positivity about students, staff and the entire school community.
- Uses their positivity to acquire resources and participation across all publics
- Student achievement continues on a positive trajectory under leadership's guidance

Instructional Staff

- Reviewed annually
- Able to move student learning ahead with a strong achievement drive for themselves and others
- Builds positive relationship with students, families in staff communicating a caring, positive and willing message to all
- Creates classroom design that supports learning, is busy, active and differentiates to meet the needs of each student
- Student's progress measures show that all students are learning and performing at appropriate developmental and academic levels, showing growth using the value add index

Support Staff

- Reviewed annually
- Able to move support student learning with a strong achievement drive for themselves
- Builds positive relationship with students, families in staff communicating a caring, positive and willing message to all
- Supports classroom design that supports learning, is busy, active and differentiates to meet the needs of each student
- Student's progress measures show that all students are learning and performing in assigned classrooms

Termination of employees

All employees will serve under at will contracts. In the case of an employee who is unable to perform the duties of their role, all means of agreeable separation will be attempted. Procedures to ensure employee rights and due process will be followed.

Substitute Pool

In addition to recruitment of full-time effective teachers, SAC will recruit effective substitute teachers. All substitute teachers will complete *TeacherInsight TI* and score above the 67 mean. Background checks for substitutes will mirror the checks for all instructional staff.

Equal Employee Opportunities and a Drug Free Workplace

All selection tools, the first step in hiring meet the EEO adverse impact test. Our goal is to attract a bilingual staff with rich and diverse background. A drug-free work place will be a goal of SAC.

C.2.e Use of Volunteers

Volunteers to Strengths Academy Charter will come from many parts of our city and have different backgrounds and expertise. Our relationship with faculty and students from Howard University and Thurgood Marshall member schools will bring young role models to our campus regularly. These students will be part of the Strengths Advocacy programs at each university. There is an expectation that our board will volunteer at special events and other activities to build relationship with families and staff.

Parents will be asked to volunteer at the Strengths Academy Charter, 20 hours each school year. Other charters in our city have asked for similar time amounts (Latin American Montessori Bilingual PCS, Capital City PCS, and Washington Yu Ying PCS models.) Parent involvement is essential for building a strong and committed community. Parents will share their expertise and participate when possible in enrichment and extra-curricular events.

The Principal will qualify volunteers from the community, using a systematic approach to include: application, background checks and training specific to the volunteer activity.

C.3 Arrangements for Meeting District and Federal Requirements

Plan of Operations for meeting Federal and District Requirements - Strengths Academy Charter

C.3.a Health and Safety

The Strengths Academy Charter will adhere to all health and safety laws and regulations, pursuant to § 38-1802.02 (11) and § 2204© (4) of the D.C school reform act, and will comply with all required or requested health and safety inspections by government officials. In addition, the Academy's staff will be trained in First Aid and in CPR to maintain the health and safety of students and staff.

C.3.b Building Safety and Fire Codes

Strengths Academy Charter will comply with the American with Disabilities Act and all requirements of DC Code, §5-501.

C.3.c Transportation

The Strengths Academy Charter will inform all parents/guardians of their eligibility for reduced fares on Metrobus and Metrorail Transit System on the same terms and conditions as are applicable to any student attending a District of Columbia public school. Our school will make tokens available to all students who need them, via the Metro bus token system. Staff will arrange for the transportation of students with disabilities, through the D.C. Public Schools. Considerations for alternative transportation providers will be considered if the location of our Academy is not accessible by public transportation.

C.3.d Enrollment Data

The Strengths Academy Charter will maintain accurate enrollment and daily attendance records for all students. SAC will use a student information system program that will record pertinent information of our students. This Information System will compile records and provide the information to appropriate authorities upon request.

C.3.e Maintenance and Dissemination of Student Records

Strengths Academy Charter will use a computerized student information system for maintenance and dissemination of student records. The system will have daily use by our attendance office. The attendance office will be able to record and report student information in accordance with the District of Columbia School Reform Act, Parts B and D, and other applicable Laws, including DC Codes § 31-401 et seq. (Compulsory School Attendance); DC Code § 31-501 et. Seq. (Immunization of School Students); Dc Code § 31-601 et. Seq. (tuition of Non-resident students); DC Code § 29-501 et. Seq. (non-profit Corporations).

C.3.f Compulsory Attendance Laws:

Strengths Academy Charter will monitor the attendance of our students each day. All safety precautions will be in place for reporting student absences. For any persistent attendance problems, SAC will work early and effectively to remedy the situation.

C.3.g Individuals with Disabilities Education and Rehabilitation Act of 1973:

Strengths Academy Charter will comply with all federal regulations for students with disability. SAC's special education services will be provided by qualified individuals that will focus on requirements of the law and more important meeting the needs of our students.

C.3.h Title 1 of the Improving the America's School Act

Strengths Academy Charter anticipates qualifying for Title 1 funds. Funds will provide additional support to students, beyond daily instruction, in accordance with the District and Federal requirements for the use of these funds.

C.3.i Civil Rights Statutes and regulation of the Federal Government and the District of Columbia

Strengths Academy Charter will comply with all federal and District civil rights regulations to ensure that students, families, employees, and volunteers will not be discriminated against.

C.3.j Other

Strengths Academy Charter will ensure that all applicable requirements of Dc Municipal Code 29, Public welfare, Excerpt: 3 Chapter 3, Child Development Facilities as well as the guidance of the US Consumer Product Safety Commission regarding playground equipment are met.

C.4 Implementation of the Charter

C.4.a Timetable and Tasks for Implementation of Charter

	Started	04/11 thru 06/11	07/11 thru 12/11	01/13 thru 04/13	05/13 thru 08/13
Pre-Approval Tasks					
A. Accountability					
Develop first-year and 5-year academic and non-academic goals and outcomes	●	●	●		
Identify data collection needs and reporting requirements	●	●	●		
Research and select student record management software		●	●		
B. Admissions					
Complete design of application form packet	●	●	●		
Define student application period	●	●			
Develop equitable lottery for selecting students if needed	●	●			
Develop parent and student handbooks (with staff after charter approved)	●	●	●		
C. Marketing and Recruitment					
Develop descriptions of curriculum uniqueness	●	●	●		
Develop and implement community outreach plan	●	●	●		
Initiate design of school brochures and other marketing material		●	●		
D. Development					
Apply for private, corporate, foundation and government grants		●	●	●	●
E. Facilities					
Identify and select a facility to be used initially for the school	●	●	●		
Ensure facility meets school occupancy requirements		●	●		
Complete lease negotiation and signing			●	●	
Schedule all relevant facility inspections				●	●
Obtain building occupancy permits as needed				●	●
F. Personnel					
Design employee benefit package (retirement, insurance, tuition reimbursement)		●	●	●	
Develop personnel policies and procedures manual		●	●	●	
Determine staffing needs	●	●	●		
Design school's employment application		●	●	●	
Develop position management strategy	●	●	●		
Develop job descriptions and hiring timeline	●	●	●		
Design school's employment contracts		●	●	●	
Contact DC police regarding background check procedures			●	●	
Post Approval Activities					
A. Accountability					
Acquire student, staff, and school assessment instruments.		●	●	●	
Design satisfaction survey and measurements		●	●	●	

	Started	04/11 thru 06/11	07/11 thru 12/11	01/13 thru 04/13	05/13 thru 08/13
Acquire software for managing student, personnel and financial information			●	●	
Finalize student records templates			●	●	
B. Admissions					
Initiate admissions process by accepting student applications and acknowledging receipt				●	●
Enter application information into student Information System				●	●
Adhere to application deadline				●	●
Conduct lottery and establish wait list (if needed)					●
Send confirmations of admission and /or waitlist status, notify parents of deadline for completing admission					●
Initiate student registration, use checklist to ensure receipt of all required information due from parents.				●	●
Ensure that parents receive school calendar, parent handbook and other relevant material					●
Conduct parent and student orientation					●
Establish system for recording and completing enrollment and attendance information				●	●
C. Board of Directors Organization and Procedures					
Finalize Board membership		●	●		
Conduct orientation and training for new Board members including Gallup selection, engagement and development tools			●	●	
Verify all board members complete Strengthsfinder2.0 TM assessment		●	●		
Finalize by-laws and governance document		●	●		
D. Marketing and Recruiting					
Announce school opening			●		
Recruit and hire faculty and staff				●	●
Hold Open Houses for community and prospective parents				●	●
Distribute marketing literature			●	●	●
Develop and implement strategy to elicit parent, community and student volunteers			●	●	
E. Development					
Refine fundraising strategy and long term funding plan		●	●	●	●
Continue to research and apply for private, corporate, foundation and government grants		●	●	●	●
F. Educational Program Development					
Hold summer training for faculty and staff					●
Develop plans for after school, enrichment, and summer programs				●	●
G. Facilities					
Complete all relevant facility inspections				●	●
Obtain certificate of occupancy					●
Acquire furniture and materials				●	●
Complete installation of Information Technology				●	●

	Started	04/11 thru 06/11	07/11 thru 12/11	01/13 thru 04/13	05/13 thru 08/13
infrastructure					
Complete installation of hardware and software				●	●
Set-up furniture in classrooms, offices and related spaces					●
Finalize facility preparation via a punch-list of identified needs					●
Hire custodian				●	●
H. Financial Management					
Establish school bank accounts and banking relationship				●	●
Develop financial management systems, policies and establish internal controls				●	●
Obtain insurance policies					●
Establish a (or use 3 rd party) payroll system					●
Implement internal accounting expenditures v budget monitoring and financial reporting procedures				●	●
Acquire software for managing finances and generating all required financial reports				●	●
Select independent auditor certified as CPA in DC and listed in the Approved Auditor List for charter schools				●	●
I. Food Services					
Ensure facility meets any food services requirements				●	●
Select food services vendor				●	●
Ensure multiple staff members acquire safe food handler verification					●
J. School governance					
Finalize Board of Trustees			●		
Establish School Advisory Council				●	●
Establish Community Advisory Group				●	●
L. Health and Safety					
Parental medical information forms completed				●	●
Verify completeness of the parental medical information forms and follow-up as needed				●	●
Establish policy for addressing noncompliance by parents to ensure school receives all medical and health information as needed			●		
Ensure 80% of staff receives First Aid and CPR certifications				●	●
Establish fire evacuation routes, fire drill procedures and a schedule of fire drills				●	●
Orient families and staff on code of conduct, behavior requirements, suspension and expulsion policies					●
Update risk management plan for emergencies and disasters				●	●
Review emergency / disaster plan with staff and families					●
M. Legal and Organizational					
Receive approval for charter petition		●			
Negotiate and sign contract with chartering authority		●	●		

	Started	04/11 thru 06/11	07/11 thru 12/11	01/13 thru 04/13	05/13 thru 08/13
Verify 501(c)(3) status as Strengths Academy Charter		●	●		
Verify state tax exempt status			●		
N. Parent Involvement					
Develop and use a questionnaire to interview parents for interest as parent trustee on board					●
Inform parents about Community Advisory Group and encourage parent participation					●
O. Procurement					
Order and manage receipt of textbooks and instructional materials				●	●
Order and manage receipt of desks, furniture, and classroom equipment				●	●
Order and manage receipt of office equipment and supplies				●	●
Order and manage receipt of computer hardware and software				●	●
Order and manage receipt of kitchen, recreational and other necessary equipment and supplies				●	●
P. Special Education					
Obtain any existing special education records, including IEPs for prospective students				●	●
Identify students requiring an IEP				●	●
Create SPED record keeping process and associated document management processes for ensuring confidentiality			●	●	
Hire full time special education staff, establish contact with outside special education provider, and/or enter into agreement with school district for appropriate SPED service delivery				●	●
Develop a description of the school's special education program and service delivery approach for parents and external entities				●	●
Establish pre-referral and referral process for students with special needs			●	●	
Q. Personnel					
Finalize personnel policies, procedures and employee handbook			●	●	
Develop professional development plan for the year, including pre-opening training during the summer			●	●	
Advertise for staff openings, conduct interview and hire staff			●	●	
Have employment contracts and acknowledgement of having read handbook signed by employees and on file			●	●	
Finalize salary scale/compensation plan			●	●	
Conduct background checks as required				●	●
Create personnel files				●	●
Assign classrooms and distribute curricular materials, furniture and supplies					●

	Started	04/11 thru 06/11	07/11 thru 12/11	01/13 thru 04/13	05/13 thru 08/13
Conduct employee orientation and pre-opening professional development activities					●
Verify all staff completes Strengthsfinder2.0 TM assessment				●	●
Establish staff evaluation policies and forms			●	●	
Ensure staff is represented on Community Advisory Group					●
Distribute class lists and relevant student records to teachers					●

C.4.b Maintenance and Reporting of Academic and Non-Academic Performance Data

Strengths Academy Charter will evaluate and select a Student Information System (SIS) that meets all reporting requirements specified by DCPCSB including, but not limited to enrollment, attendance, truancy, student/teacher ratio, and student demographic, performance and achievement information.

Our selection criteria will ensure the SIS is compatible with DCPCSB’s oversight system. We will evaluate systems that are supported on hardware located at the school as well as web-based systems (e.g., Powerschool).

The SIS at Strengths Academy Charter will be available to each teacher from within his or her instructional space. A vendor will be selected to provide secure, high-speed connectivity from SAC’s network to external networks.

The prospective SIS will support the creation of a student scorecard to help differentiate instruction based on student strengths. It will track student’s progress over time. It will facilitate timely teacher/family communication by providing family contact information. It will also store specific information that is unique to the philosophy of Strengths Academy Charter such as a student’s Wellbeing Index. It will store data pertaining to teacher effectiveness (e.g., year to year comparisons of how a teacher’s students progress in reading and mathematics).

C.4.c Major Contracts Planned

- GoldStar Group
- Nutrition Services
- Food service equipment
- Related service providers for students with disability
- Support for payroll, financial planning, student information system,
- Insurance
- Security and cleaning services
- Information technology, telecommunication and other support services
- Lease for incubator space
- Services for future site (architectural design, construction/renovation finance options)

Other contracts will be designed with discretion for financial impact, school improvement and goal alignment. All contracts are subject to review by the leadership team and in collaboration with others for best possible pricing and services. As required, when contracts are \$25,000 or more a copy will be submitted to the PCSB. The steps to ensure public notice and all other requirements by the PCSB will be closely adhered. Our legal counsel will also review contracts of this size.

C.4.d. Orientation of Parents, Teachers, and Other Community Members

Faculty/Staff Orientation

Week 1

All staff will review their strengths as a group and discuss vision and mission. The strengths-based approach will be a paradigm shift for some, ongoing articulation through the early implementation months will occur. Training on the Creative Curriculum and dual language blend will begin.

Week 2

Staff will complete training on attendance package and accessing important information from our SIS program. Continue training/planning of curriculum for all staff. Teachers will do grade level and individual planning for their classrooms. Materials for instruction to be reviewed, computers assigned for planning.

Parent Orientation

Parents will have a mini- lesson demonstration by the grade level teachers to help in the understanding of a dual language program. This lesson will build on the philosophy of partner teachers teaching both sets of students in Spanish or English. Parents will be given a series of presentations on strengths, first to build awareness of their own, and later its application for an educational support. Parents will have opportunities to take StrengthsFinder We will strive to build a school community so each family can have 5 friend families that they can get to know at school and extracurricular events. We will use the dual language program to help facilitate cultural exchange and learning.

Student Orientation

Students will attend school for a few hours prior to opening. The parents/family will accompany the student to this "Getting Acquainted" session. The student and family will tour the school and have activities in the classroom with both Teacher partners. They will also have a meal together in the school lunchroom. This orientation will help both parents and family visualize the following school days and give common language to parts of the school day.

More orientation for parents is planned with students' providing demonstrations of learning and modeling activities learned in school with language and practicing potential for home.

Part D — Public Charter Schools Mission Accomplishment Plan

D.1 Goals on Which the School's Success Will Be Judged

Student growth:

One year-growth in grade level academics and improved measures of wellbeing, for each student will give us the value add goal. Measures will include successful language acquisition in both Spanish and English, and reading, writing and math grade level increases for students in kindergarten and first grades. In very young children measures will include receptive and expressive language instruments and growth in all areas of development. Researchers from Strengths Academy Charter will devise an instrument to measure and compare improvement for the wellbeing component.

Strengths-based environment: Students/Families and Staff

Each staff member will take Strengths 2.0, and display their top five strengths, in their work area. The common strengths language will be used in conversations, to add to our positive culture that focuses on strengths. A student success plan will be written for each child. The plan creates a blueprint for development of each child's strengths and builds on the positive climate in the classroom, school and community. School staff act as advocates for students and create dialogue using the common language of strengths to describe performance in the day-to-day world of school. Parents and family members are invited to identify their strengths in order to invest more effectively in each other.

D.2 Assessment Measures

Dual Language Measure

Measures for our PS/PK students will be done using the PPVT-4 (Spanish version will be available in 2012) for PS-1st graders

- Assessing preschool early language skills Monitoring vocabulary development (progress)
- Results in monitoring progress based on 9month growth analysis, student measure (twice each year)
- Results will be part of teacher performance measure
- Results and growth will be shared with parents
- Instructional Facilitator will have responsibility for monitoring the data by the classroom teachers, scheduling debriefs on individual results of each student. Speech pathologist will consult on results as appropriate
- Other developmental areas will be measured and part of the overall profile for PS/PK students
- Other academic measures for reading, writing and math will be part of the overall growth profile for K-1 students

Strengths-based measure

- Strengths assessment complete for each employee, parent
- Retention of a satisfied staff, retention of students, build out with siblings and extended family
- Success plan developed for every student
- Attendance, parent participation (meetings, field trips, community events)
- Q12 interview measures engagement and satisfaction in employees and families

D.3 Performance Indicators

Academic

- Student outcomes: 6-9 months of growth, annually as measured in PPVT4, Ps-1st grades
- Gold System from Creative Curriculum: chart 6 areas of development near age-level mastery (3-6 months)
- Fountas and Pinnell Reading BAS Systems K-1 monitor growth by level, growth is positive not yet on grade level monitor students in 3-6 week intervals
 - Math inventories K-1
- Wellbeing indicators: daily student attendance, parent-teacher conference attendance, number and nature of school withdrawals, retention of staff, recruitment of new students

D.4 Collecting, Storing, Reporting Performance and Progress Data

The following list of data points will convey and compare our progress towards our thematic goals for Strengths-based learning and Dual Language.

