

FINAL APPLICATION REVIEWS 2009-2010			
Proposed School Name:	Leaders of Tomorrow Charter Public School		
Grades Served At Full Capacity:	6-8		
Number of Students At Full Capacity:	270		
Proposed School Location:	Worcester		
Proposed Opening Year:	2010-2011		
Regional?	No		
Proposed Sending Districts:	Worcester		
<p>Mission Statement: “The mission of the Leaders of Tomorrow Charter Public School (LoFT) is to prepare youth (middle school) from Worcester with the secured 21st century skills needed for high school, college and career success. The focus of the LoFT Charter Public School will be to provide a high quality, standards based education for every child in order to meet or exceed state targets. This will be accomplished by developing each student’s abilities in all core subject areas through the promotion of leadership and integration of college and career exploration. At LoFT, there will be a focus on leadership at all levels; student, teacher, parent, administrator and board of trustees.</p> <p>The (LoFT) Charter Public School will support leadership of all its stakeholders, but most importantly student leadership. Students in grades 6th, 7th and 8th will engage in a three tier academic/leadership program. Tier I: All students will be offered a rigorous academic program with Science, Technology, Engineering and Math focused academic offerings and with 21st century standards identified, and assessed in all classes. Tier II: Leadership Training Tier III: Application of leadership through a social service project.”</p>			
<p>Curriculum Synopsis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internally generated curricula for all subject areas that are thematic, and integrated and align with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. • Extend student learning by capitalizing on areas of strength. • Develop 21st century skills, with STEM focused enrichment opportunities. • Career and college exploration and leadership enrichment internships. • Embrace a spiraling philosophy that will allow students to be introduced to an array of standards that build on one another and are revisited various times throughout the year and from year to year. 			
<p>Mission, Vision, and Statement of Need</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><u>Primary Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><u>Primary Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mission and Vision Statements are filled with jargon and make it difficult to determine meaning. Neither the Mission nor Vision serves as a clear organizing principle throughout all sections of the application. Ideas are mentioned in these sections but are not fully developed in the application. (AP Section I. A. 4 and 5 and II. 4 and 5) • Although the application gives general information about the needs of middle school students, this Statement of Need does not clearly describe the students the charter school intends to serve and the needs of the population in Worcester. The academic data is limited and difficult to read. There is no </td> </tr> </table>		<p><u>Primary Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. 	<p><u>Primary Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mission and Vision Statements are filled with jargon and make it difficult to determine meaning. Neither the Mission nor Vision serves as a clear organizing principle throughout all sections of the application. Ideas are mentioned in these sections but are not fully developed in the application. (AP Section I. A. 4 and 5 and II. 4 and 5) • Although the application gives general information about the needs of middle school students, this Statement of Need does not clearly describe the students the charter school intends to serve and the needs of the population in Worcester. The academic data is limited and difficult to read. There is no
<p><u>Primary Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. 	<p><u>Primary Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mission and Vision Statements are filled with jargon and make it difficult to determine meaning. Neither the Mission nor Vision serves as a clear organizing principle throughout all sections of the application. Ideas are mentioned in these sections but are not fully developed in the application. (AP Section I. A. 4 and 5 and II. 4 and 5) • Although the application gives general information about the needs of middle school students, this Statement of Need does not clearly describe the students the charter school intends to serve and the needs of the population in Worcester. The academic data is limited and difficult to read. There is no 		

description of how the founding group assessed parent demand within the proposed areas of service. It does not provide a specific rationale for how this school will enhance or expand educational options currently available to this population. (AP Section I.C. 2, 3, and 5)

Educational Philosophy, Curriculum and Instruction

Primary Strengths

- The application indicates a commitment to professional development for teachers. It has been determined that the school will utilize professional learning communities. Professional development opportunities will include, but not be limited to: internships in the STEM field, leadership development, and training in sheltered English immersion. The application also explains the process for teacher evaluations. The interview provided more information about how professional development will be determined when the school is up and running. (AP Section II. B. 13 and 14)

