

## INTRODUCTION

The East Bay Conservation Corps (EBCC), soon to be Civicorps Schools, is a multi-program nonprofit educational organization located in Oakland, California. Since opening its doors nearly 25 years ago, the EBCC has been a leader in developing innovative models to serve youth and communities through education reform, youth development, environmental stewardship and service. The EBCC's comprehensive program model enhances participants' academic, leadership, career planning and life skills, self-esteem, civic responsibility and environmental awareness. Through service-learning—the practice of linking academic learning with service that meets real community needs—students apply and advance their academic learning through serving their community. This arrives at the heart of the civic mission of public education: educating and preparing individuals to be active, contributing members of our democracy.

In January 2008, the East Bay Conservation Corps will officially adopt a new name, Civicorps Schools. The reason for the name change is because Civicorps Schools is more reflective of the range of programs and services offered at the East Bay Conservation Corps.

Our new mission statement- *Civicorps Schools promote citizenship and build civil society by creating educational models that draw upon service as a way of learning*- has been adapted to better reflect our dedication to service and communities.

Whereas our mission is new, the principles that articulate the values that guide the decisions that we make, will remain the same. These guiding principals are:

- Academic excellence
- Artistic literacy
- Values, ethics, and spiritual development necessary to thoughtful citizenship in a pluralistic, democratic society
- Service as a way of learning
- Participation in the life of the school and the community through stewardship of the environment
- Creative partnerships in sustaining public education

The goal of Civicorps Schools is to create models of educational programs for serving students in grades K through 12; including an alternative high school model. The EBCC received its original K-12 charter in 1995. The first school site, the Corpsmember High School, opened in 1996. The charter was renewed in 2000, and the K-5 school site was launched in 2001. In 2005, the charter was renewed again and was valid for K-8 and the Corpsmember Academy through 2010.

However, last year, the EBCC decided that we could better serve our unique student populations, and better fulfill our goal of creating educational models, by writing distinct charters for each of our schools.

In 2007, the EBCC submitted a charter that would allow the Corpsmember Academy to operate as its own entity, separate from the K-8. This allowed us to adapt the schedule, assessment systems and calendar for the Corpsmember Academy and truly design a school reflective of the population that we are serving.

The submission of this charter, which outlines the educational philosophies, practices and school design of Civicorps Middle School, is reflective of that same logic. Our current K-8 charter legally allows us to serve students in grades five through eight through 2010. However, after careful review of student and adolescent needs, parental input, academic research and school location, the Civicorps Board of Directors has decided that Civicorps Middle School also should have its own distinct charter. This petition allows us to clearly articulate the goals and procedures for Civicorps Middle Schools. We feel that this will allow us to be more accountable to the students, families and communities that we serve, and will allow us to be more accountable to our own goal of educational reform.

The design of the charter for the Civicorps Middle School has infused the best thinking on middle schools into the solid backbone of our guiding principles. Drawing on the work of the National Middle School Association and other leading educational researchers, Civicorps Middle School will reflect best practices for implementing the middle school concept, including a caring school community, heterogeneous grouping, flexible scheduling and advisory groups (Anfara & Lipka, 2003). Service-learning, which has been identified as an essential strategy for engaging this age group (Manning & Butcher, 2005), will continue to be our primary teaching strategy.

Civicorps Middle School will continue to be based on the philosophies of the founding charter but will expand on those concepts to explore the extent to which service and citizenry can serve adolescents in their critical stages of educational and human development.

This petition meets the intent of California charter school law. The practices of academic rigor, service and citizenship, and specifically how those commitments can help to stimulate individuals and communities, serve to unify each of the Civicorps Schools, including the elementary school, middle school, and Corpsmember Academy.

### **Element A. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

*A description of the educational program of the school, designed, among other things, to identify those whom the school is attempting to educate, what it means to be an “educated person” in the 21st century, and how learning best occurs. The goals identified in that program shall include the objective of enabling pupils to become self-motivated, competent and lifelong learners.*

*If the proposed school will serve high school pupils, a description of how the charter school will inform parents about the transferability of courses to other public high schools and eligibility of courses to meet college entrance requirements. Courses offered by the charter school that are accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges may be considered transferable and courses approved by the University of California of the California State University as creditable under the “A” to “G” admissions criteria may be considered to meet college entrance requirements [California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(A)(i) a.*

Civicorps Middle School will offer a rigorous, relevant and attainable educational program for all students that is:

- a.) standards-based;**
- b.) directed to our target population; and**
- c.) based on well-researched educational practices.**

### **Student Population to Be Served**

Central to the civic mission of public education and to providing a rigorous educational experience for students of all abilities, Civicorps Middle School will actively recruit a student body that brings together the socio-economic and ethnic diversity of Oakland and the broader San Francisco Bay Area.

We anticipate that the demographics of Civicorps Middle School will mimic the cultural diversity of our elementary school, Civicorps Elementary School. Civicorps Elementary School currently enrolls a student population that reflects the rich diversity of Oakland; 68% are African-American; 15% are Caucasian; 8% are Latino; 6% are Asian; and 2% are Pacific Islanders. Two-thirds (66%) of our families qualify for either free or reduced school lunch meals according to state income level guidelines. Rigorous and expansive recruitment efforts will be used to ensure a school population that embraces and celebrates this diversity.

Civicorps Middle School seeks to educate and engage a diverse student population with regard to academic proficiency levels. We will actively recruit students who are both at risk of not meeting academic proficiency levels and students that require additional challenges to maintain stimulation and engagement. Through our differentiated instructional program, we will capitalize

on the various strengths, talents, interests and academic levels that our students bring to our school.

The Civicorps Middle School leaders and recruiters will actively recruit students in the surrounding attendance area by holding orientations and information sessions in such venues as Golden Gate Library, Rockridge Library, Rockridge United Methodist Church, and Harmony Baptist Church to name a few. At least one school in that region, Claremont Middle School, is currently in Program Improvement Status with a similar schools API ranking of 2. We will work closely with Claremont Middle School to determine strategies and practices that support the success of students, families, teachers and staff.

We will inform families in the attendance area of the Civicorps Middle School program through local newspapers such as the Temescal Valley Times, Rockridge News as well as websites for local listings such as Parents' Press.

In addition to recruiting students in the specific attendance area of Claremont Middle School, The Civicorps Middle School will focus recruitment efforts on the trend of students currently leaving Oakland Unified School District upon reaching middle school age. As indicated in the "Demographic Update for Oakland Unified School District: Executive Summary," a specific finding related to Middle School students makes it clear that there is a trend for students of middle school age to stop attending school in Oakland. The report states, "middle school students are leaving Oakland altogether or are dropping out of school." Lapkoff & Gobalet Demographic Research, 2007). The authors of the report speculate that this trend occurs due to drop out rates amongst middle school students. Students, families, the district, and the community as a whole benefit when these students continue to attend schools in the city in which they reside:Oakland.

It is the intent of Civicorps Middle School to enroll a total of 100 students in the 2008-09 school year (50 students in the fifth and sixth grades), and slowly grow to 75 students per fifth and sixth grades by the 2012-13 school year (while maintaining 50 students in grades seven and eight, for a total enrollment, grades five through eight, of 250. Civicorps Middle School will achieve its estimated full enrollment of 300 students in the 2014-15 school year.

**The following table illustrates Civicorps Middle School's growth plan the five years following its operation:**

<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
50 5 <sup>th</sup> Graders	50 5 <sup>th</sup> Graders	50 5 <sup>th</sup> Graders	75 5 <sup>th</sup> Graders	75 5 <sup>th</sup> Graders
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<b>Total= 100 students</b>	<b>Total=150 students</b>	<b>Total=200 students</b>	<b>Total=225 students</b>	<b>Total=250 students</b>
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### **What it Means to be a 21st Century Educated Person**

Our mission is based on the fundamental belief that an educated citizenry is the cornerstone of a healthy democracy. To be an educated person in the 21st century, public schools need to instill in our children the notion that life is about giving rather than getting; that rights are tied to responsibilities; and that democracy is not just a philosophical construct but a way of living and getting things done – that the whole is indeed greater than the sum of the parts. Throughout our history as the East Bay Conservation Corps, we have always believed that young people must be an integral part of every solution to our nation’s problems. Since 1983 we have espoused the belief that everyone should have the opportunity, support and education to serve and help others. We wish to ensure that all of our citizens can fully participate in the future.

In particular, we believe in Ernest Boyer's description of what it means to be “educated”:

It means developing one’s own aptitudes and interests and discovering the diversity that makes us unique. And it means becoming permanently empowered with language proficiency, general knowledge, social confidence, and moral awareness. It also means discovering the connectedness of things. It means respecting the miracle of life and responding sensitively to the aesthetic. Being truly educated means putting learning in the historical perspective, understanding groups and institutions, having reverence for the natural world, and affirming the dignity of work. And, above all, being an educated person means being guided by values and beliefs and connecting the lessons of the classroom to the realities of life.

*(Toward a Coherent Curriculum, 1995)*

More specifically, Civicorps Middle School will enable its pupils to become self-motivated, competent, lifelong learners in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by preparing all students to be proficient in the following:

- **Academic Literacy**—defined as the ability to read, write, speak, calculate, reason, and conduct processes of inquiry with clarity and precision.

- **Artistic Literacy**—defined as the ability to learn and creatively express oneself through the visual, performing, literary arts, and technology.
- **Civic Literacy**—defined as the ability to "let your life speak" by participating thoughtfully, responsibly, and passionately in the life of the community with concern for the common good.

Proficiency in these three broad academic and civic areas requires that our students develop skills in a number of more detailed school-wide student outcomes, which are catalogued in Element B of this charter petition. (See Element B for more details.)

### **How Learning Best Occurs: Educational Philosophy and Practices**

**Our Educational Philosophy.** The educational philosophy of Civicorps Middle School draws from a passionate belief that public schools were created to educate citizens who actively participate in a democracy. From the writings of educational philosophers such as John Dewey, we draw inspiration for an educational philosophy that is grounded in learning that is active and experiential, interdisciplinary in nature, supportive of students' holistic development and focused on the larger purposes of preparing students to actively participate in society as citizens, workers and environmental stewards.

These educational philosophies will be applied to our school in a unique and innovative fashion. The result: learning more for understanding than for rote memorization; learning that leads to a heightened sense of curiosity about the world and our place in it; and learning that can serve as the foundation for succeeding in rigorous high school programs and in developing the lifelong skills and habits of active citizenship.

**Our Educational Practices.** Our educational practices are based on the research of educational experts specializing in middle school education, the needs of the early adolescent, service as a way of learning and the arts integrated across the curriculum. In addition, resources from the National Middle School Association have informed instructional practices and organizational features including high expectations of all learners, differentiated instruction, focused teacher development, advisory, block scheduling, and a caring school community that deliberately fosters the emotional and social growth of students (NMSA, 1995, 2001). We also pay special attention to how we deliver instruction, expecting our teachers to employ a wide range of teaching strategies that are aligned both to the context (whole group lecture, small group discussion or individual coaching) and to the needs of each student.

In order to achieve these ambitious goals we have designed Civicorps Middle School with the following features in mind:

- a school that is intentionally built on a human scale; specifically, a caring and supportive community that is responsive to each individual learner;
- a program that is both interdisciplinary in scope and respectful of the integrity of each academic discipline;
- instructional methods that are targeted to the early adolescent, to a wide range of learning styles and to integrating service and the arts into the curriculum.

Specifically, the following educational practices reflect both the most current educational research as well as the most time-tested and sensible educational wisdom. What follows are brief descriptions of:

**1.) *The School as Community***

**2.) *The Program and the Block Master Schedule***

**3.) *Key Instructional Methods***

**4.) *The Role of Parents in the Design and the Daily Life of Civicorps Middle School***

**5.) *Clearly Articulated and High Expectations for All Learners***

**1.) *The School as Community.*** In order to ensure that Civicorps Middle School fosters the kind of caring, nurturing environment critical for young adolescents, the school is small by design, so that all students are well known to their teachers and fully appreciated for the gifts they bring to the school. Kathleen Cotton, a leading researcher of small-school communities states, "...a major reason these [small] schools are safer and more successful than large schools is that staff members are much more likely to know all of their students well. When teachers and students are able to build relationships, both are motivated to work and to make a success of the schooling enterprise. Teachers, moreover, can become knowledgeable about students' learning strengths and needs and identify ways to respond to them..." (Cotton, 2001).

At Corpsmember Middle School we also recognize in addition to being small, we must also implement strategies and practices that ensure our school community is caring, nurturing and positive. Specifically, we implement the essential elements of Positive Youth Development, a set of practices developed for risk prevention and to facilitate the success of young adolescents.

We make very conscious attempts to build community at both the classroom and school-wide levels so that students and teachers can participate fully in the life of the school as a community. The manner in which the school is governed, conflicts are managed and resources are allocated becomes central to our sense of community. Participation in school becomes, in effect, a dress rehearsal in participatory democracy, a model community.

Here are some key features of the school as a caring and responsive community:

**Advisory.** Crucial to the formative early adolescent years, students will participate in family-like groups several times per week, called advisory. Facilitated by an adult leader (teachers, administrators, and instructional support staff), advisory will serve as a structured opportunity for students to develop social and emotional skills, build teamwork skills, discuss issues, resolve conflicts, gain leadership skills, develop organizational skills, and receive additional academic support. In order to ensure that the adult facilitator comes to know their student advisory group well, and that the adult comes to be seen as a mentor and a trusted ally, the same adult will stay with a group of students for the entire year, and if logistics permit, up to four years.

**Positive Youth Development.** Positive youth development is a research based set of practices specific to the social and emotional development of adolescent youth, ages 10-15. These practices prevent high risk behavior that adolescent youth are susceptible to as well as develop the social and emotional skills and assets necessary for success in adulthood (Gomez & Ang, 2007).

