

**Louisiana Department of Education
 FY14 1003(g) School Improvement Grant
 LEA Application Narrative**

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

LEAs must submit a PDF application narrative and an excel budget form for each school for which the LEA is applying for a grant to David.Shepard@la.gov by Wednesday, September 2, 2015 at 3:00pm CT. The budget form and resources, including a sample evaluation rubric, can be found on the Department's website at [this link](#). Please contact David.Shepard@la.gov with questions.

APPLICANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Official Name of LEA (Agency/Organization)	Democracy Prep Louisiana Charter School (d/b/a Democracy Prep Baton Rouge Charter School)
Name of Superintendent/CEO	Michelle Gieg
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Email Address	michelle.gieg@democracyprep.org
Mailing Address	4055 Prescott Road
City, State	Baton Rouge, LA
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Name and Title of LEA Grant Contact Person	Benjamin Feit Chief of Staff Democracy Prep Public Schools
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A. SCHOOL TO BE SERVED: Provide information about the school to be served with a School Improvement Grant.					
Official Name of School	Site Code (6 digits)	NCES ID (12 digits)	Priority or Focus School	Intervention Model*	Amount Requested
Democracy Prep Louisiana Charter School	WAV001	N/A	N/A	Restart	\$1,001,795.07

* Select one of the following: Turnaround, Restart, Closure, Transformation, Evidence-Based Whole School Reform Model or Early Learning Model.

School Profile

Rurality (Rural, Suburban, Urban)	% Free/Reduced Lunch or % Educationally Disadvantaged	Current SY14-15 Enrollment	Anticipated Enrollment*			
			SY15-16	SY16-17	SY17-18	SY18-19
Rural	99%	N/A	188	376	564	NA

*Complete for all years for which funding is requested.

Has the LEA been awarded a SIG grant prior to SY14-15?

Yes No

If the LEA was awarded a SIG grant prior to SY14-15, state the intervention model(s) implemented and describe the impact of the grant in terms of meeting performance goals. Support findings with data.

N/A

Optional: Additional contact information or information about the school to be served:

In 2015-16, Democracy Prep opened its doors to its founding cohorts of elementary and middle school scholars. Both schools are situated in the facility that formerly operated as Prescott Middle School, and each is slated to expand by one grade-level each year until the school reaches a fully-grown K-12 continuum in North Baton Rouge. Because the school is operating in a building that both serves as a searing symbol of failure within the community and had been unoccupied for multiple school years prior to the restart, recruitment during the school's pre-opening phase relied on grassroots canvassing efforts that touted Democracy Prep's proven track record as a national high-performing school operator. With the school on track to establish a reputation for instructional quality that eclipses the community's prior negative experiences with both Prescott and the charter

sector, our expectation is that demand for seats will continue to intensify as the school expands beyond kindergarten and grade six.

SECTION 1: SCHOOL NEEDS

- 1) **Needs Assessment.** Describe how the LEA has analyzed the needs of the school (e.g., instructional programs, school leadership and school infrastructure) based on a needs analysis that, among other things, analyzes the needs identified by families and the community, and how the selected intervention(s) aligns to the needs of the school.
- 2) Describe the identified need and explain the process that the LEA used to determine the intervention model selected to meet those needs. Describe the LEA's comprehensive theory of change for addressing the needs of identified persistently low-achieving schools and how SIG funds will be part of a comprehensive approach to addressing these needs. Include in the description a high-level summary of how the LEA will use SIG funds to support the implementation of proven strategies that result in increased student achievement.

In 2011 and 2013, Prescott Middle School earned "F" ratings on its Louisiana School Performance Score. In 2008 and 2010, the school was labeled "Academically Unacceptable" and ranked near the bottom of all schools in the state. Upon receiving approval to open a Type 5 charter school in 2013, Democracy Prep embarked upon an 18-month process designed to identify the proximate causes of this persistent underperformance and to design a program that would be responsive to the specific needs of the school community. Prescott falls within the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone, a special district established as a partnership between the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board and the Louisiana Recovery School District to transform the district's lowest performing schools. 90% of students in the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone attend failing schools, which fall behind Louisiana in multiple performance metrics.

Through extensive consultation with community partners, Democracy Prep leadership embarked on a comprehensive needs assessment that facilitated the creation of an intervention designed to address the needs of this persistently low-achieving school. Specifically, through the implementation of Democracy Prep's proven model, described at greater length below, Prescott will be transformed into a high-performing school that reliably provides its students with a path to success in college and citizenship. SIG funding will support the transformation at Prescott by permitting Democracy Prep to recruit, retain, educate, and support students with disabilities and those with significant knowledge and skill deficits and to deepen community ties in a manner that allows the school to uphold its expectations without detracting from the spirit of collaboration that has been forged to date.

- 3) **Family and Community Input.** Describe how the LEA has taken into consideration family and community input in selecting the intervention.

As evidenced by the profusion of "I Support Democracy Prep Baton Rouge" signs visible on front lawns throughout North Baton Rouge, Democracy Prep has established authentic grassroots support within the North Baton Rouge community. These relationships are a manifestation of deliberate efforts made by Democracy Prep during its 18-month pre-opening period to create partnerships rooted in a mutual desire to see students be successful.

Democracy Prep's founding school leader, Michelle Gieg, started her professional journey as a teacher in North Baton Rouge and has retained close ties to the community as her career has progressed. Having been identified by local leadership as an educator who would have an acute understanding of what the community would want from an educational partner organization, Ms. Gieg spent considerable time during the pre-opening period on community outreach and engagement. The school established a founding board of directors composed exclusively of individuals with strong local ties and assembled a core group of North Baton Rouge families to serve as a steering committee. In partnership with Better Baton Rouge, the organization that created the "Our Excellence, Our Schools" Community Compact, and New Schools for Baton Rouge, Democracy Prep set out to understand the school choice landscape in Baton Rouge and to determine why the community's previous experiences with charters had been less than ideal.

Democracy Prep has a proven model and a lengthy track record of driving student outcomes for students in neighborhoods whose demographics resemble those of North Baton Rouge. However, the network's approach to expansion requires a heightened sensitivity to local conditions and a humility that prevents values from being imposed from afar absent consultation with those being affected. Armed with an intimate understanding of the reasons behind Prescott's failure and the aspirations of the community, Democracy Prep is positioned to implement the intervention described below in a manner that increases its likelihood of being effective.

SECTION 2: INTERVENTION DESIGN

- 4) **SIG Requirements.** Describe the actions that the LEA has taken, or will take, to design and implement a plan consistent with the final requirements of the turnaround model, restart model, school closure, transformation model, evidence-based whole school reform model, early learning model, or state-determined model.

A whole-school reform model is a model that is designed to:

- a) Improve student academic achievement or attainment;
- b) Be implemented for all students in a school; and
- c) Address, at a minimum and in a comprehensive and coordinated manner, each of the following:
 - i. School leadership
 - ii. Teaching and learning in at least one full academic content area (including professional learning for educators).

- iii. Student non-academic support.
- iv. Family and community engagement.

If implementing either the turnaround or transformation model, describe how Increased Learning Time will be provided for:

- a) Core academic subjects (including English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography);
- b) Other subjects and enrichment activities that contribute to a well-rounded education, such as physical education, service learning, and experiential and work-based learning opportunities; and,
- c) Teachers to collaborate plan and engage in in professional development within and across grades and subjects.

Describe the services the school will receive and/or what activities the school will implement using SIG funds.

Democracy Prep schools have dramatically narrowed, and in some cases, reversed, achievement gaps that have historically affected the student populations described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (i.e. economically disadvantaged students, black and Latino students, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency).

In restart settings, Democracy Prep has achieved remarkable results. We lengthen the school day and calendar year in order to provide extended literacy and math instructional blocks while building content-rich courses in music, speech, debate, art, physical education, design, and even Korean language into our regular academic program. We utilize student-level data (including nationally-normed assessments, as well as individually administered reading inventories) to allow us to meet students where they actually are and to inform all decisions around instruction, staffing, and spending. We implement a rigorous, college-prep curriculum and offer targeted tutoring and individualized support afterschool and on Saturdays for students who need additional attention. We focus relentlessly on school culture and maintain high expectations, not just for our students, but also for the adults charged with creating and maintain high standards with consistency and fidelity.

In building schools designed to rival the best in the country, DPPS has maintained high academic and behavioral expectations. All DPPS schools are *no excuses* schools that feature five common elements: (1) *Rigorous college-prep academics*; (2) *More time to learn*; (3) *Data-driven decision-making*; (4) *Safe and supportive school culture*; and (5) *Exemplary talent*. In addition, DPPS is unique in its commitment to two other design elements: (1) *Educating all students, in all subjects, in all grades*; and (2) *Authentic civic leadership and engagement*.



(1) *Rigorous college-prep academics*. Democracy Prep operates academically rigorous, college preparatory campuses. Low-income children, often not as fully exposed as their more affluent peers to a breadth and depth of topics, can enter school at a disadvantage: weak subject-matter knowledge leaves them less prepared to assimilate new information. DPPS's content-rich curriculum

provides the basic knowledge that makes low-income students more effective learners later in their academic careers.



(2) *More time to learn.* By lengthening the school day and calendar year, DPPS provides extended literacy and Math instructional blocks while building content-rich courses in music, speech, debate, art, physical education, design, and Korean into the regular academic program. The school year includes approximately 191 days of instruction, and students in need of additional individual support or required remediation receive after-dismissal tutoring and attend school on additional Saturdays.



(3) *Data-driven decision-making.* DPPS relies on a sophisticated feedback loop of frequent data collection and analysis including a network-wide dashboard tool, interim assessments, and comparative academic measures to drive effective instruction at the student, class, teacher, grade, school, and network levels. DPPS utilizes student-level data (including nationally-normed assessments and individually administered reading inventories) to inform all decisions around instruction, staffing, and spending.



(4) *Safe and supportive school culture.* Democracy Prep believes that a safe, structured, and supportive school community is essential to ensure dramatic academic gains for all students. School culture is based on the “DREAM Values”: Discipline, Respect, Enthusiasm, Accountability, and Maturity. DPPS focuses relentlessly on school culture and maintains high expectations, not just for our students, but also for the adults charged with creating and maintaining high standards.



(5) *Exemplary talent.* Democracy Prep has an extremely selective staff application process. Lead teachers receive a base salary that exceeds the local scale and are eligible for performance-based raises and benefits designed to incentivize excellence and longevity. All staff members benefit from extensive performance reviews and receive weekly professional development (PD) during the school year and four weeks of intensive PD in the summer. Democracy Prep teachers and leaders are guided by explicit, well-defined career paths and are afforded ample opportunities for growth.



(6) *Educating all students, in all subjects, in all grades.* DPPS actively recruits students at risk of academic failure — including those with ELL classifications, IEPs, and 504 plans — and consistently enrolls students in high-need subgroups in numbers greater than or equal to those of zoned public schools located in the surrounding districts. Special Education students and ELL students (i.e. students taught by DPPS's Academic Collaboration Team, or “ACT students”) benefit from the same transformational education and support that all our students receive, including all elective offerings. In many charter schools, students who exit through natural attrition are not replaced



through a policy of “backfill.” By contrast, DPPS welcomes new students at all grade levels at the beginning of each year.

(7) *Authentic civic leadership and engagement.* Unique among its peers, DPPS

places an explicit focus on preparing students to become civic leaders. Through civic initiatives, community engagement, and authentic student and family advocacy, DPPS reminds educators, policymakers, and all Americans that the founding purpose of public education was to prepare our nation's youth for self-government in our democracy, and that restoring the civic mission of education must be a national priority.

Democracy Prep realizes that all students, regardless of whether they are classified as at-risk students, learn at varying rates. Schools that expect all students to meet high standards must be prepared to support students — regardless of the pace at or style in which they learn — until they reach mastery. At Democracy Prep, this learning support comes through multiple means: clear, engaging, high-quality lessons in the classroom, increased learning time, pullout and push-in instruction by Academic Collaboration Team (ACT) members and related services, and mandatory tutoring for students who require additional individual and small-group attention.

Democracy Prep implements an inclusive, heterogeneous educational model that serves all students in a manner that maximizes their academic potential and prepares all of them for college and citizenship. The entirety of Democracy Prep incorporates supports for all students struggling academically, not just those with disabilities. The academic program at Democracy Prep avoids remediation “pullout” from core courses whenever possible and uses a curriculum that meets each student where he or she is and, using extra time and supports, accelerate students academically to master CCSS at a faster rate than in traditional schools.

Students have more than three hours of literacy each day Monday through Thursday, two hours each on Friday, as well as additional time on Saturdays. The Democracy Prep Literacy program focuses on phonics from the start, using the SRA Reading Mastery program, Text Talk, and other methods for reading skill acquisition. It provides services for students who struggle with decoding or fluency with a program such as Wilson Reading. Democracy Prep also runs summer school for four weeks in July and on three of four Saturdays each month for all students who have not yet mastered content material.

Democracy Prep believes that a universally designed curriculum is the most efficient and effective way to provide access for a broad range of diverse student disabilities and needs. This approach guides the full inclusion of students with disabilities, from the facilities, to the differentiated curriculum, to the routines and rituals of daily life. This approach is proven to help students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers to achieve greater academic success. Specifically, this approach includes a design of materials and activities that are attainable by individuals with wide differences in their abilities to see, hear, speak, move, read, write, understand, organize, engage, and remember.

An essential aspect of universal design at Democracy Prep is the creation of a structured, disciplined, and predictable school culture. Chaotic environments are especially detrimental to those students with disabilities including autism, Asperger's Syndrome, ADD/ADHD, Downs Syndrome, and others. The creation of uniform behavioral expectations across the entire school, in every classroom, hallway, bathroom, and office means that students will know exactly what to expect and what is expected of them at all times.

Each DPPS campus employs at least one licensed social worker who is responsible for providing

clinical interventions including at-risk counseling, behavioral support, crisis management, bereavement support, social skills training, frustration tolerance, organizational skills, academic motivation, conflict resolution with peers, and assertive skills training. Social workers serve scholars mandated to receive counseling in individual and group settings and also provide voluntary counseling to general education scholars identified as benefiting from additional social and emotional supports. In addition to regular appointments, social workers see students and families and conduct home visits on an as-needed basis.

Social workers also reach out to families through monthly newsletters to provide information on community resources such as single-stop services, domestic violence hotlines, free or low-cost access mammograms screening, asthma initiatives, summer camps, and health insurance enrollment. At each Democracy Prep campus, social workers serve mandated scholars and also actively seek to support students who are not traditionally mandated but who still need additional social and emotional supports to succeed in school.

The social workers also see students' families on an as-needed basis. Social workers provide students strategic supports in school and also work diligently to recommend support services to provide aide outside of Democracy Prep. Outpatient referrals from our social workers include family centers, hospitals, mental health facilities, child service focused foundations, athletic organizations, mentorship programs, legal services, and sex education courses.

- 5) **Evidence-Based Strategies.** Describe how it will implement, to the extent practicable, in accordance with its selected SIG intervention model(s), one or more evidence-based strategies.
- 6) The LEA should at least include one strategy that relates to quality curriculum development that aligns with the State's academic standards. For Priority schools, the State has identified two additional priorities for which LEA's may choose to align evidence-base strategies: 1) Early Childhood Education; and, 2) Career and Technical Education.

Evidentiary Basis. The model outlined above has been subjected to multiple rigorous studies conducted by external evaluators. Two studies comparing outcomes of students randomly selected for admission to Democracy Prep ("lotteried-in" students) with those of students who applied but were not selected for admission ("lotteried-out" students) have found statistically significant favorable impacts for large sample populations that overlap with the beneficiaries of the proposed SIG-funded restart.

In 2012, Will Dobbie, an economist at Harvard University's Education Innovation Laboratory, now at Princeton University, conducted the first independent experimental evaluation of the casual impact of attending a Democracy Prep school. Using an experimental design that contrasts the outcomes of students randomly lotteried-in to those lotteried-out, Dobbie found what he described as an "enormous" effect of attending Democracy Prep on student achievement. According to that study, students gained 0.238 standard deviations (σ) in Math ($se = 0.108$) and

0.232 standard deviations in ELA ($se = 0.121$) for each year they attend the school, relative to students who applied but were not selected by the lottery.

With Democracy Prep's enrollment having increased "by a factor of 20" between 2006 and 2014, Sean Corcoran, an educational economist at New York University's Institute for Education and Social Policy, conducted a follow-up analysis in 2015 to determine whether students continued to experience "the same measurable benefits" from attending a DPPS school found by Dobbie. In a report spanning six additional years of lottery data, Corcoran found that the effects of attending Democracy Prep "remain positive and substantial, and are approximately as large as those reported in the original study."

Overall, Corcoran found that spending an additional year in a DPPS school is associated with a 0.198 to 0.216 σ increase in ELA achievement and a 0.259 to 0.290 σ increase in Math. These effect sizes are "more than 2.5 times as large as the impact of the average NYC charter school . . . and 2.5 times as large as the effect of attending the well-known Harlem Children's Zone."

Furthermore, effect sizes for high-need students were larger (0.244 σ in ELA and 0.316 σ in Math for economically disadvantaged students, and 0.316 σ in ELA and 0.220 σ in Math for students with disabilities).

Curriculum Development. Democracy Prep's academic program is rooted in research-proven curricula that have been shown to accelerate progress to mastery for low-income students, including those with disabilities and English-language deficits. At Democracy Prep, students are challenged to do their best academically regardless of language proficiency, special education status, or the academic level at which they enter the school. The Democracy Prep curriculum is aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Democracy Prep uses six-week interim assessment cycles to assess student mastery of standards-based knowledge and skills. Following each assessment, teachers analyze student performance data, identify which standards are causing the most difficulty, and create six-week "reteach" plans to address these deficiencies in conjunction with the preexisting scope and sequence for that time period. Additionally, teachers use interim assessment data to create tutoring groups that address student learning deficiencies and to help determine which students receive push-in assistance from instructional support personnel during class periods. Data is tracked throughout the year to ensure scholars are maintaining growth.

Democracy Prep's instruction is based on the fundamentals of education outlined by E.D. Hirsch in his core knowledge series using highly effective, researched-based curricula. Teachers use clear, direct instruction to explicitly teach what scholars are expected to know at all grade levels, and in turn, scholars are given opportunities to demonstrate mastery of all content and skills learned.

Literacy is the key academic skill on which all future skill and knowledge acquisition is based. Low-income children hear two-thirds fewer words in the home each hour than children of more affluent families. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that success or failure in forming a foundation of basic literacy in the early grades is a strong indicator of later academic success. While schools like those in the Democracy Prep network have proven that it is still possible to overcome these deficits, doing so requires tremendous academic remediation in middle and

high school. It is therefore not surprising that schools in which low-income students reach mastery maintain a relentless focus on developing literacy skills. In fact, a recent review of existing schools serving low-income populations found that a laser focus on basic literacy in the early years, as represented by many of the practices Democracy Prep employs, was a core commonality among high-performing elementary schools. Practices of these high-performing schools, which closely reflect the findings of the National Reading Panel, include: dedicating significant time to teaching reading and writing, explicitly teaching phonics and comprehension strategies; and fostering fluency through extensive practice reading and writing and by inculcating a deep love of reading. These practices are reflected in the Democracy Prep academic program.

In direct response to evaluation data, Democracy Prep has comprehensively overhauled its approach to literacy instruction. One of our ultimate goals is to ensure that we are building knowledge over time in a coherent and cohesive manner. We know from research that the more background knowledge our scholars build over time, the more access they'll have to gaining more knowledge. Reading comprehension and language growth — two of the areas in which Democracy Prep's scholars struggle with the most across the network — are a direct function of background knowledge.

In a Core Knowledge blog post from September 2012, Democracy Prep Senior Advisor Robert Pondiscio dubbed the CCSS the “defibrillator” of education reform — our last chance to “shock American education back to life.” As Pondiscio noted, by reading texts in history/social studies, science, and other disciplines, students build a foundation of knowledge in these fields that will also give them the background to be better readers in all content areas. Students can only gain this foundation when the curriculum is intentionally and coherently structured to develop rich content knowledge within and across grades.

To truly build reading comprehension, scholars need to have a deep knowledge base so that they can apply reading skills, such as inferring and drawing conclusions. We cannot expect them to read passages about which they have no background knowledge and demonstrate an understanding of the standards. We cannot use reading instruction as a subject in which we teach “strategies to be a good reader.” Instead of focusing solely on strategies using unrelated reading passages, Democracy Prep uses Knowledge Domain specific readings, aligned to scientific and history content knowledge, built over time and taught to a standard. In writing, Democracy Prep has shifted from more narrative-based, inward-focused writing to expository, opinion-based assignments and skills.

- 7) **External Providers.** *(If applicable)* The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to recruit, screen, and select external providers to ensure their quality, and regularly review and hold accountable such providers for their performance.

The mission of Democracy Prep Public Schools is to educate responsible citizen-scholars for success in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship. DPPS has established a national reputation for producing remarkable academic results for students traditionally deprived of access to quality educational opportunities. In its first decade, Democracy Prep has grown from a handful of Harlem classrooms to a network serving nearly 5,000 students in four states. In that time, it has not only maintained the quality of its programming and its

commitment to serving every student regardless of socioeconomic status, special education classification, or the academic level at which they enter its schools, it has, in fact, become both *more effective* and *more inclusive*.

Having proven capable of efficiently replicating its program in a variety of high-need settings without compromising its treatment effect, DPPS is uniquely well-positioned to implement a project that will address a challenge for which proven scalable solutions are urgently needed. The proposed project will further develop promising strategies that increase student achievement and growth and close achievement gaps for high-need students. The animating impulse behind Democracy Prep's growth as a network has been to cluster high-performing schools in those neighborhoods most urgently in need of quality alternatives to a status quo that has historically failed them both by creating new schools and turning around failed ones.

The manner in which the LEA will hold Democracy Prep accountable for performance is outlined below in the response to prompt 12 ("Accountability").

- 8) **Planning/Pre-Implementation.** *(For an LEA that intends to use the first year of its School Improvement Grants award for planning and other pre-implementation activities for an eligible school)* Describe planning and other pre-implementation activities, provide a timeline for implementing those activities, and describe how those activities will lead to successful implementation of the selected intervention.

N/A

- 9) **Family and Community Engagement.** Describe how the LEA will meaningfully engage families and the community in the implementation of the selected intervention on an ongoing basis.

Given our passion for active citizenship and believing that communities are critical to our success, we are happy to see the Baton Rouge community charge our school with a set of standards for excellence. Democracy Prep Public Schools vision and mission align very organically to the charge set forth by the community compact, and we are committed to fulfilling this call to action on our campuses.

Democracy Prep is a partnership made up of the school leadership, teachers, scholars, and families. Although the job of making decisions about school policy belongs to the school leaders, network, and board, family involvement is not only welcome but also absolutely necessary for the success of the school. Democracy Prep is committed to having families contribute to the academic success of their scholars. As such, we use a variety of methods of communication. Communication may include:

- *Regular Progress Reports:* A progress report that includes academic and behavioral updates as well as a brief overview of important school events.
- *Automated Phone System:* Parents may receive a pre-recorded message from the

school for the following reasons:

- Issuing school-wide reminders and updates to alert families to school closings, early releases, and late starts due to inclement weather or emergencies,
- Reminding families of important documents requiring signatures, or
- Informing families of meetings for parents or scholars.

Additionally, every member of the Democracy Prep DREAM team publishes his or her cell phone number at the beginning of the year. Scholars and parents are encouraged to call teachers. Democracy Prep staff members are available in person during regular school hours and via email and cell phone up until 9 p.m. each evening to answer homework questions. Teachers may request mandatory family conferences with families of scholars who are in need of academic and behavioral support. All other families are invited to schedule appointments or to stop by to connect with their scholars' teachers.

Democracy Prep families must:

- Reinforce Democracy Prep academic and behavior standards at home;
- Check homework nightly for completion;
- Help with homework;
- Call teachers with concerns;
- Read and sign all notices sent home by the school;
- Read and respond to family communications when necessary;
- Respond promptly to disciplinary calls;
- Attend school-wide events; and
- Pick up report cards and attend trimester conferences.

Family communication and involvement at Democracy Prep is incredibly important to building school culture and achieving the school's mission. The tone for open and frequent communication with families is set immediately after the public lottery. A staff member conducts a home visit for every admitted student to introduce Democracy Prep's rigorous expectations for academic performance and family involvement.

Families are asked to sign and agree to the Democracy Prep Commitment to Excellence in which they agree to participate actively in the academic life of their student. This participation includes ensuring that their child is rested, dressed in uniform, and prepared for school on time every day. It also includes an agreement to volunteer at school activities, chaperone, and attend other events at which they can be helpful to the school community. Families will agree to pick up their child's three report cards in person at school and meet with the necessary teachers in school at least three times each year, policies that ensure high attendance rates at conferences.

Contact with families is frequent and primarily positive. Each student has an Advisor who serves as the primary point of contact for 12 to 13 families. The Advisor speaks with each family at least once every two weeks and reports areas of growth as well as improvement areas. Families also receive DREAM Dollar paychecks each week indicating exactly how well or poorly a student did during the previous week in terms of citizenship and scholarship. The paychecks indicate weekly accumulation and DREAM Dollar cash account balances, which

include a college scholarship account, a field trip account, an end-of-year field lesson account, and an account for each student to use on designated DREAM Dollar Auction items. Weekly newsletters for families about upcoming events and important dates are included with the paychecks that need to be "endorsed" and returned for them to be deposited into a student's account.

Parent Drop In-Days – Parent Drop-In Days are days when parents can come to campus to observe classes. Parents are split into several groups based on the grade level of their scholar. Democracy Prep supports the development of both a pre-observation norming session to set guidelines and expectations and a post-observation debriefing to explain unfamiliar classroom rituals and routines and to solicit parent feedback. In preparation for the debriefing, parents receive a one-page document on which to record their observations.

Coffee & Conversation – Coffee & Conversation sessions are informal and informational in nature. At these meetings, the Democracy Prep leadership team gives presentations on relevant topics and fields questions from families in attendance. Democracy Prep parents and family members are solicited to attend these events to be active in the school and provide critical feedback to ensure the continued progress of the campus to better serve its community.

Democracy Prep regularly presents accountability data in an easily accessible, widely disseminated, jargon free, and critical manner. The Board of Directors, families, community members, students, and the authorizer receive regular updates on the most current data available. Annual reports are published shortly after the end of the fiscal year, once state test data from the previous year have been reported and analyzed. All relevant data — including minutes from meetings of the Board of Directors, the school's most recent audited financial statement, and information concerning the school's performance — are posted on the school's website.

SECTION 3: GOALS

10) **Monitoring.** Describe how the LEA will monitor each Tier I and Tier II school, or each priority and focus school, that receives school improvement funds, including by:

- a) Establishing annual goals for student achievement on the State's assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics

SPS Performance Goals. Complete the table below by entering the actual and projected School Performance Score(s) for each year in which the LEA is requested School Improvement funds.

Actual SPS		Projected School Performance Score				
2013 SPS	2014 SPS	2013 SPS	2014 SPS	2013 SPS	2014 SPS	2013 SPS
36.5	NA	36.5	NA	36.5	NA	36.5

Percent Proficient Performance Goals. Complete a table below by entering the actual and projected reading/language arts and mathematics percent proficient data for each year in

which the LEA is requested School Improvement funds. Example – if the LEA is requesting funds for a school that serves grades K-8, an application may include tables for 4th grade math, 4th grade reading/language arts, 8th grade math, and 8th grade reading/language arts.

Grade: 6th		Subject: ELA				
Actual % Proficient		Projected % Proficient				
SY2013-14	SY2014-15	SY2015-16	SY2016-17	SY2017-18	SY2018-19	SY2019-20
24%	NA	39%	54%	70%	NA	

Grade: 6th		Subject: Math				
Actual % Proficient		Projected % Proficient				
SY2013-14	SY2014-15	SY2015-16	SY2016-17	SY2017-18	SY2018-19	SY2019-20
21%	NA	36%	51%	67%	NA	

- b) Establishing and measuring progress of annual goals beyond State assessments that the LEA will use to measure the success of the selected interventions that, if met, will result in the school meeting the annual student achievement goals on State assessments.

NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments will be used at two points in the year. The school expects at least 50% of students to hit growth targets in the first year of the grant, 60% in the second year, and 70% in the third year. These growth targets are set for scholars after the first administration within the first six weeks of school.

- c) Measuring progress on the leading indicators as defined in the final requirements (viz., number of minutes within the school year; student participation rate on State assessments in reading/language arts and in mathematics, by student subgroup; dropout rate; student attendance rate; number and percentage of students completing advanced coursework [e.g., AP/IB], early-college high schools, or dual enrollment classes; discipline incidents; truants; distribution of teachers by performance level on an LEA's teacher evaluation system; and teacher attendance rate).

Democracy Prep's school level and CMO level teams employ multiple platforms to track progress on all listed requirements, including Jupiter School Information System, Kickboard, and Schoolzilla. These platforms enable DPPS to create custom reports that are reviewed on a consistent basis for adherence to goals or progress toward those goals.

- 11) **Oversight and Support.** Describe how it will provide effective oversight and support for implementation of the selected intervention for the school the LEA proposes to serve (for example, by creating an LEA turnaround office).

The Executive Director in conjunction with Democracy Prep Public Schools will provide support and leadership on all aspects of the listed intervention.

- 12) **Accountability.** *(If applicable)* Describe how the LEA will hold the charter school operator, CMO, EMO or other external provider accountable for meeting grant requirements.

The Board of Directors of Democracy Prep Louisiana has entered into a comprehensive Management Agreement with Democracy Prep Public Schools that spells out the services and

support functions the CMO will provide on an annual basis. The Agreement must be renewed annually, which affords the Board ongoing opportunities to evaluate the CMO's performance and to hold it accountable for the school's performance and for meeting the requirements of specific grant programs. Specifically, section 4(e) of the Management Agreement provides as follows:

The performance of DPPS in providing services and support functions to the Charter School pursuant to this Agreement will be evaluated by the Board or its designee(s) on an annual basis using evaluation criteria reasonably determined by the Board, including, but not limited to, the following:

- i) Criteria addressing how the CMO complies with the specific requirements identified in the Contract;
- ii) Evaluation of the quality of service provided in each functional area (e.g., professional development, interim assessment, financial management and reporting, human resource management, school operations management and support, student information management, strategic planning and implementation, or special education services, etc.);
- iii) Opportunities provided for staff and parents to give feedback on the performance of the School;
- iv) Opportunities provided for the CMO to respond and give feedback to the School on the evaluation; and
- v) A written evaluation provided to the CMO with goals for the next school year.

The Board may engage a third party evaluator. DPPS will, and will procure that its officers and employees, fully cooperate with and facilitate such evaluation, and work with the Board or its designee(s) in good faith to try to resolve or improve any areas in which the Board or its designee(s) believes DPPS's performance could be improved. The parties acknowledge that the primary purpose of this evaluation is designed to maximize the Charter School's performance within any budgetary constraints.

SECTION 4: LEA STRATEGY

- 13) **Capacity.** Describe the actions that the LEA has taken, or will take, to determine its capacity to provide adequate resources and related support to each Tier I and Tier II school, or each priority and focus school, identified in the LEA's application(s) in order to implement, fully and effectively, the required activities of the school intervention model it has selected on the first day of the first school year of full implementation.

Democracy Prep Public Schools are supported in several ways by the highly experienced team of dynamic educational specialists with extensive experience in organizations building, strategic planning, and instructional leadership. Together, the DPPS CMO staff has several decades of instructional and organizational experience in the charter sector and beyond. DPDC will be governed and operated by a diverse team of educational, civic, community, and business leaders. This group will come together under the shared belief that all students are entitled to their choice of a high quality public school. Democracy Prep is actively recruiting new founding members who are dedicated leaders and residents of North Baton Rouge to infuse our founding group with knowledge and passion of the local community. The founding group is eager to share the Democracy Prep mission in North Baton Rouge, preparing all students for success in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship.

In order to maximize school impact and quality, Democracy Prep has adopted a hybrid network configuration that incorporates the most effective elements of centralized control at the charter management organization ("CMO") level and principal autonomy at the school level. DPPS supports schools operationally and academically in order to free principals to serve as true instructional leaders who can focus the entirety of their energies on leveraging teachers to maximize student achievement.

To preserve network-wide excellence while encouraging principals to put a unique stamp on their schools, DPPS maintains uniform academic, behavioral, and cultural standards. Organizationally, however, DPPS believes in relinquishing decision-making authority to the individual most intimately familiar with a specific environment. At the classroom level, teachers are empowered to make instructional choices based on their qualitative and quantitative assessment of how students are absorbing challenging material. At the school level, principals have the authority to implement norms and practices that drive student achievement to the target measures specified in their charter agreements. At the regional level, executive directors have the power to establish standards suitable to unique local operating conditions. In exchange for these specific spheres of autonomy, individuals are held accountable for well-defined outcomes.

To support the development of schools that will help students succeed in college and citizenship, DPPS prioritizes the following organizational support strategies:

Centralized support services. DPPS has built and will continue to expand a menu of lean and efficient administrative functions that guide school start-ups and provide back-office support. By centralizing many administrative and financial tasks, the DPPS network is able to:

- Build an increasingly supportive administrative infrastructure to ensure that school leaders and educators are able to focus solely on teaching and learning;
- Establish a safety net and rapid response system to address school level problems;
- Gain efficiency and decrease per student administrative costs through common instructional and operational supports;
- Administer large grant programs, including a \$9.1 million Charter Schools Program Replication and Expansion Grant awarded in 2012;
- Demonstrate sustainable success at scale to help drive broader change; and

- Expand *Leader U* to include a full talent development strategy.

Service delivery. For each of these key services, DPPS has a range of tools to ensure principals receive necessary support, the most common of which are as follows:

Technical assistance and training. DPPS works with principals to provide the information, technical assistance, training, and tools needed to improve and expand their schools. Principals also turn to DPPS when they face specific, acute challenges to gain perspective, expertise, resources, and support.

Intellectual property and best practices. Educators in the DPPS network have developed a wealth of experience in best practices for classroom instruction and school development. DPPS transforms the best elements of this knowledge into a slate of accessible tools — including materials, lesson plans, curricular services, assessments, and classroom management techniques — culled from the efforts of master educators and available to all.

Brand management. DPPS has established a reputation for instructional effectiveness that produces results. Its reputation helps raise the profile and credibility of the proposed project. Most importantly, DPPS sees brand management as a crucial mission-goal because of its importance in college admissions and in efforts to recruit principals, teachers, and students.

Information sharing. As a network of high-performing schools, DPPS encourages principals to innovate in appropriate instructional and organizational ways and affords principals the latitude to experiment and to document which practices result in improved student learning outcomes. Subsequently, DPPS facilitates knowledge sharing by using its cloud storage service, staff portal, network-created data platforms, videoconferencing, and in-person summits. When leaders and teachers interact across the network, they build supportive relationships that smooth the transmission of useful information and strategies.

Quality assurance. DPPS schools and leaders embrace a performance assessment and accountability system. At least twice each year, teams of DPPS leaders conduct academic and cultural audits at each network school. These inspections serve to provide constructive criticism and to maintain quality while ensuring that appropriate interventions are made when necessary.

14) **Resource Alignment.** The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to align other resources (for example, Title I funding) with the selected intervention.

Consider, for example, such resources as local, state or federal funds (including 1003[a]; Title I, Part A; Title II; Title III; and IDEA funds), community resources and wraparound services that may address the academic, physical health and mental health needs of students. Describe how the LEA will coordinate or integrate programs and activities at the school that the LEA commits to serve.

The proposed SIG-funded intervention will be aligned with programming and services supported by other revenue streams. Democracy Prep will be using Title I funding to provide supplies for homeless students and to partially fund salaries for social workers, registrars, and data associates who will help the school leadership team diagnose and address student academic and social-emotional needs. Similarly, Democracy Prep's Title II funding will be used to support professional development for Academic Collaboration Team members (i.e. the adults charged exclusively with supporting Democracy Prep's students with disabilities and English Language Learners). All of these services are core components of Democracy Prep's educational model and will be deployed in concert as part of a holistic approach to remediating the deficits that have accumulated in the Prescott community.

15) **Practices and Policies.** The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable it to implement the selected intervention fully and effectively.

Practices and policies may include, but are not limited to, those relating to staffing, Union issues, school board issues, increased learning time, etc.

Democracy Prep communicates its ***“Work Hard. Go to College. Change the World!”*** motto in four essential ways, each of which has been adapted to suit the unique

1) Rigorous academics with frequent evaluation;

2) More time to learn engaging curriculum;

3) A respectful school culture with a disciplined environment; and

4) Exemplary teaching.

(1) ***Rigorous academics with frequent evaluation.*** Democracy Prep's rigorous instructional program is based on our mission of having all students achieve college-preparatory academic success and informed civic involvement. Frequent evaluations ensure that teachers and families know exactly where each student stands in relation to our rigorous standards and what each student needs to do to make progress. Academic data is tracked throughout the year to ensure scholars are maintaining growth. DPPS uses six-week interim assessment cycles to assess student mastery of standards-based knowledge and skills. Following each assessment, teachers analyze student performance data, identify which standards are causing the most difficulty, and create six-week “reteach” plans to address deficiencies in student comprehension. Additionally, teachers use interim assessment data to plan for tutoring outside of class, to develop mini-lessons in class, and to help determine which students receive push-in instruction from instructional support staff. Assessment data

also help us to allocate resources in terms of classroom materials, professional development, and outside consultants. We regularly present our data in an easily accessible, widely disseminated, jargon free, and critical manner. Our Board of Directors, families, community members, students, and authorizers all receive regular data updates.

Democracy Prep employs a robust assessment system that does not rely on any one measure in isolation; instead, we will rely on four types of measures in concert. Each of these measures is essential to the effectiveness of our system by helping determine if students have mastered the curriculum, if extra support is needed for individual students, if cohorts have progressed over time, if individual teachers have demonstrated effectiveness, and if we are accomplishing our overall mission. Furthermore, our assessment system is aligned to Common Core standards so as to ensure appropriate comparison with traditional public and other charter schools. Measures include *criterion-referenced* (e.g. LEAP, SATII, and AP exams); *value-added and norm-referenced* (e.g. iLEAP, Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress ("MAP")); *comparative* (e.g. district, "similar schools," State of Louisiana, and national scores on the NAEP and ACT exams); and *internally developed/externally validated* measures such as weekly quizzes, biweekly tests, six-week assessments, and comprehensive exams (comps) that are aligned to Louisiana annual assessments (including assessments developed by the Achievement Network).

Many students enter Democracy Prep lagging behind grade level in Reading and Math. As a result, one of the most important indicators of success in early grades is the amount of value we add to students' scores. Value-added scores measure the progress of both individual students and cohorts of students over time. Because value-added measures compare students to their own data, they control for demographic factors that may influence performance. The MAP test allows us to compare the performance of Democracy Prep students to the performance of similar-age students nationwide. Students take the MAP, as well as year-end comprehensive examination (comps), in a pre- and post-test format that allows administrators to evaluate which methods, lessons, and teachers are providing the most value-added growth to cohorts of students over time. While rapid value-added improvement alone is not enough to ensure proficiency on criterion-referenced exams, it does demonstrate progress towards that goal.

Focus on Literacy: Literacy is the key academic skill on which all future skill and knowledge acquisition is based. Low-income children hear two-thirds fewer words in the home each hour than children of more affluent families. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that success or failure in forming a foundation of basic literacy in the early grades is a strong indicator of later academic success. While middle schools like DPCS have proven that it is still possible to overcome these deficits, doing so requires tremendous academic remediation in middle and high school. It is therefore not surprising that schools in which low-income students reach mastery maintain a relentless focus on developing literacy skills. In fact, a recent review of existing schools serving low-income populations found that a laser focus on basic literacy in the early years, as represented by many of the practices Democracy Prep employs, was a core commonality among high-performing elementary schools. Practices of these high-performing schools, which closely reflect the findings of the National Reading Panel, include: dedicating significant time to teaching reading and writing, explicitly teaching phonics and comprehension strategies; and fostering fluency through extensive practice reading and writing and by inculcating a deep love of reading. These practices are reflected in the Democracy Prep academic program.

Research-Proven Curricula: Democracy Prep's academic program will be rooted in research-proven curricula that have been shown to accelerate progress to mastery for low-income students, including

those with disabilities and English-language deficits. In math, Democracy Prep will use a systematic approach to basic math facts and computational skills coupled with a teacher-created curriculum that develops higher-level problem-solving skills. The curriculum was built to help students recognize that they need basic factual knowledge and “automaticity” with procedural computation, coupled with a deep conceptual understanding of mathematics, in order to solve complex mathematical application problems. In addition, the math lessons will follow a structured lesson plan designed for maximum success. The first 25 minutes of class and all homework assignments will include cumulative review. There will also be a daily section for basic facts review and problem solving. Concepts will be introduced in a set sequence, emphasizing both step-by-step approaches and explanations for all mathematical processes.

In social studies, science, music, and art we rely on a content-rich curriculum of basic subject-area and cultural knowledge, such as the Core Knowledge Sequence. Low-income children, often not as fully exposed as their more affluent peers to a breadth and depth of topics, can enter school at a disadvantage: their weak knowledge of the general topics addressed in school leaves them less prepared to assimilate new information. A content-rich curriculum such as the one we envision provides the basic knowledge that makes low-income students more effective learners later in their academic careers.

Help Students Until They Master It: Democracy Prep realizes that all students, regardless of whether they are classified as at-risk students, learn at varying rates. Schools that expect all students to meet high standards must be prepared to support students — regardless of the pace at or style in which they learn — until they reach mastery. At Democracy Prep, this learning support comes through multiple means:

- Clear, engaging, high-quality lessons in the classroom with low student-to-teacher ratios (not including support from the Academic Collaboration Team);
- The increased learning time that we provide relative to schools in the surrounding district schools;
- Pull-out and push-in instruction by Academic Collaboration Team (ACT) Members and related services such as counseling, speech, and occupational and physical therapy for student who require it; and
- Mandatory after-school and Saturday program tutoring for students who require additional individual and small-group attention, as determined by assessment data regardless of Special Education or English Language Learner classification

All of these strategies and supports ensure that students with disabilities, students with limited English language proficiency, and students at-risk of academic failure who may not have an official classification are given the remediation and intervention they need to meet the high standards that we set at Democracy Prep.

Approach to Special Education: Democracy Prep will implement an inclusive, heterogeneous educational model that serves all students in a manner that maximizes their academic potential and prepares all of them for success in the college of their choice and active citizenship. The guiding philosophy at Democracy Prep is to minimize the impact of a student’s disability while maximizing his or her access to support services and the college-preparatory general curriculum. Democracy Prep believes that students with disabilities fall along a wide continuum of difference in learners, but they are not a discrete category when it comes to instructional methodology. This means that adjustments will occur for all students, not just those with documented disabilities. In order to ensure that all students

meet academic performance goals as outlined in their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), Democracy Prep makes a clear distinction between modifications to curricular content and accommodations available to students that do not lower academic expectations. We will seek to *modify curriculum as infrequently as possible*, yet we will provide *accommodations as frequently as necessary* to help students progress as guided by students' IEPs and their individual needs.

The Academic Collaboration Team will be a specialized group of educators trained to provide support and targeted instruction to ensure all students at Democracy Prep, regardless of family background, income, race, religion, language proficiency, or disability can achieve academically and reach success in college and citizenship. The ACT Team will provide targeted support to students at academic risk, including but not limited to those who are classified as English Language Learners or needing an Individualized Education Plan.

(2) **More time to learn engaging curriculum.** Our “hard work” philosophy drives the design of Democracy Prep curriculum, which is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and is based on our mission of having all students achieve college-preparatory academic success and informed civic involvement. Democracy Prep is focused on ensuring scholars spend more time on task and provides students with increased learning time focused on core academics. This includes a longer school day, week, and year, focused on reading, math, writing, and science. Specifically, because it takes time, effort, and practice to meet the challenge of high academic standards, our schedule is based on an extended school day (students arrive between 7:30 and 7:44 a.m. and the academic day runs from approximately 7:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.) and an extended school year (approximately 195 days) for all students. In addition, we provide small-group and one-on-one tutoring for students who need extra help and attention in order to reach mastery. This tutoring consists of 75 minutes of instruction from 4:00 p.m. until 5:15 p.m. four days per week and 160 minutes at least one Saturday a month. Under these programs, Democracy Prep students most in need of extra help benefit from over 70% more instructional time each year than they would receive in a typical district school. Increased learning time is essential to enabling students who enter school with skills and knowledge deficiencies, those with disabilities, and those with limited English language proficiency to achieve at the highest levels.

Transitions are crisp and efficient. Because students waste no time passing through hallways, they do not sacrifice any moment during the school day that would otherwise be devoted to instruction. In class, teachers follow a routine to ensure every second counts. Students enter classrooms by lining up outside the room silently and receiving a firm handshake from their teacher. Students then begin a silent “Do Now” assignment at their desks as a review of the previous day's lesson and to ensure previously covered concepts are spiraled throughout the year. Following the Do Now, students look at the common board configuration, review the lesson's aim, agenda, and homework, and begin a period of direct instruction of new material before breaking into teacher-designed activities in groups, pairs, or as individual practice. Each class ends with a review of the aim and an “Exit Ticket” that emphasizes comprehension of the class's specific and measurable objectives with at least three questions that assess student mastery. Exit Ticket data is gathered regularly and evaluated by teachers to identify individual and group deficiencies. Teachers spend significant time creating systems and routines to ensure the majority of their time is spent on learning rather than on redirection.

Another way in which Democracy Prep will create additional learning time is by assigning a significant amount of nightly homework that allows students to review, practice, and solidify skills and knowledge they are learning in the classroom. Students will be held accountable for completing their work. Assignments will be available for both families and students to confirm with teachers via the cell phone

system and email systems that allow all families to call teachers with questions until 9:00 p.m. each evening. There will be no excuses for not completing homework; non-completion will result in mandatory attendance at study hall.

(3) **A respectful school culture with a disciplined environment.** For many of our students, the path to higher education will be a long and arduous climb. In order to fulfill our long-term goal of having students become leaders in their communities, we will inculcate the DREAM character values of Discipline, Respect, Enthusiasm, Accountability, and Maturity. At Democracy Prep, implementation of a rigorous instructional program coupled with an emphasis on fostering a safe and supportive learning environment has engendered a school culture in which students routinely meet and exceed high academic and behavioral expectations. Democracy Prep believes that proper school behavior — like academic skill — is not innate and instead must be taught clearly and explicitly. Effective behavior instruction, like effective academic instruction, will be modeled, practiced, and reinforced. For students to visualize how an activity should look, teachers must provide meaningful, positive, corrective feedback.

The Democracy Prep approach to student behavior is overwhelmingly positive. Although there will be clear, strict consequences for poor behavior at Democracy Prep, we believe that positive recognition of good behavior is most essential to fundamentally improve student conduct. Democracy Prep teachers will work to recognize all students for their accomplishments, even if they are small or based on consistent growth. Achievement of high standards and improvement will be celebrated with both students and parents. Students will regularly receive positive DREAM Dollars and other means of congratulating them on a particular area of success. Parents will regularly receive positive phone calls from teachers, who are expected to call all their scholars at least once every two weeks.

Because developing these personal qualities is inextricably linked to delivering on the Democracy Prep mission, our academic program is paired with a character education curriculum. This curriculum will be designed internally by our staff to ensure that it meets the specific needs of our students. The Democracy Prep schedule includes approximately 100 minutes per week to focus on character development in Morning Meetings, Town Halls and Core Knowledge Periods.

All entering students begin their experience with Prep Academy, a weeklong session in August at which students are taught the behaviors, routines, rituals, and rules of a Democracy Prep School. In Prep Academy, we administer assessments to establish baseline scores in each subject. In addition, students are taught how to learn at a Democracy Prep school. Prep Academy includes direct instruction in academic and organizational skills including how to organize binders, come to class prepared with necessary materials, take notes, put a proper heading on papers, raise hands in class, submit homework assignments, study for a test, ask respectful questions, etc. Prep Academy also includes social lessons as basic as how to walk in silent lines in the halls, hold the door for a classmate, say 'please' and 'thank you,' give a firm handshake, make eye contact, apologize for mistakes, make proper introductions, correctly wear the school uniform, properly use meal manners, and leave a place cleaner than one found it.

Other core tenets of Democracy Prep's approach to school organization and culture include

Consistent Instructional Practices: One of the most frustrating experiences for a teacher is to work hard to establish norms in a classroom only to have them undermined in a room down the hall. At Democracy Prep, consistent instructional practices are maintained in every classroom. While there is no one correct way to teach content, students must have consistent routines, blackboard configurations,

grading practices, and behavioral expectations in every class.

Orderly Physical Space with College Themes: Classrooms at Democracy Prep are environments that inspire learning. They are bright, exciting, lively places that reinforce the mission and values of the school. In each classroom, the mission and motto will be clearly displayed. Classrooms are named after colleges and universities and are decorated in the style and colors of our teachers' alma maters. Thus, Room 101 might be known as Morehouse College, decorated in maroon and gray and festooned with Morehouse memorabilia, banners, campus maps, pictures of the Maroon Tiger mascot, and photos and quotes from notable Morehouse graduates like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Spike Lee. Room 102 might be the University of Iowa, with a black and gold color scheme, Hawk eyes peering down, and poetry from the Iowa Writers Workshop. Common spaces, including the restrooms, will be kept in immaculate physical condition. Guided by the philosophy that Democracy Prep citizen-scholars always *leave a place better and cleaner than they found it*, students will be expected to pick up any debris and report even minor incidences of vandalism.

DREAM Rubrics and DREAM Dollars: Our school culture and discipline framework are based on the DREAM values. Students received a weekly "paycheck" with amounts deducted for immature, undisciplined, or disrespectful behaviors. These reports are sent home to parents each week, and students both receive recognition for amassing the most "currency" and are eligible to redeem their paychecks for prizes at bimonthly auctions. Moreover, students who graduate from a Democracy Prep high school will be able to convert their accrued DREAM Dollars into "last-dollar" college scholarship funds.

STAR Posture: Students demonstrate that they are ready to learn by sitting in STAR posture, an acronym for *Sit up, Track the speaker, Ask and answer questions, and Raise your hand*. Classes are also evaluated and encouraged to work as a team by focusing on having *all students*: 1) completely prepared; 2) use words and actions that demonstrate DREAM; 3) learn in STAR posture; 4) complete homework and classwork on time; and 5) leave the classroom neat, orderly and cleaner than it was found. Classes that work well as a team earn special dress-down privileges, lunches, trips, and other opportunities.

Community Gatherings: Other essential elements in building a respectful and disciplined school community are Morning Advisory and weekly sessions of Town Hall. These community gatherings are times for students and teachers to come together for spirit building activities, rituals, reflection, recognition, awards, performances, and other community messages. Town Hall will begin as a place for awards and exhibition of exemplary student work and over time will provide time to thoughtfully deliberate current events and issues of importance to the school, community, city, state, nation, and world in a formal setting. Eventually students will strategize and implement methods for helping to *change the world* through their direct actions and advocacy.

Ambassadorial Behavior: When students enter Prep Academy, they arrive in white t-shirts and must earn their Democracy Prep uniform. The uniform serves to build school pride, equalize students, and teach the importance of appearance. Students are taught that wearing the Democracy Prep logo and uniform makes them ambassadors for the school and that they must act accordingly if they want to continue to wear their uniform and represent the school to the world. This means students must embody the DREAM values both inside and outside of the school facility; they must own the values not only as extrinsic motivators, but as intrinsic ways of life. Students unable to maintain ambassadorial behavior lose privileges.

Silence is Golden: Hallway chaos is a sign of deeper troubles in a school's culture that leads to violence, vandalism, and other problems. Democracy Prep believes school must be an oasis from the cacophony that students face in their daily lives. Silence reinforces good study habits, provides time during the day for "Drop Everything And Read," emphasizes the importance of order in the hallways, and helps students focus on the academic tasks by beginning every class with a silent "Do Now" assignment.

Accountability for Decisions: Students must learn that their behaviors, both good and bad, have consequences. The staff will use a fair, firm, and consistent approach to accountability that is purposeful, transparent, and equitably applied. Students at Democracy Prep will be asked to sign the Family & Student Handbook to ensure that they know, understand, and will abide by school rules, and to acknowledge that they fully comprehend the accountability procedures. In addition, positive behaviors will earn special recognition, rewards, and privileges. