

FINAL APPLICATIONS REVIEW 2010-2011			
Proposed School Name:		Proposed School Location:	
Grove Hall Preparatory Charter School		Boston	
Dorchester Preparatory Charter School		Boston	
Dudley Square Preparatory Charter School		Boston	
Network of Schools with Roxbury Preparatory Charter School			
	Grove Hall	Dorchester	Dudley Square
Grades Served at Full Capacity:	5-12	5-12	5-12
Number of Students Served at Full Capacity:	600	600	600
Proposed Opening Year:	FY2012	FY2013	FY2013

Public Statement:
Grove Hall, Dorchester, and Dudley Square Preparatory Charter Schools, 5th – 12th grade public schools, will prepare students to enter, succeed in, and graduate from college. They are founded on the philosophy that all students are entitled to and can succeed in college preparatory programs when: 1) the curriculum is rigorous, engaging, and well-planned; 2) the school emphasizes student character, community responsibility, and exposure to life’s possibilities; and 3) a community network supports student academic, social, and physical well-being. Each of the three proposed prep schools will serve up to 600 students and plans to be located in their corresponding Boston neighborhood.

Mission Statement:
Grove Hall, Dorchester, and Dudley Square Preparatory Charter Schools, 5th – 12th grade public schools, will prepare students to enter, succeed in, and graduate from college. They are founded on the philosophy that all students are entitled to and can succeed in college preparatory programs when: 1) the curriculum is rigorous, engaging, and well-planned; 2) the school emphasizes student character, community responsibility, and exposure to life’s possibilities; and 3) a community network supports student academic, social, and physical well-being.

To prepare students for success in college and beyond, the Grove Hall, Dorchester, and Dudley Square Preparatory Charter Schools community will adhere to the following values:

- 1) Scholarship: We think critically and aspire to and achieve academic excellence.
- 2) Integrity: We are honest and ethical in our words and our actions.
- 3) Dignity: We have self-respect and honor our heritages.
- 4) Responsibility: We are accountable for our decisions and our actions.
- 5) Perseverance: We are resourceful, work hard, and always strive to do our best.
- 6) Community: We use our talents to make positive contributions to our communities.
- 7) Leadership: We act on the principle that if we are not part of the solution, we are part of the problem.
- 8) Peace: We resolve conflicts with compassion and help others to do the same.
- 9) Social Justice: We endeavor to make our society more just.
- 10) Investment: We are reflective, act with foresight, and invest in our futures.

The mission of the Grove Hall, Dorchester, and Dudley Square Preparatory Charter Schools mirror the mission of Roxbury Preparatory Charter School. The only difference is the grade span. By adding a 5th grade, the Grove Hall, Dorchester, and Dudley Square Preparatory Charter Schools can serve more students in the middle school program while adding an invaluable year of instructional time. This is particularly important given that most students will arrive at school two or more grade levels behind in both reading and math.

In addition, Grove Hall, Dorchester, and Dudley Square Preps will serve students through high school to reinforce the school's mission to see students to and through college. The Board of Trustees of Roxbury Preparatory Charter School seeks to serve more students through a network of schools called the Preparatory Network. The Preparatory Network will consist of the following:

Name of School	Opening Year	Grades	Total Number of Students
Roxbury Preparatory Charter School	1999	6-8 (will serve 5 th grade starting in 2012-2013 and 9-12 program will begin in 2015-2016)	300 (will reach 600 in 2018-2019)
Grove Hall Preparatory Charter School	2011	5-12	600 (will reach capacity in 2018-2019)
Dudley Square Preparatory Charter School	2012	5-12	600 (will reach capacity in 2019-2020)
Dorchester Preparatory Charter School	2012	5-12	600 (will reach capacity in 2019-2020)

With the increase in the number of middle school students, providing a high school program becomes the most effective way to fulfill our mission of preparing students to enter, succeed in, and graduate from college. Roxbury Preparatory Charter School has helped students apply to college preparatory high schools, and provided services and support to students in high school and college through the graduate services program. This program has produced outstanding results with 99% of Roxbury Prep's 8th grade graduates completing high school and nearly 80% of Roxbury Prep's college-aged alumni enrolled in college. Grove Hall, Dorchester, and Dudley Square Preps will utilize lessons learned from Roxbury Prep's Graduate Services Program and the experience and resources of Uncommon Schools in order to build a strong, mission-aligned high school program. Most notably the Uncommon Schools North Star network has closed the achievement gap for 9th – 12th grade students in Newark, New Jersey. North Star Academy Charter School has the highest four-year college enrollment rate of all high schools in the state of New Jersey over the past five years¹. As the Roxbury Prep network grows, there will be a sufficient number of 8th grade graduates across multiple schools to create a college preparatory high school program with academic and enrichment programs that will prepare all students for college success. For this reason, Grove Hall, Dorchester, and Dudley Square Preparatory Charter Schools will serve students in grades 5 – 12.