As indicated by numerous researchers, schools that institute Positive Youth Development see significant increases in positive behavior, healthy decision making, greater sociability, problem-solving and greater assertiveness. (Richard F. Catalano, 1998). The essential points of Positive Youth Development described below are inherent to the core educational practices at Civicorps Middle School and will be integrated throughout the school day. Yet, the school's advisory period will be a time that is set aside to ensure that students are explicitly taught the key elements of Positive Youth Development. These elements include:

- ***Developing positive peer relationships.*** Ensuring that all youth learn the skills related to building positive relationships with adults and peers. Students will engage in activities that build their communication skills, as well as receive support with interpersonal challenges when needed.
- ***Building on students' strengths.*** All adults are committed to building on students' strengths and efforts and those strengths and efforts recognized on a regular basis. Teachers will conference with students regularly to communicate areas of strength based on evidence in student work, school

and classroom behavior and participation. Students and teachers will jointly create Individualized Learning Plans in order to formally recognize students' growth as well as track goals.

- **Adult Mentors.** Every student is connected with a caring adult whom they know they can trust and rely upon for emotional and academic support. Through the school's strategic partnerships, we will develop the capacity to ensure that our youth have positive adults who are available to them on a routine basis by way of our advisory program.
- **Student Leadership.** Students are empowered to assume leadership roles in different realms of the school community and classroom.

1.) *Leadership at the school level:* Student leadership in the school will include students playing important roles such as conflict mediators, or taking office in student governance. Students who take on leadership roles at the school level will be trained specifically for their role and there will be time built in to the weekly schedule for them to reflect on their effectiveness as a leader, so that they may have the opportunity to improve their leadership practice.

2.) *Leadership at the classroom level:* Student leadership at the classroom level will include the explicit teaching and learning of what constitutes of excellent leadership. To this end, teachers will highlight community figures that exemplify the qualities and characteristics of excellent leadership and students will link their understanding of leadership to the core academic disciplines of Language Arts and Social Studies. Service Learning projects that take place will naturally be linked to the central concepts of leadership. As students engage in service, they will reflect on their own development as leaders. For example, problem-solving will be identified as a central aspect of quality leadership. A service learning project which challenges students to identify and *solve problems* related to industrial pollution in their local neighborhood will foster problem-solving abilities.

Public speaking, small-group facilitation, and modeling of excellence especially with regard to academic performance are also aspects of student leadership that will be integrated into the daily activities of the classroom. *All* students at Civicorps Middle School will have opportunities to take part in leadership activities and will have continuous opportunities to grow as a leader. All opportunities will build upon students' unique talents and strengths.

**Healthy Risk Taking.** Youth are challenged to take risks in ways that build their competence and their awareness of needed areas of growth and areas of talent and strength. Risk-taking is an essential component of service- learning

instruction and will be integrated in the performing arts program. Risk taking as an aspect of service- learning may require students to speak up about something that they feel is an injustice such as pollution or crime through letter writing or attending a public hearing. Risk taking in the performing arts may require students to present themselves to a large audience, when they may otherwise feel uncomfortable doing so. Reflection will be built into the students risk taking experiences so that they may have the opportunity to monitor their own growth and build upon their successes.

**Teaching and learning healthy habits and behaviors.** Rather than just telling students what to do and what not to do, adults will engage students in dialogue and provide them with data and information that will facilitate critical thinking and informed decision making when it comes to how they take care of their physical and mental health.

**2.) The Program and the Block Master Schedule.** Integrating the core subject matter areas through block scheduling has shown to significantly increase student achievement, enhances critical thinking skills and allows for depth over breadth learning experiences at the middle school level (Valentine, 2003). Civicorps Middle School will implement block scheduling as a means to provide in-depth learning, subject matter integration, and flexible learning time. Students' classes will be cored Language Arts with Social Studies and History and Math will be cored with Science. Non-core classes will be stand alone and will rotate every other day and/or semester by semester.

Service learning and Civic Literacy will be integrated into the core subject matter areas and block periods. In order to assure that grade level standards are taught comprehensively within the block periods, teachers will be required to carefully scope and sequence their instructional plans and curriculum on a quarterly basis.

The following table shows a sample master schedule and reflects the general framework from which we will design schedules at Civicorps Middle School. Civicorps Middle School plans to offer intensive after school and supplemental programming that follows the academic rigor and philosophy of our day program. The following schedule does not include after-school scheduling nor does it reflect grade level cohort rotations.

<b>Anticipated Civicorps Middle School Schedule 2008-2009</b>					
<b>Time</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>8:30 to 10:40</b>	Core Block  Language Arts and Social Studies	Core Block Language Arts and Social Studies	Core Block Language Arts and Social Studies	Core Block Language Arts and Social Studies	Core Block Language Arts and Social Studies
<b>10:45 to 12:30</b>	Core Block  Math and Science	Core Block Math and Science	Core Block Math and Science	Core Block Math and Science	Core Block Math and Science
<b>12:35 to 1:10</b>	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
<b>1:15 to 2:05</b>	Exploratory A	Exploratory B	Advisory	Exploratory A	Exploratory B
<b>2:10 to 3:00</b>	Exploratory A	Exploratory B		Exploratory A	Exploratory B
<b>3:05 to 3:45</b>	Whole school community meeting.	Advisory		Advisory	Advisory

\*Exploratory A = Visual or Performing Arts/ Music/ Technology Arts

\*Exploratory B= Physical Education

**3.) Key Instructional Methods.** We will incorporate three key instructional methods: Differentiated Instruction; Service-Learning; and Arts Integration.

**Differentiated Instruction.** Differentiated Instruction is the implementation of differing instructional strategies and practices in accordance with students who are at varying levels of academic proficiency and who have diverse interests and entry points in motivation. The National Middle School Association identifies differentiated learning in heterogeneous groups as a key element for the middle school concept (2007).

Civicorps Middle School recognizes that at the middle school level, there is an especially wide range of performance levels, skill levels and differing interests amongst students. This necessitates a strong focus on implementing

differentiated instructional strategies and practices that address the varying needs of our learners (John Van Hoose, 2001).

Specific practices which reflect differentiated instruction will include flexible groupings of students, varying questioning strategies during classroom discussions, consistent use of visual aids such as graphic organizers, a variation of whole group, small group and individual instruction, interest based research assignments and a balance between cooperative and independent learning time. Differentiated instructional practices will align with analysis of students' needs based on systematic and ongoing assessments.

**Service-learning.** Service-learning is the teaching strategy central to Civicorps Middle School's mission. It is a learned activity, involving planning, action, reflection, evaluation, and in certain cases celebration. Service-learning is woven into the fabric of our academic life, providing all students with age-appropriate opportunities to address real needs in their communities and to practice the skills of citizenship.

Service to others acts as a catalyst that alters the dynamics of a traditional classroom, strengthens academic performance and transforms the tone of a school. Our middle school curriculum and its emphasis on project-based learning is an ideal setting for service learning.

**Arts Integration.** We strongly support arts education in at least two ways: first, the arts (visual, performing arts, etc.) are discrete subjects in their own right; and second, the integration of the arts across our core academic disciplines greatly enhances learning, helping students to be more creative and innovative in their thinking and developing in them new knowledge, skills and insights.

Core subjects and the arts will be integrated through the collaborative work of our teachers who will draw upon the arts as instructional tools for math, science, social studies, and language arts. We believe that integrating the arts into the curriculum supports all our students in demonstrating mastery of the state standards and school-wide artistic literacy outcomes.

In the end the arts serve as the connective tissue between and among the core disciplines and breathe spirit, vitality and meaning into the whole process of learning.

**4.) The Role of Parents in the Design and the Daily Life of Civicorps Middle School.** Parents play a central role in the success of our students and in the strong performance of the school. Their voice, their support and their participation are essential. We know this both from our own experience as educators and what we know from educational research. Thus, we encourage parental involvement in the school through a variety of innovative partnerships.

Building systematically upon the experience of Civicorps Elementary School, we will take a proactive approach to parental involvement. In brief, we expect parents to be active and engaged citizens themselves so that these traits can be further enforced for the children for whom they care.

**The Design of the School.** We plan to share the key elements of our program design with our prospective parents and seek their feedback in both formal and informal ways. Formally, we will create a series of “advisory councils” that will bring together parents, school leaders and community leaders around core concerns. Examples include:

- 1.) **Service-learning Advisory Council:** Council will help to frame our service-learning program, which is designed to involve our students in meeting real community needs. Parents are a natural link between the school and this larger community. Parents can also play a role in transporting students to off-campus sites. Building on the experience of Civicorps Elementary School, parents can help with specially created service days dedicated to improving our own campus and reaching out to others in need.
- 2.) **Arts Advisory Council:** Council to support and sustain the arts program. Civicorps Elementary School is already a partner in the UC Berkeley program called the Arts Education Initiative, a consortium of educators and researchers who are pursuing tangible ways to advocate for the arts in our schools. Parents can play a natural role in this area, not only assisting our art teacher with classroom projects, but also taking initiative in reaching out to the vital arts community (museums, after school programs, etc.) in the Bay Area.
- 3.) **Study Skills Advisory Councils:** Parents can support classroom teachers and the school administration in helping students and their families develop strategies for academic success. This council can address specific student needs in the context of the educational program, can make recommendations on strategies, help to train interested individuals and help to organize the efforts of community volunteers, such as Experience Corps members (older Americans) who devote approximately 15 hours per week in public schools.
- 4.) **Recruitment and Orientation Council:** The last advisory council could take a lead role in the recruitment of students and in orienting them to the mission of Civicorps Middle School. Parents on this council would be trained to address a variety of questions from prospective parents and their children. They could also play an active role in organizing open houses and information sessions in the community.

**The Daily Life of the School.** Once students are enrolled into the school, we will invite their parents to play an active role in their own children's welfare. We expect all our parents to attend key events on the school calendar (for example, Back-to-School Night and parent conferences), to be prompt in delivering their children to school in the morning and in picking them up from school in the afternoon. We expect all parents to support their children at home, providing them with a healthy breakfast before school (either at home or at school through our subsidized breakfast and lunch programs), sending their children dressed in the school uniform every day, and providing them with a quiet place at home to study and work. If parents have difficulty carrying out these expectations, we will work closely with them or refer them to services to ensure that they have the resources that they need to be successful.

We also encourage all parents to play a supportive role in the school community, volunteering on a regular basis, whether on advisory councils, doing paperwork in the school office or as assistants in the classrooms. They will help with "drop-off" in the morning, staffing lunch and recess periods and in assisting our After School program. Civicorps Middle School will keep a log of parental guardians to observe similar expectations to the ones we have developed for our elementary school.

We will also facilitate the creation of **a lead cohort of parents**. Those who show the greatest initiative and talent for leadership will be encouraged to become "parent citizen leaders." Building upon the foundation we are establishing with their children in the classroom and in the larger community, these leaders will play a prominent role in our active Parents' Association as chairs of advisory councils and or in prominent roles on other committees.

To assist parents in the various ways they can support the school, we will support an active Parents Association and will prepare our "Guide for Parent Citizenship at Civicorps Middle School." We expect that all our parents to read this guide and then commit themselves to extensive participation in the life of the school.

**5.) Clearly Articulated and High Expectations for All Learners.** We believe that all students must be held to clearly articulated, high expectations of achievement if they are to succeed. Civicorps Middle School curriculum is built upon clear learning goals and benchmarks for student performance that are aligned with the state content and performance standards Grades 5-8. (See Element B for Measurable Student Outcomes). Student achievement is measured by performance assessments that align to academic curriculum. Student promotion is dependent on several assessment criteria to ensure that CMS students exit the middle school program well prepared for a rigorous high school program and for entrance to the university system. Methods for articulating and communicating high expectations of all of our learners include:

- *Demonstration of Grade Level Exemplars.* Grade level exemplars in the core academic disciplines are essential for informing students and their caregivers of what they are working toward and what is expected of them. For example, it will be common practice at CMS for teachers to introduce genre based writing project with a grade level exemplar, a students' piece of writing which meets all of the components of what is expected in order to meet grade level expectations for a writing assignment based a particular genre.
- *Rubrics.* While rubrics are a tool for assessing, they are also a tool for articulating academic expectations to students. Rubrics allow students to see not only what they are working toward in order to meet grade level standards, they also make clear to students the developmental continuum for getting there, so that they can see where they are on the continuum with regard to a particular assignment and where they need to go. Rubrics are created by teachers in the high leverage standards of problem- solving in math, writing and reading comprehension.
- *Independent Learning Plans.* Students who are held to high expectations must continually engage in goal setting that is relevant to high expectations. They must have opportunities to identify steps toward meeting their goals and reflect on progress with the support of adults. At Civicorps Middle School, every child will have an Independent Learning Plan which allows the students, parents and caregivers, and teachers to collaboratively create academic, social, emotional and physical that are based on high expectations that are framed by grade level standards. Teachers will consistently use the ILP as a tool to assess students' progress toward goals as well as discuss progress with students, parents and caregivers. ILPs will be created, reviewed and updated every marking period which takes place four times per year. All aspects of the ILP will become part of the students' portfolio which will follow them through their four years at CMS, thus serving as a reflection tool for students and their teachers.
- *Providing extended time and support.* At CMS we communicate clearly to students what the grade level expectations are, we provide the time and support necessary for ensuring students meet academic expectations through providing small group or individual tutoring after school, meeting individually with a teacher, and convening meetings with caregivers to identify and address students' support needs. Students who are not meeting academic proficiency levels are required to participate in the identified mandatory time and support activities that ensure their progress, even if this just means staying back from lunch in order to complete an assignment with a teacher. In this way, we communicate to students that

we expect them to succeed not just with our words, but with our actions as well.

**Support for English Language Learners.** All Civicorps Middle School parents will be required to complete a Home Language Survey in the student enrollment packet. If a language other than English is indicated on the Home Language Survey, students will be administered the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) within the first 30 days to evaluate their listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities in English. Students whose primary language is not English will be tested in their home language within 90 days of enrollment at Civicorps Middle School. The unofficial results of this test are made available to parents and teachers immediately and official results from the state are mailed to parents as soon as they are received by the school.

Academically, Civicorps Middle School will meet the needs of its English Language learners through an inclusion, Sheltered English Immersion model in which students are instructed in English by teachers who are specially trained in SDAIE (Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English). At Civicorps Middle School, we understand that English Language learners have varying levels understanding of syntax and phonology in English, as well as tremendously varying levels of vocabulary knowledge. This leads to the need for teachers who will provide explicit and comprehensive instruction for English Language Learners (Dutro, 2006). Explicit and comprehensive instruction for English language learners is characterized by the following:

**1.) Systematic English Language Development.** It is important that the development of academic English is not left to random experiences and chance encounters. Therefore, time will be set aside specifically for English Language learners to learn, practice and apply the grammatical forms and functions of academic English, and to expand their knowledge of English vocabulary. Teaching strategies relevant to systematic development of English Language Development will take place during the language arts block, and more specifically during small group instruction. Students performing at a "Beginning" level of Academic English as indicated by the CELDT, will receive additional language instruction after school. Teachers will implement ongoing assessments in order to track students' English language needs and subsequent growth.

**2.) Frontloading language to support content instruction.** Frontloading is a way of making students familiar with the language they may experience in a lesson. For example, before teaching a lesson using the concept of compare and contrast, teachers will provide students with the language structures that they will encounter in that lesson, such as: whereas, however, as compared to, etc. Frontloading will take place at the introduction of a lesson or unit. Frontloading strategies will take place in all of the core subject matter areas (English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies).

**3.) Scaffolding the delivery of grade level content.** A range of scaffolding strategies will be used in order to ensure that English Language Learners are able to access the content that is being taught. Such strategies include the explicit teaching of unknown vocabulary, the use of graphic organizers, utilizing a variety of instructional groupings from whole group and small group to working with students individually, and providing multiple levels of reading materials.

Like all students at Civicorps Middle School, English Language Learners will be held to high, clearly articulated expectations. English Language Learners will be expected to meet school and state standards in all academic and non-academic areas of the instructional program.

**Support for Academically Low-Achieving Students.** Civicorps Middle School holds high expectations for all students and is committed to supporting students who are not achieving expected outcomes. Academically low-achieving students will be identified early in the year and when possible, before the start of the school year. Initial tools identifying low-achieving students include the previous years' STAR data and subsequently the Diagnostic Assessment for Reading (DAR) in order to identify the specific reading difficulties that a student may be encountering (phonics, fluency, comprehension, limited vocabulary). In order to determine specific mathematical challenges, students will take a beginning of the year assessment that will give insight into specific mathematical challenges (reasoning, problem solving, computation or reading difficulty). Teachers will continually monitor the progress of low-performing students through weekly assessments, anecdotal records; standards based interim assessments and students' class work.

When data indicates that students are performing below grade level, Civicorps Middle School will address the needs of students who are low-achieving by:

**1.) Small group instruction.** We will ensure that there is sufficient time during the school day for small group instruction that addresses the specific academic needs of struggling learners.

**2.) Extended time and support.** We will provide extended time and support both during the academic day and after school for students to receive individual support necessary for making progress.

**3.) Parent and caregiver communication.** Parents and/or caretakers will be alerted of the specific struggles that their child is having through a parent conference and teachers will inform them of the home practices they can employ to ensure that their child makes progress. Home practices will include monitored home reading, use of manipulatives for understanding of mathematical concepts and suggestions and advice around logistical study issues such as keeping a planner well maintained and having a spot for school supplies. Teachers provide

bi-weekly progress reports for students that continue to parents of students that are in academic risk.

**4.) Developing Teacher Capacity.** Teachers' expertise is inextricably linked to the success of their learners. Administration will provide our teachers with the instructional coaching and the professional development necessary for assuring the success of their low-performing students. Instructional coaching and support will take place through observations and immediate constructive feedback to follow, providing model exemplar lessons, and weekly professional development. Teachers will also be supported to observe in classroom teachers who are demonstrating proficiency in meeting the need of low-achieving students. All observations will be followed by written action plans.

**5.) Motivation and Engagement.** We recognize that motivation and engagement are important factors in the achievement levels of middle school students (John Van Hoose, 2001). Therefore, we will be proactive in ensuring that these factors are in place for struggling students as a means to ensure that they sustain their academic progress. These motivational factors include allowing certain levels of student choice, a sense of purpose linked to academic content, and continuous forms of positive reinforcement by adults and caretakers.

If deemed necessary, the faculty will create a student study team (SST) comprised of the principal, teachers, family members, the student (when appropriate) and other support providers to identify strategies to better support the student's success. SSTs will be held as early in the year as possible, so that students' needs are addressed early in the academic year.

**Support for Academically High-Achieving Students.** Academically high-achieving students will be identified through teacher recommendations, progress reports, test scores, and/or other assessment measures. These students will be challenged to meet and exceed grade level standards and school-wide outcomes by creating appropriate goals during Parent-Teacher-Student conferences which occur three times per year. Civicorps Middle School faculty will support these students through differentiated instruction and additional assignments during or after school. Specific classroom strategies particular to high-achieving students will include:

**1.) Questioning strategies.** During class discussions, individual conferences and small group instruction, teachers will use methods outlined in Bloom's Taxonomy. Teachers will use questioning strategies that aid high-achieving students to stay engaged in content as well as to apply the knowledge and think critically. For example, during a class discussion, the teacher may deliberately and frequently ask high achieving students questions which require them to analyze information as opposed to simply recall literal information about a topic.

\*Note that analysis would be expected of *all* learners, at some point in the lesson. None the less, teachers' will acknowledge the readiness of high-achieving students and use questioning methods to respond accordingly.

**2.) Extension Activities.** Activities that allow high-achieving students to apply their knowledge and skills in new and relevant ways will be accessible to students throughout the school day. For example, a student that demonstrates mastery in adding and subtracting fractions will automatically have an extension activity to do which requires the student to apply this skill to an activity which requires them to apply knowledge of the skill such as drawing a map to scale.

**3.) Motivation and Engagement.** Just as with low-achieving students, motivation and engagement are important factors in maintaining achievement for students already performing at grade level (John Van Hoose, 2001). Therefore, we will be proactive in ensuring that motivational factors of allowing student choice, a sense of purpose linked to academic content, and continuous forms of positive reinforcement are in place for high-achieving students.

**Special Education:** The developers of Civicorps Middle School understand that the school will have the obligation to serve students with exceptional needs and that the school, pursuant to applicable state and federal law, must ensure that all of its students have access to a free and appropriate public education. Under these laws, the school has various options on how to deliver special education and related services either as (1) arm of the charter-granting agency, (2) an independent local education agency, or (3) as a charter SELPA.

During its first year of operations, the school intends to function as a "public school of the local education agency that granted the charter" for purposes of providing special education and related services pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b). During each school year during which the school operates as an arm of OUSD for special education purposes, the school understands that it is required to contribute an equitable share of its charter block grant funding to support district wide special education instruction and service costs. Pursuant to Education Code Section 47646(b), the district shall provide the school with funding and/or services reasonably necessary to ensure that all students with exceptional needs who attend the school are provided a free and appropriate education. In addition, Civicorps Middle School will comply with sections 613(a)(5) and 613(e)(1)(B) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, including 613a5's provision that LEAs are required to provide services and funding for children with disabilities in charter schools that are public schools of the LEA in the same manner in which services and funding are provided to children with disabilities in other schools in the LEA

*Provision of Services*

CMS and OUSD shall annually and in good faith negotiate and enter into a written agreement to more clearly identify the specific desired mix of special

education funding and services to be provided. The school shall enjoy reasonable flexibility to decide whether to receive services, funding, or some combination of both pursuant to Education Code Section 47646(b). As noted below, the school anticipates that during its first year of operation, most special education services would be provided by district staff. If the volume or scale of activities related to assessment, individualized education plan (IEP) development, and/or delivery of the special education and related services is sufficient, the school may seek to assume responsibility for directly providing and managing these functions with its own staff, with appropriate adjustments to the mix of funding and services provided under the terms of Education Code section 47646(b).

#### *Child Find*

The school plans to participate in a comprehensive “child find” system to identify students who have or may have exceptional needs. The school will seek to participate in the child find systems of the special education local plan areas (SELPA) in which its students reside. The school anticipates that these systems will include various policies and practices, including, but not limited to the following:

- Post-matriculation in-take practices that identify students with exceptional needs to help ensure that the school is aware of all students who have identified special needs;
- Seeking to develop relationships with all feeder local education agencies to request and obtain cumulative files and other documents in a timely fashion;
- Staff development and training for school staff, to ensure that they possess an understanding of tools and techniques to identify students who may have exceptional needs; and,
- Review of student assessment data, including but not limited to state-mandated testing, to identify students who may be falling behind expectations in their academic progress and are in need of additional support or services.

#### *Student Success Team*

The school also plans to implement a “student success team” (SST) model to the maximum extent feasible to attempt to meet all student needs within the regular instructional setting prior to referral for formal assessment for special education purposes. Such teams will typically consist of the student’s teacher(s), a school administrator, the student’s parent/guardian, and others. The team will oversee development of plans to meet students’ needs, if possible, without referral to assessment for special education needs. The team will monitor students’ progress.

#### *Referral and Assessment*

In the event that formal interventions provided through the SST are not successful, the school would seek to secure a formal and appropriate

assessment conducted by qualified staff. The school initially anticipates that these assessments would be conducted by the staff who perform such services for the district. If this assessment identifies that the student has exceptional needs and require special education and/or related services under the terms of applicable special education law, the school anticipates working with appropriate district staff to convene and conduct an individualized educational plan (IEP) team meeting or meetings.

*Individualized Education Plans and Service Delivery*

The school would participate actively and as appropriate in planning and conducting the IEP team meetings and processes. Student plans will ensure the “least restrictive environment” and mainstreaming techniques will be utilized. The school would commit to implementing all special education and related services called for by the IEP in partnership with the district and/or SELPA. The school understands that student progress toward the goals specified in the IEP would be monitored regularly and formally reviewed by the IEP team on at least a triennial basis.

*Due Process*

In the event of a due process claim to enforce provisions of applicable special education law, the school is committed to working in cooperation with the district to the maximum extent permitted under law to respond to and defend the school and the district in the process.

*Section 504 Special Needs*

The school understands that its students may have exceptional needs that are not governed by the terms of the federal special education law (IDEA) but who may require accommodations or services pursuant to the terms of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and that the school will be responsible for planning and implementing any such accommodations or services.

*Right to Pursue LEA Status*

As noted above, the school initially anticipates functioning as an arm of the district for purposes of special education. The school shall also retain the right to pursue independent local education agency (LEA) and/or special education local plan area (SELPA) status pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(a) and the district shall not hinder or otherwise impede the efforts of the school to do so. In the event that the school opts not to establish independent LEA and/or SELPA status, it shall remain an arm of the district for special education purposes as required by Education Code Section 47641(b), and shall continue to receive funding and services pursuant to the terms of this section and any related annual agreements.

**Systematic Assessment.** Critical to our success—both with each of our students and as a school—is a well designed and executed system of formal assessment. Civicorps Middle School is committed to a strong cycle of inquiry to

inform instruction and practice. Our staff will use data from a variety of standards-based assessments, including standardized tests, school-developed assessments of civic and artistic literacy, and teacher-developed performance and content tasks to evaluate and improve their instruction and curriculum and to document students based on grade-level, standards-based rubrics.

We are also strong advocates of regularly scheduled standards-based interim assessments, which become powerful tools for heightened student achievement when they are tightly coupled internally with our own instructional program and when they are closely aligned externally with both state mandated assessments (e.g., STAR testing) and state content standards in all subject areas. (See *Element C* for a more detailed explanation about our use of assessments for and of student learning.)

**Transfer of Courses and College Entrance Requirements.** Civicorps Middle School will prepare all of our students for rigorous high school programs in the Bay Area. If our students move to another middle or high school, we will communicate with the partnering school to ensure the successful transfer of course work and student records.

**Civicorps Middle School Core Curriculum.** In its first year, Civicorps Middle School anticipates using a combination of state-adopted curriculum materials supplemented by other research based sources and curriculum. Specifically, Civicorps Middle School is currently considering the following options:

Math: Connected Mathematics Project  
Reading: High Point (for interventions purposes only)  
Science: Full Options Science System (FOSS)  
Social Studies: Prentice Hall Social Studies Series

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### **Element B. SCHOOL WIDE STUDENT OUTCOMES**

*A description of the measurable pupil outcomes, i.e. the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that students will have attained upon leaving the charter school [California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(B)].*

The student outcomes for Civicorps Middle School are aligned with the California State Standards and with the mission of the school – to prepare young people for their lifelong roles as citizens by instilling in students academic, artistic and civic literacy.

To realize our mission Civicorps Middle School has developed ten school-wide student outcomes—outlining what we intend for all students to know and be able to do upon promotion from our school. These ten outcomes are organized around our three types of literacy.

**Academic Literacy—the ability to read, write, speak, calculate, reason, and conduct processes of inquiry with clarity and precision.** All students will demonstrate academic literacy through the mastery of content (what students will know) and performance (what students will be able to do) standards in all core

academic areas: English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science as defined by the following four student outcomes:

- **English/Language Arts: Reading Skills.** Students will understand and demonstrate the ability to effectively and critically read, critique, and appreciate a range of literature, sources, and data.
- **English/Language Arts: Communication Skills.** Students will also understand and demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively and creatively – with a range of audiences – through writing, speaking, listening, and the use of visual forms.
- **Mathematics.** Students will understand and demonstrate problem solving using multiple strategies, mathematical logic and language, and the use and real-world applications of mathematical concepts and processes.
- **Science.** Students will understand and demonstrate the processes and methods of scientific inquiry (including experimentation, data collection, analysis, problem solving, and writing/communication), and real-world applications of scientific concepts, thinking skills, technologies, and processes.
- **Social Studies.** Students will understand and demonstrate the ability to research, investigate, describe, and analyze present and historical events from multiple perspectives and apply historical concepts, thinking skills, and processes to real-world situations.

