

PROPOSED DUDLEY STREET NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This was prepared by the founding group of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School.

The Boston Plan for Excellence (BPE)-Boston Teacher Residency (BTR) proposes to start a new Horace Mann Charter School: The Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School (DSNCS). DSNCS will be located in the Dudley neighborhood of Boston and will be a founding member of the Dudley Village Campus (DVC) as part of the neighborhood's exciting Boston Promise Initiative (BPI), capitalizing on partnerships and deep relationships with families to function as an excellent school.

Our Mission: The mission of the DSNCS is threefold:

- To provide a world class education for all students, preparing them for long-term academic success and responsible civic engagement,
- To serve as a driver of human and social capital development, preparing outstanding new teachers to drive excellent student outcomes throughout Boston,
- To serve as a partner in catalyzing improvement of all schools in the Dudley area.

Our vision is that the Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School helps realize the promise of our democracy: that a quality education be a guaranteed, basic human right. At full size, DSNCS will serve children from across the city in Grade K1 through Grade 5, graduating resilient and hard-working students who are proficient readers, writers, problem solvers, and thinkers, well-prepared for secondary school and college success.¹ DSNCS will work closely with Dudley area partners and secondary schools to ensure a seamless, high-quality PreK-12 experience for all youth.

Our program: The educational program is designed so that all students become proficient in the Massachusetts Common Core Standards and become responsible members of their community. The school will use as a guiding framework the five essential supports for school improvement developed by Dr. Anthony Bryk: (1) leadership; (2) parent-community ties; (3) professional capacity; (4) a student-centered learning climate; and (5) ambitious instruction. DSNCS leaders and teachers will engage in rigorous review of evidence and data to inform all decisions and advance student performance. We believe that a new kind of elementary school is required to realize the promise of our democracy. Key programmatic elements of DSNCS include the following:

- **More Time** for both student and adult learning provided by a longer school day and year.
- **Mixed-Grade, looped two-year classrooms** so teachers develop strong relationships with students and have time to adequately address individual learning needs.
- **Flexible staffing and student grouping** that maximizes teacher expertise to ensure that the “right” teachers teach the “right” students the “right” content and skills, at the “right” time.

¹ Hernandez, 2011

- **Progress Monitoring** of every student and the school, done in a shared context of expectations for students and adults, including regular feedback to teachers.
- **Competency-based promotion** with students’ advancing by demonstrating proficiency against benchmarks based on the Common Core standards.
- **Strong Socio-Emotional Supports** in collaboration with BPI partner organizations.

DSNCS will contribute to the larger BPS goal to educate *all* students well in three ways:

1. As a school committed to the development of **educated, responsible citizens** in alignment with the BPS Acceleration Agenda,² DSNCS will ensure that students:
 - Love to learn.
 - View the world as a classroom without walls, thinking critically about the issues within it.
 - Succeed academically in college-preparatory courses across content areas.
 - Master verbal and written expression in English.
 - Use mathematical skill, scientific inquiry, and state-of-the-art technology to invent new solutions to persistent and unanticipated problems.
 - Exhibit growth, self-discipline, and reflection through innovative expression and artistry.
 - Acknowledge and respect people with diverse backgrounds, histories, and perspectives.
 - Assume personal responsibility for physical/emotional well-being by making healthy choices.
 - Contribute confidently and positively in professional and social settings, both independently and as members of a team.
 - Demonstrate resourcefulness and resilience in the face of setbacks and obstacles, relying on personal assets and support from others to achieve goals.
 - Participate actively in our democracy as courageous leaders who challenge injustice.
2. As a **driver of human capital development** through embedded teacher preparation, induction, and professional growth, within the context of a “teaching hospital” or “lab” school paradigm. DSNCS’s pedagogical approach, the common data-driven practices, and the collaboration among teachers will model what new teachers should know and be able to do. In doing so, we aim to demonstrate a model of teacher education in which a new teacher’s vision of teaching is shaped by a coherent set of ideas and practices, based in research, and embodied by a school and faculty. These teachers will then continue their service to the children of Boston as they assume teaching positions across the city.
3. As a partner in **catalyzing the success of a network of schools** in the Dudley area. DSNCS will not be an island of excellence. Rather, we intend to build the school as part of a tightly connected network of schools and community partners that share practices, approaches and data to best serve children. DSNCS aspires to

² Boston Public Schools Acceleration Agenda Framework, *Vision for a BPS Graduate*, May 2010

play an integral role in the development of a seamless Grade K1-12 educational pipeline that provides access for future generations of children to a system of excellent schools, thereby strengthening both the local community and the larger city.

Community's Need for Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School: The rich diversity of the Dudley neighborhood is seen in its demographics: 38% African-American, 29% Latino, 25% Cape Verdean, and 7% White. The neighborhood has a per capita income of \$12,332. Approximately 27% of the area's population falls below the federal poverty level of \$17,029 (family of four), and 62% fall below the Family Economic Self-Sufficiency measure of \$37,591. The unemployment rate is just under 14%. If approved, DSNCS will be housed in the former Emerson school, and its demographics and incoming students' performance will likely be similar: only 13% of students at the Emerson scored Proficient or better on the ELA MCAS, and only 21% did so in math in SY09-10. Of the students, 94.2% were from low-income families, 54.6% were classified as limited-English proficient, and 13.2% had special needs.

Background and Capacity of the Applicant Group to Make This School a Success: The newly converged BPE-BTR has a long track record of supporting educational innovation and sustaining organizational viability, dating back to 1984. Both BPE and BTR are approved vendors under MA Race to the Top, having proven the ability to deliver valuable services to schools. For BPE, this has taken the form of implementing a coherent framework for teams of teachers to work together to advance student achievement and providing schools with comprehensive support to gather and make sense of data to inform planning and decision-making. BTR has developed a national reputation for its human capital work, providing a continuum of services related to recruitment, preparation, induction, retention, and ongoing professional development. Together, BPE and BTR have raised almost \$100 million for their joint efforts with BPS, and have been recognized by both Superintendents Payzant and Johnson for contributing to the district's steady improvement on MCAS.

Community Demonstration of Support. Staff of BPE-BTR, together with parents, teachers, area residents, and community and business leaders, have come together to create DSNCS in order to propose a school that addresses the immense challenges in the Dudley community and other under-resourced city neighborhoods. BPE-BTR has been part of BPI's K-12 working group, which has sought community involvement in the development of this school plan, as well as informing the larger vision for education in the neighborhood. In partnership, BPE-BTR and DSNI have researched and identified school practices and approaches most likely to be successful in the DSNCS.

Governance. The DSNCS will be governed by a Board selected for their community ties and their experience and qualifications in such areas as education, management, finance, development and law.