Based on historical data from Roxbury Prep and Boston Public Schools, the students of Grove Hall, Dorchester, and Dudley Square Preps will likely be predominantly Black or Latino and 75% or more will qualify for free or reduced-priced lunch. Between 25% and 50% will speak a language other than English at home and between 12% and 20% will qualify for special education services. This serves the mission of preparing students to enter, succeed in, and graduate from college because low-income students of color are underrepresented in the population of college graduates. Even as college matriculation rates increase for low-income minority students, graduation rates are still stark with only about 25% of low-income students and 20% of Black and Latino students earning any type of post-secondary degree.²

¹ <http://www.uncommonschools.org/nsa/ourResults/>

² http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/09/education/09gates.html?_r=1

Proposed Growth Plan for First Five Years of Operation:

School Year	Grade Levels	Total Student Enrollment
First Year	5	75
Second Year	5-6	150
Third Year	5-7	225
Fourth Year	5-8	300
Fifth Year	5-9	375

NOTE: All three proposals describe the same growth plan.

Mission, Vision, and Description of the Community(ies) to Be Served**Primary Strengths**

- The mission clearly defines the purpose and values underlying the proposed schools' commitment to the idea that "all children are entitled to and can succeed in college preparatory programs." This mission is reflected throughout all sections of the applications. (Section I.A.)
- The vision illustrates a compelling image of the school and serves as an organizing principle for the applications; including but not limited to a rigorous curriculum, affiliation with Uncommon Schools (Uncommon is a nationally recognized charter management organization.), highly structured extended school day, training all teachers in Structured English Immersion, college campus visits, and family involvement. (Section I.B.)
- The applications provide a general rationale for how this school will enhance or expand the educational options and speaks to the value of the proposed schools by offering a successful educational model. (Section I.C.)
- Senator J. Hart has voiced support for the expansion proposal. See public comment. (Section I.C.)

Primary Weaknesses

- While the additional information provided in the mission section of the applications is helpful in understanding the multifaceted aspects the school, it is not succinct. (Section I.A.)
- While the vision is compelling, reviewers had many questions about how the high school component of the proposed schools will operate. (Section I.B.)
- The applications do not fully describe any of the modifications relating to the size of each school more than doubling the existing model with a changed grade span from 6-8 to 5-12. (Section I.C.)

Educational Philosophy, Curriculum and Instruction

Primary Strengths

- The educational philosophy clearly describes the schools' core beliefs and values about education; aligns with the proposed mission and is integrated into the implementation of a comprehensive educational program that includes high expectations and a supportive and structured environment. (Section II.A.)
- While reviewers had concerns regarding the limited information about the high school aspects of the applications, during the interview the applicant group provided additional information about how the educational philosophy and practices will be extended or modified to the high school program. Due to the limited planning thus far for the high school, the applicant group intends to begin planning in 2013 for the initial freshman class in 2015. (Section II.A. and II.B.)
- The Curriculum and Instruction section is clear and the applications provide a rationale for developing and choosing the proposed curriculum. It includes the content and skills for all intended grades and provides a few samples of the "Curriculum Alignment Template" that details standards, learning activities, and assessment activities for each course. (Section II.B.)
- The applications provide a very clear plan to facilitate ongoing development, improvement, and refinement of the curriculum and a clear process to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and its implementation. (Section II.B.)
- The applications indicate a commitment to responsive professional development for teachers. (Section II.B.)

Primary Weaknesses

- No primary weaknesses.

Assessment System, Performance, Promotion, and Graduation Standards

Primary Strengths

- The applications provide very clear examples of performance standards and explain promotional standards. (Section II.C.)
- The assessment system is linked to curriculum and instruction, features multiple measures of student outcomes, is consistent with the school's mission, and seems thorough, clear, credible, and sound. (Section II.D.)

Primary Weaknesses

- While the promotional standards are outlined, the high school graduation requirements are not clearly articulated. (Section II.C.)

School Characteristics

Primary Strengths

- While the high school characteristics are not well defined, the general school characteristics for the three proposed schools are clearly outlined. The applicant group emphasized the intention to allow each school to organically develop distinct identities. (Section II.E.)
- The applications describe the school culture and have a plan to establish this culture. (Section II.E.)
- The applications and the applicant group have a clear plan to involve parents and develop effective family-school partnerships. (Section II.E.)
- During the interview, the group discussed how they intend to strengthen their alumni support programming to include both college and career services. (Section II.E.)
- During the interview, the applicant group discussed the need for a shared high school facility for financial sustainability and to permit a variety of academic electives and programming. (Section II.E.)

Primary Weaknesses

- Addressed in earlier sections.

