

Leaders of Tomorrow Charter Public School Executive Summary

This is prepared by the founding group of the proposed Leaders of Tomorrow Public Charter School.

Mission Summary:

The mission of the Leaders of Tomorrow Charter Public School (LoFT) is to prepare youth to secure 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 by developing each student's abilities in all core subject areas through rigorous academics, the promotion of leadership and the integration of college and career exploration. At LoFT, there will be a focus on leadership at all levels; administrator, teacher, student, parent and board of trustees.

Education Program Summary:

The Leaders of Tomorrow Charter Public School is grounded in a vision of instilling strong leadership values (skills, habits, practice) and holding every stakeholder accountable for high performance. LoFT Charter Public School will operate with an extended year and expanded learning day. According to the Mass2020 Organization's 2008 annual report increased time on learning results in improved student performance. The AYP data in Expanded Learning Time Schools: 2006 (pre-ELT) vs. 2007 (with ELT):¹ In 2006 there were three ELT schools reaching AYP targets in mathematics. In 2007 that number doubled to six schools. Further data shows in 2006 there were five schools' making AYP in English Language Arts versus 2007 that number increased to seven schools. During this expanded learning day LoFT will offer students rigorous academic courses in all content areas, technology, wellness, and the arts.

In addition to the academic programming students will participate in intersession internships and enrichment activities in grades 6 and 7 (180 students) in the 2010-2011 school year, grades 6, 7 and 8 in year two (270 students). The trimester intersession's will give the students necessary time to engage in enriching career and college internship explorations, mentorship programs, and civic clubs to further develop their leadership skills. By developing relationships with community partners, local organizations will have the opportunity to share their resources with LoFT and mentor LoFT students. In return, our students will give back to the Worcester community and develop a sense of civic responsibility.

Students will exit LoFT Charter Public School equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to enter into a college preparatory high school program and continue to develop as leaders of a local, national, and global community.

Community Need:

Worcester is a community with many untapped resources, most notably its youth. High dropout and poverty rates do not reflect a city and state at the forefront of technology, science and engineering. Worcester is rich in higher education, technology related industry, and performing and visual arts.

¹ Expanded Learning Time Annual Report 2007
http://mass2020.org/files/file/2007_EL%20Annual_Report.pdf

The latest research on Worcester high school dropout rates indicate that in 2005-2006 7.9% of those not completing high school were Hispanic, 6.6% Black and 2.3% White.² Further research indicates that the 2007 rates continue to be high at the minority level.³

An additional alarming statistic is the **Worcester poverty rate among people who did not graduate high school** as compared to the state:⁴

Worcester:		40.3%
Massachusetts:		37.8%

Versus those who are **living in poverty in Worcester who did graduate high school** as compared to the state.⁵

Worcester:		21.8%
Massachusetts:		15.3%

This issue is not unique to Worcester. One of the realities confronting the United States is that a major proportion of racial and ethnic minority students in this country have unequal access to higher education (Ntiri, 2001). Many experience a variety of personal, environmental, and institutional barriers that result in limited or no access to college and university education (Opp, 2001; Thomason & Thurber, 1999). Some of these barriers include financial difficulty and lack of financial aid, the need to work full-time, lack of family support, lack of information about the college preparation and application process, low scores on traditional college admission tests, and often, an absence of role models who have gone to college (Lee, 1991; Ntiri, 2001).⁶

In conclusion, at some point during their educational careers these students became disengage in the learning process and did not see the relevance and relationship of their studies as true applications to “real life.” Therefore, students are not completing high school, progressing to higher education, and double their chances of living in poverty. LofT academic and non-academic programming will address these issues and issues of lack of rigor.

Founding Group:

The Leaders of Tomorrow Charter Public School’s Board of Trustees (The Board) is comprised of educators, parents, community activists and integrated technology specialist (listed below). The Board has pursued the development of the LofT Charter Public School in an inclusive manner. Relying on experts in the field of education, such as Joe Rull of Mass 2020, Janet Strauss of the National Institute for School Leadership, and Dr. Donna Braun and Christopher Haskins from Ocean State National

² <http://www.city-data.com/poverty/poverty-Worcester-Massachusetts.html>

³ http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d08/tables/dt08_107.asp

⁴ <http://www.city-data.com/poverty/poverty-Worcester-Massachusetts.html>

⁵ <http://www.city-data.com/poverty/poverty-Worcester-Massachusetts.html>

⁶ <http://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/recruit/litreview.htm>

School Reform Faculty Center of Activity, to review and provide feedback during several stages of development.

Jason V. DeFalco,	Licensed Educator/Administrator in Massachusetts, Worcester Resident
Ellen Lincourt,	Community Advocate, Parent, Worcester Resident
David Rosario,	Integrated Technology Specialist, Worcester Resident
Joany C. Santa,	Licensed Educator/Administrator in Massachusetts and Rhode Island
Krista Winter,	Parent, Worcester Resident

The Board recognizes the need to recruit additional members with varied areas of expertise in order to provide appropriate input and over-site. The Board will include an additional 2-4 members upon invitation by the DESE to submit a final application and will recruit parents from enrolled students following approval. The Board will also be engaged in professional development to broaden the necessary insight and knowledge they must possess and demonstrate to lead LofT as a 21st century school.