Primary Weaknesses

- The interview provided some clarifying information about aspects of the educational program; however, the Educational Philosophy as a whole is not clear. It is not fully integrated into a comprehensive educational program. It does not show evidence that this approach will lead to high academic achievement. (AP Section II.A.1, 2, and 5)
- The Curriculum and Instruction section is multifaceted and states that the school will build a thematic-integrated academic program that includes capitalizing on areas of strength, instruction in each of 6 major content areas, developing 21st century skills, career/college exploration, and leadership enrichment internships. The curriculum documents in the attachment section come from the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. However, the section is confusing. It is not clear how all these components will be developed, structured, and operationalized to function as an integrated educational program. Also, the application provides very little research to demonstrate the curriculum will result in high academic achievement. (AP Section II.B. 2, 4, 5, and 11)

Assessment System, Performance, Promotion, Graduation Standards

Primary Strengths

- Through the interview, the applicant group clarified the performance, promotion, and graduation standards. (AP Section II. C. 3)

Primary Weaknesses

- While the MCAS is mentioned in other parts of the application, it is not discussed in the Assessment section. (AP Section II.D. 3)
- The interview helped clarify the connection between the portfolio competencies, the students' professional development plans, and the needs of students as related to the safety net courses. However, it is not clear how the school's mission and the range of aspirations mentioned throughout the application are translated into concrete outcomes that are measured and effectively tracked in the Assessment System. (AP Section II.D.4)

School Characteristics, Special Student Populations and Student Services

Primary Strengths

- Through the interview, the applicant group provided more information, indicating knowledge regarding processes and procedures for identifying and serving special education students and English language learners. (AP Section II. F. 1 and 2)

Primary Weaknesses

- The interview provided more information about how the founding group is establishing meaningful relationships with community agencies that will be serving as “Community Learning Organizations” who will provide the “leadership enrichment” component of the school. However since this is such a large component of the educational program, it is inadequately articulated in the application. (AP Section II. E. 14)
- The application provides limited information about school culture. It describes the culture of the proposed school as revolving around the concept of professionalism, including dress code, being on time, being prepared, and being fully present. It does not provide a clear plan for establishing a school culture and norms. It does not provide a clear plan for mentors and advisors. (AP Section II. D. 9 and 10)
- The application states that it will encourage family involvement, but there is very little information about building and maintaining effective family-school partnerships and no information about gauging parental satisfaction and publicizing results. (AP Section II.E. 12 and 13)

Enrollment and Recruitment

Primary Strengths

- None.

Primary Weaknesses

- The enrollment section needs further clarification. The application does not provide a specific rationale for a viable and sustainable size and growth strategy. (AP Section III.A. 2)

Capacity, School Governance, and Management

Primary Strengths

- Although, it might be difficult to manage with the Director of Schools and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction both being on the board, the governance model provides a clear workable reporting structure with the Director of Schools reporting to the board of trustees. (Section III.C. 3)

Primary Weaknesses

- With four out of the eight founding group members intending to work at the proposed school, it is not clear that the board of trustees has enough members or the range of skills necessary to create and sustain a successful charter school. (AP Section III.B. 3)

Finances and Action Plan

Primary Strengths

- None.

Primary Weaknesses

- The Action Plan restates the check list from the Opening Procedures Handbook. There is no information about hiring, curriculum development, and/or enrollment. The Action Plan is not specific to this charter school. (AP Section III. G. 2 and 3)
- Reviewers had many questions about the budget. Some of the assumptions in the budget are not realistic. It was not clear how they came

up with tuition revenue of \$439,510 during the pre operation phase and it was not clear how they determined \$2,000 for testing and assessment of general education and \$0 for special education. The budget didn't provide evidence of knowledge about some of the practical matters relevant to the operation of a charter school. (AP Section III F. 4 and 5)