

I. CHARTER SCHOOL MISSION

A. Mission Statement of Fall River Maritime Charter Public School (FRMCPS)

Our mission is to empower a diverse group of middle school students to take personal responsibility for their learning. We provide a challenging student-centered, project-based maritime studies program where students will develop a strong identity and become inquisitive learners capable of interacting with others in ways that will contribute to success in high school.

B. Statement of Need

- **Systems:** *A set of well-defined, designed and related processes for meeting the organization's purpose, including quality and operating performance requirements*

The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform recommends the creation of small schools at the middle-grades level. It is a critical step in creating high performing, middle-grades schools that are academically excellent, responsive to the unique needs of young adolescents, and socially equitable.¹

A Commonwealth Charter school will provide families in Fall River with the choice of a small, safe, intimate educational environment. Creating small, personalized environments (the Forum recommends interdisciplinary teams with no more than 80 students per team) are necessary to enhance teaching and learning in the middle level. The Fall River Public middle schools currently serve 2,901 students, grades 6 – 8, in four large schools with an average of 242 students per grade level per school. Research has shown that smaller schools are more effective. “A majority of the 14 million young adolescents (grades 5–8) enrolled in U.S. public schools continue to fare poorly on national and statewide performance assessments. Many eventually tune out or drop out of school.”² With a drop out rate of 10.6% at the high school level (9-12) in Fall River, “holding power” is crucial. Engaging young learners in the middle school years will keep them in high school. Although all four middle schools have relatively high attendance rates compared to the state average, in-school suspension rates range from a low of 20.3 % to a high of 79.3 %. Out-of-school suspension rates range from 14.4% to 56.6 %. “The relationship between school size and student achievement suggests that students’ attachment, persistence, and performance are all stronger in the small schools as compared to the system at large.”³

- **Structure:** *the people in a community considered as a system organized by a characteristic pattern of relationships*

A Commonwealth Charter with a Teacher Professional Practice model will allow entrepreneurial educators to create a responsive, innovative, and efficient program in the Fall River community and to draw on the best resources available to strengthen public education options for learners. Although 95% of teachers in the Fall River Public Schools have been identified as highly qualified in their core subject areas (a higher percentage than the state average) and a student/teacher ration of 13.4 to 1 (a better ratio than the state average), existing systems and structures can often make it difficult to effectively implement change. “The most successful schools are those that use restructuring to help them function as

¹ Policy Statement. *Small Schools and Small Learning Communities*. The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform, Education Development Center. Issue 4, June 2004

² Ibid.

³ Wasley, P. A., Fine, M., Gladden, M., Holland, N. E., King, S. P., Mosak, E., Powell, L. C. (2000), *Small Schools: Great Strides*. New York: Bank Street College of Education.

"professional communities."⁴ A professional practice organization allows teachers to: embrace professionalism and entrepreneurialism and become part of a professional practice organization; be owners of their professional services rather than employees; have true site-based management and make key decisions on how to manage the school's resources; and personalize every student's learning opportunities with Individual Learning Plans and in-depth student-initiated projects.

FRMCPS will serve a population of students represented in the structure of the Fall River Public Schools. For example, using current data available, at full capacity of 80 students the school will serve approximately 25 students who do not have English as their first language (31%), 2 students who have limited English proficiency (2%), 45 students who are from families designated low-income (56%), and 12 who have special needs (15%). Please note that some students will fall into more than one of the categories identified above. Data provided is based on student populations at the four middle schools in Fall River.

- **Learning Experiences:** *processes in which knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors change; the process of reflecting to identify how a situation or future actions could be improved and then using this knowledge to make actual improvement*

Through a variety of unique learning experiences, FRMCPS will develop desirable qualities in students such as respect, integrity, self-awareness, and empathy thereby enabling students to develop a strong identity and become inquisitive learners capable of interacting with others in ways that will contribute to success in high school.

FRMCPS will empower its students to take personal responsibility for their learning; increasing student achievement, narrowing the achievement gap for low-income and English language learners, and ensuring greater "holding power". MA DOE records indicate that for FY04, the Fall River School District is at or below the state MCAS average and has been designated a "targeted area". All though there have been improvements in all areas since FY03, improvement is still needed. For example, looking at MCAS Tests of Spring 2004, on average, 89% of 8th grade students at the four middle schools located in Fall River performed in the Needs Improvement or Warning/Failing category in Mathematics; 80% of 8th grade students performed in the Needs Improvement or Warning/Failing category in Science & Technology; and 58% of 7th grade students performed in the Needs Improvement or Warning/Failing category in English Language Arts. On October 26, 2004, the Board of Education voted to declare Kuss Middle School in Fall River to be chronically underperforming. Kuss is located less than a mile from the proposed site of FRMCPS.

FRMCPS will provide a maritime-based curriculum, aligned with the MA Curriculum Frameworks, for students who may have an interest in the subject and want to explore it in greater depth. With 47 % of the population of Fall River of Portuguese decent (U.S. Census 2000), FRMCPS will engage local, regional, and national Portuguese organizations in planning and developing curriculum. Portugal rose from obscure beginnings to be the greatest maritime, commercial and colonial power in Europe.⁵ A focused and concentrated curriculum in the maritime realm will bring interested students and passionate professionals together for a dynamic educational experience. A course of study in the maritime realm will not only provide the means for students to learn basic skills such as reading, writing, and computation, but also the means to explore and discover a multitude of concepts in science and technology, history and social sciences, mathematics, literature, and the arts. Students will be able to engage in learning experiences with maritime professionals and organizations such as The Marine Museum at Fall River, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, MIT Ocean Engineering, the School for Marine Sciences and Technology at UMASS/Dartmouth, New Bedford Whaling Museum, Battleship Massachusetts, Ocean Classroom Foundation, and the National Maritime Historical Society. A maritime-

⁴ Newman, F.M., and G.G. Welhage. 1995. *Successful school restructuring*. Madison, WI: Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools.

⁵ <http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/History-of-Portugal>

based curriculum will raise awareness among the students about sea education programs available to them in the future (BMC Durfee High School has an active NJROTC program) and the diverse opportunities in the maritime professional world.

- **Tools:** *anything used to help one accomplish a task*

What will make all this possible for a small number of students and teachers who value people, ideas, and project-based learning, are two unique, innovative tools to assist students in the process of becoming inquisitive learners capable of interacting with others in ways that will contribute to success in high school: *Starting Points: Vessels, People, Places, Innovations, and Maritime Artifacts*™ and *TRIM*™ (The Resource for Information Management).

Starting Points™, an encyclopedia, which will be digitally archived, provides students with a resource to stimulate research and develop Individual Courses of Study based on maritime content. Exploratory questions and directives for the students are aligned with the MA Curriculum Frameworks. (See Section II, B. Curriculum)

TRIM™ is a unique, custom designed, software program, developed by the Fulton Project, that works in unison with both *Starting Points*™ and a comprehensive portfolio system. It will provide teachers, parents, and students with the means to communicate and access up-to-date student progress in all areas at any time. (See Section II, B. Curriculum)

- **Why a Commonwealth Charter is Necessary**

A maritime-based educational program, combined with a Teacher Professional Practice model, must be granted autonomy to be effective and the local district is not considering this option. A Commonwealth Charter is necessary for *FRMCPS* to effectively establish the necessary systems, structure, learning experiences, and tools to empower students to take personal responsibility for their learning.

FRMCPS proposes an educational environment that: provides **systems** for meeting the school's mission, including quality and operating performance requirements; establishes a **structure** of teachers and parents who not only nurture the qualities of identity, inquisitiveness, and interaction, but will also model it; **learning experiences** that focus on active learning (project-based and community-based) and equitable instruction (heterogeneous and flexible groupings) which will increase student achievement, narrow the achievement gap, and have greater "holding power" for the students; innovative **tools** (*Starting Points*™ and *TRIM*™) for students, teachers, and parents.

II. DEMONSTRATING ACADEMIC SUCCESS

A. Educational Philosophy

The emerging adolescent experiences physical and social/emotional growth at an alarming rate. The social/emotional struggle they experience during this developmental period, which has a direct effect on academic progress⁶, is a natural process; they will want to take risks and explore the world around them. *FRMCPS* will provide them with a safe and supportive environment in which to do so.

To be effective, *FRMCPS* has adopted *The Seven Attributes of Highly Effective EdVisions Schools* as the educational foundation for the school. The seven attributes, as defined by the Gates Foundation, are evaluated in three or more EdVisions Schools (and other Gates grantees) by the American Institute of Research and the Stanford Research Institute. The attributes of ***Common Focus, High Expectations, Personalized***

⁶ Juvonen, Jaana. Le, Vi-Nhuan. Kaganoff, Tessa. Augustine, Catherine. Constant, Louay. *Focus On the Wonder Years, Challenges Facing the American Middle School*. 2004, RAND Corporation

Environment, Respect & Responsibility, Time to Collaborate, Technology Used as a Tool, and Performance Based, provide the framework for developing the necessary systems, structure, learning experiences, and tools for the school. Utilizing these seven attributes as a foundation for the educational program will ensure that our students leave the eighth grade with a strong identity, the academic skills, the inquisitiveness, and capability to interact with others in ways that will contribute to success in high school. How these attributes are realized is summarized below and described in detail throughout the prospectus where appropriate.

□ **SYSTEMS**

As part of the educational foundation, the attributes of *Personalized Environment* and *Time to Collaborate* provide the framework for creating systems that are pervasive in the educational environment.

Personalized Environment – We know a personalized environment needs well-defined, designed and related process to be effective. Therefore, the systemic structure of FRMCPS will promote and sustain student relationships with adults where every student will have an adult advocate and a personal plan for success. An individual student's identity will be respected. The school will be organized into advisories where there is a significant amount of staff interaction with students.

Time to Collaborate – We know time is needed for effective collaboration and that effective collaboration will result in well-defined, designed and related process for creating a personalized environment. Therefore, the staff at FRMCPS will have time to collaborate and develop skills and plans to meet every student's needs. Parents will be recognized as partners in education. Partnerships will be developed with businesses, social services agencies, and higher education to improve teacher preparation and induction. FRMCPS staff members will exhibit a high degree of democratic interaction utilizing the Five C's of Democratic Collaboration: The Collective, The Consultative, The Coaching Commitment, Consensuality, and Creating Community.

□ **STRUCTURE**

As part of the educational foundation, the attributes of *Common Focus, High Expectations,* and *Respect & Responsibility*, provide the framework for establishing a *structure* that is pervasive in the educational environment.

Common Focus – We know a common focus is essential for empowering the students to take personal responsibility for their learning. Therefore, staff and students will focus on a few important goals obtained by a research-based, student-centered program of learning. The program is highlighted by focus upon a student-directed, project-based approach that emphasizes: autonomy for students and staff; supportive relationships in the interaction between adults and students, students and students, and parents and staff; and life skill attainment and performance assessment.

High Expectations – We know setting high expectations will help all students to achieve Massachusetts state standards and life skills which will lead to the development of inquisitive learners capable of interacting with others in ways that will contribute to success in high school. Therefore, the staff will be dedicated to helping all students to achieve state standards and life skills via a challenging program of self-directed, project-based, transformative learning. All students will: achieve the necessary state standards to achieve a meaningful and powerful middle school education; achieve the development of necessary life skills to be able to move successfully on to high school; achieve a level of engagement in civic and personal affairs so as to lead an effective life of citizenship; and leave middle school with a high degree of passion and ability for inquiry.

Respect & Responsibility – We know a structure of mutual respect and responsibility will produce students who have a strong sense of identity. Therefore, the educational environment will be supportive, safe, ethical, and studious. The staff will teach, model, and expect responsible behavior, and relationships will be based on mutual respect. Students and teachers will treat each other with respect and dignity. There will be a high level of teacher support as well as peer support (for both teachers and students). As a result, the staff will be able to reach all students and make a difference in their lives.

□ **LEARNING EXPERIENCES**

As part of the educational foundation, the five attributes above, in addition to *Performance Based*, provide the framework for establishing *learning experiences* that empower students to take personal responsibility for their learning.

Performance Based – We know a performance-based educational program will lead to high academic achievement for students enabling them to be successful in high school. *FRMCPS* will promote students based upon their competencies with Massachusetts state standards and life skills. Through the use of *TRIM™*, *FRMCPS* will utilize rubrics and check lists pertaining to: life skill development and attainment; project processes; Massachusetts state skill and content standards met; level of student ability to become self-directed and use inquiry. In addition, students will have performance portfolios of their work.

□ **TOOLS**

As part of the educational foundation, the six attributes above, in addition to *Technology Used as a Tool*, provide the framework for acquiring and using *tools* that empower students to take personal responsibility for their learning.

Technology Used as a Tool – We know technology is a tool that can be used to create an efficient and effective educational program. Technology, including *TRIM™* (The Resource for Information Management), is used by staff to meet the needs of students; access best practices, create unique learning experiences that align with the MA Curriculum Frameworks, analyze results, and report to parents and sponsoring agencies. Students will use *TRIM™* on a regular basis to plan and organize their learning, record and monitor their progress, and evaluate their work, as well as the work of others. Students will have access to computer programs and other technologies to learn skills they can utilize in real-world contexts. With a computer to student ratio of 1:1 and individual workstations, student spaces will be similar to real-world work areas. Students will have access to other modern technologies, such as printers, cameras, fax machines, video and music production equipment, media graphics, and various software programs. Staff will utilize a computerized program to track student progress and manage the school.

References: Stoddard, Lyn. *Educating for Human Greatness*, (2003); Newell, Ronald J. *Passion for Learning*, (2003); Newell, Ronald J. and Buchen, Irving. *Democratic Learning and Leading*, (2004); Costa, Arthur. and Kallick, Bena. *Strategies for Assessing Self-directed Learning*, (2003); Dirkswager, Ed. *Teachers as Owners*,(2002)

B. Curriculum

□ **SYSTEMS**

The curriculum at *FRMCPS* is a system of well-defined, designed and related processes that staff, students, and parents will use to create a structure of learning that empowers the students to take personal responsibility for their learning. The curriculum: details what *all students* are to know, how they are to learn it, what the teacher's role is in the process, and the context in which the learning and teaching will take place; enables students, teachers, and parents, to create Individual Learning Plans that will define what *each individual student* is to know, how they will learn it and in what context; and merges maritime studies with the MA Curriculum Frameworks through Individual Courses of Study designed by students and unique learning experiences created by teachers.

□ **STRUCTURE**

FRMCPS is a *maritime-based* educational program. *FRMCPS* will provide a focused and concentrated means for students, teachers, and parents to create an educational environment where students learn basic skills such as reading, writing, and computation, as well as, explore and discover a multitude of concepts in science and technology, history and social sciences, mathematics, literature, and the arts, through maritime studies.

□ **LEARNING EXPERIENCES**

When considering the curriculum for *FRMCPS*, the focus will be on developing a challenging student-centered and project-based program of learning. In his paper, *A Review of Research on Project Based Learning* (March 2000), John W. Thomas, Ph. D., asks an important question which we will consider, “what must a project have in order to be considered an instance of project-based learning?” Thomas offers the following five criteria: *centrality, driving question, constructive investigations, autonomy, and realism*. Project-based learning is *central* to the curriculum at *FRMCPS*, not peripheral, and will focus on *questions or problems that “drive” students to encounter* (and struggle with) the central concepts of a discipline. Projects will involve students in a *constructive investigation* (a goal-directed process that involves inquiry, knowledge building, and resolution). They will be *student driven*, not teacher lead, scripted or packaged, and *realistic*. Projects will embody characteristics that give them a feeling of authenticity to students.

Student designed Individual Courses of Study (ICS) will be the vehicle for project-based learning, empowering students to take personal responsibility for their learning. They are informed by the attributes of *Common Focus, High Expectations, Personalized Environment, and Performance Based*. ICS provide students with the autonomy to actively engage in doing meaningful work, asking questions, discussing ideas, applying skills and knowledge in interesting, thought provoking situations, and integrating it with other content areas. Due to the “sheer breadth of the content and material” expounded in the Frameworks, *History & Social Sciences* will be at the center of student designed ICS, along with *Science & Technology/Engineering*.

□ **TOOLS**

The two primary tools that students will use to merge the maritime-based curriculum with MA Curriculum Frameworks are *Starting Points™* and *TRIM™*. *Starting Points™* provides students with a resource to stimulate research and develop Individual Courses of Study based on maritime content. *Starting Points™* will contain information from a variety of sources; for example: the publications *Maritime Life and Traditions* (Wooden Boat Publications) and *Sea History* (National Maritime Historical Society); historical non-fiction, *Revenge of the Whale* and *Sea of Glory* (Nathaniel Philbrick); artifacts found in the Marine Museum’s collections, as well as other regional, national, and international museums, and historical societies, such as *The Sippican Historical Society*. Exploratory questions and directives for the students are aligned with the MA Curriculum Frameworks.

TRIM™ is a unique, custom designed, software program that works in unison with both *Starting Points™* and a comprehensive portfolio system. Students will use it to plan and organize an ICS, record and monitor their progress, and evaluate their completed work.