Special Student Populations and Student Services

Primary Strengths

- The applications indicate that the applicant group has knowledge regarding program requirements and effective means of implementation, and understands the obligations of charter schools regarding special education. (Section II.F.)
- While in the applications the staffing ratios for special student services were low based on projected enrollments, in the interview, the group indicated that they are able to be flexible with staffing ratios in response to student needs. (Section II.F.)
- In the applications and the interview, the group affirmed plans for all teachers to be trained in the four Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) categories. (Section II.F.)
- It is evident based on past student performance that the applicant group, Roxbury Preparatory Charter School, has the capacity to successfully work with students in need of special education services as well as English language learners. (Section II.F.)

Primary Weaknesses

- While the interview provided additional information regarding the provision of services for English Language Learners (ELLs,) the applications provided inaccurate information related to the initial identification or annual assessment of ELLs. The description of service delivery does not meet the recommended hours of English Language Development instruction. (Section II.F.)

Enrollment and Recruitment

Primary Strengths

- The applications, the applicant group, and the recruitment and retention plan describe a broad and aggressive outreach in order to inform families about educational options. (Section III.E.)
- The proposed enrollment process is open, fair, and in accordance with the charter school statute and regulations. The draft enrollment policy clearly indicates an admissions plan that ensures adequate enrollment and full accessibility of the school for all eligible students. (Section III.E.)

Primary Weaknesses

- The growth plan and strategy does not address attrition in the upper grades. (Section II.F.)

Capacity and School Governance

Primary Strengths

- The founding group and existing board of trustees include members who possess a wide variety of skills and experience, including finance, management, education, development, law, and school constituencies. (Section III.B.)
- The governance model presents a clear reporting structure and relationship between the board of trustees, school leaders, and administration regarding the governance and management of the school. (Section III.C.)
- It was clear through the interview that the board has clear expectations of the responsibilities of Uncommon. The board will utilize its Accountability Plans to annually evaluate Uncommon and determine whether Uncommon has made substantial progress toward the goals related to academic success, organizational viability, and faithfulness to charter. (Section III.C.)

Primary Weaknesses

- While the proposed schools and network are modeled after Uncommon's successful experience in both Newark, New Jersey (North Star), where they have one charter for multiple campuses and have created feeder middle schools into the high school, and Brooklyn, New York (Collegiate), where they will have six separate middle schools funneling into one high school of 800 kids each. These networks are still in their early stages of development (for example in New Jersey the high school has 150 students). (Section III.C.)

Capacity for Network of Schools

Primary Strengths

- The applicant group is aware of the multiple challenges inherent in the proposed network of schools, such as staff recruitment, board operations, and resource development. (Section III.D.)
- The applicant group intends to contract with Uncommon, which has a proven track record of managing significant growth. They oversee twenty-four charters, some with multiple campuses. (Section III.D.)
- In contracting with Uncommon, the applicant group enhances their capacity to address the challenges of expansion. Uncommon will provide a valuable array of services, such as human resources development, fiscal management, fundraising, and professional development. (Section III.D.)
- The application included a draft contract

Primary Weaknesses

- Opening three new schools, working with a charter management organization, and determining how to proceed with the high school component will be a challenge for the board of Roxbury Preparatory. (Section III.D.)
- The proposed schools within the network are not exact replications of the existing Roxbury Preparatory Charter School and therefore, may present additional challenges for the applicant group.
- If the applicant group does not receive charters for all the schools they are applying for, it is possible that the relationship with Uncommon will be different from what is proposed in the applications. (Section III.D.)

with Uncommon Schools. The draft provides details about the roles and responsibilities of Uncommon and extensive information about how both parties can terminate the agreement. If chartered, the contract would need further refinement and then review and approval by the Department. (Section III. D.)

Management

Primary Strengths

- Each of the proposed schools modeled the leadership structure after that of Roxbury Preparatory, utilizing a dual leadership model with a Principal and Director of Operations. The applicant group has identified the two school leaders of the proposed Grove Hall Prep from present staff at the Roxbury Preparatory Charter School. Both staff members are participating in an Uncommon Schools Fellowship program this year in preparation. (Section III.D.)

Primary Weaknesses

- Reviewers expressed concerns about the school-level management and accountability of placing the four distinct schools' 9-12 grades into a single high school facility. (Section III.D.)

Facilities, Transportation, and Finances

Primary Strengths

- Existing board members have extensive expertise with financial management. The budget demonstrates knowledge of practical matters relevant to the operation of a school. The board has the capacity to raise additional funds and manage funds effectively. (Section III.F.)
- Uncommon proposes to garner a variety of resources for the proposed schools, including human resources recruitment, real estate, and additional funds. In the interview, we were told that last year Uncommon raised \$21 million, including \$6 million for the North Star network to grow. (Section III.F.)

Primary Weaknesses

- No primary weaknesses.

Accountability

Primary Strengths

- No primary strengths.

Primary Weaknesses

- The Department has concerns about how the separate middle schools funneling into

one high school would complicate
monitoring accountability measures.