**Artistic Literacy—the ability to learn and creatively express oneself through the visual, performing, literary arts, and technology.** Students will demonstrate artistic literacy through mastery of a range of outcomes that include the skillful understanding and use of technology as well as mastery of visual and performing arts standards as defined by the following student outcomes:

- **Visual and Performing Arts.** Students will understand and demonstrate an appreciation and skillful use of the arts as a tool for understanding/meaning making, creative problem solving, expression, and communication.
- **Technology Arts.** Students will understand and demonstrate an appreciation and skillful use of technology to facilitate and/or enhance learning, expression, and communication.

**Civic Literacy—the ability to "let your life speak" by participating thoughtfully, responsibly, and passionately in the life of the community**

**with concern for the common good.** Students will demonstrate mastery of the following three civic literacy outcomes:

- ***Physical Education, Health, Wellness.*** Students will understand and demonstrate positive health habits and behaviors/strategies for maintaining mental and physical wellness.
- ***Civic Engagement and Citizenship.*** Students will understand and demonstrate an appreciation of community as well as skills for responsible participation and leadership within a variety of interdependent community contexts.
- ***Diversity, Respect, Community Participation, Career/Life Development.*** Students will understand and demonstrate an appreciation of the diversity of “ways of being” in the world as well as skills for identifying, pursuing, building, and maintaining full, rich, and meaningful lives.

The Civicorps Middle School Student Outcomes described above will be subdivided into a list of specific, measurable grade level standards and skills that are aligned to the California State Content and Performance Standards. These will be combined with other outcomes and benchmarks deemed appropriate by Civicorps Schools Board of Directors and staff. Each grade level standard/outcome will be further delineated into developmentally appropriate benchmarks that are described by means of in-depth grade level rubrics and/or performance tasks.

These grade level standards, rubrics and benchmarks will be provided to all students and families at the start of every school year. Student progress towards meeting grade level benchmarks will be monitored and reported to and discussed with students and families a minimum of three times per school year. An example of the fifth grade report card, a fifth grade math rubric sample, and a communication for parents is included in the appendix.

All students at Civicorps Middle School, including individuals with special needs, English Language Learners, and/or students identified as “under-performing” will be expected to meet these outcomes in order to successfully complete a course of study at the school. Students will be provided additional support and/or accommodations to meet these outcomes as needed and/or legally required by an Individual Education Plan.

In order to best serve our students and community, Civicorps Middle School will continue to examine and refine the list of student outcomes over time to reflect the school’s mission and any changes to state or school standards that support this mission. Civicorps Middle School will submit a description of any significant

changes to the above student outcomes as an amendment of the charter to the district board any time prior to expiration of the charter.

**Element C. ASSESSMENT METHODS**

*A description of “the method by which pupil progress in meeting the pupil outcomes will be measured” [California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(C)].*

Systematic assessment is central to the teaching and learning at Civicorps. Time and structures will be built into the fabric of the school to enable teachers to collaboratively analyze and reflect on assessment data on a regular basis in order to align and adjust teaching practice in accordance with students’ academic needs. The following table illustrates the types of assessments that will be given and how often.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Internal Assessments</b>	<b>External Assessments</b>
<b>Academic Literacy</b>	Cite the publisher: Diagnostic Reading Assessments (DRA)  New Leaders for New Schools Standards aligned interim assessments every six weeks (English language arts and math)  Student writing with grade level rubrics Three times per year  Teacher created final projects Three times per year	STAR Tests (currently CST, CAT 6)  <i>One time per year.</i>
<b>English Language Development</b>	ELD Assessments Research-based; teacher adapted <i>Ongoing</i>	CELDT <i>One time per year</i>
<b>Social and Emotional Literacy</b>	Student attitudinal survey and observation checklists: <i>Ongoing and to be synthesized every marking period</i>  Student attendance and behavior: <i>Ongoing and to be synthesized every marking period</i>	
<b>Service Learning Competency</b>	End of unit projects as measured by rubric service learning rubrics  Three times per year	

	Journal reflections  Teacher's cumulative anecdotal records  <i>Ongoing and to be synthesized every marking period</i>	
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### External Assessments

As mandated by California Education Code Section 47605(c) (2), Civicorps Middle School will annually administer the state mandated assessments that currently include the STAR (CST, CAT-6, Aprenda 3, and CAPA) and California English Language Development Test (CELDT).

### Internal Assessments

To monitor student progress in achieving academic, English language development and social and emotional literacy, Civicorps Middle School will employ the following forms of internal assessments every six weeks. Our teaching staff will re-examine the frequency of such assessment use after each academic year to ensure we are using assessments in the most effective way possible.”

- **California State Standards Aligned Interim Assessments.** To monitor student progress toward standards in English Language Arts and Math, Civicorps will implement standards based interim assessments to monitor student progress in achieving proficiency. Interim assessments will be taken from the New Leaders for New School interim bank that the Director of Instruction at Civicorps Middle School played a key role in creating. Interim assessments will be given every six weeks and will be aligned to a standards map that clarifies the scope and sequence of when to teach what standards.
- **Writing Assessments.** Writing assessments will be given every eight weeks and will be scored in correspondence to a standards aligned rubric. Teachers will utilize exemplar writing that reflects proficiency in order to norm the scoring of students’ writing and to assure that there is common understanding of what constitutes proficiency.
- **Content Assessments (Science and Social Studies).** Teachers will measure student progress toward content and performance standards through teacher-created assessments on an on-going and regular basis. This on-going work (i.e. essays, labs, journals, quizzes, reports and

projects) will be evaluated on a pre-determined scale, and all scores will be averaged to attain an overall content assessment score.

- **Progress Reports.** School progress reports will be developed to help parents understand what has been taught at the school and to help teachers reflect upon how students are performing relative to the school's mission and state content standards in all subject areas. The progress reports will serve as a tool for pulling all of the assessment data together in order to get a holistic picture of students' progress during the school year.
- **Attitudinal Surveys and Observational Checklists.** In order to assess students' social and emotional development, teachers will use school-wide assessments such as student observation checklists, to monitor student's communication and conflict resolution skills, and a survey that measures students' knowledge of positive social and emotional dispositions.
- **Student Retention and Promotion.** Student promotion to the next grade level or retention will be determined through careful examination of each student's overall achievement on state testing, student progress reports and teacher recommendations. Passage from one level to the next will be based on a formal system of evaluation that includes demonstration of content mastery in each core subject area. For students with special needs and English Language Learners, mastery and promotion will be dependent on their respective IEP and/or English proficiency levels.

### **School-wide Performance Goals**

In addition to the school-wide student outcomes and grade level standards and benchmarks specified above, Civicorps Middle School aims to meet the following outcomes for achievement:

<b>Assessment Method</b>	<b>Student Outcome</b>
<b>CST</b>	Civicorps Middle School will increase the number of students scoring at or above proficient/advanced levels every year in accordance with state and federal standards.
<b>Value Added</b>	More than 70% of all students will demonstrate growth in their STAR results from one year to the next.
<b>API Ranking</b>	Civicorps Middle School will score a 4 or better in its overall similar school ranking from one year to the next.
<b>Reading, Writing and Math Interim Assessments</b>	90% of all students will meet their internally identified growth targets in the

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	school's reading, writing and math interim assessments in any given year.
<b>Civic Literacy</b>	90% of students will meet the standards as outlined on Civicorps' Civic Literacy Rubric when graduating from 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade.

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\*Benchmarks for attendance rates and promotion rates will also be established and reviewed by the Middle School Planning team and the Board of Directors.

Civicorps Middle School holds high expectations for all students and is committed to supporting students who are not achieving at the level of expected outcomes. Academically low-achieving students are identified through diagnostic measures, teacher recommendation, progress reports, test scores, and/or other assessment measures. When students appear to require additional academic support and time, the school ensures that students receive after school tutoring and/ or additional small group work. If deemed necessary, the faculty will create a student study team (SST) comprised of teachers, family members, the student (when appropriate) and other support providers to identify strategies to better support the student's success.

In addition, our focus on differentiated instruction as a staple of our curricular program will play a major role in meeting the needs of students during the school day. Structures and routines will be built into the literacy and math block to ensure that struggling students are receiving small group instructional time with their core content area teachers.

### **Methods for assessing instructional practice and informing teachers of areas that need improvement**

The Director of Instruction will systematically utilize observation and supervision methods (A major source is Jon Saphier of *Research for Better Teaching, Inc.*) to both coach and evaluate teachers' delivery of instruction. In addition to regular classroom observation, the Director of Instruction and teachers will collaboratively reflect on students' assessment data every six weeks. The Director of Instruction will guide teachers to analyze data and decide on needs for instructional adjustments and improvement. Follow up plans will be initiated between teachers and the Director of Instruction in order to ensure accountability and alignment with improvement plans. Teachers will also have access to BTSA (the Beginning Teaching Support and Assessment) program which provides cognitive coaching for teachers.

### *DATA MANAGEMENT, ANALYSIS, AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT*

Civicorps Middle School will make effective use of data to establish, evaluate, and improve policies and progress toward identified student outcomes. The

school will identify or develop a school information system (e.g. Powerschool) that has the capacity to collect, analyze, and report a variety of reports on student achievement, including disaggregated data by content strand, student subgroup, grade-level, and classroom-level analyses. The staff will be trained on how to interpret standardized test data and will be engaged in critical analysis of the data in order to determine how the school can address any performance deficiencies or negative data trends. The data analysis will be tied to professional development on standards-based instruction, so that teachers can enhance their understanding of student performance in light of normative data, and modify their instructional designs accordingly.

Staff will use all pieces of the assessment system in an ongoing effort to examine student performance and revise instructional practices to address student needs. At no time will Civicorps Middle School become complacent with the examination of assessment findings. The goal will be to foster continuous improvement to achieve the highest quality educational program that is possible. In this way, staff will continuously be challenged to rethink current pedagogical practices to meet the changing needs of new and existing student populations.

Civicorps Middle School will analyze trends, significant changes, apparent conflicts, and anomalies to track individual student growth over time, evaluate specific, aggregated and disaggregated groups of students, measure performance on the state tests, API, and school-based growth data and authentic assessments to assess the whole school from year to year. Our data analysis will also include attendance rates and comparative data as appropriate. Civicorps Middle School will also annually survey major stakeholder groups (e.g., parents/guardians, students and teachers) about our effectiveness and opportunities for improvement.

#### **Element D. GOVERNANCE**

*A description of “the governance structure of the school, including, but not limited to, the process to be followed by the school to ensure parental involvement.”*

[California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(D)].

The governance structure of the Civicorps Middle School will have the following components:

- A California Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation Board of Directors
- An Executive Director and Supporting Administrators
- A Civicorps Middle School Advisory Committee

The Civicorps Middle School will operate as a program of Civicorps Schools, a California Public Benefit Corporation pursuant to California Law and will have

IRS 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. The school will be governed pursuant to the bylaws adopted by the board, as subsequently amended pursuant to the process specified in the bylaws. Civicorps Middle School will thereby be governed by the Civicorps Schools Board of Directors, comprised of an array of influential educators, community members and experts in their fields. Board members' areas of expertise include curriculum and instruction; charter schools development; public and private school administration; fundraising; and business and organizational development.

The Board of Directors currently has eight members and will build to a maximum of 25. Each board member is elected for a three-year term from different start dates. New members are recruited and screened by a nomination committee composed of board members. Each new member must be approved by a simply majority of those already on the board.

#### *Board Training and Sustainability*

Civicorps is committed to continuous improvement and on-going training to assist the Board of Directors in fulfilling its responsibilities to act as stewards for the charter school. To this end, the board will seek appropriate training and educational opportunities, both as a full board and individually. Such training experiences may include full-board training sessions with legal counsel or other experts familiar with public school governance, and/or training sessions with charter school governance experts. Training and education for new board members will also be critical to ensure that these new members fully grasp their responsibilities as Board members and develop the requisite expertise in public school oversight and monitoring to be effective. New board members will go through an initial orientation and will be given a stipend to attend supplemental training sessions in areas of school oversight where they are deficient. The school will maintain in effect general liability and board errors and omissions insurance policies.

Our board is composed of leaders in education, business, and the community. These volunteers provide valuable strategic guidance to Civicorps Schools. Over the last twenty-four years our Board has displayed both the knowledge and the leadership in public education that is needed to oversee and support Civicorps Middle School. The Oakland Unified School District is entitled to a representative on the Civicorps Schools Board of Directors. To prevent any real or perceived conflict of interest or incompatibility of office, the District representative may decide to sit on the board as a nonvoting member who facilitates communication and mutual understanding between the Charter School and District.

#### **Civiorps Schools/Civicorps Middle School Board of Directors 2007-8**

- **Amy Slater, President.** After completing law school at Hastings College of Law, Ms. Slater worked for various law firms in San Francisco and served as the General Counsel of Ask Jeeves, Inc. Ms. Slater has been a

- member of the EBCC, now Civicorps Schools, Board of Directors since 2003. She is also a director of the East Bay Community Foundation and a member of the Development Council of Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders.
- **Thomas Mead, Vice President.** Thomas Mead is a Senior Vice President with Webcor Builders, the largest Bay Area commercial general contractor. Mr. Mead is responsible for all hospitality projects as well as many high-rise residential and institutional projects. A 30-year veteran of the construction industry, Mr. Mead is active in international construction and community-based projects.
  - **Robbie Yohai, Treasurer.** Mr. Yohai is a licensed real estate broker and developer. Currently, he is the Managing General Partner for Linden Associates and President of Schaefer Heights, Inc. of Oakland, California. Mr. Yohai has been helping Civicorps to help secure a new site for the organization.
  - **Stephen Davenport, Secretary.** Stephen Davenport, who received his BA from Oberlin College in English Literature and MA in Literature from Trinity College, has had a long career in education including teaching, serving as the Head of School for the Country School in Connecticut and the Athenian School in Danville, California, and consulting for independent schools. Mr. Davenport has published articles in The New York Times and received the Capital Area Teacher of the Year award. Mr. Davenport's most recent work, "Saving Miss Oliver's," is a novel of leadership, commitment, and change at a private girl's school.
  - **Craig Y. Bloom.** Dr. Bloom is currently in private practice in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (OMS) in Berkeley, California and serves as Chief of OMS at Alta Bates-Summit Medical Center. He is currently an associate professor of OMS at the University of the Pacific and Highland Hospital Alameda Medical Center in Oakland.
  - **Rita Isaacs.** Rita Isaacs spent eight years in international film sales, followed by four years of consultancy in corporate and systems design and administration for international film, television, and video start-up companies in Los Angeles. She has served on the parent boards of preschool, elementary, middle school, and high schools and in various parent organizations for the city of Piedmont. She also served as Vice President of the Board of Directors at Temple Sinai in Oakland, assisted on their capital campaign, and chaired their Endowment Campaign.
  - **Yolanda Peeks.** Yolanda Peeks has been a member of the Civicorps Schools Board since 1995 and was an active supporter for many years earlier in her role as district liaison to the partnership between the Oakland Unified School District and EBCC. Ms. Peeks served Oakland students for over 30 years as teacher, principal, assistant then associate superintendent of curriculum and instruction, and executive director. Ms. Peeks has volunteered for many years with Partners in School Innovation,

- the Marcus A. Foster Educational Foundation, East Bay Reading Association, and Bay Area and National Writing Projects.
- **Eric Premack.** Eric Premack is the founder and co-director of the Charter Schools Development Center (CSDC), a leading provider of policy expertise and technical assistance to charter schools, charter-granting agencies, and policy makers. Mr. Premack has played a leading role in the development of charter schools and has helped draft and implement charter school legislation in over 25 states, at the federal level, and overseas. Prior to founding CSDC, Mr. Premack provided consulting services to hundreds of California school districts and served as a non-partisan education policy analyst for the California Legislature. He is a graduate of the Harris Graduate School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago.

Specifically, the board is constituted in such a way that there are no conflicts of interest. In addition, there are differentiated roles and responsibilities for board members and staff. There are sufficient internal fiscal controls and effective practices for the oversight of finances. Moreover, the board is well positioned to ensure that the staff uses data to establish, evaluate and improve the education program and school policies. The full Board of Directors meets every other month and the committees of the board meet during the months that the full board does not. The Board of Directors oversees major Civicorps Middle School policies including:

- **Financial Oversight:** The board approves the school's annual operating budgets and their impact on the overall finances of the organization.
- **Strategic Planning:** The board informs itself as to the long and short-term plans for the development and operation of the school.
- **Oversight:** The board informs itself as to the welfare and integrity of Civicorps Schools and the degree to which it is meeting its goals and achieving its mission through information provided primarily from the Executive Director.
- **Advocacy:** The board is responsible for advocating for the Civicorps Middle School including raising funds.
- **Hiring:** The board hires, supports, evaluates and advises the Executive Director of Civicorps Schools.

### **Civicorps Schools Board of Directors' Committee Structure 2007-8**

#### **Executive Committee**

(Committee Chair, Amy Slater; Staff Liaison, Joanna Lennon)

The executive committee is comprised of board members (not necessarily officers) who help guide the organization programmatically and financially. It also holds both the board and the CEO accountable to the following:

- Program and fiscal goals

- Scrutinizes strategic issues and opportunities before they are submitted to the Board for full discussion and decision
- Plans for future Board meetings
- Offers guidance to the organizational strategic planning process

### **Finance Committee**

(Committee Chair, Robbie Yohai; Staff Liaison, Stephen Hu)

The purpose of the finance committee of the board is to stay abreast of financial issues facing the organization and communicate fiscal issues and propose financial policies to the full Board. The finance committee approves all major contracts and grants. Within the purview of the committee are monitoring the following:

- Budget and forecasts
- Annual audit
- Investment strategies
- Overall fiscal health of programs, services offered and potential new ventures

### **Audit Committee**

(Committee Chair, Craig Bloom)

California law and the agency's bylaws require that the board appoint an audit committee to assist the Board of Directors in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities by monitoring:

- The overall systems of internal control and risk mitigation
- The integrity of the financial statements of Civicorps School.
- Compliance with legal and regulatory requirements and ethical standards
- The independence and performance of the agency's internal and independent auditors

### **Development Committee**

(Committee Chair, Rita Isaacs; Staff Liaison, Rebecca Grove)

The purpose of the development committee is to plan and implement development strategies in collaboration with staff that build and broaden our donor outreach. The committee is also a resource for staff-driven activities such as foundation/institutional giving and direct mail solicitation. It is the committee's responsibility to steward donors so that they will stay involved with the organization and grow their commitment to Civicorps Schools' mission. The committee's scope of work includes:

- Growing individual, corporate and in-kind gifts;
- Direct solicitation of major donors and corporate sponsors, special events, and board giving; and
- Managing the Director Emeritus status members

**Nominating Committee.** The Nominating Committee is comprised of Board Members.

(Committee Chair, Amy Slater; Staff Liaisons Joanna Lennon, Rebecca Grove)

The purpose of this committee is to develop and grow the board of directors. Specifically, the committee will:

- Organize the recruitment and orientation of new board members.

### **Program Committee**

(Committee Chair, Steve Davenport Staff Liaisons, Kate Mahar and Clint Wilkins)

The program committee's purpose is to provide overall guidance to staff on Civicorps Schools' various programs. The committee works with staff in the ongoing creation, updating and assessment of the organization's strategic plan (including department plans). The program committee establishes and approves all major educational and operational policies. The performance of the heads of school is evaluated by this committee as well as school and student performance. The committee reviews performance data from the programs quarterly (January, April, July, and October). The committee focuses specifically in these program areas:

- Civicorps Elementary School;
- Civicorps Middle School;
- Civicorps Academy;
- Project YES (Youth Engaged in Service) This is a service-learning partnership with certain Oakland public middle schools.)
- The Institute for Citizenship Education and Teacher Preparation. This is the "think tank" for Civicorps Schools. It is dedicated to providing our charter schools with best practices in the field of service learning and helping to train teachers in the field of service-learning.

The Civicorps Middle School Advisory Committee will be no smaller than five and no larger than fifteen participants and will be composed of parents, students, social service providers, nationally acclaimed educators; local community leaders, and other community stakeholders. The committee will determine its meeting schedule.

**Legal.** The school complies with all applicable federal, state and local laws. Civicorps Schools, Inc. retains its own legal counsel when necessary. The Charter School is non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations; does not charge tuition; and does not discriminate against any student on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender or disability. The Civicorps Schools Board of Directors is constituted and conducts its affairs as specified in its bylaws which may be

amended as provided for in the bylaws and in accordance with any applicable state open meetings laws (e.g. the Brown Act) to foster community building and parental and stakeholder involvement.

The Board of Directors is the responsible agent for the accountability requirements established by the California Charter Schools Act of 1992 and the charters of Civicorps Schools.

The charter school is responsible for screening of volunteers for the protection of students, including fingerprinting and criminal background checks. Registered sex offenders under Penal Code section 290 may not serve as volunteers on campus or anywhere or at anytime students are present. Volunteers working on campus or when students are present who will be unsupervised by certificated personnel at any time must submit to a criminal background check pursuant to Education Code 45125. All volunteers who work on campus during school hours must have a current TB test on file with the charter school.

*Special Education Governance*

The Civicorps Middle School and the OUSD pledge to work in cooperation to ensure that a free and appropriate education is provided to all students with exceptional needs in accordance with all state and federal laws regarding provision of special education services.

During its first year of operations, the Civicorps Middle School intends to function as a public school of the OUSD for purposes of providing special education and related service pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b). The Civicorps Middle School and the district shall annually, and in good faith, negotiate and enter into a written agreement, via a memorandum of understanding or annual operational agreement, to clearly specify the desired mix of special education funding and services to be provided and to detail the specific terms of such services and funding.

After its first year of operations, Civicorps Middle School shall have the right to pursue independent local education agency (LEA) and/or special education local plan area (SELPA) status pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(a) and the district shall not hinder or otherwise impede the efforts of the charter school to do so. In the event that CMS opts not to establish independent LEA and/or SELPA status, it shall remain an arm of the district for special education purposes as required by Education Code Section 46741(b), and shall continue to receive funding and services pursuant to the terms of this section and the annual agreement.

**Oversight of Finances.** Civicorps Schools, through Board of Directors' oversight and through Civicorps Schools' experienced financial managers engage in best financial practices which include the following elements:

**Financial Records and Internal Controls.** An annual audit by independent auditors is required with findings reported directly to the audit committee of the Board of Directors. Such auditors are engaged and retained by the Board at the recommendation of the Audit Committee. These audited financial reports are also provided to charter related organizations such as the Oakland Unified School District and the California Department of Education, as well as financial supporters and the general public.

Financial management of the organization includes senior staff who are or have been certified public accountants, experienced in the non-profit sector. Additionally, there is staff adequate to insure proper segregation of duties.

The annual budget is approved and monitored by the Board. The budget is tied to program outcomes and program management is provided periodic reports on planned and actual revenues and expenditures in their area of responsibility. Budget variances are reviewed by the Board.

Financial statements, prepared using generally approved accounting principles (GAAP), are reviewed and approved regularly. Additionally, the organization has an adequate system of internal controls that are reviewed and updated, as necessary.

The organization has a diversified funding base. In addition to receiving educational funds from Federal, state and local agencies, Civicorps Schools generates support from local and national foundations, board members, individual donors as well as supporters of conservation activities.

**Board Organization and Oversight.** While the full Board of Directors reviews and approves budgets and financial reports of Civicorps Schools, The Board also has a Finance Committee and an Audit Committee.

The members of the Finance Committee is comprised of three board members, two who have extensive experience in finance and business, and the third , Eric Premack, Co-Director – Charter School Development Center, is a leader in charter school finance and law.

Prior to full board review, the Finance Committee reviews in detail the organization's financial reports and financial activities, as well as monitoring its financial sustainability and capacity building.

The Audit Committee operates under the requirements of California's Nonprofit Integrity Act of 2004.

**Board Conflict of Interest.** The Civicorps Schools Board has Governance Policies to guide the board members in their board responsibilities. The policies

include a code of conduct that requires avoidance of “any conflict of interest”. Such conflicts cover issues of self-interest, agency employment of themselves, family members and close associates. Additionally, on an annual basis, board members are required to disclose involvements with organizations, vendors or other associations that might produce a real or perceived conflict of interest.

**Operations.** Civicorps Schools Inc. maintains and augments as necessary its general liability (including board errors and omissions), property, workers compensation, unemployment, and automotive/vehicle insurance policies. Any liability claims against the charter school will be handled pursuant to the terms of the Civicorps Schools’ insurance policies.

Civicorps Middle School will be responsible for all supplies and equipment that it purchases. Any District property used by the charter shall be protected by insurance satisfactory to the District. The District shall have no responsibility for student losses, and the charter shall hold the District harmless from any such losses.

#### **Element E. EMPLOYEE QUALIFICATIONS**

*A description of “the qualifications to be met by individuals to be employed by the school” [California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(E)].*

Civicorps Middle School has four categories of staff members: Administrators, Teachers, Instructional Support Staff and Non-Instructional Support Staff. For all positions, Civicorps Middle School seeks to employ professional, qualified candidates who are strongly committed to the mission of the school and to nurturing the academic, artistic and civic development of a diverse student population. All employees will meet the applicable qualifications required by state and federal laws for their positions and will demonstrate understanding of youth development and/or service-learning. We will also seek individuals who have extensive experience working in diverse, urban communities. As provided for in the California Charter Schools Act, Civicorps Middle School may choose not to require credentials for teachers in non-core, non-college preparatory courses. The school will conduct background checks of all prospective employees to ensure the health, safety and success of all students.

In addition to the general qualifications outlined above, the School’s key staff members (Administrator, Teachers, Instructional Support Staff and Non-Instructional Support Staff) will meet the following qualifications:

**Administrators.** Administrators include the principal who serves as the instructional leader of the school site, we don’t really have anyone else listed in our 5 year plan, right?: and other program managers such as school partnerships manager and workforce development manager who support the principals in achieving the outcomes outlined in this charter petition. Qualifications for the principal position includes at least five years of teaching and/or administrative

experience; Masters degree and/or administrative credential; and demonstrated leadership in the areas of curriculum, instruction and/or assessment. Qualifications for the other administrative positions will include three to five years of teaching or administrative experience relevant to their positions and a minimum of a Bachelor's degree.

#### *Leadership Competence*

- The ability to articulate and support the philosophy and direction of the CMS academic program;
- The ability to implement program initiatives through appropriate professional development for staff;
- The ability to lead effectively within a team environment;
- The ability to communicate effectively with staff, students, parents, community, private partners and outside agencies to better meet the needs of the students in the school;
- The ability to use appropriate communication tools, especially current technologies;
- The ability to exhibit and promote multicultural awareness, gender sensitivity and racial and ethnic appreciation;
- The ability to implement a shared decision making process agreed upon by all stakeholders;
- The ability to establish a framework for collaborative action and involve the school community in developing and supporting shared beliefs, values, mission and goals for the school;
- The ability to make informed, objective judgments;
- The ability to work with all staff to create an effective staff development plan for all staff;
- Ability to maintain and promote confidentiality as the norm under which the school operates;
- The desire and ability to engage in continuing education and skills upgrading.

#### *Administrative Competence*

- The ability to create and maintain a safe, orderly, positive and effective learning environment;
- The ability to annually evaluate the performance of all school-based staff;
- The ability to employ and monitor acceptable accounting procedures in the maintenance of all fiscal records;
- The ability to work well with the school governing board;
- The ability to create and maintain a climate of respect and fairness for all staff and students.

*Overall Qualifications (Desired/Preferred but not required)*

- Professional Administrative Credential and/or Masters Degree in Education or equivalent;
- At least 5 years experience in the education field;
- Management, administrative and instructional expertise
- Curriculum implementation expertise
- Experience with school budgets
- Willingness to learn about charter school leadership

**Teachers.** Teachers are responsible for teaching the core curriculum. Qualifications for the Teachers of the core curriculum (language arts, mathematics, history/social sciences, foreign language, visual/performing arts and college preparatory electives) include minimum Bachelor's degree; appropriate teaching certificate, permit or other document required by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing; subject matter competence by exam or coursework; and at least three years of teaching experience.

Applicants to teach in our program will be evaluated based on the following qualifications:

- Demonstrated expertise in subject area and the ability to communicate the appropriate knowledge to each student.
- Possession of a CLAD credential.
- Knowledge and experience with standards-based instruction: ability to align curriculum and standards and willingness to adopt grading practices that can be used in standards-based grading.
- Knowledge of assessment strategies and the ability to use data to drive their teaching and ensure continuous improvement of student learning.
- Ability to effectively use a broad range of instructional strategies, including providing a guaranteed curriculum, challenging goals and effective feedback, differentiated instruction, and back mapping, among others.
- Demonstrated competence using advanced technology as a learning tool: willing and able to integrate technology into teaching and student learning.
- Outstanding classroom management skills.
- Belief in our mission that all students will learn and successfully master the content and skills necessary for advanced post-secondary education.
- Willingness to work as a vital part of the CMS team to ensure continuous improvement for students, staff and CMS community as a whole.
- Willingness and ability to work with students and parents on an ongoing basis to ensure student success.

- Love of students, enthusiasm for teaching, the belief that each student can and will succeed and the willingness to do what it takes to make that happen.
- Desire and ability to engage in continuing education, staff development and skill upgrading.
- Positive references from most recent employment and/or college or graduate school.

**Instructional Support Staff.** Instructional Support Staff, including Teacher Interns and Operations Staff, work with teachers of the core and non-core curriculum to assist students in achieving the outcomes outlined in this petition. Teacher Interns work in classrooms with individual students and small groups to support student success. Operations Staff is responsible for preparing and correcting educational material, tracking attendance and performance, and tutoring students under the direction of the teachers. Teacher Interns will hold a minimum of a Bachelor's degree and be enrolled in a teacher credentialing program.

**Non-Instructional Support Staff.** The non-instructional support staff provide a variety of support services to the administrative and teaching staff. The following positions are located at the headquarters of our umbrella organization: Civicorps Schools. The Development Staff are responsible for developing funding to support the school. The Recruiting Staff recruits students. The Human Resources Staff is responsible for defining and enforcing policies and procedures dealing with staff and students. The Fiscal/Accounting Staff is responsible for tracking all fiscal matters including accounts receivable, accounts payable and fund management. The Facilities Staff is responsible for maintaining the agency's facilities and equipment. The Office Staff is responsible for handling reception and intra-office and external communication. The Counseling Staff is responsible for providing guidance in the school and in the students' personal lives.

Qualifications for each of these positions include strong organizational and communication skills; relevant educational experience (e.g. minimum of Associate's degree for Office Staff and Masters degrees for Development or Human Resources managers); and relevant work experience of at least three to five years in their fields.

**Teacher Hiring.** Civicorps Middle School recognizes the importance of recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff who value teamwork and collaborative decision making and who are passionate about making the school's mission come alive. Over the last 20 years, our organization has successfully recruited staff members from the following sources and strategies, including job postings in local and national publications and in charter school-specific job

banks as well as recruitment from local networks including local teacher education programs. In addition to seeking candidates committed to the school's mission, Civicorps Middle School will continue to seek candidates who are highly qualified and meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

For each opening we inform a number of teaching agencies, job listserves, graduate programs in education (UC Berkeley, Mills College, Stanford University, for example) and other nonprofit agencies.

We have worked closely with teacher placement agencies such as RISE (Resources for Indispensable Schools and Educators). For example, RISE specializes in placing teachers committed to working with underserved students in years two to five in a teacher's career. Once we have identified prospective teachers, we expect them to complete a thorough application and go through an extensive interview process, culminating in their teaching a model lesson in one of our classrooms, observed by the principal and other teachers. In addition, we check references very carefully.

We also seek to retain our high performing teachers with a competitive salary and solid benefits. We believe that a stable teaching staff is the key to the long-term success of the school and the long-term benefit of our students.

**Professional Development.** Civicorps Schools is highly committed to staff professional development and continuous improvement. All staff members participate in professional development and collaborative planning time each year including (1) intensive summer training and planning related to the data-driven identified priorities for student achievement, team and vision building and revision of school policies and procedures; (2) weekly professional development sessions focused on improving teaching practice and the overall school community and culture; and (3) daily horizontal and vertical collaboration meetings to plan, reflect on, and improve curriculum and instruction. Teachers at Civicorps Middle School are also encouraged to improve their practice through individualized professional development.

**Teacher Evaluations.** Civicorps Schools uses an annual evaluation process (see Appendix D) for teachers that focuses on creating a professional culture of collaboration, reflection, and continuous improvement within the school community; assisting educators to formulate professional goals to improve student learning and teacher practice; and assessing the progress of a teacher's practice toward professional goals and professionally-accepted benchmarks. Teachers' evaluations will be organized around four main areas: Classroom Environment, Curriculum, Instruction, and Learning Community. These four coaching, reflection, and evaluation areas are aligned to and reflect both the six California Standards for the Teaching Profession.

All persons working on campus or when students are present must submit to a criminal background check pursuant to Education Code 45125 and must have a current TB test on file with the charter school.

*General Requirements, Hiring and Performance Review*

Prior to employment and within thirty (30) days of hiring, each employee will submit to a criminal background check as required by Education Code §44237. CMS will adhere to California laws including fingerprinting and prohibitions regarding the employment of persons who have been convicted of a violent or serious felony. CMS will comply with the provisions of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act as they apply to certificated personnel and paraprofessionals. Each employee must furnish proof of tuberculosis (TB) testing, as well as documents establishing legal employment status. The Principal and/or administrative designees will be responsible for monitoring and maintaining documentation of criminal investigation clearances, as required by California and federal laws. Those employees that require a criminal background check and do not have a current background check will be required to undergo such a check through such services as a LiveScan fingerprint process. CMS will pay for such services on behalf of its prospective employees. These services will occur where the LiveScan service is offered, which may be located at district, county or local college facilities.

**Element F. HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS**

*A description of "the procedures that the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff" [California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(F)].*

Civicorps Middle School has existing health, safety and risk management guidelines and policies currently in use by Civicorps Schools. The charter school will update these guidelines as necessary in consultation with Civicorps Schools insurance carriers and risk management experts. To the extent required by non-charter schools, these guidelines and policies address, at a minimum, the following topics:

- Employee background checks and criminal record summary as required by Section 44237 and California Education Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(F);
- Documentation of immunization records for student enrollment and employees;
- Regular student screening for tuberculosis, vision, hearing and scoliosis;
- Administration of prescription drugs and other medications;
- Response to natural disasters and emergencies such as earthquakes and fires including staff training in first emergency response such as basic first aid and CPR;

- Family contact information in case of an emergency; and
- Maintenance of a drug, alcohol, and tobacco free workplace.

These policies are incorporated into the school's staff and family handbooks which will be reviewed by the faculty and staff and approved by the board on an on-going basis.

**Element G. MEANS TO ACHIEVE RACIAL AND ETHNIC BALANCE**

*Describe “(t)he means by which the school will achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district to which the charter petition is submitted” [California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(G)].*

In order to ensure that there is a racial and ethnic balance at the school reflective of the Oakland Unified School District and the larger East Bay community, Civicorps Middle School is committed to a student and family recruitment strategy that includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following elements:

- Outreach to and networking with community-based organizations such as churches, neighborhood groups and public and private agencies that serve the various racial, ethnic, and interest groups of the Oakland community;
- Distribution of promotional materials and announcements in a variety of media including print, TV and/or radio targeted toward diverse populations and in a variety of languages, if needed;
- Inclusion in the district's annual open enrollment process for Oakland parents.
- Recruitment of a diverse faculty and staff through outreach and networking with a variety of agencies that reflect the racial and ethnic make-up of Oakland and the Bay Area.
- Recruitment of a diverse faculty and staff through outreach with leading universities and teacher training programs.
- Recruitment of a diverse faculty and staff through partnerships with such organizations as RISE (Resources for Indispensable Teachers and Educators), which targets teachers in years 2-5 of their careers with a commitment to underserved students, and with other teacher placement agencies.

#### **Element H. ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS**

*Describe “admission requirements, if applicable” [California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(H)].*

Civicorps Middle School does not discriminate in its admissions practices and policies on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, primary language, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. To fully achieve its mission to nurture active, engaged citizens, Civicorps Middle School will seek to recruit for diversity within its student population that reflects the population of within the larger San Francisco Bay Area and from a community of families who are committed to the school’s mission, instructional and operational philosophy and practices.

Admission to the school shall be open to any resident of the State of California, although admission preferences will be given in the following order:

- Admission preference shall first be given to students attending the charter school and students with siblings admitted to the school.
- Next preference will be given to all remaining students residing within the Oakland Unified School District and adjacent areas.

Each year, Civicorps Middle School will begin collecting applications in January. The school will accept all students who apply but will seek a gender balance in its classrooms. In order to be admitted into the Civicorps Middle School applicant pool, a student and her or his family must participate in an orientation process that will include an introduction to the school’s mission and policies.

If more applications are received than there are available slots, a public, random lottery will be held every year in a public location to determine the following school year’s enrollment. Parents and students will be informed of their entrance into Civicorps Middle School via the public lottery session or by phone or mail if they are not present at the lottery. Based on the lottery, an annual wait list will be formed and as openings become available, students on the waitlist will be given preference to enroll in the school. Once admitted, students need not apply each year. However, if students should leave the school and do not have a sibling enrolled, the student will need to enter the lottery process again.

#### **Element I. FINANCIAL AUDIT**

*Describe “(t)he manner in which annual, independent, financial audits shall be conducted, which shall employ generally accepted accounting principles, and the manner in which the audit exceptions and deficiencies shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the chartering authority” [California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(I)].*

The Civcorps Schools Board of Directors uses sound budgetary monitoring and oversight processes including the development of balanced budget plans prior to each fiscal year as well as cash flow plans and projections. In compliance with California Education Code section 47605(b)(5)(I), Civcorps Schools, at its own expense, contracts for the services of an independent, certified public accountant to conduct an annual financial audit of Civcorps Schools' financial statements, internal controls, and attendance accounting records and practices. The audit will follow generally accepted accounting principles. To the extent required under applicable federal law, the audit scope will be expanded to include items and processes specified in any applicable Office of Management and Budget Circulars.

The Audit rules for charter schools got something of an upgrade lately. Each audit shall be made by a certified public accountant selected from the directory of certified public accountants designated by the State Controller's Office as active to conduct audits of local education agencies. This auditor will have experience with audits of educational entities and education finance, preferably with charter schools. The scope of the audit will include all elements mandated by the Audit Guide regulations promulgated by the Education Audit Appeals Panel as applicable to charter schools and any other elements as required by applicable law. The audit will be conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the school and will verify the accuracy of the school's financial statements, average daily attendance and enrollment accounting practices, and review the school's internal controls. By December 15<sup>th</sup> of each year, the annual audit will be completed and a copy of the auditor's findings will be forwarded to the charter-granting agency, the county superintendent of schools, the State Controller, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The school's audit committee will review any audit exceptions or deficiencies and report to the school's board of directors with recommendations on how to resolve them. The board will report to the charter-granting agency regarding how the exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved. In addition, the school and the charter granting agency will consider an audit exception or deficiency to be resolved once the auditor considers the item resolved. Any disputes regarding the resolution of audit exceptions and deficiencies will be referred to the dispute resolution process contained in the dispute resolution process as outlined in this charter.

Civcorps Middle School will receive funding "directly" as allowed by California Education Code, and any funds due to the school from the District shall be forwarded to Civcorps Schools in a timely manner. During the term of this charter petition, Civcorps Schools and the District will attempt to negotiate in good faith to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that clarifies the financial relationship between the two entities. Pursuant to the terms of the Charter School Act, the District shall perform oversight duties necessary for the

implementation of this charter for a fee that will not exceed the District's actual oversight costs, which shall not exceed one percent of the General Purpose and Categorical Block Grant funds provided to the School, unless the District begins to provide rent-free facilities for the school, in which case the cap on oversight fees would be the lesser of actual costs or three percent of the revenues specified above.

The below are additional financially related items that don't have an obvious place elsewhere in the petition:

#### *Financial Plan*

A financial plan for the school is attached. This plan is based on the best data available to the developers at the time the plan was assembled. The plan is based on many key assumptions, as outlined in the following tables. Some of the most basic assumptions include:

1. 100 students in Year 1, with an ADA rate of 95%, growing to 250 students by year 5.
2. Funding rates as outlined on Table V.
3. Class size ratios of 25:1 in all grades.

#### *Budget and Financial Reporting Schedule*

Civicorps Middle School will annually prepare and submit to OUSD:

- On or before July 1<sup>st</sup>, a final budget
- On or before December 15<sup>th</sup>, an interim financial report which reflects changes to the final budget through October 31<sup>st</sup>
- On or before March 15<sup>th</sup>, a second interim financial report which reflects changes to the final budget through January 31<sup>st</sup>
- On or before September 15<sup>th</sup>, a final unaudited financial report for the prior full fiscal year

#### *Other Financial Reports*

Civicorps Middle School will implement an attendance recording and accounting system which complies with state law.