The tables below provide a sample of the content and skills, informed by the MA Curriculum Frameworks, which will be used to establish benchmarks at each level. All students, upon completion of their educational program at *FRMCPS*, should know and be able to apply these skills and knowledge of content areas (and others) in new situations. The first table provides examples of how a *vessel, person, place, innovation, or maritime artifact* can be a starting point for exploring a concept outlined in the *History & Social Sciences* and *Science & Technology/Engineering* Frameworks. The second table provides examples of four ICS at each level and what skills and content areas will be applied.

<p>Starting Points: Vessels, People, Places, Innovations, and Maritime Artifacts</p>	<p>Aligning Starting Points with the MA Curriculum Frameworks – Examples</p>
<p>Science & Technology/Engineering Strands</p>	
<p>Innovations: Quadrant & Sextant,(Portugal, 1400s & England, 1700s)</p>	<p>Earth & Space Sciences (Grades 3–5): 14. Recognize that the earth revolves around the sun in a year’s time and that the earth rotates in its axis once approximately every 24 hours.</p>
<p>Vessel: HMS Beagle, The Voyage, 1909-1914</p>	<p>Life Sciences (Grades 6-8): 1. Classify organisms into the currently recognized kingdoms according to characteristics that they share. Be familiar with organisms from each kingdom.</p>
<p>Vessel: The Vulcan (see next entry)</p>	<p>Physical Sciences (Grades 6-8): 2. Differentiate between volume and mass. Define density.</p>
<p>Innovation: Iron Hull Construction, (The Vulcan, Great Britain, 1819)</p>	<p>Technology/Engineering (Grades 6-8): 2.1 Identify and explain the steps of the engineering design process, i.e. identify the need or problem, research, develop, construct, test, evaluate, communicate...</p>
<p>History & Social Sciences Learning Strands</p>	
<p>Vessel: The Portuguese Caravel Person: Prince Henry the Navigator (Portugal, late 1300s -1400s)</p>	<p>Grade 5 – Concepts & Skills: History & Geography: 7. Compare maps of the modern world with historical maps of the world before the Age of Exploration, and describe the changes in 16th and 17th century maps of the world. (G, H, E)</p>
<p>Places: Boston, New Bedford Vessel: Esperanto (Gloucester Fishing Schooner) Artifact: Vessel and labor contract (Essex Shipbuilding Museum)</p>	<p>Grade 5 – Learning Standard: The Political, Intellectual, and Economic Growth of the Colonies, 1700-1775: 5.11 Explain the importance of maritime commerce in the development of the economy of colonial Massachusetts using the services of historical societies and museums as needed. (H, E) The fishing and ship building, and whaling industries, trans-Atlantic trade, port cities</p>
<p>Vessel: The Dhow, 1100s Place: Sur, Oman (Tim Severin Expedition, 1980-81)</p>	<p>Grade 6 – Learning Standard: Western Asia (the Middle East): WA 3. Explain how the following factors have influenced settlement and the economies of major Middle Eastern countries: absolute and relative locations, climate, physical characteristics, natural resources, population size, general education</p>
<p>Vessel: Funeral Ship of Cheops Person: Pharaoh Cheops (Egypt, 2500, 2600 BCE)</p>	<p>Grade 7 – Learning Standard: Egypt, 3000-1200BC/BCE: 7.14 Describe the role of the pharaoh god/king, the concept of dynasties, the importance of ...one Egyptian ruler, the relationship of pharaohs to peasants, and the role of slaves in ancient Egypt. (H, C)</p>
<p>Vessel: Hancock, Frigate (1776) Artifact: Hancock, Frigate (The Marine Museum)</p>	<p>Grade 8 – Pathway 3* - U.S. History I Learning Standard: The Political and Intellectual Origins of the American Nation: Revolution and the Constitution, 1763 – 1789: US1.1 Explain the political and economic factors that contributed to the American Revolution</p>
<p>Vessel: Savannah (steamship, 1819) Person: Robert Fulton (1765-1815) Place: Great Lakes(1830s) Innovation: Screw Propeller (1838)</p>	<p>Grade 8 – Pathway 3* - U.S. History I Learning Standard: Economic Growth in the North and South 1800-1860: US1.27 Explain the importance of the Transportation Revolution of the 19th Century (the building of canals, roads, bridges, turnpikes, steamboats, and railroads), including the stimulus it provided to the growth of a market economy. (H, E)</p>
<p><i>*Grade 8 - Pathway 3 aligns with the Fall River Public Schools history and social science curriculum, grades 8 – 12.</i></p>	

Frameworks	Student Designed Individual Courses of Study Applying Skills/Content (MA Curriculum Frameworks) - Examples
Level I – An ICS In a Single Content Area – Starting Point: Essex (vessel/whaleship), 1819 - 1820	
ELA (8.19/8.20)	<i>Applied skills: Read Revenge of the Whale by Nathaniel Philbrick, write a paper identifying and analyzing sensory details and figurative language; and the author’s use of dialogue and description</i>
Level II – An ICS Integrating Two Content Areas – Starting Point: HMS Beagle (vessel), The Voyage, 1909-1914	
ELA (8.27/19.7)	<i>Applied skills: Read selected passages from The Voyage... by Charles Darwin; Identify evidence used to support an argument and write a report based on the research that includes quotations, footnotes or endnotes, and a bibliography.</i>
S & T/E (LS 1)	<i>Applied skills: Classify organisms into the currently recognized kingdoms according to characteristics they share.</i>
Level III – An ICS Integrating Three Content Areas – Starting Point: Iron Hull Construction, The Vulcan, Great Britain, 1819	
S & T/E (T/E 2.1)	<i>Applied skills: Identify and explain the steps of the engineering design process, research the problem, develop possible solutions, select the best possible solutions, construct a prototype, test and evaluate, communicate solutions and redesign</i>
ELA (19.17)	<i>Applied skills: Write a short explanation of a process that includes a topic statement, supporting details, and a conclusion.</i>
M (8.G.5)	<i>Applied skills: Use a straight edge, compass, or other tools to formulate and test conjectures, and to draw geometric figures.</i>
Level IV – An ICS Integrating Four Content Areas – Starting Point: The Erie Canal (Place/Innovation) 1808- 1825	
H & SS (USI.27)	<i>Applied skills: Economic Growth in the North and South 1800-1860: Explain the importance of the Transportation Revolution of the 19th Century including the stimulus it provided to the growth of a market economy. (H, E)</i>
ELA (24.4)	<i>Applied skills: Apply steps for obtaining information from a variety of sources, organizing information, documenting sources, and presenting research in individual projects</i>
M (8.G.8)	<i>Applied skills: Recognize and draw two-dimensional representations of three-dimensional objects, e.g. nets, projections, and perspective drawings; and use models, graphs, and formulas to solve simple problems involving rates, e.g. velocity and density.</i>
S & T/E (T/E 6.3)	<i>Applied skills: Identify and describe three subsystems of a transportation vehicle or device, i.e. structural, propulsion, guidance, suspension, control, and support.</i>
Key: ELA (English Language Arts); H & SS (History and Social Science); M (Mathematics); S & T/E (Science and Technology/Engineering)	

□ **LEARNING EXPERIENCES**

In addition to Individual Courses of Study, students will participate in a variety of other learning experiences including, teacher created learning experiences, self-paced skills development programs, and explicit instruction, to acquire the necessary skills to be competent in reading, writing, and computing.

English Language Arts - Emphasis will be placed on providing students with the necessary skills and strategies to be competent readers, writers, and speakers. Students will acquire these strategies through direct skills instruction, unique learning experiences, and through a repetitive process of planning and organizing projects, recording and monitoring progress, and evaluating work. All students will participate in three literacy-learning experiences: Writer's Workshop, Reading Seminar, and Independent Reading.

The Writer's Workshop format calls for uninterrupted, long blocks of time, and provides opportunities for teacher modeling, independent work, and shared learning. Students will make their own choice in regards to topic, style, and format based on previously set goals in their Individual Learning Plan and/or Individual Course(s) of Study.

The Socratic Method of Questioning will be the primary teaching tool utilized in Reading Seminar. This method provides opportunities for: critical readings of texts; teaches respect for diverse ideas, people, and practices; enhances students' knowledge and research base; develops strategies for increasing success for all students; potential for creating a positive learning environment for all students; creates a community of inquiry; develops strategies for critical thinking skills, building self-esteem, and problem solving; quality time to engage in in-depth discussions, problem solving and clarification of one's ideas, ethics and values; builds a strong, collaborative work culture and puts the student in the center of the learning as an active and engaged participant. Texts selected for Reading Seminars will be chosen for their relevance to the over arching themes articulated in the History & Social Sciences Frameworks⁷ providing the students and teachers an opportunity to engage in meaningful conversation and critical thinking.

Independent Reading is essential for building fluency, increasing vocabulary, and building background knowledge. Research clearly shows that the reading of meaningful, connected text results in improved reading achievement.⁸

Mathematics - The mathematics curriculum at FRMCPS will be informed by a report from the U.S. Department of Education. The curriculum will: provide all students the opportunity to take Algebra I or a similarly demanding course that includes fundamental algebraic concepts in the 8th grade to enable students to take more advanced mathematics and science courses in all four years of high school; build the groundwork for success in algebra by providing a rigorous curriculum in grades 5-7 that moves beyond arithmetic and prepares students for the transition to algebra; and ensure that all students, parents, teachers, and counselors understand the importance of students' early study of algebra as well as continued study of rigorous mathematics and science in high school.⁹

The five Guiding Principles outlined by the Mathematics Curriculum Frameworks (DOE, 2000), Learning, Teaching, Technology, Equity, and Assessment, are congruent with our educational philosophy defined by The Seven Attributes of Highly Effective EdVisions Schools and align with our mission. Learning, Teaching, and Equity are incorporated into the mathematical learning experiences that students at FRMCPS will participate in. These learning experiences can be defined in four ways: student designed Individual Courses of Study, self-paced skills development, teacher created learning experiences, and explicit instruction.

Teacher created maritime-based mathematical learning experiences are designed to challenge

⁷ MA DOE, *History & Social Sciences Curriculum Frameworks*, 2003

⁸ Anderson, R. C., P. T. Wilson, and L. G. Fielding. *Growth in reading and how children spend their time outside school*. Reading Research Quarterly, 23, (1988): 285-303.

⁹ U.S. Department of Education, "Mathematics Equals Opportunity" (white paper prepared for U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley), October 20, 1997. <ed.gov/pubs/math>

students in multiple ways. Short- and long-term investigations that connect procedures and skills with conceptual understanding are integral components of the teacher created mathematical learning experience (DOE, et al. 2000). A teacher created mathematical learning experience, integrating science and technology/engineering, can be read about in *A Typical Day in the Life of Graca Estrela*, Section D. School Characteristics.

The self-paced skills development utilizes a software program such as Accelerated Math. This type of program: generates unlimited practice assignments tailored to each student's level; gives immediate, individual feedback (detailed reports assist in the process of identifying specific problem areas and so that they can be addressed quickly); provides quick access to student progress with each math objective; and helps students practice precise skills necessary to move ahead at their own pace. When appropriate, students will receive one-on-one or small group explicit instruction of necessary math skills.

Technology and Assessment are incorporated into the systems and tools provided by FRMCPS to empower students to take personal responsibility for their learning.

□ **Non-academic Goals**

Non-academic goals will be part of a student's Individual Learning Plan; please refer to the process described in Section II, D. Assessment Systems. Non-academic goals will include social/emotional and life skills goals. Social/emotional goals will be related to the work students are called to do to create the ethos of the school, which will be based on *The Responsive Classroom*. Life skills goals will include, but are not limited to, skills of autonomy. Our mission is to empower students to take personal responsibility for their learning; developing skills of autonomy will assist them in this process. Autonomous skills include: task completion, time management, responsibility, managing information, and problem solving. A scoring rubric within TRIM will be used to assess student progress with these goals. Example: Attachment A

As a basis for developing non-academic goals in the social/emotional realm FRMCPS will adopt the seven tenets which characterize *The Responsive Classroom* approach: the social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum; how children learn is as important as what children learn; the greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction; there is a set of social skills that children need to learn to be successful (Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, Self-control); educators must know children individually, culturally, and developmentally; all parents want what's best for their children and educators must work with parents as partners; the principles of *The Responsive Classroom* must be practice by educators in their interactions with each other, with the children, and with the parents.¹⁰ FRMCPS will develop a rubric for social/emotional goals based on the set of social skills stated above (cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control).

C. Promotion and Graduation Standards

□ **Promotional Policies and Standards**

FRMCPS considers the entire population of 80 students as a community of learners - not four distinct groups of 20 students at each grade level (grades 5-8). In an educational environment where the students are empowered to take personal responsibility for their learning, progress with academic, social/emotional, and life skills goals is unique to the individual. Students at FRMCPS will progress through a level system at a rate that is appropriate to their developmental level. Clearly defined benchmarks at each level will enable a student to understand what is expected. Prior to moving to the next level, students will need to schedule a Level Hearing. A Level Hearing provides a student the opportunity to demonstrate specific skills and knowledge they have acquired and present evidence of mastery of specific standards, including those in content areas of the MA Curriculum Frameworks. Students, teachers, and community members will evaluate a student's progress during this hearing. The

¹⁰ <http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/about/principles.html>

table below provides examples of standards a student needs to meet to progress from one level to the next.

	Individual Courses of Study	Life Skills		English Language Arts
Level I	Completed 12 ICS - requiring one form or writing - at the level of Advancing or above (3 in each major content area)	Completed 70% of projects in a timely fashion with assistance and daily supervision	Acquires, organizes, and interprets information with some assistance	Has written a one-page research paper at a level of Advancing or above at least two times.
Level II	Completed 12 ICS - requiring two forms of writing, incorporating two content areas - at the level of Advancing or above (covered all content areas at least 4x)	Completed 80% of projects in a timely fashion with less assistance and daily supervision	Acquires, organizes, and interprets information with less assistance	Has written a three-page research paper at a level of Advancing or above at least two times.
Level III	Completed 9 ICS requiring three forms of writing, incorporating three content areas – at the level of Advancing or above (covered all content areas at least 6x)	Completed 90% of projects on time and met deadlines with minimal assistance	Acquires, organizes, and interprets information with minimal assistance	Has written a six-page research paper at a level of Advancing or above at least two times.
Level IV	Completed 6 ICS requiring four forms of writing, incorporating four content areas – at the level of Advancing or above (all content areas covered)	Consistently set own deadlines and completed 100% of projects on time: works independently	Acquires, organizes, and interprets information independently	Has written an eight-page research paper at a level of Advancing or above.

□ **Graduation Standards**

The following table provides examples of “exit standards” for the grade grouping (5-8) at FRMCPS. These are examples of what students will know and be able to do upon completion of the educational program at FRMCPS.

Examples of Exit Standards				
	Language Oral Presentations	Reading/Literature Understanding Text	Composition Informational - Expository	Media Media Production
ELA	Gives oral presentations for various purposes, showing appropriate changes in delivery and using language for dramatic effect. (3.8)	Identifies and analyzes main ideas, supporting ideas, and supporting details. (8.22)	Writes reports based on research that includes quotations, footnotes or endnotes, and a bibliography. (19.21)	Creates media presentations and written reports on the same subject and compares the differences in effects of each medium. (27.4)

Mathematics	Number Sense and Operations	Patterns, Relations, and Algebra
	Student selects and uses appropriate operations – addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and positive integer exponents – to solve problems with rational numbers (including negatives). (8.N.12)	Student is able to set up and solve linear equations and inequalities with one or two variables, using algebraic methods, models, and/or graphs. (8.P.7)
H & SS	Note: FRMCPS chose Pathway 3 as the sequence to follow because it aligns with the local high school’s history and social science curriculum.	
	Formation and Framework of American Democracy	Political and Intellectual Origins of the American Nation
	Student is able to describe how decisions are made in a democracy, including the role of legislatures, courts, executives, and the public. (History, Civics)	Student is able to explain the role of Massachusetts in the Revolution, including important events that took place in Massachusetts and important leaders from Massachusetts. (History)

□ **Example of Performance Standards**

Below is a sample “page” from TRIM that will be used for evaluating student work. The performance standards indicate the following attributes:

Beginning	I often needed guidance and help understanding how to put this quality into my writing.
Developing	I am actively immersed in learning to understand this quality of writing. I occasionally need some guidance and help understanding how to put this quality into my writing.
Advancing	I understand this quality but may not be consistent with it throughout my piece of writing.
Excelling	I have internalized this writing quality fully and am able to apply it to all forms of writing.

Evaluation – Individual Course of Study

Wednesday, March 29, 2006

Student: Derek Level: II AMS: Roger Bourassa

Composition – Informational – Critical Essay

Qualities of Writing	Beginning	Developing	Advancing	Excelling
Purpose: the degree to which the piece of writing: - establishes and maintains a clear purpose - demonstrates an awareness of audience and task - exhibits clarity of idea	○	○	○	○
Organization: the degree to which the piece of writing: - illustrates unity - illustrates coherence	○	○	○	○
Details: the degree to which the details are appropriate for your purpose and support the main point (s) of your piece of writing	○	○	○	○
Usage, Mechanics, Grammar: the degree to which the piece of writing exhibits correct: - usage (i.e. tense formation, agreement, word choice) - mechanics (spelling, capitalization, punctuation) - grammar - sentence structure as appropriate to the writing piece	○	○	○	○
Voice/Tone: the degree to which your piece of writing reflects personal investment and expression	○	○	○	○

D. Assessment

Considering the targeted population, *FRMCPS* needs to provide: a measuring and reporting system that considers the diverse characteristics of the students and recognizes their unique abilities; a structure of mutual respect and responsibility; learning experiences that provide opportunities for students, teachers, and parents, to reflect and identify how to improve instruction and student learning; and tools that provide a consistent process to individualize learning for each student.

□ **SYSTEMS & TOOLS: Collecting and Using Baseline Achievement Data**

Informed by the attributes of: *Common Focus, High Expectations, Personalized Environment, Technology as a Tool, Performance Based*

With respect to the attribute of Common Focus, the FRMCPS assessment system will focus on obtaining data that will assist students and teachers with establishing Individual Learning Plans (ILP). Throughout the school year, data will be gathered on a consistent basis to assist with reporting within-year student gains/losses. This will be accomplished primarily through a weekly goal setting session between a student and their Academic Management Specialist (AMS) where the stated academic, social/emotional, and life skills goals are addressed. Using *TRIM™*, students will have the opportunity to plan and organize, record and monitor, and evaluate their work. Short-term and long-term academic, social/emotional, and life skills goals will be set and carefully monitored each week. In addition, data will be gathered through Presentations of Learning upon completion of a student-designed, project-based Individual Course of Study, a Level Hearing (upon completion of specific level benchmarks), portfolio reviews, and other assessment measures such as quizzes and tests.

In conjunction with the Global Assessment System developed by Child & Family Services, Inc., a select battery of standardized and informal assessments will be administered to all students upon enrollment in the school to collect data. FRMCPS will administer the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) as required by state law and Progress Toward Standards (PTS), a standards-based testing program offered by Measured Progress, to measure student knowledge relative to MA State and national standards. In addition to MCAS and PTS, students will receive a core battery of selected subtests, including, but not limited to: the Woodcock-Johnson III, and Word Identification & Spelling Test. Other assessments will be administered on an as-needed basis to acquire more discrete information necessary to understand a student's learning profile. We will also administer a nationally norm-referenced reading and mathematics exam (i.e. Stanford 9) on an annual basis for all students at each grade level.

When a student enters FRMCPS for the first time, they will take the PTS test equivalent to their grade level (based on previous data available). PTS results will be used to identify specific standards for creating a student's ILP. Subsequently, students and teachers will use the information in an ILP to create student-directed, project-based, transformative learning experiences. Upon completion of the first level benchmarks, a student will take the next standards-based test equivalent to their grade level. The data collected will then be used to develop a new ILP at the next level for the student. As a student progresses, year-to-year gains are easily identified by the data collected using the Progress Toward Standards assessment system. When a student has mastered all four level benchmarks (grades 5-8), they will take a final standards-based test that will be scaled to MCAS scores.

PTS is statistically linked to MCAS and the results will be reported on the same score scale used in MCAS. This unique feature will provide students, teachers, and parents with a meaningful picture of student performance as compared to the MA Curriculum Frameworks and performance standards and provides the opportunity to plan, organize, record, and monitor student progress toward the state standards.

Recording, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting student progress on a regular basis is a priority

for FRMCPS. The primary, internal/school-developed tool for measuring and reporting student progress will be The Resource for Information Management (*TRIM™*). *TRIM™* includes a standards-based reporting system that is aligned with the school's level benchmarks and MA State Curriculum Frameworks. In addition, *TRIM™* will provide a variety of task specific checklists to assist students in completing projects, short- and long-term goals, and level benchmarks. Multiple rubrics will be used for evaluating specific areas, for example: written compositions, demonstrating knowledge of standards-based content, presentation skills, etc. Through *TRIM™*, students, teachers, and parents will have instant access to a variety of reports including, but not limited to: Individual Courses of Study completed and level of attainment, learning experiences completed, level progress, skills mastered (goals obtained), and MA Curriculum Frameworks standards completed and level of attainment.

FRMCPS will also utilize an extensive portfolio system, in conjunction with *TRIM™*, to measure and report student progress. Portfolios will contain such items as: reflections, documentation of time and learning, journals; academic, social/emotional, and life skills attainment judgments by students, staff, and community members; performance criteria met; and student assessment of personal learning goals attained.

Students, teachers, and parents will use the results of the administered tests to develop Individual Learning Plans to improve academic ability. Individual Learning Plans will be evaluated and modified by students, teachers, and parents, in August/September, November/December, February/March and May/June. In addition, students will meet with their AMS on a weekly basis to evaluate their progress with stated academic, social/emotional, and life skills goals. Using *TRIM™*, detailed notes of weekly meetings are recorded and available for viewing immediately by the student's parent(s) and other teachers. When a stated goal has been accomplished through demonstrated mastery, the stated goal and work sample will be included in a student's portfolio.

The standardized assessment information will be reported in November of the first year of a student's attendance, during a parent-teacher conference. By November the student will have had the opportunity to develop academic goals, and have work samples to show progress on stated goals. All assessment and achievement information, including standardized assessment information, and goals that result from this information, will be shared with student, teacher(s), and parents/guardians upon receipt of the information.

- **STRUCTURE & LEARNING EXPERIENCES: Improving Instruction and Student Learning** Informed by the attributes of: *Common Focus, High Expectations, Respect & Responsibility, Personalized Environment, Technology as a Tool, Time to Collaborate, Performance Based*

Assessment information will provide a profile of underlying basic skills needed for a student to be successful in a program of student-centered, project-based learning where students take ownership of their own learning. This information, in addition to previous academic records, a student interview, as well as, weekly evaluations with an AMS, will provide the staff (and students) with the insight and knowledge to determine how a student performs in the educational environment, given the student's current level of skills. The individual student's educational program will be tailored to address documented needs (based on the assessments) while at the same time using a student's strengths to move their educational instructional program forward.

FRMCPS is designed to teach and reinforce the underlying basic skills, or "tools". The assessment instruments will identify the specific "tools" that a student may be lacking to comprehend, and exhibit knowledge of the school curriculum. Through weekly goal-setting sessions with an AMS, the student will become aware of areas of need for further instruction, which will be relevant to the individual student. With the acquisition of basic underlying skills, students are empowered to take personal responsibility for their learning by applying them in the context of a self-directed, project-based

Individual Course of Study or a unique learning experience designed by a Content Area Specialist. Students will demonstrate their understanding of content, mastery of specific skills, as well as experience the need to master additional skills to accomplish a more complex project through these processes. Students will develop an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses at a particular skill level, learn what is required to improve, participate in learning experiences to practice and acquire new skills, and immediately apply them in a new project. The relevance of newly acquired skills becomes apparent immediately through this process. Success with a complex project will increase academic ability.

With assistance from ATLAS Communities, FRMCPS will develop an effective staff development program that uses assessment data to develop teaching objectives with measurable benchmarks that are linked to the school's target goals for AYP. Professional development is the cornerstone of the whole school strategy and Whole Faculty Study Groups are at the center of professional development efforts. All faculty members will participate in small study groups that convene on a weekly basis to examine curricular and instructional issues.

Teachers will choose topics for study by examining school data—everything from writing samples to parent involvement, test scores, etc. Assessment data on student achievement of level benchmarks and the MA Curriculum Frameworks will be collected constantly through *TRIM™*. Since learning experiences are rooted in the MA Curriculum Frameworks, teachers will assess the effectiveness of Individual Courses of Study designed by students and unique learning experiences created by teachers through student and teacher evaluations of these experiences. This process will reveal student needs, which then help teachers chart their own courses of study to meet those needs. The content addressed by the study groups must translate back to the unique learning experiences created by teachers, and to the Individual Courses of Study designed by students.

Teachers will work together, observe each other, and consult outside experts as needed. Study groups will provide much needed time and space for research, planning, demonstration, practice, and reflection – habits that define what it means to be a learner and a professional. Whole faculty study groups are the anchor and point of departure for other forms of professional development, including outside learning opportunities.

The use of assessment data related to student needs is central to this collaboration. Teachers in Whole Faculty Study Groups use an array of data to help understand who the children are as well as the communities in which they reside. Plans will be developed to reflect the priorities suggested by the data, in particular helping to establish the appropriate focus on student learning and achievement. ATLAS will support FRMCPS to create opportunities for reflection – time and space to analyze the data, plan next steps, and consider the impact of decisions. Examples of staff development plans may include the following: how to interpret the scores to assist a student in developing specific academic goals; how to use the scores to develop a diagnostic, prescriptive instructional program; how to develop an effective instructional sequence, i.e. which skills need to be taught first or how to ‘unpack’ a skill to identify where a student may have difficulty demonstrating mastery of a school (acquiring and applying a skill); what the scores mean in terms of student performance in Individual Courses of Study and teacher created learning experiences; what the scores mean in terms of individual student expectations and instructional organization; how to administer the standardized assessments and record anecdotal information during the administration of the assessment; and scoring, error analysis, and understanding student behavior during testing.

D. School Characteristics

- **SYSTEMS: Calendar, Hours of Operation, Organization of Students and Teachers**
Informed by the attributes of: *Common Focus, Performance Based, Time to Collaborate, Personalized Environment*

FRMCPS will follow the school calendar of the Fall River Public Schools (180 days) to accommodate families with children attending district schools. However, to accommodate the needs of today's families, the developmental needs of the late childhood/early adolescent, our educational practices and mission, the school day at FRMCPS will be longer. Daily hours of operation will be from 7:30 am – 5:30 pm.

Considering the mission of FRMCPS to empower students to take personal responsibility for their learning, the school will open its doors at 7:30 am for students who want to schedule extra structured learning time; for example one-on-one explicit instruction, independent study (Individual Course of Study), independent reading, etc. However, students will not be required to come to school until 8:30 am to begin structured learning time for core subjects (as defined in 603 CMR 27.02) at 9:00 am. The decision to have a later starting time is based on research of late childhood and early adolescent/adolescent sleeping needs and patterns. For example, in a recent study published in *Developmental Psychology* (Vol. 36, No. 3), data has shown that 6th grade students who do not get enough sleep develop adverse cognitive, behavioral and emotional habits (Sadeh, Aavir, Gruber, 2000). The school day will end at 5:30 pm. The extended hours offer an additional 540 hours of structured learning time per school year (1 hour per day is allotted for non-structured learning time).

Students will be organized into a single community of 80 learners (grades 5-8) that is non-graded/multi-aged in nature. Upon entering the school for the first time, a student will be assigned to an advisory group of 20 students (mixed age and ability) with an Academic Management Specialist (AMS). Students will remain with the same advisory group for the duration of their educational program at FRMCPS. Advisory groups will come together at the beginning and end of each day (see Structure: Culture or Ethos below). In addition, a student will meet with their AMS for 45 minutes, once a week to plan and organize/record and monitor their ILP and Individual Course(s) of Study.

Teachers will be organized into two groups: Academic Management Specialists (AMS) and Content Area Specialists (CAS). The basic responsibility of an AMS is to work with students to: plan and organize individual learning; record and monitor progress; and evaluate work. The basic responsibility of a CAS is to create unique learning experiences that provide opportunities for students to acquire academic, social/emotional, and life skills. Teachers will be provided with time to collaborate and develop skills and plans to meet every student's needs. Once a month, on Wednesdays, students will be dismissed early (12:00pm) to allow time for teachers (TPP members) to meet as a whole group.

□ **STRUCTURE: Culture or Ethos**

Informed by the attributes of: *Common Focus, Respect & Responsibility, Personalized Environment*

Students and teachers at FRMCPS will become part of a community of learners where their individual identity is respected, autonomy is granted, and supportive relationships exist between adults and students. Through the use of a social curriculum, students and teachers at FRMCPS will create a supportive, safe, ethical and studious environment. FRMCPS is grounded in the belief that people are social by nature and that learning is a social process. Learning involves on-going decision-making in the learning community by the teachers, students, parents and community. FRMCPS believes democracy - specifically, social democracy - serves as the basis for the decision-making processes.

FRMCPS seeks to have the students experience democracy on a daily basis. To foster a sense of belonging, this will be practiced by the advisory groups at the start of each day. Faculty and students, together, will have the freedom to determine the components of the opening of each day; no template is offered. Rather, faculty and staff may draw from a variety of methods including Morning Meeting (Responsive Classroom), Democratic Classroom Meeting (Judicious Discipline), and Restorative Justice Circles. These three use the structure of a circle, providing all an opportunity to see one another, to speak to another, and to listen to another. The opening provides an opportunity for all to feel welcome, to reflect

on the learning of the previous day, to check in with what has happened since they last met, and to plan for the day. The circle process—to circle up—provides an opportunity for all to be involved at the very start of each day in an active way.

Along with Presentations of Learning, regular learning community meetings will be conducted where the entire school community meets to celebrate accomplishments, hear information and address concerns. Whenever possible, students are to plan these all-community gatherings and serve as the up-front people at the entrances, during the gathering, and at the exits.

□ **LEARNING EXPERIENCES: Instructional Organization**

Informed by the attributes of: *Common Focus, High Expectations, Respect & Responsibility, Personalized Environment*

The instructional organization of FRMCPS is focused on providing a challenging student-directed, project-based program of learning that empowers the student to take responsibility for their learning; helping students to achieve MA State standards and life skills. The system of progression for students will be based upon the mastery of competencies in academic, social/emotional, and like skills. Based on the unique qualities and characteristics of each student, this process will happen at different times for the students. Therefore, for the purpose of instructional organization, students will be organized into four groups, Level I, II, III, & IV. Progress from one level to the next will be based solely on an individual student’s ability to master specific level benchmarks.

Instructional Organization of Students –	
Areas of Focus and Concentration/Acquiring Skills and Knowledge	
Level I: Beginning Learner:	Organization, time management, scheduling, attendance, fundamentals of an Individual Learning Plan, fundamentals of creating an Individual Course of Study, documentation of time and learning, fundamentals of self and peer assessment, basic skills instruction in reading, writing, & mathematics
Level II & III: Intermediate Learner:	Application of the skills and knowledge acquired above, growth in self and peer assessment, growth in complexity and quality of Individual Courses of Study, growth in attaining higher levels of learning in reading, writing, & mathematics, self-advocacy
Level IV: Advanced Learner:	Application of the skills and knowledge acquired above, growth in self-advocacy, advanced levels of self and peer assessment, advanced levels of complexity and quality of Individual Courses of Study, attainment of higher levels learning in reading, writing, & mathematics

Considering our mission to empower students to take responsibility for their learning, students are expected to move towards independence. Students, teachers, and parents will develop Individual Learning Plans which will be reflected in a student’s daily and weekly schedule. Initially, new students will have a limited amount of time available for them to schedule their learning experiences. As they acquire the necessary skills and knowledge, they will be given more freedom and flexibility to schedule their learning experiences.

Learning Experience	% of Time on Task /Per Learning Experience /Per Week*	
	Level I Expectations	Level IV Expectations
Plan & Organize (morning)	3% (1.25hrs)	3% (1.25hrs)
Reading Seminar	5 % (2.25 hrs)	5 % (2.25 hrs)
Writers Workshop¹	7 % (3 hrs)	0 %
Mathematics	8 % (3.75 hrs)	8 % (3.75 hrs)

Independent Reading	6 % (2.5 hrs)	6 % (2.5 hrs)
Explicit Instruction (if necessary)	4 % (2 hrs)	4 % (2 hrs)
Teacher Created Learning Experiences²	20 % (9 hrs)	10 % (4.5 hrs)
Individual Courses of Study²	7 % (3 hrs)	23 % (10.5 hrs)
Advisory Meeting	2 % (.75 hr)	2 % (.75 hr)
Evaluations/Hearings	7 % (3 hrs)	7 % (3 hrs)
Foreign Language Instruction	8 % (3.75 hrs)	8 % (3.75 hrs)
Small Group Maritime Activity³	7 % (3 hrs)	7 % (3 hrs)
Record and Monitor	3% (1.25hrs)	3% (1.25hrs)
Circle (Responsive Classroom)	3% (1.25 hrs)	3% (1.25 hrs)
Lunch/Recess/Breaks	11 % (5.25hrs)	11 % (5.25 hrs)

1. Students will acquire the necessary skills and strategies to become competent writers while participating in Writers Workshop. Upon completion of specific benchmarks at each level, students are expected to complete an increasing amount of writing (in volume and complexity) through their Individual Courses of Study.
2. Upon completion of specific benchmarks at each level, students are expected to plan and complete more complex, integrated, project-based Individual Courses of Study with less reliance on teacher created learning experiences.
3. Activities include: Swimming, boat building, and/or sailing.

*Total time is based on 45 hours per week; 8:30 am – 5:30 pm (9 hours)

□ **TOOLS:**

Informed by the attribute of: *Technology as a Tool*

TRIM™ (The Resource for Information Management) will be the primary tool that students and teachers will use to assist in the process of effectively and efficiently managing the instructional organization of the school.