These internal and external measures give staff on-going information on students, staff and families. Thematic data will be recorded by classroom staff and stored on our SIS system. Grade level discussions and review of individual student progress will be reviewed each month. The student profile will give a snapshot of each child’s total growth and can be reviewed using the student scorecard by teachers, building leadership and parents.

Data Point	Collection Date 1st	Collection Date 2nd	Collection Date 3rd	Data housed	Reported to parents	Reported to charter/community Annual Report
Academic Dual Language						
PPVT 4	*	*		SIS	2x year	*
Gold System C.C.	*	*		SIS	2x year	*
Guided Reading Benchmark Level	*	*	*	SIS	3x year	*
AYP/Acuity /Prep						*
Reading (3-8)	*	*		SIS	2x year	*
Math (3-8)	*	*		SIS	2x year	*
Science (3-8)	*	*		SIS	2x year	*
AYP DC CAS						
Reading	*			SIS	1x year	*
Math	*			SIS	1x year	*
Science	*			SIS	1x year	*
Total AYP	*			SIS	1x year	*
Wellbeing Index						
Staff	*	*	*	SIS	3x year	*
Students	*	*	*	SIS	3x year	*
Parents/Families	*	*	*	SIS	3x year	*

D.5 Timeline for Implementation

Strengths Academy Charter's Mission Accomplished Plan is an on-going document, similar to a school improvement plan. Each school year as grades are added, increased collection will take place. Students in upper elementary and middle school will have a portfolio review added to the plan. As important as the academics and the dual language are to the success of our charter, the power of the Strengths-based approach will not be lost. The cornerstone of our beliefs is based on the science that effective teachers will make the difference in student success. Finding teachers who do what they do best, every day will engage our students and their families in the mission of leveraging your strengths for optimal success. In the annual report for parents and community the measures of our thematic and academic goals should have a positive trajectory. Mission accomplished is a yearly measure, keeping the individual success of each child in our view.

Part E — Certifications

E.1 Required to be submitted with the initial application

E.1.a Assurances Form

Part F — Budget

F.1 Pre-opening Expenses

F.2 Two-Year Operating Budget

F.3 Estimated Five-Year Budget Projections

F.4 Capital Budget

F.5 Cash Flow Projection for Year 1

Strengths Academy Charter
February 1, 2011

Part G — Resumes, Board Member Agreements, and Statements of Interest and Qualifications

Strengths Academy Charter
February 1, 2011

Part H — Conflict of Interest

Strengths Academy Charter
February 1, 2011

Part I — Demographic Analysis

District of Columbia Public Charter School Board
Demographic Analysis Form
2011 Application Review Process

Name of Proposed School: Strengths Academy Charter Proposed Location: Ward 1 and 2 NW

(Address or general location—NE, SW, NW, SE. *If no general location has been identified, provide information for top two options.*)

Projected Age Range and Number of Students Expected to Enroll:

a. In 2011-2012 From age/grade 3year olds to age/grade 1 Number of students 160

b. At Full Capacity From age/grade 3year olds to age/grade 8 Number of students 440

1. Please provide the following information for schools that serve **the same age/grades** as you propose and are located in the neighborhood where you propose to establish your charter school:

Name	Projected Enrollment/ Capacity 2010-2011 ¹	Actual Enrollment 2010-2011	Type ²	% Low Income	DCCAS Performance (% Proficient) SY 2009-2010	Percentage of Highly Qualified Teachers ³
Center City PCS- PK-8 Ward 2 Shaw	234	286	Charter	78%	37.5 21.53	
Community Academy PCS Ward 2	228	153	Charter	83%	58.3 50.2	
KIPP 5-7 Ward 2	321	166	Charter	82%	37.5 21.53	
Meridian PS-8 Ward 1	520	509	Charter	86%	66.35 71.96	

**District of Columbia Public Charter School Board
Demographic Analysis Form
2011 Application Review Process**

SAIL School f/Arts in learning PC Ward 2	167	147	Charter	74%	28.7	26.7	
Bancroft ES PS-5		443	Public	80%	40%	45%	
Bruce-Monroe ES PS-5		415	Public	95%	24%	23%	
Cleveland ES PS-5		264	Public	86%	65%	83%	
Garrison ES PS-5		208	Public	83%	55%	47%	
HD Cooke ES PS-5		311	Public	88%	36%	38%	
Marie Reed ES PS-5		317	Public	89%	49%	52%	
Francis Steven ES PS-8		225	Public	69%	45%	43%	
Seaton ES Ps-5		317	Public	92%	48%	40%	

District of Columbia Public Charter School Board
Demographic Analysis Form
2011 Application Review Process

Thomas ES Ps-5		398	Public	75%	46%	51%	
Harriet Tubman ES PS-5		462	Public	90%	45%	64%	

NOTES:

¹For charter schools, enter projected enrollment; for all other schools, enter capacity.

²Type = DCPS, public charter school, private, parochial, independent, other

³Not applicable to private, parochial, and independent schools

2. Please check the ONE statement that best describes your recruitment strategy and provide a rationale for the chosen strategy:

I will recruit exclusively in the neighborhood where I plan to locate my charter school.

I will primarily focus my recruitment efforts in neighborhoods other than the one where I plan to locate my school. Please list those neighborhoods. _____

I will primarily focus my recruitment efforts in targeting specific populations of students, regardless of their neighborhood. Please describe the target population you intend to recruit (i.e., youth placed at risk, special needs, non-native English speakers, etc.) _____

I will conduct a citywide recruitment effort for my school.

Rationale: Strengths Academy Charter has a strong model to attract families from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. A dual language program that begins at three years of age and continues through 8th grade provides a safe and secure environment, rigorous curriculum taught by only the most effective teachers. Strengths foundations will give each person in our school family their own place and create a common bond. Creating opportunities for families to participate in dual language learning to support their children will be a uniting element. Parent interest and participation in all offerings by the Charter will build both personal and community relationships.