The Civicorps Middle School currently anticipates applying for the Charter School Revolving Loan Fund. If it does so, Civicorps understands that it must comply with Education Code section 41365 if it receives funds.

The Civicorps Middle School will be a directly funded charter school. The Civicorps Middle School anticipates depositing its funds in a non-speculative and federally insured bank account for use by the school.

The Civicorps Middle School will provide the following reports that are required by law: California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS), actual Average Daily Attendance reports, and School Accountability Report Card (SARC).

The OUSD shall not be required to provide coverage to the Civicorps Middle School under any of the district's self-insured programs or commercial insurance policies. The charter school shall secure and maintain, as a minimum, insurance as set forth below to protect CMS from claims which may arise from its operations. The following insurance policies are required:

1. Workers' Compensation Insurance in accordance with provisions of the California Labor Code, adequate to protect Civicorps Middle School from claims under Workers' Compensation Acts, which may arise from its operations.
2. General Liability, Comprehensive Bodily Injury and Property Damage Liability for combined single limit coverage of not less than \$2,000,000 for each occurrence. The policy shall be endorsed to name the OUSD and the Board of Education of OUSD as additional insured.
3. Fidelity Bond coverage shall be maintained by Civicorps Middle School to cover all charter school employees who handle, process, or otherwise have responsibility for charter school funds, supplies, equipment or other assets. Minimum amount of coverage shall be \$50,000 per occurrence, with no self-insured retention.

#### Insurance Certificates

Civicorps shall keep on file certificates signed by an authorized representative of the insurance carrier. Certificates shall be endorsed as follows: The insurance afforded by this policy shall not be suspended, cancelled, reduced in coverage or limits or non-renewed except after thirty (30) days prior written notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, has been given to the district. Facsimile or reproduced signatures are not acceptable. The district reserves the right to require complete certified copies of the required insurance policies.

#### Optional Insurance

Should Civicorps deem it prudent and/or desirable to have insurance coverage for damage or theft to school, employee or student property, for student accident, or any other type of insurance coverage not listed above, such insurance shall not be provided by the district and its purchase shall be the responsibility of the charter school.

#### *Indemnification*

With respect to its operations under this charter, Civicorps shall, to the fullest extent permitted by law, hold harmless, indemnify, and defend the district, its officers, directors, and employees from and against any and all claims, demands, actions, suits, losses, liability expenses and costs including, without limitation, attorneys' fees and costs arising out of injury to any persons, including death or

damage to any property caused by, connected with, or attributable to the willful misconduct, negligent acts, errors or omissions of Civicorps Schools or its officers, employees, agents and consultants, excepting only those claims, demands, actions, suits, losses, liability expenses and costs caused by the negligence or willful misconduct of the district, its officers, directors and employees. The district shall be named as an additional insured under all insurance carried on behalf of Civicorps Schools as outlined above.

With respect to its operations under this charter, the district shall, to the fullest extent permitted by law, hold harmless, indemnify, and defend Civicorps Schools, its officers, directors, and employees from and against any and all claims, demands, actions, suits, losses, liability expenses and costs including, without limitation, attorneys' fees and costs arising out of injury to any persons, including death or damage to any property caused by, connected with, or attributable to the willful misconduct, negligent acts, errors or omissions of the district or its officers, employees, agents and consultants, excepting only those claims, demands, actions, suits, losses, liability expenses and costs caused by the negligence or willful misconduct of Civicorps Schools, its officers, directors and employees.

#### **Element J: PUPIL SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

*A statement describing "the procedures by which students can be suspended or expelled" [California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(J)].*

Civicorps Middle School is responsible for all disciplinary matters independent of the OUSD. Student discipline, including suspension and expulsion, will be handled by the charter school administration, in accordance with the Civicorps Middle School Family Handbook and the policies of Civicorps Schools. These policies include detailed written guidelines that describe expectations for staff and student conduct with regard to attendance, performance, respectful communication, alcohol and substance abuse, and violence. Students who violate these guidelines may be subject to expulsion or other disciplinary action as articulated in the family and staff handbooks. All disciplinary policies reflect relevant laws protecting the constitutional and statutory rights of students generally, and of disabled and other protected classes of students. All students and their parents/guardians will be introduced to the School's discipline policies during parent and student orientations. The policies will be reviewed periodically and modified when necessary. The school will notify the District of any expulsions and will account for suspended or expelled students in its average daily attendance as required by law.

This policy and its rules and procedures have been established in order to promote learning and protect the safety and well-being of all students. When

these policies and standards are violated, it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student from regular classroom instruction.

Staff shall enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently amongst all students and accord all students with similar rights to due process. These disciplinary rules and procedures will be printed and distributed as part of the Student Handbook and will clearly describe discipline expectations. In addition to these suspension and expulsion policies required for this charter, prior to completing student enrollment, Civicorps Middle School will develop a complete set of student discipline policies and procedures which shall be distributed to each student/parent as part of the Student Handbook.

Discipline includes but is not limited to advising and counseling students, conferring with parents/guardians, detention during and after school hours, the use of alternative educational environments, suspension and expulsion.

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of, or willfully causing the infliction of, physical pain on a student.

For purposes of the policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to the charter school property.

The charter school Principal shall ensure that students and parents/guardians are notified in writing of all discipline policies, rules, and procedures and given an opportunity to provide input and feedback on discipline policies and procedures. Transfer students and their parents/guardian shall be so advised upon enrollment. The notice shall state that these disciplinary rules and procedures are available on request at the charter school office.

Suspended or expelled students shall be excluded from all school-related extracurricular activities unless otherwise agreed during the period of suspension or expulsion.

A student identified as an individual with disabilities pursuant to the Individual with Disabilities Education Act is subject to the same grounds for suspension and expulsion and is accorded the same due process procedures applicable to regular education students except to the extent that federal and state law or the student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) mandates additional or different procedures for that student. Civicorps Middle School will follow all federal and state law when imposing any form of discipline on a student identified as an individual with disabilities and according due process to such students.

*Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion of Students*

A student may be suspended or expelled for any of the enumerated acts listed below if the act is related to school activity or school attendance occurring at the charter school or at any other school: (a) while on school grounds; (b) while going to or coming from school; (c) during the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus; (d) during, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity. A Civicorps Middle School student *shall be* recommended for suspension or expulsion for the following acts:

- 1) Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person or willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except in self-defense.
- 2) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the charter school Head of School or designee's concurrence.
- 3) Unlawfully possessed, used sold or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of, any controlled substance as defined Health and Safety code sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
- 4) Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.
- 5) Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal code section 261, 266c, 286, 288, 288, 288a or 289, or committed a sexual battery as defined Penal Code 243.4.
- 6) Made terrorist threats against school officials and /or school property.
- 7) Committed sexual harassment as defined in Education code Section 212.5.
- 8) Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of hate violence as defined in Education Code Section 233. (e)

An Civicorps Middle School student *may be* recommended for suspension or expulsion for the following acts:

- 9) Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
- 10) Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
- 11) Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.
- 12) Possessed or used tobacco or any product containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes,

- miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel.
- 13) Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
  - 14) Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in the Health and Safety Code sections 11014.5
  - 15) Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisor, teachers, administrators, other school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.
  - 16) Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.
  - 17) Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e., a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
  - 18) Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and /or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
  - 19) Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated a student or group of students to the extent having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder, and invading student rights by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment.

#### *Suspension Procedure*

Suspensions shall be initiated according to the following procedures:

##### **Informal Conference:**

Suspension shall be preceded by an informal conference conducted by the charter school Principal or designee with the student and whenever practicable, the teacher, supervisor or school employee who referred the student to the charter school Principal.

The conference may be omitted if the charter school Principal or designee determines that an emergency situation exists. An "emergency situation" involves a clear and present danger to the lives, safety or health of students or school personnel. If a student is suspended without this conference, both the parent/guardian and student shall be notified of the student's right to return to school for the purpose of a conference.

##### **Notice to Parents/Guardians:**

At the time of the suspension, a charter school employee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian by telephone or in person. Whenever a student is suspended, the parent/guardian shall be notified in writing of the suspension. This notice shall state the specific offense committed by the student. In addition, the notice may also state the date and time when the

students may return to school. If school officials wish to ask the parent/guardian to confer regarding matters pertinent to the suspension, the notice may add that state law requires the parent/guardian to respond to such requests without delay.

***Authority to Expel***

Only the charter school Board of Directors upon the recommendation of the expulsion panel may expel a student. The Board of Directors may expel any student found to have committed an expellable offense(s) listed above in the "Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion."

Except for expulsions for offenses listed under Education Code Section 48915(c), a student may only be expelled upon the findings and recommendations of the expulsion panel if the charter school Board of Directors finds that the student committed the expellable offense and that at least one of the following findings may be substantiated:

- 1) That other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct.
- 2) That due to the nature of the violation, the presence of the student causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the student or others.

***Expulsion Procedure***

Students recommended for expulsion are entitled to a hearing to determine whether the student should be expelled. The hearing shall be held within thirty (30) school days after the charter school Principal or designee determines that one of the acts listed under "Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion" has occurred.

The hearing will be presided over by the charter school Principal who will make a recommendation to the expulsion panel.

Written notice of the hearing shall be forwarded to the student and the student's parent/guardian at least ten (10) calendar days before the date of the hearing. The notice shall include:

- 1) The date and place of the hearing;
- 2) A statement of the specific facts, charges and offense upon which the proposed expulsion is based;
- 3) A copy of charter school's disciplinary rules which relate to the alleged violation;

- 4) Notification of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to provide information about the student's status in charter school to any other district in which the student seeks enrollment;
- 5) The opportunity for the student or the student's parent/guardian to appear in person or to employ and be represented by counsel;
- 6) The right to inspect and obtain copies of all documents to be used at the hearing;
- 7) The opportunity to confront and question all witnesses who testify at the hearing;
- 8) The opportunity to question all evidence presented and to present oral and documentary evidence on the student's behalf including witnesses;

***Record of Hearing:***

A record of the hearing shall be made and may be maintained by any means, including electronic recording, as long as a reasonably accurate and complete written transcription of the proceedings can be made.

***Presentation of Evidence:***

While technical rules of evidence do not apply to an expulsion hearing, evidence may be admitted and used as proof only if it is the kind of evidence on which reasonable persons can rely in the conduct of serious affairs. A recommendation by the expulsion panel to expel must be supported by substantial evidence that the student committed any of the acts listed in "Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion" above.

Finding of facts shall be based solely on the evidence at the hearing. While no evidence shall be based solely on hearsay, sworn declarations may be admitted as testimony from witnesses whose disclosure of their identity or testimony at the hearing may subject them to an unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm.

The decision of the expulsion panel shall be in the form of a recommendation to the charter school Board of Directors which will make a final determination regarding the expulsion.

***Written Notice to Expel:***

The charter school Principal or designee following a decision of the charter school Board of Directors to expel shall send written notice of the decision to expel to the student or parent/guardian. This notice shall include the following:

- 1) The specific offense committed by the student from the acts listed in "Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion" above
- 2) Notice of the right to appeal the expulsion
- 3) Notice of the student's or parent /guardian's obligation to inform any new district in which the student seeks to enroll of the student's status with the charter school

The charter school Principal or designee shall send written notice of the decision to expel to the Student's district of residence and the district office of Education. This notice shall include the following:

- 1) The student's name
- 2) The specific offense committed by the student for any of the acts listed in "Grounds for Suspension or Expulsion" above.

Upon expulsion from the charter school, students will attend school pursuant to the procedure of their district of residence pertaining to expelled students.

#### **Element K. STAFF RETIREMENT SYSTEM**

*A statement of whether charter school staff will participate in California's State Teachers Retirement System (STRS), Public Employees Retirement System (PERS), or federal social security" [California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(K)].*

Civicorps Schools has established a retirement system in lieu of existing public employment retirement systems, according to the policies established by Civicorps Schools Board of Directors. The Staff Retirement System consists of the federal social security system and a 403(b) plan through Nation Wide Trust. All employees are eligible for the 403(b) plan once they have attained age 21 and have completed one year of service during which 1,000 or more hours of service were completed. All eligible employees can make voluntary contributions on a pre-tax basis. In addition, Civicorps Schools will contribute up to 7% of the eligible employee's annual salary following the fulfillment of the eligibility requirements, depending on funds available.

Civicorps Schools retains the option to elect to allow eligible charter school staff to participate in the State Teachers Retirement System and/or Public Employees Retirement System in the future. If the school should opt to participate in the STRS or PERS systems, the district shall cooperate as necessary to forward any required payroll deductions and related data. The school shall apply to the district a reasonable fee for the provision of such services. If the school elects to have teachers participate in the STRS or PERS systems, then all teachers will do so.

**Element L. ATTENDANCE ALTERNATIVES**

*A statement that students who opt not to attend the charter school may attend other district schools or pursue an inter-district transfer in accordance with existing enrollment and transfer policies of their district or county of residence or a description of other attendance alternatives [California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(L)].*

Students who opt not to attend Civicorps Middle School or who leave the charter school may attend other district schools in accordance with the existing enrollment and transfer policies of the district of their residence. Civicorps Middle School will transfer student records to and from the appropriate schools to follow student progress.

Parents or guardians of each student enrolled in the charter school will be informed upon enrollment and within the student/parent handbook that the student has no right to admission in a particular school of any local education agency as a consequence of enrollment in Civicorps Middle School, except to the extent that such a right is extended by the OUSD.

**Element M. EMPLOYEE RIGHTS**

*A description of the rights and return rights of district employees who leave the district to work in a charter school [California Education Code 47605(b)(5)(M)].*

Civicorps Middle School staff are employees of Civicorps Schools. The right of employees to leave the District to work at the School as well as the right to return to the District for School employees who were previously employed by the District will be specified in District policies or collective bargaining agreements regarding this issue. The right of other employees to leave another LEA or organization and the right to return to those organizations will be specified by the policies or collective bargaining agreements of the previous LEA or organization.

OUSD employees cannot be required to work at Civicorps Middle School, nor can the district require the charter school to hire district non-certificated, certificated, or confidential employees, with the exception of district employees provided to the charter school as part of the administrative services paid for by the charter school under a separately negotiated agreement for services or memorandum of understanding.

Charter school employees are not subject to district transfers without written consent of that employee.

The charter school shall adopt comprehensive personnel policies and procedures, approved by the charter school board of directors that will be

provided to each employee upon hire. These policies will set forth personnel obligations, rights, responsibilities, complaint procedures, discipline procedures, and other pertinent policies essential to preserving a safe and harmonious work environment. The charter school Principal will resolve complaints and grievances and will administer any personnel discipline, with the assistance of the district when necessary, in accordance with these policies. Disputes over personnel discipline will not be covered by the charter school dispute resolution process, and instead, will be resolved through the personnel policies and procedures.

#### **Element N. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS, REPORTING AND RENEWAL**

*A statement describing "the procedures to be followed by the charter school and the entity granting the charter to resolve disputes relating to provisions of the charter" [California Education Code 47605(b)(5)(N)].*

The intent of Civicorps Middle School Dispute Resolution Process is to resolve disputes within the school pursuant to the school's policies and to ensure a fair and timely resolution to disputes relating to provisions of this charter. The staff and governing board members of the School and the District agree to attempt to resolve all disputes regarding this charter pursuant to the terms of this section. Both will refrain from public commentary regarding any disputes until the matter has progressed through the dispute resolution process.

##### *Internal Disputes*

Disputes arising from within the school, including those among and between students, staff, parents, volunteers, community partners, consultants and governing board members of the school, shall be resolved pursuant to policies and processes developed by the school. The district shall not intervene in any such internal disputes without the consent of the governing board of the school. The district shall refer any complaints regarding such disputes to the governing board/or executive director of the school for resolution pursuant to the school's policies. The district agrees not to intervene or become involved in the dispute unless the dispute has given the district reasonable cause to believe that a violation of this charter or related laws or agreements has occurred, or the governing board of the school has requested the district to intervene in the dispute. *Please see Appendix E for a more detailed description of the dispute resolution process contained in Civicorps Schools Staff Handbook regarding internal disputes.*

##### *External Disputes*

In the event that the school or granting agency have disputes regarding the terms of this charter or any other issue regarding the school and grantor's relationship, both parties agree to consider the process outlined below.

In the event of a dispute between the school and the grantor, the staff and governing board members of the School and District may agree to first frame the issue in a written format and to refer the issue to the Superintendent of the District and Executive Director of Civicorps Schools, or their designees. In the event that the grantor believes that the dispute relates to an issue that could lead to revocation of the charter, this shall be specifically noted in the written dispute statement.

The charter Executive Director and District representative would informally meet and confer in a timely fashion to attempt to resolve the dispute. In the event that this informal meeting fails to resolve the dispute, both parties may consider identifying two governing board members from their respective boards who would jointly meet with the charter Executive Director of Civicorps Schools and District representative to attempt to resolve the dispute. If this joint meeting fails to resolve the dispute, the charter Executive Director and District representative may meet to jointly identify a neutral third party mediator. The format of the mediation session would be developed jointly by the charter Executive Director and District representative and would incorporate informal rules of evidence and procedure unless both parties agree otherwise. The findings or recommendations of the mediator would be non-binding, unless the governing boards of the school and grantor jointly agree to bind themselves.

#### *Oversight, Reporting, Revocation, And Renewal*

If the governing board of the district believes it has cause to revoke this charter, the board agrees to notify the governing board of the school in writing, noting the specific reasons for which the charter may be revoked, and grant the school reasonable time to respond to the notice and take appropriate corrective action.

The Oakland Unified School District agrees to receive and review the annual fiscal and programmatic performance report.

#### **Element O. LABOR RELATIONS**

*A declaration of whether the charter school or local school district will be the employer for EERA (labor relations) purposes [California Education Code 47605(b)(5)(O) and 47611.5].*

The Board of Directors of Civicorps Schools has officially declared that the school shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the school for the purposes of the Education Employment Relations Act.

Under the EERA, Civicorps Middle School employees shall have the right to form a collective bargaining unit and to negotiate directly with the charter school. If the employees lawfully form a collective bargaining unit with a representative

designated to negotiate with the charter school on their behalf, the charter school shall negotiate matters covered by the EERA directly with that representative. These matters may include such items as salary levels (which may be based upon such factors as educational degree attained, years of teaching experience and/or other factors), employee benefits (health plan provider, levels of coverage and co-payments, retirement plans, vacation days, dental and vision coverage, etc.), number of work days per year and number of teaching hours per day, and work rules (including required breaks).

**Element P. SCHOOL CLOSURE PROCEDURES**

*A description of the procedures to be used if the charter school closes. The procedures shall ensure a final audit of the school to determine the disposition of all assets and liabilities of the charter school, including plans for disposing of any net assets and for the maintenance and transfer of pupil records [California Education Code 47605(b)(5)(P)].*

If the school ceases operation, then the school shall designate an entity or individual to be responsible for conducting closure activities. The designated entity or individual shall be known as the Authorized Closer. The Authorized Closer shall commence closure proceedings by notifying parents and guardians of pupils, SBE, the County Office of Education, the SELPA in which the school participates, the retirement systems in which the school's employees participate and the California Department of Education.

The notice shall include the effective date of the closure ("Closure Date"), the party to contact for information related to the closure, the pupil's districts of residence and the manner in which parents and guardians may obtain copies of pupil records, including information on completed courses and credits that meet graduation requirements. The school shall provide the Authorized Closer with a list of pupils in each grade level and the classes they have completed, together with information on the pupils' districts of residence.

Pupil records, including all state assessment results and special education records, shall be maintained and transferred to the custody of the Authorized Closer, except for records and/or assessment results that, under the provisions of the governing charter, are required to be transferred to a different entity. Personnel records shall be maintained and transferred in accordance with applicable law.

The school shall complete an independent final audit within six months of the school's closure. The audit may also serve as the annual audit. The audit must include at least the following:

- An accounting of all assets, including cash and accounts receivable and an inventory of property, equipment and supplies.

- An accounting of the liabilities, including accounts payable and any reduction in apportionments as a result of audit findings or other investigations, loans and unpaid staff compensation.
- An assessment of the disposition of any restricted funds received by or due to the school.

The Authorized Closer must provide for the completion and filing of any annual reports required by Ed. Code section 47604.33.

The school is a California nonprofit public benefit corporation (as permitted under Ed. Code section 47604(a) ("school corporation"). If in connection with the closure, the Board determines that it will dissolve the school corporation ("Dissolution"), then (i) the Dissolution shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the California Nonprofit Public Benefit corporation Law ("Law") including, without limitation, Corp. Code sections 6610 et seq. and sections 6710 et seq., and (ii) the Board may select the Authorized Closer to assist with the wind-up and Dissolution of the school corporation, but shall not be obligated to do so. Consistent with the requirements of the Law, any net assets remaining after all debts and liabilities of the school corporation (i) have been paid to the extent of the school corporation's assets, or (ii) have been adequately provided for, shall be distributed in accordance with the school corporation's Articles of Incorporation.

Prior to the distribution of any remaining net assets, the school corporation shall:

- determine if there are any remaining proceeds of any Restricted Government Grant that have not been expended for the purposes set forth in the Restricted Government Grant, and shall return any such remaining proceeds to the applicable federal or California governmental agency; and
- dispose of, distribute or otherwise utilize any proceeds of any grants or donations (whether in cash or in-kind (i.e., materials or property)) received by the school or the school corporation from any private foundation, any other entity exempt from tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, any other person, or the general public in accordance with the restrictions, if any, imposed by the grantor or donor on such grants or donations at the time received by the school or the school corporation.

For purposes of subparagraph (a) above, "Restricted Government Grant" means any grant or donation (in cash or in-kind (i.e., materials or property)) made by any federal or California governmental agency to the school or the school corporation, the grant instrument of which, or the applicable law governing, requires that, upon closure of the school or dissolution of the school corporation, any proceeds of such Restricted Government Grant that have not been

expended for the purposes set forth in the grant instrument or in applicable law, be returned to the granting or donating governmental agency. The school shall use, but is not limited to, school reserves normally maintained for contingencies and emergencies to fund closure proceedings.

## **CHARTER-RELATED ISSUES**

**Term of Charter Petition.** The term of this Charter shall be 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2008 through the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013. This Charter may be renewed for one or more subsequent five (5) year terms upon the mutual agreement of the parties.

The charter may be revoked pursuant to California Education Code Section 47607. Any amendments to this charter shall be made by mutual agreement of the Board of Directors of Civicorps Schools and the Oakland Unified School District. Material revisions and amendments shall be made pursuant to the standards, criteria, and timelines in California Education Code Section 47605.

**Severability.** The terms of this charter are severable. In the event that any of the provisions are determined to be unenforceable or invalid, the remainder of the charter shall remain in effect unless mutually agreed otherwise by the Oakland Unified School District and Civicorps Schools Board of Directors. The District and the School agree to discuss and resolve any issues or differences relating to invalidated provisions in a timely, good faith fashion.

**Revocation of Charter.** The District agrees to act in good faith to notify the School in writing of any violation that may result in the revocation of the Charter for the reasons described in California Education Code Section 47607. If the violation does not constitute a severe and imminent threat to the health or safety of the students, the School is provided a reasonable opportunity to correct the violation. In such a situation, Civicorps Middle School and the District shall follow the laws and procedures in the California Education Code.

**Facilities.** Civicorps Middle School is currently seeking a site from the Roman Catholic Arch Diocese. Civicorps Middle School, however, reserves the right to apply for district facilities through the Proposition 39 process and/or relocate to other suitable facilities. In the event of a move, Civicorps Middle School would seek any necessary amendments to this Charter.

**Administrative Services.** Civicorps Schools has experienced administrative, payroll and accounting staff and will be responsible for its own personnel plans, provisions and costs. If any administrative services are to be provided by the District, details and conditions will be agreed upon in a Memorandum of Understanding between Civicorps Schools and the District.

**Potential Civil Liability Effects.** Civicorps Schools provides the charter school's liability insurance; it does not expect the District to assume the debts or

liabilities of the school. Civicorps Schools maintains and augments as necessary its general liability (including board errors and omissions), property, workers compensation, unemployment, and automotive/vehicle insurance policies. Any liability claims against the school will be handled pursuant to the terms of Civicorps Schools existing and longstanding insurance policies.

Civicorps Middle School will be responsible for all supplies and equipment that it purchases. Any District property used by the charter shall be protected by insurance satisfactory to the district. The District shall have no responsibility for student losses, and the charter shall hold the district harmless for any such losses. The school will track attendance and performance and will provide the District with ADA and performance records. Civicorps Schools will assume all potential civil liability and will hold the District free of such responsibility.

**Financial Statements.** See Appendix D for one year cash flow statement and financial projections for three years.

**Communications.** All official communication between Civicorps Middle School and the Oakland Unified School District will be sent via First Class Mail or other appropriate means to the following addresses:

Civicorps Schools  
1021 Third Street  
Oakland, CA 94607

Oakland Unified School District  
1025 Second Avenue  
Oakland, CA 94606

## **IMPACT ON THE CHARTER AUTHORIZER**

This section is intended to satisfy the requirement of *Education Code section 47605(g)* that the charter school provide the school district with a district impact statement. This section provides information regarding the proposed operation and potential effects of the Civicorps Middle School on the OUSD. It is intended to assist the OUSD in understanding how the Civicorps Middle School may affect the OUSD but it is not intended to govern the relationship of the school and OUSD. Further details regarding the relationship between Civicorps Middle School and OUSD may be detailed in an annual memorandum of understanding between the charter school and the district.

### *Administrative Services*

The Civicorps Middle School will be constituted as a California Public Benefit Corporation and will be governed by a board of directors as described above. A school Principal will enjoy lead responsibility for administering the school under

policies adopted by the school's Board of Directors. The school anticipates that it will provide most of its own administrative services independent of the OUSD. These include financial management, personnel, and instructional program development. If the Civicorps Middle School desires to purchase any administrative services from OUSD, it will seek to define the specific terms and cost for any such services in an annual memorandum of understanding with the OUSD. In addition, OUSD will be required to provide oversight and performance monitoring services, including monitoring school and student performance data, reviewing the school's audit reports, performing annual site visits, engaging in any necessary dispute resolution processes, and considering charter amendment and renewal requests.

#### *Facilities*

The Civicorps Middle School is currently far along in negotiations with the Roman Catholic Arch Diocese to secure a site in North Oakland. Civicorps has already secured a 20 year lease for its elementary school at 1086 Alcatraz Avenue and will secure a middle school site in the same area from the Arch Diocese. No matter which facility the Civicorps Middle School secures, the charter school anticipates being responsible for routine maintenance of the facilities, including janitorial, grounds keeping, minor maintenance, and utility costs. The petitioners believe that the facilities impact on the OUSD will be minimal because the charter school intends to secure its own facility independent of the OUSD's current and long-term facilities plans.

#### *Civil Liability*

The Civicorps Middle School will be formed as a California public benefit corporation with IRS 501c3 tax exemption status. As such, the school's founders presume that the OUSD will not be liable for the debts or obligations of the charter school pursuant to Education Code Section 47604(c). In the event that the OUSD does not complete its responsibilities for charter school oversight under the Charter Schools Act, the OUSD may expose itself to liability. The school intends to purchase liability and property insurance as outlined above to protect the school's assets, staff, Board of Directors members, and, where appropriate OUSD personnel.

#### *Assurances*

In accordance with Education Code Section 47605(d)(3), if a pupil is expelled or leaves the charter school without graduating or completing the school year for any reason, the charter school shall notify the superintendent of the school district of the pupil's last known address within 30 days, and shall, upon request, provide the school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including a transcript of grades or report card, and health information. This paragraph applies only to pupils subject to compulsory full-time education pursuant to Section 48200.