□ **Monday, December 13, 2010 - A Day in the Life of Graca Estrela, a Level IV Student**

I stopped at the front door of the Marine Museum at Fall River and looked down at my GPS device which read: 41° 42' 10" North, 71° 09' 49" West. I glanced back up at the door – the numbers matched. I entered the museum lost in my thoughts, reflecting on the significance of John Harrison's work - and eventual success - to determine longitude, using clocks, more than two hundred years ago. John Harrison, a village carpenter, self-educated, no formal credentials – a persistent person with a creative vision who struggled against odds – fantastic! "Excuse me, may I help you?" The voice of a young girl, about 13, brought me back to 41° 42' 10" North, 71° 09' 49" West (well, actually, I had moved off a few points since my arrival).

Graca, of Portuguese decent, was standing in front of a magnificent model of the 32 Gun Frigate Hancock - the entire model is made of whalebone and the attention to detail is incredible. She had come down to view the model one more time before her Presentation of Learning, which would be conducted this afternoon. "Two weeks ago I started a new Individual Course of Study (ICS)," she explained. "I decided to use the Hancock as a starting point. Did you know that it was 234, no wait, 235 years ago TODAY that the Continental Congress authorized the Continental Navy to build this ship and 12 other frigates?" "Why did they want to build these ships?" "To fight the British! America had claimed their independence! In 1777, the British captured the Hancock and said she was the finest and fastest frigate in the world!" "What's a frigate?" I asked.

As Graca led me through the museum and up the stairs to the remaining part of the school, we discussed frigates, the American Revolution, John Hancock, and the Continental Congress. She mentioned she got her information from the museums historian/archivist, the Internet, and some books she checked out of the school's library. The English Language Arts specialist helped her with the details of her two-page research paper and her Academic Management Specialist (AMS) guided her through recording and monitoring her progress.

What I saw upon entering the second floor looked much like a photo I had seen downstairs in the museum the grand central hall of the Providence, a steamship of the Fall River Line. Small conference type rooms, around the perimeter of the space, were filled with small groups of students and an adult who were engaged in conversation. There were individual students meeting with their AMS – Graca mentioned that all students meet with their AMS once a week for an hour. Other students were conducting research for their ICS at computer kiosks in the “grand central hall”. We passed by the science lab where a group of students were working with a professor from Massachusetts Maritime Academy. They were exploring hydro-dynamics in the water tank using hulls they designed and built in the workshop.

As we stopped to watch the students in the science lab, Graca told me about a learning experience she participated in with a professor at MA Maritime Academy. She had worked with some of the sophomore cadets enrolled in a ship construction course when she was on Level III. The cadets had been given a construction list with which to construct their models and a choice to construct a dry cargo carrier or a liquid cargo carrier. They could, if they chose, incorporate normal ship construction techniques into their models, to increase longitudinal strength, and to increase subdivision and reduce free surface effects, or experiment. The winners would be determined first by: the ship models that remained in stable equilibrium that did not capsize or sink, and secondly, by the models that loaded the most cargo.

Graca and her classmates, assisted in the loading and testing of the various models. “We had been studying displacement and Archimedes’s Principal,” explained Graca, “and had emailed the cadets during the project. We had observed the test results over the Internet from a previous group of cadets who did the same thing, and then we saw how our ideas that we suggested to them had been used in their models and discovered how the models did. Our ship held the most vegetable oil!”

Afterwards, Graca brought me over to a three-dimensional relief map, of the northeastern coast of the U.S., which she made with a group of students during a “teacher created learning experience”. She signed up for this learning experience at the beginning of the semester and, like several of the other students, used it as a resource for three of her ICSs. Graca showed me how she was going to use the relief map - and small, simple clay ships to re-enact the battles that the Hancock engaged in - to demonstrate her understanding of multiple causes, and how forces from different spheres of life can cause or shape an event.

Fantastic! – Another John Harrison in the making.

□ **Student Behavior and Discipline**

FRMCPS’s behavior and discipline policies will be based on the Responsive Classroom approach developed by the Northeast Foundation for Children. This approach uses logical consequences, problem-solving meetings, empowering language, and clear positives. In a recent study first published in March 2004 (Rimm-Kaufman, 2004), it was concluded that teachers who used more *Responsive Classroom* practices feel... *more effective in their approaches to discipline, and more effective in their ability to affect the school climate...* An earlier study (Elliot, 1999) concluded that *the frequency of problem behaviors of students decreases significantly with a year or more of exposure to instruction that is organized and delivered within a Responsive Classroom, and that the social skills taught and reinforced in The Responsive Classroom approach seem to function as academic enablers, resulting in improved scores on achievement tests.*

FRMCPS will prepare a student handbook with information about the school's discipline policy, incorporating *The Responsive Classroom* approach, and distribute it to each student and their family. In addressing student behavior and discipline in the school's Code of Conduct, FRMCPS will meet all state and federal laws and regulations. For additional information, please refer to Section II, B. Curriculum – Non-academic Goals.

□ **Family/School Partnerships**

Speaking about eight successful charter schools in the United States, the Office of Innovation and Improvement (US DOE) states: *The culture forged around a shared educational vision creates a strong sense of community. Parents choose to send their children, and students know why they are there. The schools tend to be small, which itself allows an intimacy and face-to-face recognition not possible in larger schools. But their family-like feel is intentional, part of the school design.* Fall River Maritime Charter Public School is no exception; *intentionally designed* for eighty students and their families to maximize the impact on creating positive and supportive student/teacher/parent relationships.

Parents will be actively involved, on a regular basis, in developing Individual Learning Plans with their child (described above in Section II, D. Assessment). This process will include a contract between the parent, student, and AMS. In addition, staff will conduct informal home visits twice a year and will be required to remain in constant communication with parents; informally contacting/conversing with parents twice a month, by phone, email, or while the parent is visiting the school. Through TRIM, parents will have easy access to their student's ILP and academic, social/emotional, and life skills progress. Two terminals will be available at all times for parents to come into the school if they do not have access at home. Parents will be encouraged to volunteer 20 hours of service per year – this could be in the form of tutoring, coaching, mentoring, being a guest instructor, or assisting with projects. There will be family nights for parents and students to share their learning or just hang out and have fun. There will be positions for parents on the board of trustees as well.

□ **Gauging Parental Satisfaction**

Parental satisfaction will be part of the school's Accountability Plan. FRMCPS will gauge parental satisfaction through formal surveys, questionnaires, and conversations when developing Individual Learning Plans. In addition, FRMCPS will host monthly information sessions similar to "Murdoch Mornings" - a model used by Murdoch Middle Public Charter School. This will provide an opportunity for parents to come and speak to others about the educational program beginning offered by FRMCPS.

□ **Community Agencies and Organizations**

FRMCPS will become a member of the Community Connections Coalition. Currently, there are over 60 residents and service providers, representing 40 organizations (which provide services to youth and families), who are members of the coalition. Community Connections strives to achieve success by: 1) coordinating resources already in communities, 2) bringing out the voices of residents in planning for local resources, 3) ensuring that services meet the needs of families and communities.

FRMCPS has already established partnerships with several organizations in Fall River, including: the Marine Museum, Narrows Center for the Arts, and Child and Family Services. FRMCPS has entered into discussion regarding potential partnership with Fall River Chamber of Commerce's School-to-Career Partnership, South Coast Educational Collaborative, Battleship Massachusetts, Atlantis Charter School, PYCO (an affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation), Old Colony YMCA, and the Boys & Girls Club of Fall River.

E. Special Student Populations and Student Services

□ **Delivery of Adequate Instructional Support For All Students and Teachers**

As required by law (MGL 71, Section 38Q1/2), FRMCPS will develop a district curriculum accommodation plan (DCAP) to assist the school in ensuring that all efforts have been made to meet

students' needs in the general education environment, including reading instruction, remedial instruction, services for linguistic minority students, and consultative services for teachers, such as teacher mentoring and collaboration.

The goal of FRMCPS is to make the general education environment the appropriate placement for all students. This will be accomplished by complying with all state and federal special education requirements for serving students with disabilities. Several resources are available from the DOE to ensure that these requirements are understood, including, but not limited to: *Memorandum*, from the state director of Special Education, August 6, 2004; *Is Special Education the Right Service - A Technical Assistance Guide*; *The IEP Process Guide*; and *IEP Forms and Notices*.

As stated in *Section II. Increasing the Capacity of the General Education Environment* of the *Technical Assistance Guide*, the DCAP is intended to assist the regular classroom teacher in analyzing and accommodating diverse learning needs of all students in the general education classroom and in providing appropriate services and support with the general education program...[and] to address direct and systematic instruction in reading... The proposed educational environment of FRMCPS is well suited for developing a DCAP that will meet the needs of diverse learners as recommended by the DOE:

MA DOE Recommendations:

- Increased support services and instructional delivery options available within general education
- More effective educational policies and practices, such as reduced class size
- Responsive, flexible curriculum presentation in general education
- Staff time for professional collaboration and problem solving
- Availability of standardized and criterion-referenced assessment data as one measure of student learning and indicator of student needs
- Referral services to provide child care, or healthcare services
- Information services for parents to understand school programs and options available for their children

FRMCPS Provisions:

- See **Section II. B. Curriculum**
- See **Section II, E. School Characteristics, Learning Experiences**
- See **Section II, E. School Characteristics, Learning Experiences**
- See **Section II, C. Assessment, Structure and Learning Experiences; Section III, D (5) Human Resources: Ideal Teacher, Typical Teaching Program**
- See **Section II, C. Assessment, Systems & Tools**
- See **Section II, F. Special Student Populations**
- See **Section II, F. Special Student Populations**
- See **Section II, E. School Characteristics**

FRMCPS is built upon a model of immersion; full-inclusion with differentiated instruction for all students. To differentiate instruction in an educational environment that values academic, social/emotional, and life skills development is to recognize every student's background knowledge, readiness, language, preferences in learning, and interests.

Working with all students to develop a strong sense of identity is an important part of this process. The attributes of *Common Focus*, *High Expectations*, *Personalized Environment*, and *Respect & Responsibility* speak to all students, including those with special needs. The systemic structure of FRMCPS will promote and sustain student relationships with adults where every student will have an adult advocate and an Individual Learning Plan.

As described in Section II, D. Assessment, all students will receive a battery of assessments to identify a personal skills baseline. Each student's Individual Learning Plan is built upon further

developing academic, social/emotional, and life skills into a larger application through ILPs within a community of learners.

□ **Delivery of Special Education Services**

The DOE states in the *IEP Process Guide* (p. 4): *students should be considered important members of Team meetings*. It is suggested, by the DOE, that schools: 1) teach students their civil rights, 2) develop students' self-advocacy skills, 3) have students lead their own Team meetings, and 4) invite adult human service agency representatives to speak to student groups about provided services and eligibility. The educational program of FRMCPS, in collaboration with Child & Family Services and the Community Connections Coalition, provides the foundation for developing skills of self-advocacy. The mission of the school to *empower students to take personal responsibility for their learning...to develop strong identities...capable of interacting with others in ways that will contribute to success in high school* aligns well with the MA DOE's perspective on student participation in Team meetings. All students, especially those with learning disabilities, who graduate from FRMCPS, will have the skills and knowledge necessary to advocate for themselves in the future.

As recommended by IDEA -97, FRMCPS will take a collaborative approach in making educational decisions for students with disabilities. Our small, open educational environment not only encourages collaboration but also permits it to happen formally, and more importantly, informally (as articulated as an important factor in resolving differences between parents and school staff). The Special Education Team (the Team) will be made up of the Facilitator of Special Education (an AMS who has the qualifications of a SPED Director and has taken on the responsibility to facilitate and administer the special education program for FRMCPS), a CAS, the parent, and most importantly, the student. Although school personnel have the ultimate responsibility to ensure that an IEP includes the services that are needed for an individual student, the Team will always work towards consensus. There are three important steps that the Team will manage: 1) eligibility determination, 2) development of the IEP, and 3) placement decision.

Eligibility Determination - As stated in the technical assistance guide, *Is Special Education the Right Service*, the primary purpose for the Team for completing an evaluation is: 1) to provide information for the Team to determine eligibility; and, if the student is eligible, 2) to provide information for the Team to determine appropriate services. To assist the Team with this process, the Team will utilize a form provided by the DOE, *Special Education Eligibility/Initial and Reevaluation Determination*. The process for completing an evaluation is clearly articulated in the technical assistance guide. Please note: FRMCPS will not conduct any evaluations without parental consent.

Development of the IEP - Once a student is determined to be eligible for special education services, the process for developing an IEP will be carefully managed to ensure that needs of students area addressed and to ensure that FRMCPS complies with statutory and regulatory requirements. IEP development is *a student driven process*. As noted in the *IEP Process Guide*, *a good IEP will be responsive to parents concerns and the student's vision and will assist the student as much as possible to move towards independence*. The Team will: 1) obtain parent/student input, 2) think about the student's future dreams and goals, 3) understand how the student's disability(ies) affect the student's learning, 4) know how the student performs currently, 5) address only the areas that are affected by the disability(ies), 6) provide a focus for student's learning during the designated IEP period, 7) reflect high expectations for the student, 8) stay as close as appropriate to what the student's peers are learning and doing, and 9) identify supports and services the student needs to for success.

Placement Decision – In making a decision regarding placement of student, the Team will consider least restrictive environment requirements (such as the general education environment, presumed to be the first placement option under IEDA-97) and requirements related to give preference to approved programs and programs in Massachusetts (IEP Process Guide, p. 29). Through partnerships with Child & Family Services, the Community Connections Coalition, and South Coast Educational Collaborative,

teachers at FRMCPS will have knowledge of, and potential access to, a variety of services available to the student

Conclusion - It is important to note that, the IEP process is conducive to the educational environment at FRMCPS, which *empowers students to take personal responsibility for their learning*, for, as noted in the *IEP Process Guide*, *each team meeting is unique. Each group will arrive at different answers, ideas and services to address a student's needs and will write the IEP in a different manner. All of these differences should be expected and encouraged, as there is no single correct way to serve a student or write an IEP.* With all students on Individual Learning Plans (a comprehensive process much like the IEP process, but not to be confused with an IEP – they are very different), in an educational environment, which respects individual differences, students with disabilities will feel at home at FRMCPS.

□ **Identifying and Evaluating Students Who Require English Language Proficiency Testing**

To ensure that all students who may need LEP services are identified, a needs assessment in the form of a Home Language Survey will be distributed along with the application during the enrollment process. The AMS responsible for the LEP program will collect the surveys and identify which students will need testing. Given our school size, and projected yearly enrollment of 20 students, assessing student needs for LEP testing will be conducted as soon as a student has become officially enrolled. The AMS will be responsible for arranging testing and evaluation by an outside LEP specialist.

With an estimated LEP population of four students, FRMCPS will contract out services for identifying and evaluating students who require English language proficiency testing. The individual responsible for this process will be a highly qualified LEP expert within the community.

□ **Services and Supports for LEP Students**

FRMCPS will provide an educational program for LEP students that is 1) based on sound educational theory, 2) adequately supported so that the program has a realistic chance of success; and 3) periodically evaluated and revised if necessary (per federal law). To be sure that the LEP plan is in compliance with federal statues and regulations, FRMCPS will consult *Programs for English Language Learners* (November, 1999), a guide for resource materials and self-assessment published by the US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. Prior to the opening of FRMCPS in Fall 2006, an AMS, CAS, LEP specialist, and a community representative will develop a comprehensive plan, as recommended by OCR. During this process of designing an effective LEP program, FRMCPS will select an educational approach that provides for English language development and meaningful participation of LEP students in the general education program (requirements of Title VI). Programs that will be considered are *Sheltered English Instruction* and *Structured English Immersion*. FRMCPS will describe and document the educational approach in a written plan so that staff, parents, and the board of trustees understand how the program works.

The LEP plan will reflect the characteristics of FRMCPS – a student-centered, project-based maritime studies program - and include: 1) selecting the educational approach and goals, 2) identification of potential LEP students, 3) assessment of the need for LEP services, 4) program services for LEP students, 5) staffing and resources, 6) transition from LEP services and monitoring performance, 7) LEP students and other district programs, and 8) program evaluation, review, and improvement – as required by federal law. (US DOE, OCR, 1999)

Since all students will have Individual Learning Plans and are empowered to take personal responsibility for their learning, LEP goals for a particular student will be incorporated into their ILP. Providing services for an LEP student will be possible given the flexible scheduling available at FRMCPS. Whenever possible, LEP students will participate in the general education program, and if necessary, will be able to schedule times to work one-on-one with a LEP specialist.

Students identified as LEP may require a small group tutorial intervention model of instruction in specific academic skill areas such as reading (decoding, encoding, comprehending), mathematic (calculation, word problems) and/or written language. The need for such a program would be determined

from prior records, school battery of assessments, and additional testing that may be done to better understand a student's skill level and processing style. When necessary, LEP students will schedule a 50-60 minute small group tutorial on a daily basis, in addition to completing Individual Courses of Study and participating in teacher created learning experiences. The tutorial block will be devoted to direct instruction of discrete skills. With repeated drill and practice, LEP students will acquire skills and develop strategies (skills as a tool) to access higher skills throughout their academic day. There are several reading, mathematics, and written language intervention tutorial programs for middle school students that are currently recognized as "best practices" by NICHD (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development). For example, when necessary, FRMCPS will consider utilizing an intervention program such as *The Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing Program for Reading, Spelling, and Speech*, and/or *The Sonday System I and II*.

All staff members will receive professional development in the area of LEP instruction. This service will be provided an educational consultant specializing in reading language instruction for English language learners.

□ **Special Education Staff**

A highly qualified individual with special education certification will be hired. As an AMS, his/her responsibilities would include managing the academic progress of 20 students, which will account for 50% of their time (20 hours per week); 25% (10 hours per week) will be devoted to additional student support services - not necessarily related to special education, unless needed - and 25% (10 hours per week) devoted to administrative duties associated with special education. Given our estimated population of 12 students with special needs, this is realistic. FRMCPS anticipates outsourcing services such as OT, PT, and speech. If necessary, a contract will be developed with either South Coast Collaborative.

In addition, FRMCPS will work in collaboration with Child & Family Services who will provide comprehensive counseling services that help students to overcome the emotional, psychological and personal issues that can hinder their education. The agency will work within the framework of the Fall River Maritime Public Charter School in the following ways:

System- A licensed mental health therapist will provide a Global Assessment for *each student and family attending the school*. The assessment will include: biographical information (such as name, age, parent or guardian names), the student's maturity level and its appropriateness for their age, family dynamic, the student's strengths and areas of need examined on a broad level (i.e. a student's ability to make friends, their relationship with authority figures, history of emotional illness or mental health issues).

Upon completion of the Assessment, goals for the student will be developed using a strengths-based approach to address each issue the student is struggling with. The student, parent, Academic Management Specialists, Content Area Specialists, and the mental health professional will review progress with these goals on a consistent basis.

Structure – Child & Family Services' mental health therapist will work in tandem as one component of the wider *FRMCPS* staff. The therapist will provide clinical supervision and recommendations that ensure a student's emotional and mental health needs are being met. The therapist will be a member of the *FRMCPS* faculty, but for clinical direction will be under the supervision of Child & Family's clinical team leaders.

Learning Experiences – Having a therapist on-site will ensure timely response to classroom disruptions by children struggling with emotional issues that can sometimes spiral out of control without proper intervention. The therapist will be able to facilitate and intervene to bring about positive and stabilizing results. A therapist will also be available to observe classroom activities to gain knowledge of a child's attitudes, behavior and interactions with fellow students and teaching staff with the goal of providing recommendations to institute improvements.

Building on observation and interaction with students as a whole and individually, Child & Family will offer Group Sessions for *FRMCPS* students focused on a variety of topics that assist them in

reaching their potential academically and in life. Group Sessions can include such topics as: social skill building, anger management, violence prevention and alcohol and drug awareness.

Tools – To provide successful mental health services for students by Child & Family staff, FRMCPS will provide: a private space that ensures confidentiality for discussions between a therapist and student; a suitable area for Group Sessions; an outcome measurement tool to gauge progress toward goals; a computer and database systems for processing outcomes (TRIM™); a client satisfaction surveys for students, parents and teachers; and on-going training, supervision and evaluation by the mental health professionals at Child & Family Services.

□ **Nutritional Program Services**

The attribute of Respect & Responsibility will play a significant role in the nutritional program services provided by FRMCPS. Through unique learning experiences centered on nutrition and physical well being, staff will teach, model, and expect nutritional eating habits. To encourage this, staff and students will not only eat together, but also share in the responsibility of setting up, serving, and cleaning up. FRMCPS will provide free and reduced-price nutritious lunches for eligible students through the Federal School Lunch Program. In addition, FRMCPS will provide free snacks for all students mid-morning and afternoon. Through a bidding process, FRMCPS will contract with a food service provider which will meet all state and federal guidelines.

□ **Student Health Needs**

FRMCPS's partnership with Child and Family Services, Inc. addresses the counseling and outreach services that may be needed for students and is described in Section II, F. Special Education Staff. In addition, as stated in Section II, E. Community Agencies and Organizations, FRMCPS will become a member of the Community Connection Coalition. This will enable the staff to become familiar with a myriad of services available for students and their families in Fall River. FRMCPS will employ a part-time nurse. FRMCPS will comply with all applicable state and federal health and safety laws and regulations. (MGL 89(ee))

□ **Evaluating the Special Populations Programs**

Special populations programs include students with an IEP and LEP students. Federal law requires ongoing evaluation of the LEP program and re-evaluation of IEPs every three years. The AMS responsible for the LEP program will collect data from a variety of sources including, but not limited to: progress with academic goals outlined in students' ILPs (and/or IEPs), assessment measures such as tests, and conversations with instructional staff (CASs), AMSs, therapists providing services (mental, physical, occupational, and speech). For more information, please see Section II, D. Systems & Tools: *Collecting and Using Baseline Achievement Data*, and Structure & Learning Experiences: *Improving Instruction and Student Learning*.

III. DEMONSTRATING ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY

A. Enrollment and Recruitment

□ **Number of Students Enrolled Each Year:** Year I: 20; Year II: 40; Year III: 60; Year IV: 80

As noted above in Section II, E. School Characteristics; Family-School Partnerships, *small schools allow for an intimacy and face-to-face recognition not possible in larger schools. A family-like feel is intentional* and necessary to empower students to take personal responsibility for their learning. A small educational environment increases interaction between students, students and teachers, teachers and parents, at a greater level, which promotes strong identities. Development of the growth strategy (20 students each year, beginning with 5th grade) enables students to acquire the skills necessary to be successful with the proposed learning program. Students entering the fifth will have sufficient time to learn how to operate in a non-traditional setting which demands specific skills, including, but not limited

to: task completion, time management, responsibility, managing information, and problem solving.

As noted above in Section I, B. Statement of Need, *The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform* recommends interdisciplinary teams of no more than eighty students. In a student-centered, project-based learning environment, with a planned student to teacher ration of 10:1, students will be able to move from dependence to independence more efficiently and effectively; teachers will have the time needed to interact with, and attend to the individual needs, of every student.

In addition, a small school environment, and the growth strategy, is more conducive to the proposed management structure outlined below in Section III, D. Management.

□ **Parental Demand for Fall River Maritime Charter Public School**

Although no formal assessment has been conducted, through informal conversations with social service providers, employees of local businesses and non-profit organizations, and parents (and grandparents) in Fall River, there is a demand for another choice in public education. Atlantis Charter School currently has a waiting list of 274 students (Fall 2004). Many people have expressed interest in, and excitement for, the proposed educational program to be offered by FRMCPS.

□ **Plans for Publicizing Fall River Maritime Charter Public School**

To reach a broad cross-section of prospective students, FRMCPS will coordinate efforts with local youth and family service organizations to inform prospective students and their families about an alternative choice in public education. For example, on December 16th, 2004 the director of the Fulton Project will be attending the quarterly meeting of the Community Connections Coalition (for more information, please refer to Section II, E. School Characteristics) to share with the membership the proposed public school alternative. In addition, the director will attend a staff meeting at Child & Family Services, in November (2004) to share information with staff about the educational program offered by FRMCPS. Other opportunities such as this will be sought through out the planning year. FRMCPS will also place ads in the local newspapers, i.e. The Herald News, and O' Jornal (a Portuguese paper) and seek out opportunities to speak about FRMCPS on local radio programs available such as "Voice of the Immigrant" on WHTB/1400 AM (ethnic radio), or WJFD/97.3 FM in New Bedford (Portuguese radio). FRMCPS will hold informational sessions at the Museum, as well as, in various neighborhoods around the city that reflect the diversity of Fall River (notices will be posted as well).

In accordance with Charter school regulations, FRMPCS will give reasonable public notice, of at least one month, of all application deadlines (603 CMR 1.06(3)).

□ **Enrollment Process**

Enrollment and recruitment processes will be conducted in conformance with MGL c.71 & 89. FRMCPS will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or foreign language, or prior academic achievement per Charter School Regulation 603 CMR 1.06(1). In addition, FRMCPS will not administer tests to potential applicants or predicate enrollment on results from any test of ability or achievement. Although FRMCPS will encourage attendance at informational meetings and interviews, they will not be designed, intended or used to discriminate (603 CMR 1.06(2)).

The board of trustees and the TPP will work together to develop an enrollment policy consistent with regulation 603 CMR 1.06, which will describe the specific procedures for enrollment to ensure that the procedure is in compliance with applicable laws. If there are more eligible students applying, than there are spaces available, FRMCPS will hold a lottery to determine which students to admit, and will do so prior to March 15th of each year. Subsequently, FRMCPS will submit a pre-enrollment report to the Charter School Office on a date that is set annually by the CSO.

Before beginning the admissions process, FRMCPS will: determine the spaces available in each grade; set a deadline for accepting applications, publicize the application deadline with reasonable notice of at least one month in advance, set a date for the lottery with reasonable notice given at least one week prior to the lottery, and set a final date for students to accept enrollment and the actual date of enrollment.

The lottery will be conducted in public; a disinterested person who is not affiliated with the school will draw names of students. Prospective students who have a sibling attending the school at the time of the lottery will be given priority, followed by residents of Fall River. If there are more eligible applicants than spaces available, names will continue to be drawn and added to a waiting list in the order that they were drawn.

Although FRMCPS will adhere to the anti-discrimination requirements noted above, FRMCPS will have enrollment “requirements” to ensure that prospective students and parents have a complete understanding of the mission, educational philosophy, and instructional organization of the school – this is critical for student success within the educational program. Therefore, FRMCPS will strongly encourage parents to attend a public informational session and a small group, or one-on-one, informational session with an AMS of the school. In addition, FRMCPS will ask parents to sign a compact that they understand the mission of FRMCPS.

B. Capacity

The Fulton Project was incorporated on May 16, 2003. On December 16, 2003 a forum was held at MA Maritime Academy, which assembled individuals from several organizations, to discuss this initiative. The forum was a success and a commitment to bring FRMCPS to fruition was established. The Fulton Project’s Advisory Board evolved out of the forum. In the months that followed, informal meetings and communication between the acting director and founder, Roger Bourassa, ensued - beginning the process of planning and developing the educational program. On July 30, 2004 Bourassa brought together another group of individuals who had the knowledge and expertise in specific areas to assist in planning, developing, and implementing the educational program (please see attached letters and resumes). This group, along with The Fulton Project Board of Directors and Advisory Board continued the planning and writing process through informal meetings and communication via email and phone.

The Fulton Project recognizes the need for an effective board of trustees who have the capacity to ensure that FRMCPS will be academically successful, a viable organization, and faithful to its Charter. Given the unique nature of the proposed educational environment, recruiting and educating interested individuals (from the Fall River area) to serve on the board of trustees, is a process that has demanded careful consideration. Alan Silvia, a proposed member of the board of trustees, exemplifies the type of individual that The Fulton Project requires to govern FRMCPS. Silvia, *a dedicated and experienced administrator who exhibits effective management skills that contribute directly to a positive impact on the bottom line while driving results that are focused on the needs of the organization*, has had extensive experience, and demonstrated success, in a variety of areas including: business, education, and strategic planning and leadership. The Fulton Project is committed to acquiring five initial board members by February, 2004. Two meetings with potential board members have been scheduled for later this month. Both individuals come with extensive public school experience (a former superintendent and assistant superintendent) and an interest in alternatives in public education.

C. School Governance

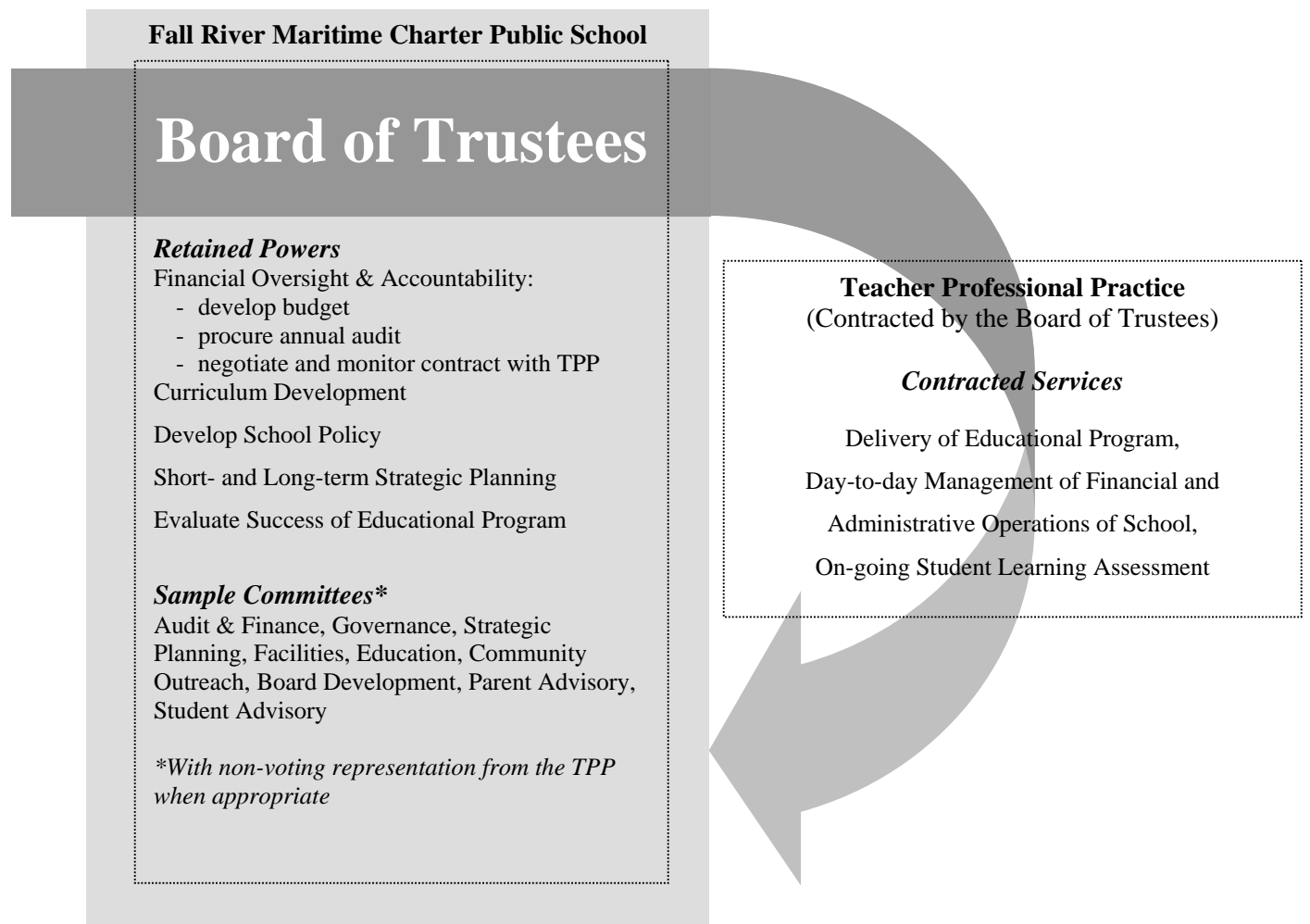
The freedom to innovate with governance models is a signal feature of charter schools. (Office of Innovation and Improvement, US DOE, June 2004) In keeping with the mission of empowerment, the Fulton Project proposes adoption of a policy governance model by the board of trustees. John Carver’s Policy Governance is an effective model that aligns with the standards for governance articulated by the MA DOE. This model has been chosen to enable the board of trustees as “servant-leaders” of the public, to ensure that Fall River Maritime Charter Public School achieves board-stated goals and conducts itself with probity. The policy governance model informs board planning, mission, committee work, agenda

control, budgeting, reporting, TPP evaluation, management relationships, fiduciary responsibility, and all other aspects of the board job.

According to MGL Chapter 89(a), the board of trustees of Fall River Maritime Charter Public School is a public agent authorized by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to supervise and control FRMCPS. In addition, *the board of trustees, in consultation with the teachers* (the TPP in this proposal), *shall determine the school’s curriculum and develop the school’s annual budget.* (MGL Chapter 89(x))

The Policy Governance model begins with the assertion that the board of trustees exists to be accountable to the MA DOE and the public that Fall River Maritime Charter Public School works. The board of trustees is where all authority resides. This model utilizes an integrated system of governance (Carver and Carver, 1996; Carver, 1997) summarized in the sections below.

1. Governance Structure



The FRMCPS governance model presents a system of clear oversight and accountability by the board of trustees, with proportionate autonomy and responsibility for the TPP to implement the educational program, ensuring the mission will be accomplished with excellence and innovation. A community-based board of trustees will hold the school’s charter and retain ultimate oversight authority and financial accountability, while contracting with a Teacher Professional Practice (TPP), owned and operated by teachers and educational specialists in the form of a limited liability corporation (LLC). TPP members will deliver the school’s educational programming and administer the learning site.

The Fulton Project proposes this governance model, which acknowledges the professional status and capabilities of teachers, in the belief that it will create incentives for program accountability and excellence in teaching not found in the traditional administration/teacher model. As owners of the TPP, the teacher-members will be key stakeholders in this venture, with ultimate responsibility for student achievement and personal investment in the school's success. Contracted services will be negotiated and monitored by the board of trustees, who will also evaluate academic success and student achievement in the context of on-going responsibility for mission accomplishment and strategic planning.

Governed cooperatively through an internal operating agreement, the TPP membership will be comprised of teachers and educational specialists with administrative, financial and management expertise to ensure the corporation's business plan is successfully carried out.

A series of committees, whose members include representatives of the TPP, will ensure on-going collaboration and channels of communication between the two entities. Committees included, but are not limited to: Audit & Finance, Governance, Strategic Planning, Facilities, Education, Community Outreach, Board Development, Parent Advisory, and Student Advisory.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

□ Board of Trustees

In accordance with Charter and education law, the Board of Trustees has the ultimate responsibility for FRMCPS. It is the board's role to ensure that: 1) the school is educationally sound, 2) the school is a viable organization, and 3) the school is faithful to its Charter. Subsequently, the board of trustees has a responsibility to ensure that the school's five-year charter is renewed by the state Board of Education.

The creation of a Teacher Professional Practice to implement the educational program changes the relationship between the board of trustees and the school leaders/teachers. Rather than micro-manage the school the board of trustee's focus shifts to student achievement, goal-setting, policy making, monitoring contractual commitments, and enhancing relationships with students, parents, and the greater community. The Board of Trustees becomes a purchaser of educational services rather than the supplier. This arrangement offers new opportunities for professional autonomy and responsibility.

Using the policy governance model developed by Carver, the role of the board of trustees is to use input from the parents and students, members of the TPP, experts, and anyone else in a position to increase the board's knowledge, to: 1) make ends decisions in a proactive, prescriptive way (Ends policies); 2) make informed decisions about its *own* job - governance, servant leadership, and visioning - in a proactive, prescriptive way (Governance Process policies); 3) make informed decisions about the relationship between governance and management (Board-TPP Linkage policies); and 4) make informed decisions about the TPP's means (acceptable behavior) in a proactive, but negative and boundary-setting way (Executive Limitations policies).

Specific responsibilities of the board of trustees include: developing bylaws, determining the school's curriculum and annual budget, make major policy changes when necessary, complying with the state's Open Meeting Law, developing procedures for responding to complaints, complying with required insurance coverage (603 CMR 1.05(2)(i)), and applying for waivers from Charter school regulations if necessary.

Although the board of trustees has total authority over FRMCPS and total accountability, it will rely on the TPP to carry out the work. This dependence on the TPP will require the board to pay careful attention to the principles of sound delegation and governance to be successful. This demands that the board of trustees to be very clear about its expectations and then to assess whether the expectations have been met.

□ Choosing and Evaluating the School Leader

In consideration of the proposed governance model that utilizes a teacher professional practice,

choosing a school leader is not necessary; rather, the board of trustees will contract with the TPP to implement the educational program outlined in these pages. In place of a school leader, members of the TPP will take on the administrative functions of FRMCPS. For more information regarding the TPP, the reasons for proposing this alternative arrangement, and how the TPP will be evaluated, please refer to Section III, C. (5) School Management Contract.

□ **Role Distinctions Between Board and Administration of TPP by TPP Members**

In this proposed governance model it is important that the board maintain a sense of cause and effect with respect to the TPP. It is crucial that all parties involved - board members, potential board members, members of the TPP, community members, parents - understand that the board is totally accountable for FRMCPS and therefore has total authority over it. The board of trustees needs to be definite about its performance expectations, to assign these expectations clearly, and then check that the expectations are being met. The task is to demand organizational achievement in a way that empowers the TPP, leaving to their creativity and innovation as much latitude as possible. The following are role distinctions in four areas between the board of trustees and the TPP:

Curriculum - The board of trustees, in consultation with members of the TPP, is responsible for developing the school's curriculum. The board: establishes the mission and program direction for FRMCPS and approves goals and objectives designed to achieve those ends; and assesses compliance/progress in achieving educational outcomes. The TPP: participates in establishing the mission and program direction for FRMCPS; contributes to the vision; assists the board in maintaining focus and momentum for FRMCPS; develops specific program goals and objectives; and develops reports to demonstrate success of the educational program.

Personnel Decisions - The board of trustees will be responsible for setting and reviewing what personnel policies should look like. The TPP will be responsible for implementing personnel policies, recommending changes in personnel policies to the board, and acquiring and evaluating the performance of members of the TPP. The TPP and the board of trustees are jointly responsible for: conducting criminal background checks on all prospective members of the TPP; working collaboratively to develop a member handbook regarding policies; and becoming familiar with, and complying with NCLB requirements regarding highly qualified teachers.

Budget Allocation - The board of trustees is responsible for developing the annual budget for FRMCPS. Therefore, in developing a contract between the board and the TPP, the trustees will review the required elements of contracts for educational services, which are outlined in *The Charter School Administrative and Governance Guide*. Since the board of trustees is accountable to the state for the viability of FRMCPS, it will take every precaution available to ensure sound financial management of FRMCPS. The board will review periodic financial reports and ensure that proper internal controls are in place. The TPP will prepare financial reports and implement proper financial controls.

Vendor Selection - It is the joint responsibility of the board of trustees and the TPP to participate in the public purchasing official certification program conducted by the Office of the Inspector General. The board will set governing policies for vendor selection; responsibility will be carried out either by the board or the TPP. For example, if a vendor is needed for board business, then it becomes the responsibility of the board. If a vendor is needed for operations, then it becomes the responsibility of the TPP. Both the board of trustees and the TPP will consult with the resources available when selecting vendors.

□ **Job description of Chairman of the Board of Trustees**

In taking responsibility for its own performance, the Board of Trustees of FRMCPS faces the challenge of acting responsibly as a group of equals. Although it is important that each board member take responsibility for the board's group behavior, the board of trustees grants the Chair extra authority required to make rulings that keep the board on track. Ultimately, the Chair is a servant-leader of the board (Carver, 1999). The board Chair acts in a position of trust for the community and is responsible for the effective governance of the board and FRMCPS.

The board Chair will: demonstrate a commitment to the work of the board and FRMCPS; demonstrate knowledge and skill in one or more areas of board governance (ie. policy, finance, programs, and personnel); be informed of the services provided by the TPP and publicly support it; work in partnership with the TPP to make sure board resolutions are carried out; prepare for and participate in the discussions and the deliberations of the board; foster a positive working relationship with other board members, TPP members, and the community of Fall River; and be aware and abstain from any conflict of interest.

4. Policy Development¹¹

- **Sample Section of By-laws:** Please see Attachment B
- **Developing Policies and Decisions by the Board**

The board of trustees will focus on setting broad organizational policies that will strengthen long-term educational results for FRMCPS. The decision-making process will include: accessing and using relevant information which should be accurate, balanced, and presented as an efficient guide for action; discussing issues deliberately that are objective and open (putting aside personal differences); considering alternative actions reflecting different points of view; and working towards consensus (recognizing the need for compromise in the importance of reaching agreement).

The board of trustees will develop policies in an efficient and effective manner by utilizing the following steps: 1) a need for new policy is identified, 2) a team is assigned to draft new policy, 3) a first policy draft is written, 4) legal counsel is sought to review the draft policy, 5) the draft policy is presented to the board for approval, and 6) review policies frequently and revise them if necessary.

Through these processes, the board of trustees will be able to delegate authority to the TPP and still retain ultimate responsibility and control over the mission and vision of FRMCPS.

- **Seeking Feedback from the School Community and Fall River**

Success of the educational program of FRMCPS is directly linked to developing strong relationships with parents of students at FRMCPS and community organizations in greater Fall River. The board of trustees will play an active role in nurturing existing relationships with community organizations that the Fulton Project has established and building new ones. To build loyalty and confidence in the educational program of FRMCPS, the board will reach out to the parents of FRMCPS and community organizations in two ways: to listen and to report.

Examples of how the board can solicit input include: attending a meeting of the Community Connections Coalition to learn about other community organizations serving youth and their families; sending a survey to parents before making major policy decisions; host a series of parent and community forums to discuss challenges faced by the board and/or FRMCPS; and hosting a monthly coffee at the Marine Museum to create informal opportunities to meet and hear parent concerns.

Examples of how the board can share the progress of FRMCPS with others include: hosting a breakfast at the Marine Museum for Fall River civic leaders to describe the educational program and its positive impact on student achievement; write personalized letters to major donors; include a written column by the board Chair in a monthly parent newsletter; and again, attending a meeting of the Community Connections Coalition.

- **Legal Counsel and Independent Auditing**

Legal counsel has been obtained to: establish the non-profit corporate structures of The Fulton Project, Inc. a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization; establish intellectual property and licensing rights in regards to the development of software (TRIM); and ensure compliance with state and federal laws

¹¹ Largely informed by *Creating an Effective Charter School Governing Board*, Charter Friends National Network, November, 2004

regarding the proposed governance model utilizing a teacher professional practice in the form of an LLC.

As of this application, legal counsel and an independent auditor have not been obtained for FRMCPS; however, the board of trustees will consult with other Charter school leaders and attorneys currently working with the Fulton Project to obtain legal counsel with experience in education law. The board will take similar steps in acquiring an independent auditor. According to the action plan, both will be obtained by March, 2005.

4. **Board Development**¹²

□ **Orientation Process**

Policy governance requires that board members understand governance and then be disciplined enough to be competent as a group. The board of trustees will be charged with authority and accountability – that is the board as a *group*, not individual board members. Therefore, the board of trustees needs to speak with one voice. This can be accomplished through an orientation process that is thoughtful and thorough in its approach. Initially, a consultant from the Gates-EdVisions Schools Project, with expertise in board development, will facilitate the orientation process for the newly formed board of trustees of FRMCPS. The orientation process will include topics such as: *Getting Grounded* (overview of policy governance in relation to the mission and operation of FRMCPS), *Developing Ends Policies*, *Developing Governance Process Policies*, *Developing Board/TPP Linkage Policies*, and *Developing Executive Limitations Policies*. This process will include visits by the board consultant to regular board meetings to make observations and provide feedback. Please see Action Plan, G3 for the timeframe.

The initial orientation process will be followed by ongoing board education and training. A good question for board members to ask is, *What do I need to know to become a more effective member of the board?* Education and training will be closely linked to the issues facing FRMCPS. Whenever possible, training will be incorporated into each board meeting. For this to be effective, training should be short, focused, and well prepared. Other possibilities for education and training include: developing mini seminars organized around a special topic of interest; forming study groups (to acquire knowledge and a deeper understanding of an issue); rotating through committees to bring a fresh perspective; providing access to articles, books, and magazines on relevant topics; attending conferences; sharing experiences with peers; and communicating directly with students and families.

Please Note: The Gates-EdVisions Schools Project is committed to providing fifty hours worth of professional development in the pre-operational year, of which at least twenty-five hours will be devoted for the purpose of board education and training.

□ **Board Evaluation and Development**

As noted above, in Section III, C. School Governance, 2. Roles and Responsibilities, one of the responsibilities of a board utilizing the policy governance model is to *make informed decisions about its own job in a proactive, prescriptive way* (Governance Process policies). The board of trustees of FRMCPS will be committed to making continuous improvement of its performance. Improved performance is only possible by actively engaging (with enthusiasm) in board self-assessment. The centerpiece of the self-assessment process by the board of trustees of FRMCPS will be a formal process that is conducted on a regular basis using a written assessment tool that the board members complete. The assessment will be based on a set of standards that characterize effective board performance. The board will use the results to *make informed decisions about its own job*.

To ensure that the self-assessment process will result in effective governance, the board of trustees will consult the following sources to identify a set of standards that characterize effective board performance: *Creating an Effective Charter School Governing Board* (Charter Friends National Network), *The Attorney General's Guide for Board Members of Non-Profit Organizations*, the

¹² Ibid

Massachusetts Charter Schools Trustee Guide (Building Excellent Schools), *Trustee Handbook* (National Association for Independent Schools), and *Ten Basic Responsibilities of Non-profit Boards* (Board Source). The timeframe for completing the assessment tool is noted in the Action Plan, G14.

□ **Recruiting and Selecting Board Members**

To ensure the long-term viability of FRMCPS the board of trustees will develop a long-range plan for board leadership recruitment and development. A year-round board development committee will be established to prospect, contact, recruit, orient, support, provide on-going training, and evaluate board members. The committee will write a job description for board members, create a profile of the initial board, review the goals and strategies set by the board, and focus recruiting on board members with specific skills that will enable the board to reach its goals. To be effective, that is to be thorough and thoughtful, recruiting and selecting board members is requires ongoing dedication and commitment to the process.

5. School Management Contract with the Teacher Professional Practice, LLC

□ **Proposed Contract**

According to MGL 71 & 89 (j)(5) the Board of Education must approve the terms of charter school contracts with individuals for “substantially all educational services.” Therefore, the board of trustees will follow the standards and procedures developed by the DOE, outlined in *The Charter School Administrative and Governance Guide* (December, 2003), to create a contract between FRMCPS and the proposed Teacher Professional Practice. The board of trustees will also refer to *Charting A Clear Source* (May, 2001). The board of trustees will be submitting a draft of the proposed contract to the DOE Charter School Office (April 30, 2005), no later than 120 days prior to the beginning of the contract period (September 1, 2005).

□ **Why This Model?**

According to MGL Chapter 89(d), *the purposes for establishing charter schools include: providing teachers with a vehicle for establishing schools with alternative, innovative methods of educational instruction and school structure and management; and to hold teachers and school administrators accountable for students’ outcomes.*

The Teacher Professional Practice (TPP) proposed by the Fulton Project for the implementation of the educational program outlined for Fall River Maritime Charter Public School, represents a route to professional status in the public system which allows teachers to take professional control of, and responsibility for, their own work through ownership of their teaching practice using models developed in other professions.

Part of the mission of the FRMCPS is to *empower students to take personal responsibility for their learning*. The TPP provides the same opportunities for teachers. The central belief held by the Fulton Project and the Gates-EdVisions Schools project, is that the model used in most professional fields is useable and workable in education as well. Teachers as well as lawyers, doctors, accountants, architects, consultants, etc. can and should have the option to work for themselves as members in a private practice, as well as work as employees for employers/managers. As an LLC, members will have a direct say in the decision making of the TPP. A member’s ownership is represented by their “interest”; just as a student’s ownership (of their individual learning process) is represented by the student’s interests.

The arrangement of authority and responsibility over the work and resources in an organization affects how the individuals in an organization behave. Teachers are the key interface between the school and the primary client, the students, yet most of the decisions about the structure of a school, the allocation of resources, and the process for implementing the learning program has been made by those outside the “classroom”. Empowering teachers to take personal responsibility for the learning program will develop a complete sense of ownership for the learning outcomes of FRMCPS.

The TPP proposed by the Fulton Project believes that the management model outlined in this application will result in the creation of an educational environment that is more successful for students and more rewarding, professionally for the teachers themselves.

□ **Financial Management and Oversight - Respective Roles and Responsibilities**

The role of the TPP is to conduct day-to-day management of the school. In doing so, the members of the TPP responsible for the administration of the school, will comply with all state and federal laws. These administrative functions are outlined in the *Charter School Administrative and Governance Guide*, available on-line at: www.doe.ma.edu. Members will assume a share of responsibility for school success and individual entrepreneurship in the following areas: finances; administration of programs for student support, such as health and nutrition; student conduct and records; and issues related to academic programs such as special education and services for students with limited English proficiency. If there are ever questions, the members will consult with the school's legal counsel. For more information regarding the specific roles and responsibilities of the members in the TPP assuming responsibility for administrative functions, please refer to Section III, D. Management, 2. Roles and Responsibilities.

Defining the respective roles and responsibilities of the board of trustees and the TPP for the financial management and oversight of FRMCPS is a complex process that demands careful consideration. Although it is clear that the board of trustees is not to abdicate its legal and fiduciary responsibilities as the entity holding the charter; it is less clear, at this time, how the board of trustees (since a working board does not exist as a group at this time) will provide proportionate autonomy and authority for the TPP to execute its responsibilities. It is crucial - for the success of FRMCPS - for the board of trustees to define, and take ownership of their responsibilities in relation to the TPP. Therefore, once the board of trustees is defined as a group, careful consideration and planning will be given to the roles and responsibilities of each entity. In doing so, the board will seek legal counsel, as well as consult with *The Charter School Administrative and Governance Guide* (MA DOE) and *Charting a Clear Course* (Charter Friends National Network). The Fulton Project will initiate this process. Please see Action Plan for timeframe.

It is understood by the Fulton Project (as the applicant for a Charter for FRMCPS), that the core responsibilities of the board of trustees included: 1) meeting the terms of the charter, 2) maintaining the health and safety of the students and others in the school, 3) establishing and guarding the vision and mission of the school, 4) setting broad policies for the school, 5) ensuring the fiscal health of the school, 6) evaluating the performance of the TPP, 7) managing relationships with the community of Fall River and beyond, and 8) carrying out functions specifically mandated by law (i.e. complaint procedures, leasing property, applying for waivers). (Charter Friends National Network, 2001)

To monitor the performance of the TPP to keep the TPP accountable, the board of trustees will consider a variety of measures: advance board review of important reports and documentation, school inspections, surveys (parent/student satisfaction), interviews, questionnaires (parents/students/members of the TPP), review of student progress reports, and development of an Accountability Agreement that aligns the performance measures in the contract with the mission and overarching charter accountability agreement of FRMCPS.

□ **History of the Management Organization**

The proposed Teacher Professional Practice will be a small, local limited liability company of eight members incorporated for the purpose of implementing the educational program of FRMPCS. No history of the TPP exists.

D. Management

1. Management Structure

The members of the proposed TPP will be owners of the LLC. The LLC will not utilize a single manager; therefore, the members will have a direct say in the decision making process – a consensus building model will be used. Members of the TPP will be appointed - by mutual agreement (as articulated in an operating contract between TPP members) - administrative functions (please refer to Section III, D (2) Roles and Responsibilities, below). These “point people” will be responsible for managing the day-to-day activities in their area, facilitating work groups, delegating tasks, compiling data, and submitting reports. Individual members will not make a decision unilaterally, unless policies have been put in place for them to do so. Through a formal process of reporting, members will address issues during weekly meetings where decisions will be made by the membership. In this manner, as well as through routine evaluations by the membership, members will be held accountable.

2. Roles and Responsibilities -Administrative Functions of Members of the TPP

As noted above, the members of the TPP will share the administrative functions of the day-to-day management of the school as outlined in *The Charter School Administrative and Governance Guide*. As the school grows, the TPP will grow; new members will assume responsibilities of specific administrative

	AMS	CAS	Total	Students	Ratio
Pre-operational	1	1	2	0	N/a
Year I	2	2	4	20	1:5
Year II	3	3	6	40	1:6/7
Year III	3	3	6	60	1:10
Year IV	4	4	8	80	1:10

functions. The table to the left shows the ratio of members to students. This is important to demonstrate the capacity of members to meet the needs of the students, as well as, attend to the administrative functions necessary to manage the school effectively. The TPP will divide the administrative functions into four

categories: Financial Management, General Administration, Student Conduct and Records, and Academic Programs. The table below summarizes the specific functions that will be appointed by members. Where ever necessary, administrative functions will be managed by highly qualified and certified persons (i.e. Special Education). All administrative functions will be conducted in accordance with all state and federal laws and regulations.

TPP Membership	Administrative Function
Financial Management	
AMS	Charter School Funding, Transportation, Day-To-Operations (Business Management), Facilities
AMS	Federal and State Grants (i.e. entitlement, allocation, and competitive)
General Administration	
CAS	Code of Conduct, Freedom of Expression, Attendance, Student Records, Petty Cash Disbursement and Mail Distribution
Student Conduct & Records	
AMS	(a Child & Family mental health therapist), Anti-Discrimination, Compliance, Public Records, Health & Nutrition, Abuse & Possession, Legal Custody, Religion, Safety
Academic Programs	
AMS	Special Education, English Language Learners
CAS	Schedule and Structured Learning Time, Testing (including MCAS)
CAS	District Curriculum Accommodation Plan
CAS	Accountability Plan, Special Programs (i.e. sailing and boat building)

3. Policy Development

□ The Process for Developing Policy

The proposed opening of FRMCPS is Fall 2006; therefore, the school's Code of Conduct and Student Enrollment Policy is not included (nor required) in this application. However, FRMCPS is aware that: a Code of Conduct must be developed in accordance with state law and submitted to the Charter School Office for approval; the Code of Conduct must be published and provided to anyone upon request (MGL c.71 & 37H). When developing the Code of Conduct, FRMCPS will consult the *Advisory Opinion on Student Discipline* available at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/advisory/discipline/AOSD1.html>, in addition to MGL c.71 & 37H. Please refer to the Action Plan for a timeframe for creating these two documents.

School uniforms, yes or no? In making a decision regarding school uniforms, the founding members gathered information from other Charter schools, talked with Charter school leaders, students, and parents, discussed various options, and most importantly, looked at the mission, philosophy, and vision of FRMCPS. Based on the information gathered and the mission of FRMCPS to empower students to take personal responsibility for their learning and to develop students with strong identities, the founding group decided that FRMCPS would not require students to wear uniforms.

Future Policy Development - The Accountability Plan will be used to guide policy decisions regarding the educational program. Using clear and measurable performance measures outlined in the AP, the board of trustees, and when appropriate, in consultation with members of the TPP, will set policy that is consistent with state and federal laws and regulations and that supports those responsible for accomplishing the mission of FRMCPS. Please see Section III. C. School Governance, 3. Policy Development.

4. Educational Leadership

□ Assessment of Educational Content and Pedagogical Approach

As evident in several sections of this application (II, B. Curriculum, D. Assessment, F. Special Student Populations; and III, C. School Governance, D. Management) the development, supervision, coordination, and continual assessment of the educational content and pedagogical approach, is crucial for the success of FRMCPS. From the board's responsibility to ensure that FRMCPS is *educationally sound* and *faithful to its Charter*, through effective policy making, to the responsibility of members of the TPP to implement the educational program through effective use of board policies, the Accountability Plan, DCAP, Technology Plan, LEP Plan, and a formal IEP process, development, supervision, coordination, and continual assessment are an integral part of FRMCPS. The very nature and purpose of board policies and developed plans demand alignment to support instructional goals and student achievement.

□ Improving Instruction to Improve Student Achievement

The management structure of the TPP does not support the role of a principal or instructional leader. The individuals responsible for instruction and student achievement are the members of the TPP, both Academic Management Specialists and Content Area Specialists. Members are actively involved, on a day-to-day basis, with instruction and assessment of students, as well as responsible for administrative functions (as noted above in Section III, D. Management, 2. *Roles and Responsibilities*). Through coordinated efforts and continuous formal and informal dialog, assessment data is readily available to those who have the means to improve instruction and student achievement – the teachers. For more information, please see Section II, D. Assessment, *Structure & Learning Experiences, Improving Instruction and Student Learning*.

- **Use of Assessment Data for Professional Development** – See Section II, D. Assessment, *Structure & Learning Experiences: Improving Instruction and Student Learning* (paragraphs 3 – 6); and Section III, D. Management, *Plans for Professional Development* (below)

5. Human Resources

□ **Faculty to be Hired**

In March of 2004, the board of trustees will contract with a newly formed, local teacher professional practice (TPP) to begin the implementation of the educational program outlined in this application. The TPP will be required, by contract with the board of trustees, to comply with all state and federal laws regarding teacher quality. In accordance with Charter School Regulation 603 CMR 1.07, teachers who are partners in the TPP will take and pass, with their first year of employment, the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure; or be already certified to teach in Massachusetts.

In the pre-operational phase (March 1, 2004 – August 31, 2005) the TPP will consist of two professional educators (members). During this phase, the two initial members will recruit two additional members (one with special education certification and another with experience teaching in a fifth grade) to meet the administrative and instructional needs necessary for the first year of operation with 20 students. Subsequently, two additional members will be recruited by the TPP (for a total of six) for the second year of operation with 40 students. No additional members will be recruited until the fifth year of operation when the school will reach capacity - 8 members and 80 students.

□ **Staff Recruitment and Retention**

The nature of the educational environment demands a different type of educator. Therefore, the TPP will recruit prospective members from a variety of different sources, including institutions that offer an alternative Master of education/professional studies programs such as:

- *Teacher Leadership* strand of the *School Leadership Program*, Harvard University (<http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=slp&pageid=icb.page634>);
- *Leadership for Educational Entrepreneurs*, Arizona State University West (<http://www.west.asu.edu/leep/>);
- *Teacher Leadership*, University of Minnesota (<http://education.umn.edu/SPS/programs/ins/tchrlead-home.htm>).

As a Gates-EdVisions Schools project, FRMCPS will be part of a national network of schools that are student-centered, project-based and utilizing an alternative form of teacher-led governance. This partnership provides unique opportunities to recruit future members of the TPP.

Members of the TPP will attend career fairs and take advantage of other opportunities to meet unique educators through campus visits and presentations; for example, the director of The Fulton Project will be attending a career fair at Harvard Business School (HBS) on November 30th, and will conduct a presentation for the Social Enterprise Club at HBS in the near future.

The TPP will have access to a variety of other resources including: educational periodicals; local and regional newspapers; internet resources; and additional networks/organizations such as the National Middle School Association, New England Minority Teacher Recruiting Network, the Association of Independent Schools of New England, and the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers.

Membership in a TPP is not for everyone; however, for the right person, it offers the opportunity of “ownership” for all aspects of the educational program, a professional status rarely granted to teachers.

□ **Determination of Salaries and Increases**

As an LLC, members of the TPP are owners of the organization (the TPP). The written operating agreement of the TPP (not to be confused with the contract with the board of trustees) will include clauses requiring “buy-sell” and “buy-out” agreements for new members and members that want to leave the TPP. These agreements will include performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of a member, enabling the membership to “buy-out” (or to let go of) a member if necessary. Members of the TPP will negotiate their salaries – which will be included in a contract with the board of trustees.

□ **Plans for Professional Development**

The success of the educational program envisioned by the Fulton Project is dependant on a number of factors, including ongoing professional development. FRMCPS will emphasis this in the

contract with the Teacher Professional Practice. Initial professional development opportunities in the pre-operational year will include: governance with a teacher ownership model (Gates-EdVisions Schools Project), reading instruction for learning and/or reading disabled students (Jean-Fryer Schedler), Teaching for Understanding (ATLAS Communities), and The Responsive Classroom (Northeast Foundation for Children).

Ongoing professional development will be determined on the assessment of data gathered throughout the year. Where appropriate, to enhance the student-centered, project-based learning environment at FRMCPS and address areas of need based on data gathered, members of the TPP will participate in professional development opportunities made available through the Massachusetts Charter School Association. For example, current professional development opportunities include: Project-based Curriculum – Meeting Standards, Capitalizing on Teacher Creativity, Fulfilling the School’s Mission (Murdoch Middle Public Charter School); Understanding and Working with Multiple Learning Styles (Pioneer Valley Performing Arts CHS); Supporting Student Learning (Sturgis CS); Essential Data for Educators – Math MCAS Vocabulary (Community Day CS); and Supporting At-Risk Students for Academic Achievement (Lowell Middlesex Academy CS).

In addition, a multitude of organizations provide opportunities for TPP members to acquire and develop valuable skills and knowledge in particular areas, including, but not limited to: Title I Dissemination Project (supports the education efforts of Title I directors, coordinators, teachers, and parents); National Middle School Association (only national education association dedicated exclusively to the growth of middle level education – they provide conferences, on-line training, workshops, and video training); The Society for Naval Architects and Marine Engineers (annual maritime technology conference); Coalition for Essential Schools (creates and sustains equitable, intellectually vibrant, personalized schools – they provide resources and the annual Fall Forum); and Francis W. Parker Essential Charter School & Teachers Center (provides opportunities for educators to gather for collective inquiry and meaningful dialogue about teaching and learning).

Please Note: *The Gates-EdVisions Schools Project is committed to providing fifty hours worth of professional development in the pre-operational year, of which at least twenty-five hours will be devoted to TPP member education and training.*

□ **The “Ideal Teacher”**

There are two types of educators required for the success of the educational program described in this document: Academic Management Specialists and Content Area Specialists. For both types, the ideal educator will: be creative, have an entrepreneurial spirit, a strong work ethic, the ability to think “outside the box”, and have a strong interest in the maritime realm. Although teachers graduating from traditional teacher certification programs may exhibit these qualities, prospective teachers who are interested in working in the proposed educational environment will need to clearly understand the roles and responsibilities required in this unique educational setting.

The ideal teacher will be open to exploring new arrangements in teaching and administrative management. The ideal teacher will have an interest in the over all success of the school including administrative issues. The ideal teacher will not be looking for a classroom to “own”, or a small group of students to call their own, but be part of a professional practice that takes ownership of the implementation of the entire educational program. The ideal teacher will enjoy the process of, and become actively involved in, self-management and have the ability to communicate effectively with colleagues.

In addition, the ideal CAS will be passionate about their content area and have the ability to effectively share that knowledge and understanding with students in a multi-aged, non-graded setting.

The ideal teacher will love working with children, demonstrate an innate respect for children, and hold students to high standards while being supportive and nurturing.

□ **Typical Teaching Program**

Each day, all members of the TPP will be responsible for 4 hours of pre-scheduled, direct student involvement, 2 hours of flexible time dedicated to assisting students when necessary, and 2 hours of administrative duties. An AMS will hold 4 advisory meetings on a daily basis to work with individual students to plan and organize, record and monitor, and/or evaluate their progress with an ILP and/or ICS. A CAS will facilitate 4 hours worth of unique learning experiences for students in their area of expertise or in collaboration with another CAS; for example, Writer's Workshop, an integrated math and science workshop, Reading Seminar, or a history/social science project. All members of the TPP (both AMS and CAS) will be available for two hours per day to assist students in a variety of ways, including (but not limited to): evaluating an ICS presentation or Level hearing, one-on-one explicit skills instruction, working out a problem with or facilitating learning for an ICS, lunch/recess, or monitoring a small group activity. In addition, all TPP members (both AMS and CAS) will have two hours per day to conduct their administrative functions; for example, working on the Accountability Plan, arranging services for a special needs student, finalizing a report to be sent to the DOE, or preparing for the next board meeting.

E. Facilities and Student Transportation

□ **Why was the Marine Museum chosen and is it a viable option?**

The Marine Museum (MM) is an excellent choice for the proposed educational environment of FRMCPS for a number of reasons: 1) the MM is ideally situated on the waterfront in Fall River - across the street from the state pier, Battleship Cove (the world's largest collection of historic naval ships), Community Boating Center, and Narrows Center for the Arts; 2) the MM will provide sufficient space on the second floor for a small, personalized educational environment of 80 students; and 3) the artifacts at the MM will become a valuable and rich resource for curriculum development. The MM is located within minutes of Fall River Heritage State Park and several neighborhoods that are hosts to an elementary and middle school.

□ **Layout and Description of the Proposed Educational Environment**

The proposed layout for FRMCPS is the physical manifestation of the mission of the school. It provides the students, faculty, and parents, with a unique space that is flexible and accommodating. Over 1,600 sq.ft. will be used to create individual workstations in four separate "pods" of 20 students each. An additional 1,100 sq.ft. is divided into multiple spaces for quiet individual work, small group work, and large group work. FRMCPS proposes creating a 400 sq.ft. science lab and a 600 sq.ft. presentation space. Students and teachers will also have access to 2,400 sq.ft. of common areas: library and "cafeteria". For more details, please see Attachment C

□ **Financing Plans**

The Fulton Project will work closely with the Marine Museum to acquire architect certified plans and a cost estimate to finance the renovation of the physical space. Financing will be secured (if necessary, pending Charter approval) through a local lender and a lease agreement will be prepared between the Marine Museum and FRMCPS by March 2005. Pending approval, renovations to the physical space will begin in April 2005. The director of the Fulton Project has been in contact with both *The Charter Coalition (NCB Development Corp)* and *America's Charter School Corp*. The Charter Coalition provides financial and development services for Charter schools in low-income and economically distressed communities.

□ **Transportation Services**

At this point, FRMCPS will not provide transportation services for families. If transportation is needed, FRMCPS will work with the Fall River school district's school committee to provide transportation for the student(s). However, in the event that the school committee limits transportation for district students, FRMCPS will not request transportation beyond those limitations. (MGL 89(ff))

□ **Physically Challenged Students**

FRMCPS will make all the necessary modifications to ensure that all students, regardless of physical challenge(s), will be provided with the access, services, and accommodations necessary to assure their full participation in the same educational environment and program as their peers. The board of trustees of FRMCPS and members of the TPP will work together to ensure that FRMCPS is in full compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations regarding physically challenged students, including the Americans with Disabilities Act.

F. School Finances

1. Fiscal Management

□ **Management of the School Finances**

In accordance with the *MA Charter School Recommended Fiscal Policies and Procedures Guide*, ultimate responsibility for the financial health and stability of FRMCPS rests entirely with the Board of Trustees. The role of the TPP in financial management would be analogous to the role of a Head of School in a more traditional management structure.

For example, the Board will maintain sole authority to adopt the annual operating and capital budgets. The TPP will work with the Board Treasurer and the Finance Committee to make budget recommendations to the Board, supporting each line item recommendation with a backup worksheet, but all recommendations will be presented to the full Board for approval.

Section 204 of the guide provides that the Board has authority to select and terminate key employees and set salary for key employees. Since it is difficult to define “key” employees in the TPP management structure, this would mean that the Board’s review of the TPP contract and decision to renew or terminate that contract gives them ultimate authority to determine the school’s management team.

As in a more traditional management structure, the Board maintains sole authority to purchase property, incur debt, invest funds, choose a bank, and choose an auditor. In addition, the Board will have signatory authority, through the Board Chair and Treasurer, for authorizing all cash transactions.

For ease of operations, signatory authority will be extended to one of the TPP members, as designated by the TPP contract. However, to properly segregate duties within FRMCPS, this will not be the same TPP member responsible for business management administrative functions. Dual signatures will be required for all individual checks greater than \$5,000.

The TPP member responsible for business management will generate monthly reports, including a Budget Variance Report (budget vs. actual) and a projected cash flow report. These reports will first be submitted to the Finance Committee and the TPP for review. Review by the TPP ensures adherence to line item limits because any overage by one TPP member could adversely affect another member. After initial review, monthly financial reports are submitted to the full Board.

□ **Fiscal Controls and Financial Management Policies**

FRMCPS will maintain accounting records and related financial reports on the accrual basis of accounting. All records and reports will be consistent with the special purpose governmental unit requirements of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). As with the financial management structure, appropriate financial controls and financial management policies are clearly outlined in the *MA Charter School Recommended Fiscal Policies and Procedures Guide*. FRMCPS will support the implementation of these policies by clearly articulating the division of financial responsibilities among the members of the TPP. The nature of the TPP itself ensures greater financial transparency and review by parties clearly invested in the operational stability of FRMCPS. Subject to ratification first by the TPP and then by the Board of Trustees after review by the Finance Committee, the following list represents a thorough division of financial responsibilities at FRMCPS.

TPP Member “I”	TPP Member “II”	TPP Member “III”
Responsible for business management	Responsible for cash and mail distribution	With signatory authority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide government access to financial records • Set up and maintain accounting software • Design chart of accounts as outlined in Section 1100 of the guide • Ensure security of financial data and school documents • Maintain records as outlined in Section 312 of guide • Create financial reports • Maintain fixed asset register and record disposals • Ensure that FRMCPS adheres to procurement policies as outlined in guide • Reconcile general ledger control accounts with subsidiary ledgers • Reconcile bank statements with cash accounts, verify outstanding checks • Periodically check cash disbursement records for overpayment and duplicate payment • Maintain personnel records, and adhere to payroll policies as outlined in section 1400 of guide • Prepare payroll • Ensure adherence to expense reimbursement procedures as outlined in guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open mail and record receipts for deposit, forward to TPP Member I • Disburse petty cash payments in accordance with Section 403 of the guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review financial reports, scan for unusual budget variance • Stamp supporting documents when signing checks to prevent resubmission
	Board of Trustees	TPP Member “IV”
	Treasurer	Grant Administrator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial oversight • Review financial reports, analyze overall financial health of FRMCPS • Exercise authority as outlined in Section 204 of the guide • Sign individual checks greater than \$5,000 as required • Research possibility of obtaining revolving credit line in case of a cash deficit • Review annual audit report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare invoices as required by funding source, subject to review by TPP Member I • Track receipt of grants, and reconcile expenditures incurred to invoices prepared
	Entire TPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review financial reports, scan for line item overages

2. Budget and Budget Narrative

□ **Estimated Expenditures and Revenues**

The FRMCPS mission will drive the budget and inform strategic financial planning. Careful budget development and implementation will be crucial to long-term sustainability of an institution that can truly provide a challenging student-centered, project-based maritime studies program, and provide the technological tools (such as TRIM™ and Starting Points™) to support that program. The guiding principles in the development of the FRMCPS budget were: providing the technological infrastructure necessary to support TRIM™ and Starting Points™; providing sufficient pre-operational and first year staffing to ensure proper professional development opportunities regarding implementation of student-centered and project-based learning, understanding of the TPP organizational structure, and development of FRMCPS maritime program objectives; maintaining a low student count and a low student to teacher ratio so that administrative duties can be reasonably divided among the faculty members of the TPP; this ensures low administrative overhead, concentrating resources in instructional programs, and in the hands of professionals who will be interacting with the students on a daily basis; staggering enrollment to allow for planned capital acquisition of costly maritime-related and technology-related assets and gradual introduction of costly maritime-related, level specific programs, such as sailing, swimming, boat building, rowing, and open ocean exploration.

A complete estimate of expenditures and revenues from FRMCPS’s startup phase through its fourth year of operation is included below. A fourth year is added to the proposed budget because that is

the year FRMCPS will reach student enrollment capacity. By year four, all significant maritime and technology-related assets will have been purchased, all significant maritime-related student programs will have been introduced, and the FRMCPS budget will be stable.

This section includes an overview of the budget. Total estimated revenue for Year I is \$464,374, increasing to \$668,748 in Year II, \$683,123 in Year

	Pre-Op	YEAR I	YEAR II	YEAR III	YEAR IV
Local Sources	\$20,000	\$135,940	\$141,880	\$117,820	\$123,760
State Sources		\$181,140	\$362,280	\$543,420	\$624,560
Federal Sources	\$150,000	\$157,294	\$164,588	\$21,883	\$29,177
TOTAL REVENUE	\$170,000	\$474,374	\$668,748	\$683,123	\$877,497

III, and \$877,497 in Year IV. These revenues are derived from anticipated federal sources (start-up assistance grant, Title I, and Special Education Entitlement Funding), state sources (per-pupil tuition allocation), and local sources (EdVisions grants and fundraising from Fulton Project, the fundraising arm of FRMCPS).

Expense Projections

Expenditures are divided into seven categories: Administrative, Instructional (including faculty), Business Services, Operations and Maintenance, Physical Plant, Student Services and Board of Trustees. The portion of expenditures dedicated to instructional & staff expense is remarkably high, and this can be attributed to the TPP management model, suggesting that an argument could be made for the cost effectiveness of the small school model – an assumption that contradicts current conventional wisdom. By the fourth year of operation, spending for instructional expenses (72%) is followed by spending for student services (12%), and then spending for the physical plant (8%). These budget priorities clearly echo the FRMCS mission of providing a truly student-centered learning environment.

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES	Pre-Operational	Year I	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	% of Revenue	% of Revenue	% of Revenue	% of Revenue	% of Revenue
Instructional & Staff	76% (\$127,004)	62% (\$291,271)	68% (\$444,467)	67% (\$450,384)	72% (\$614,106)
Administrative	6% (\$9,811)	4% (\$18,092)	2% (\$13,892)	2% (\$11,300)	1% (\$9,692)
Business Services	18% (\$29,346)	8% (\$38,500)	6% (\$38,500)	5% (\$36,500)	4% (\$33,500)
Operations & Maintenances	0% (\$ -)	1% (\$2,480)	1% (\$3,480)	1% (\$4,480)	1% (\$5,480)
Physical Plant	0% (\$ -)	16% (\$73,500)	11% (\$73,500)	11% (\$73,500)	8% (\$73,500)
Student Services	0% (\$ -)	6% (\$28,600)	9% (\$56,900)	11% (\$74,700)	12% (\$105,500)
Board of Trustees	0% (\$ -)	3% (\$12,000)	3% (\$22,000)	3% (\$22,000)	2% (\$14,000)
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	100% (\$166,161)	100% (\$464,443)	100% (\$ 662,196)	100% (\$672,864)	100% (\$855,688)

Financial Forecasts

FRMCPS plans to start with 20 5th graders and add a new 5th grade class each year until Year IV. During the pre-operational phase and during Year I and Year II, staffing exceeds the ultimate student to teacher ratio of 10:1 that will be in place by Year IV. This will allow faculty to dedicate time to establishing and perfecting curriculum and assessment systems and developing community partnerships.

FRMCPS anticipates having a positive cash balance during the first year of operation (2006-07). Net cash surpluses are consistently 2% of revenue year on year. Some notable mission-driven expenses in the FRMCPS budget are: student to teacher ratio of 5 to 1 in year 1 of operation; technology infrastructure that provides one computer for every student; professional development allocation of \$5,000 for new teacher training; maritime-based programs in open ocean exploration, sailing, boat building, swimming, and rowing; maritime laboratory for study of hydrodynamics.

□ **Planned Fundraising Efforts**

In March, 2003 The Fulton Project received a pre-charter planning grant of \$10,000 from the Gates-EdVisions Schools Project (http://www.edvisions.com/html/edvisions_schools.html); if a Charter is granted, additional implementation funds totaling \$80,000 will be awarded. The Fulton Project anticipates raising \$10,000 annually through a full boat donation program with Block Island Maritime Funding. This program will become operational in January 2005. In addition, the Fulton Project, in collaboration with FRMCPS, plans to raise \$100,000 annually beginning FY05/06.

The Fulton Project, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, exists for the purpose of *planning, developing, implementing, and supporting a maritime-based educational program for children ages 9 - 13...* (Articles of Organization). The Fulton Project will lead and coordinate fundraising efforts for FRMCPS focused on three areas: individual donors (\$2,460 has been raised to date); local, regional, and national charitable organizations; and corporate sponsors. A Fundraising Plan will be developed in collaboration with members of the Board of Trustees. Plans include: Nathaniel Philbrick, an acclaimed maritime author (*In the Heart of the Sea, Revenge of the Whale, Sea of Glory*), who has offered to speak at a future fundraising event to raise funds for FRMCPS.

The founder/director of the Fulton Project is currently an active member of a CEO group for non-profit organizations sponsored by the Community Foundation of Southeastern MA. This membership will aid in the process of developing strong local and regional relationships with other non-profit leaders.

Complete Estimate of Expenditures and Revenues

Complete Estimate of Expenditures and Revenues (continued)

Complete Estimate of Expenditures and Revenues (continued)

Complete Estimate of Expenditures and Revenues (continued)

G. Action Plan – Please see Attachment D.

IV. DEMONSTRATING FAITHFUL TO THE TERMS OF THE CHARTER

1. Accountability Plan – Example Goals

In accordance with Charter School regulation 603 CMR 1.05(g), FRMCPS will develop an Accountability Plan (AP). During the first year of operation (2006 – 2007) an effective AP will be created on the basis of three questions. Is the academic program a success? Is the school a viable organization? Is the school faithful to the terms of its charter? With the mission statement of FRMCPS in mind, the AP will be clear, coherent, consistent with high academic standards, and address internally set performance objectives and how the progress toward these objectives will be measured. Progress towards these objectives will be reported in the Annual Report to the state Board of Education and the public (due on or before August 1st of each year). The performance objectives set will only address the most critical outcomes of the educational program. Examples are given in the table below.

Academic Success	Goal: Students at FRMCPS will demonstrate mastery of completing Independent Courses of Study that integrate multiple content areas at the proficient level or above.	
	Assessment: Internal – TRIM data	
	Benchmarks:	
	Year III 2008/09	Upon completion of Level IV benchmarks, 80% of students will have completed twenty Individual Courses of Study (ICS), at the proficient level or better, integrating four content areas, using an ICS Performance Rubric (internally created).
Year V 2010/11	Upon completion of Level IV benchmarks, 100% of students will have completed twenty Individual Courses of Study (ICS), at the proficient level or better, integrating four content areas, using an ICS Performance Rubric (internally created).	
Academic Success	Goal: Students at FRMCPS will correctly identifying writing skills in need of improvement, establish appropriate writing goals in their Individual Learning Plan, and master the identified writing skills.	
	Assessment: Internal & External – TRIM/ILP data & PTS (Progress Towards Standards)	
	Benchmarks:	
	Year III 2008/09	90% of students at Level II will have accurately identified writing skills in need of improvement and established appropriate goals in their ILP. 80% of students who have completed Level II benchmark requirements will have scored at the Proficient level on the Progress Towards Standards test (standards referenced).
Year V 2010/11	100% of students at Level II will have accurately identified writing skills in need of improvement and established appropriate goals in their ILP. B. 90% of students who have completed Level II benchmark requirements will have scored at the Proficient level on the Progress Towards Standards test (standards referenced).	
Academic Success	Goal: Seventh grade students at FRMCPS will excel in ELA in MCAS, as indicated by the number of students achieving at the Proficient or Advance levels.	
	Assessment: External – MCAS (Standards Referenced)	
	Benchmarks:	
Year III 2008/09	85% of seventh grade students will score at the Proficient level or above on ELA (MCAS)	

	Year V 2010/11	95% of seventh grade students will score at the Proficient level or above on ELA (MCAS)
Organizational Viability	Goal: Fall River Maritime Charter Public School will consistently operate at full capacity.	
	Assessment: Full-time enrollment and waiting list	
	Benchmarks:	
	Year III 2008/09	Full-time enrollment (grades 5 – 7): 60 students; waiting list: 15 students
	Year V 2010/11	Full-time enrollment (grades 5 – 8): 80 students; waiting list: 20 students
Organizational Viability	Goal: Fall River Maritime Charter Public School will be a financially sound organization.	
	Assessment: Balanced budget and contingency fund	
	Benchmarks:	
	Year III 2008/09	Balanced budget at fiscal year end; contingency fund of 2% of budget.
	Year V 2010/11	Balanced budget at fiscal year end; contingency fund of 5% of budget.
Organizational Viability	Goal: The Board of Trustees is an effect and efficient board.	
	Assessment: Annual self-assessment and TPP/parent/student questionnaire	
	Benchmarks:	
	Year III 2008/09	Self-assessment: Advancing or above in 80% of categories Questionnaire: Advancing or above in 80% of categories
	Year V 2010/11	Self-assessment: Advancing or above in 90% of categories Questionnaire: Advancing or above in 90% of categories
Faithfulness to Charter	Goal: The Teacher Professional Practice demonstrates effective and efficient management of the day-to-day operations of Fall River Maritime Charter Public School.	
	Assessment: Board evaluation	
	Benchmarks:	
	Year III 2008/09	The TPP has met the academic, organizational, and financial goals outlined in their contract with the Board of Trustees with an overall rating of Meets Expectations using a scoring rubric developed by the Board of Trustees for the purpose of evaluating the TPP.
	Year V 2010/11	The TPP has met the academic, organizational, and financial goals outlined in their contract with the Board of Trustees with an overall rating of Exceeds Expectations using a scoring rubric developed by the Board of Trustees for the purpose of evaluating the TPP.
Faithfulness to Charter	Goal: (Example of long-term goal) Students graduating from FRMCPS are successful in high school	
	Assessment: number graduating from high school; GPA; extra-curricular activities	
	Benchmarks: (FRMCPS graduates will graduate from high school in the year 2014)	
	Year IX 2014/15	19 graduates; 16 (80%) w/ a GPA of 3.0 or higher; 2 activities each year of high school
	Year XI 2016/17	20 graduates; 18 (90%) w/ a GPA of 3.0 or higher; 4 activities each year of high school

2. Creating an Effective Accountability Plan (AP)

At FRMCPS, members of the TPP will create and use the AP to inform instructional practice with students. The primary person responsible for defining and overseeing the process of creating the AP will be a CAS (Please see Section III, D. Management (2) Roles and Responsibilities). A team consisting of two AMSs, and two CASs, and board member will be created to develop the AP. This team will meet once a month beginning in September of the first year of operation (2006-07) and use the *Charter School Accountability Action Guide* (Nahas, Brigham) as a foundation for developing the AP. In the years proceeding, all members of the TPP will be asked to assist in the process of collecting and analyzing data to evaluate the school's progress with AP goals. It is essential that the members of the TPP have a thorough understanding of the AP goals when making decisions around the day-to-day management of the educational program. Since all members of the TPP are actively engaged with students on a daily basis, implementing the AP will be efficient and effective.

3. Key Indicators of Success

Scenario: We, the renewal inspection team, have determined that Fall River Maritime Charter Public School is a success. Overall, we found that students 1) are empowered to take personal responsibility for their learning, 2) have developed, or are in the process of developing, a strong identity, 3) are inquisitive, and 4) are capable of interacting with others in ways that contribute to their success. In addition, we found the student-centered, project-based maritime studies program to be challenging for all the students. Although the educational environment at FRMCSP was not recognizable as a traditional school, we were immediately drawn in by a sense of unity and contentment. Despite a variety of maritime-based learning experiences (individual, small group, and one-on-one) taking place simultaneously, there was order and students were engaged in their work. Students took the initiative to introduce themselves to team members and invite them to learn more about what they were doing. We witnessed students asking for assistance and clarification when needed from teachers who were not only available, but also respectful.

It was difficult to determine which grade a student, or group of students was in; however, when we approached a student and asked them about their learning, they were able to clearly articulate the academic, social/emotional, and life skills goals they were working on. The students demonstrated competence in developing and completing Individual Courses of Study which integrated multiple content areas; identified specific standards to master from the MA Curriculum Frameworks; and identified specific academic skills to master in reading, writing, and mathematics. They understood the process of learning which required thorough evaluation, reflection, and actual improvement. When we asked for specific examples, students were able to access data through the school's resource for information management, TRIM. AND all students showed progress in MCAS scores over time.

4. Disseminating Best Practices

According to MGL Chapter 89(d), the purpose for establishing charter schools include: *providing teachers with a vehicle for establishing schools with alternative, innovative methods of educational instruction and school structure and management.* As a Charter school, FRMCPS is charged with sharing best practices with other public schools. Therefore, FRMCPS will actively participate in programs offered by the Massachusetts Charter School Association such as the annual convention *Best Practices Showcase, Whole School Models Dissemination Program, and Fellowship Program.* In addition, FRMCPS will become a member of the *Massachusetts Charter School Technology Leaders Network* founded by Mara Gordon at Murdoch Middle Public Charter School.