District of Columbia Public Charter School Board
Demographic Analysis Form
2011 Application Review Process

Based on the information provided above, provide the following information:

- a. Describe how your proposed charter school will compete with existing schools as it relates to the recruitment of students and highly qualified teachers and securing an adequate facility.

The reason to open our location to both ward 1 &2 gave us more options for location and still focusing on an area of the district that needs quality early childhood programs for all children and a themed charter that attracts people for its positive design. Our decision to be flexible in location, close proximity to bus and metro lines will support a whole city recruitment plan. Our definition of highly qualified is different than the NCLB version. Highly qualified has not guaranteed the necessary ingredient so far to have effective teachers in classrooms. Gallup's TeacherInsight tool will be the primary means of sorting candidates. Great teachers are looking for opportunity to teach in positive schools that provide more than just academics for children.

- b. Provide a description of the proposed charter school's student recruitment strategies should the school initially locate in an area other than the intended location. Specifically, explain if students will be recruited from the area where you intend to locate or where the school will initially be located, and the short- and long-term impact of such a strategy.

A large media reach in all mediums, will begin as soon as Charter approval has been publicly announced. Discussion groups will be held in community centers throughout the district. Advertisements at colleges, universities, libraries and churches will explain the opportunity for quality early childhood experience and on-going school relationship. The promise of a school that will take your very young child through the elementary and middle school years is a significant support and commitment. The design will provide needed relationships for many in the early years of parenting to have activates and classes that unify the efforts of the school community.

- c. Provide a justification for the intended location if a strong presence of charter schools currently exists or will do so in the future. Describe how your proposed charter school will be successful given the surrounding schools.

There are many public and charter schools in Wards 1&2. The number of schools that provide a PS-8 configuration are limited. The Strengths-based educational focus gives a much-needed philosophy to the school environments, which creates advocacy and success very early. The state of the public schools in the Wards shows a need to renew engagement of students and families. Success planning and individual focus is needed to bring about true reform. The belief in students' ability and the right expectations are missing in too many schools. Dual language schools are a response to the achievement gap in LEP students but it will bring added value to the education of all students regardless of first language.

Strengths Academy Charter
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Part J — Required Documents

Description of Curriculum

The Objectives and Standards direct our curriculum content. As stated earlier in the document, Strengths Academy Charter will adopt the Common Core Standards in language arts and mathematics for our school. Adopting the Common Core Standards will position our school to share information effectively as well as prepare them to attend college or enter the world of work. These standards do not prevent different levels of achievement among students. Effective teachers will be our best safeguard for increasing the achievement of all students. Our charge is to provide consistent exposure to materials and content. Our students must be prepared to compete globally. In other subjects, the National Boards will drive our content standards in science, social studies and the arts.

The alignment of those standards is closely mapped in the Literacy section for grades K-5th grade. Houghton Mifflin series Invitations/Invitaciones Reading and Writing Workshop is a product we will review. These materials align with Common Core Language Arts Standards, the school's belief in a basal series for the modeled section of reading instruction as well as the use of leveled materials from multiple sources (Rigby, Scholastic, Pearson, 100 Book Challenge (K-8) as well as those included in the Houghton Mifflin Series).

National Geographic has developed high quality materials that provide content-rich, flexible resources that foster language development in both English and Spanish. Materials such as these will be used to develop our curricular connections. SAC staff will bring detail to our 50:50 immersion approaches. They will look at a combination of curricular designs. Aligning Common Core with dual language materials is key in our design. Ongoing instruction, at the middle level for Language Arts will be in both languages. It is important for dual language students to have ample practice and exposure to quality literature in both languages, with oral and written opportunities to express their understanding of material. Recommendations for other core subjects to be taught in Spanish will be decided by our teachers and instructional facilitator.

SAC's goals for bilingual education will be integrated within our curriculum. Our staff will work to embed the language and the literature across the curriculum. Our students will learn content and the academic language associated with the content. As part of this process, multicultural competence and equity will be reflected in our school climate. In addition to the selection of materials and textbooks, the integration of technology presented and practiced in both languages will be another lever for student learning. Technology as a vehicle for delivering instruction has been seen in some studies to be more effective than traditional formats such as textbooks. Many publishers offer software packages that complement the learning of objectives in this interactive format.

The most significant instructional approach for a dual language setting is to promote positive instructional interactions. These interactions are respectful of the strength of both groups and that learning together is more effective. The genuine dialogue effective teachers bring to the classroom is provide a format that models for students and shares the control of instruction at one point, but gradually relinquishes control to students. Cooperative learning is an ideal approach in a dual language setting. Pairing first language English students with first language Spanish students provides reciprocal support to the learning setting. Studies show this matching of students brings about positive results for learning and for social goals as well.

The development of materials in both English and Spanish continues to grow. Many companies have now leveled bilingual texts and have them available to supplement materials in classrooms for a balanced share of language access.

Assessments for middle school students would follow the same design as K-5 schedule. Acuity is a system of formative assessments in core subject areas that provides ongoing information about students'

Strengths Academy Charter
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learning and can provide refined diagnostic tests as well. The student data provided by the Acuity program will give staff a measure of how students are performing toward achieving the standards. The schedule provides for changes in instruction that might be necessary for student success on DC CAS and other measures.

Part K – Optional Documents

Two-Year Operating Budget Worksheet: Year ONE

DESCRIPTION PRE-Opening Year		BUDGETED AMOUNTS			
		Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
REVENUES		501(c)3 School Applicant			
1	Per Pupil Charter Payments				
2	Per Pupil Facilities Allowance				
3	Federal Entitlements				
4	Other Government Funding/Grants				
5	Total Public Funding				
6	Private Grants and Donations	150,000			
7	Activity Fees				
8	Loans				
9	Other Income (please describe in footnote)				
10	Total Non-Public Funding	150,000			
11	EMO Management Fee (= line 73, col. G)				
12					
13					
14	TOTAL REVENUES	\$150,000			
EXPENSES		501(c)3 School Applicant		Combined Total	Expenditures as a Percent of Total Public Funding
Personnel Salaries and Benefits					
15	Principal/Executive S: *PT	50,000	Part time		
16	Teachers Salaries				
17	Teacher Aides/Assistance Salaries				
18	Other Education Professionals Salaries	50,000	Recruiter		
19	Business/Operations Salaries	10,000			
20	Clerical Salaries				
21	Custodial Salaries				
22	Other Staff Salaries				
23	Employee Benefits				
24	Contracted Staff				
25	Staff Development Costs				
26					
27	Subtotal: Personnel Costs	\$110,000			
28					
29	Direct Student Costs				
30	Textbooks				
31	Student Supplies and Materials				
32	Library and Media Center Materials				
33	Computers and Materials				
34	Other Instructional Equipment				
35	Classroom Furnishings and Supplies				
36	Student Assessment Materials				
37	Contracted Student Services				
38	Miscellaneous Student Costs				
39					
40	Subtotal: Direct Student Costs				
41					
42	Occupancy Expenses				
43	Rent				
44	Mortgage Principal Payments				
45	Mortgage Interest Payments				
46	Building Maintenance and Repairs				
47	Renovation/Leasehold Improvements				
48	Utilities				
49	Janitorial Supplies				
50	Equipment Rental and Maintenance				
51	Contracted Building Services				
52					

Two-Year Operating Budget Worksheet: Year ONE

53	Subtotal: Occupancy Expenses				
54					
55	Office Expenses				
56	Office Supplies and Materials				
57	Office Furnishings and Equipment				
58	Office Equipment Rental and Maintenance				
59	Telephone/Telecommunications	2,500			
60	Legal, Accounting and Payroll Services	10,000			
61	Printing and Copying	5,000			
62	Postage and Shipping				
63	Other				
64		17,500			
65	Subtotal: Office Expenses	\$17,500			
66					
67	General Expenses				
68	Insurance				
69	Interest Expense				
70	Transportation				
71	Food Service				
72	Administration Fee (to PCSB)				
73	EMO Management Fee				
74	Other General Expense	10,000			
75					
76	Subtotal: General Expenses	\$10,000			
77					
78	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$137,500			
79					
80	EXCESS (OR DEFICIENCY)				
81	Excess (or deficit) retained by school	\$12,500			
82	Excess (or deficit) retained by EMO				

ASSUMPTIONS

Student Enrollment	
Facility Size (square footage)	
Average Teacher Salary	
Student/Teacher Ratio	
Other Major Assumptions	

NOTES:

Two-Year Operating Budget Worksheet: Year ONE

DESCRIPTION	BUDGETED AMOUNTS			
	Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
	501(c)3 School Applicant	Education Management Organization	Total Revenues by Funding Source	Expenditures as a Percent of Total Public Funding
REVENUES				
1 Per Pupil Charter Payments	2,752,311		2,752,311	
2 Per Pupil Facilities Allowance	480,000		480,000	
3 Federal Entitlements	241,168		241,168	
4 Other Government Funding/Grants	46,107		46,107	
5 Total Public Funding	<u>3,519,586</u>		<u>3,519,586</u>	
6 Private Grants and Donations	3,519,586		3,519,586	
7 Activity Fees			0	
8 Loans			0	
9 Other Income (please describe in footnote)			0	
10 Total Non-Public Funding			<u>0</u>	
11 EMO Management Fee (= line 73, col. G)			0	
12				
13				
14 TOTAL REVENUES	<u>\$3,519,586</u>			

EXPENSES	501(c)3 School Applicant	Education Management Organization	Combined Total	Expenditures as a Percent of Total Public Funding
Personnel Salaries and Benefits				
15 Principal/Executive Salary	120,000		120000	0.034
16 Teachers Salaries	600,000		600000	0.17
17 Teacher Aides/Assistance Salaries	240,000		240000	0.07
18 Other Education Professionals Salaries	100,000		100000	0.037
19 Business/Operations Salaries	50,000		50000	0.014
20 Clerical Salaries	30,000		30000	0.01
21 Custodial Salaries	50,000		50000	0.014
22 Other Staff Salaries	0		0	0
23 Employee Benefits	430,000		430000	0.122
24 Contracted Staff	40,000		40000	0.012
25 Staff Development Costs	20,000		20000	0.01
26				
27 Subtotal: Personnel Costs	<u>\$1,680,000</u>		<u>1680000</u>	<u>0.48</u>
28				
29 Direct Student Costs				
30 Textbooks	20,000		20000	0.005
31 Student Supplies and Materials	3,000		3000	0.002
32 Library and Media Center Materials	100,000		100000	0.03
33 Computers and Materials	40,000		40	0.01
34 Other Instructional Equipment				
35 Classroom Furnishings and Supplies	103,000		103000	0.03
36 Student Assessment Materials	10,000		10000	0.003
37 Contracted Student Services	40,000		40000	0.001
38 Miscellaneous Student Costs	5,000		5000	
39				
40 Subtotal: Direct Student Costs	<u>\$321,000</u>		<u>321000</u>	<u>0.09</u>
41				
42 Occupancy Expenses				
43 Rent	580,000		580000	0.16
44 Mortgage Principal Payments				
45 Mortgage Interest Payments				
46 Building Maintenance and Repairs	10,000		10000	0.003
47 Renovation/Leasehold Improvements	90,000		90000	0.03
48 Utilities	6,000		6000	0.0017
49 Janitorial Supplies				
50 Equipment Rental and Maintenance				
51 Contracted Building Services	20,000		20000	0.005
52				
53 Subtotal: Occupancy Expenses	<u>\$706,000</u>		<u>706000</u>	<u>0.2</u>
54				
55 Office Expenses				
56 Office Supplies and Materials	10,000		10000	0.003

Two-Year Operating Budget Worksheet: Year ONE

57	Office Furnishings and Equipment	10,000	10000	0.003
58	Office Equipment Rental and Maintenance	5,000	5000	0.0015
59	Telephone/Telecommunications	5,000	5000	0.0015
60	Legal, Accounting and Payroll Services	30,000	30000	0.09
61	Printing and Copying	5,000	50000	0.0015
62	Postage and Shipping	5,000	50000	0.0015
63	Other			
64				
65	Subtotal: Office Expenses	<u>\$70,000</u>	<u>70000</u>	<u>0.1</u>
66				
67	General Expenses			
68	Insurance	16,000	16000	0.0045
69	Interest Expense	0		
70	Transportation	7,500	7500	0.002
71	Food Service	150,000	150000	0.04
72	Administration Fee (to PCSB)	13,328	13,328	0.005
73	EMO Management Fee			
74	Other/unexpected expense	80,000	80000	0.02
75				
76	Subtotal: General Expenses	<u>\$266,828</u>	<u>266,828</u>	<u>0.07</u>
77				
78	TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$3,198,828</u>		<u>0.9</u>
79				
80	EXCESS (OR DEFICIENCY)			
81	Excess (or deficit) retained by schoo	<u>\$320,758</u>		
82	Excess (or deficit) retained by EMC			

ASSUMPTIONS

Student Enrollment	<u>160</u>
Facility Size (square footage)	<u>15000</u>
Average Teacher Salary	<u>60000</u>
Student/Teacher Ratio	<u>1:20</u>
Student/Adult Ratio is 1:4.5	<u></u>

NOTES:

Two-Year Operating Budget Worksheet: Year TWO

DESCRIPTION		BUDGETED AMOUNTS			
		Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
REVENUES		501(c)3 School Applicant	Education Management Organization	Total Revenues by Funding Source	Expenditures as a Percent of Total Public Funding
1	Per Pupil Charter Payments	2,806,619		2,806,619	
2	Per Pupil Facilities Allowance	600,000		600,000	
3	Federal Entitlements	141,800		141,800	
4	Other Government Funding/Grants	56,480		56,480	
5	Total Public Funding	3,604,899		3,604,899	
6	Private Grants and Donations			0	
7	Activity Fees			0	
8	Loans			0	
9	Other Income (please describe in footnote)			0	
10	Total Non-Public Funding			0	
11	EMO Management Fee (= line 73, col. G)			0	
12					
13					
14	TOTAL REVENUES	\$3,604,899		3604899	
EXPENSES		501(c)3 School Applicant	Education Management Organization	Combined Total	Expenditures as a Percent of Total Public Funding
Personnel Salaries and Benefits					
15	Principal/Executive Salary	125,000		125000	0.034
16	Teachers Salaries	720,000		720000	0.2
17	Teacher Aides/Assistance Salaries	300,000		300,000	0.08
18	Other Education Professionals Salaries	100,000		125000	0.027
19	Business/Operations Salaries	62,500		62500	0.017
20	Clerical Salaries	40,000		40000	0.011
21	Custodial Salaries	55,000		55000	0.015
22	Other Staff Salaries				
23	Employee Benefits	537,500		537500	0.149
24	Contracted Staff	60,000		60000	0.016
25	Staff Development Costs	30,000		30000	0.008
26					
27	Subtotal: Personnel Costs				0
28		\$2,030,000		2030000	0.56
Direct Student Costs					
30	Textbooks	10,000		10000	0.002
31	Student Supplies and Materials	5,000		5000	0.001
32	Library and Media Center Materials	30,000		30000	0.006
33	Computers and Materials	10,000		10000	0.002
34	Other Instructional Equipment				
35	Classroom Furnishings and Supplies	20,000		20000	0.004
36	Student Assessment Materials	10,000		10000	0.002
37	Contracted Student Services	50,000		50000	0.01
38	Miscellaneous Student Costs	10,000		10000	0.002
39					
40	Subtotal: Direct Student Costs	\$145,000		145000	0.04
41					
Occupancy Expenses					
43	Rent	600,000			0.17
44	Mortgage Principal Payments				0
45	Mortgage Interest Payments				0
46	Building Maintenance and Repairs	20,000			0.005
47	Renovation/Leasehold Improvements	90,000			0.024
48	Utilities	10,000			0.002
49	Janitorial Supplies				0
50	Equipment Rental and Maintenance				0
51	Contracted Building Services	30,000			0.006
52					
53	Subtotal: Occupancy Expenses	\$650,000			0.18
54					
Office Expenses					
56	Office Supplies and Materials	12,000			0.003

Two-Year Operating Budget Worksheet: Year TWO

57	Office Furnishings and Equipment	12,000		0.003
58	Office Equipment Rental and Maintenance	6,000		0.002
59	Telephone/Telecommunications	6,000		0.002
60	Legal, Accounting and Payroll Services	35,000		0.009
61	Printing and Copying	6,000		0.002
62	Postage and Shipping	6,000		0.002
63	Other			0
64				
65	Subtotal: Office Expenses	<u>\$83,000</u>		<u>0.023</u>
66				
67	General Expenses			
68	Insurance	19,000		0.005
69	Interest Expense			0
70	Transportation	9,000		0.002
71	Food Service	175,000		0.048
72	Administration Fee (to PCSB)	17,742		0.0049
73	EMO Management Fee			0
74	Other General Expense	100,000		0.027
75				
76	Subtotal: General Expenses	<u>\$320,742</u>		<u>0.08</u>
77				
78	TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$3,228,742</u>		<u>0.89</u>
79				
80	EXCESS (OR DEFICIENCY)			
81	Excess (or deficit) retained by school	<u>\$376,157</u>		
82	Excess (or deficit) retained by EMO			

ASSUMPTIONS

Student Enrollment	<u>200</u>
Facility Size (square footage)	<u>15000</u>
Average Teacher Salary	<u>60000</u>
Student/Teacher Ratio	<u>1:20</u>
Student/Adult ratio is 1:4.5	

NOTES:

Two-Year Operating Budget Worksheet: Year TWO



Five-Year Estimated Budget Worksheet

DESCRIPTION	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
REVENUES					
Per Pupil Charter Payments	3,232,311	3,406,619	4,087,943	4,782,893	5,452,612
Federal Entitlements	287,275	198,280	237,936	278,385	317,358
Income from Grants and Donations					
Activity Fees					
Other Income					
TOTAL REVENUES	\$3,519,586	\$3,604,899	\$4,325,879	\$5,061,278	\$5,769,970
EXPENSES					
Personnel Salaries and Benefits	1,680,000	2,030,000	2,436,000	2,923,200	3,507,840
Direct Student Costs	321,000	145,000	174,000	208,800	250,000
Occupancy	706,000	650,000	780,000	900,000	1,080,000
Office Expenses	70,000	83,000	90,000	98,000	102,000
General Expenses	266,828	320,742	384,890	400,000	450,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$3,043,828	\$3,228,742	\$3,864,890	\$4,530,000	\$5,389,840

Capital Budget
Strengths Academy Charter
SY 2012 – 2013

32	Library and Media Center	100,000
33	Computer	40,000
35	Classroom Furniture	103,000
47	Renovations/Lease hold	90,000
57	Office Furnishings	10,000

The first option for capital costs is to build them into the first year budget. Major capital costs will be planned as facility decisions are made.

Monthly Cash Flow Projection

DESCRIPTION	Pre-Opening	Month 1 July	Month 2 August	Month 3 Sept	Month 4 Oct	Month 5 Nov	Month 6 Dec	Month 7 Jan	Month 8 Feb	Month 10 April
1. Cash on Hand (start of month)										
2. Cash receipts										
Per Pupil Charter Payments		\$808,077			\$808,077			\$808,077		\$808,718
Federal Entitlements		\$71,818			\$71,818			\$71,818		\$71,818
Grants and Donations										
Activities Fees										
Other Income										
3. Total Receipts	\$0	\$879,895	\$0	\$0	\$879,895	\$0	\$0	\$879,895	\$0	\$880,536
4. Total Cash Available	\$0	\$879,895	\$0	\$0	\$879,895	\$0	\$0	\$879,895	\$0	\$880,536
5. Expenses										
Personnel Salaries and Benefits										
Principal/Executive Salary		10000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Teachers Salaries		50000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Teacher Aides/Assistance Salaries		20000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Other Education Professionals Salaries		100000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$8,333	\$8,333	\$8,333	\$8,333	\$8,333
Clerical Salaries		2500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
Custodial Salaries		4333	\$4,333	\$4,333	\$4,333	\$4,333	\$4,333	\$4,333	\$4,333	\$4,333
Other/Contracted Staff		3333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333	\$3,333
Employee Benefits		35833	\$35,833	\$35,833	\$35,833	\$35,833		\$35,833	\$35,833	\$35,833
Staff Development Costs		2166	\$2,166	\$2,166	\$2,166	\$2,166	\$2,166	\$2,166	\$2,166	\$2,166
Direct Student Costs										
Textbooks		\$20,000								
Student Supplies and Materials		\$1,500					\$1,500			
Library and Media Center Materials		\$50,000		\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Computers and Materials		\$20,000					\$20,000			
Other Instructional Equipment										
Classroom Furnishings and Supplies	60000	\$3,583	\$3,583	\$3,583	\$3,583	\$3,583	\$3,583	\$3,583	\$3,583	\$3,583
Student Assessment Materials Contracted		\$5,000						\$5,000		
Instructional/Student Services				\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Miscellaneous Student Costs										
DESCRIPTION	Pre-Opening	Month 1 July	Month 2 August	Month 3 Sept	Month 4 Oct	Month 5 Nov	Month 6 Dec	Month 7 Jan	Month 8 Feb	Month 10 April

Monthly Cash Flow Projection

Office Expenses										
Office Supplies and Materials		833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833
Office Equipment Rental and Maintenance		833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833
Telephone/Telecommunications		417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417
Legal, Accounting and Payroll Services		2500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
Printing and Copying		417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417
Postage and Shipping		417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417	\$417
Other										
Occupancy Expenses										
Rent		48333	\$48,333	\$48,333	\$48,333	\$48,333	\$48,333	\$48,333	\$48,333	\$48,333
Mortgage Interest Payments										
Maintenance and Repairs		833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833	\$833
Utilities										
Janitorial Supplies		500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500
Equipment Rental and Maintenance										
Contracted Building Services										
General Expenses										
Insurance		\$8,000						\$8,000		
Interest Expense										
Transportation			\$750	\$750	\$750	\$750	\$750	\$750	\$750	\$750
Food Service			\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Administration Fee		\$3,332			\$3,332			\$3,332		
Other General Expense										
6. Total Expenses	\$60,000	\$394,663	\$302,581	\$311,581	\$314,913	\$219,914	\$185,581	\$256,246	\$219,914	\$219,914
7. Fund Balance (end of month)	(\$60,000)	\$485,232	(\$302,581)	(\$311,581)	\$564,982	(\$219,914)	(\$185,581)	\$623,649	(\$219,914)	\$660,622

Monthly Cash Flow Projection

Month 11 May	Month 12 June	Total
		\$3,232,311
		\$287,285
\$0	\$0	\$3,519,596
\$0	\$0	\$3,519,596
\$10,000	\$10,000	\$120,000
\$50,000	\$50,000	\$600,000
\$20,000	\$20,000	\$240,000
\$8,333	\$8,333	\$100,000
\$2,500	\$2,500	\$30,000
\$4,333	\$4,333	\$50,000
\$3,333	\$3,333	\$40,000
\$35,833	\$35,833	\$430,000
\$2,166	\$2,166	\$20,000
		\$20,000
		\$3,000
\$5,000	\$5,000	\$100,000
		\$40,000
\$3,583	\$3,583	\$103,000
		\$10,000
\$4,000	\$4,000	\$40,000
		\$5,000
Month 11 May	Month 12 June	Total

Monthly Cash Flow Projection

\$833	\$833	\$10,000
\$833	\$833	\$10,000
\$417	\$417	\$5,000
\$2,500	\$2,500	\$30,000
\$417	\$417	\$5,000
\$417	\$417	\$5,000
\$48,333	\$48,333	\$580,000
\$833	\$833	\$10,000
\$500	\$500	\$6,000
		\$20,000
		\$16,000
\$750		\$7,500
\$15,000		\$150,000
\$3,332		\$13,328
\$223,246	\$204,164	\$2,818,828
(\$223,246)	(\$204,164)	\$700,768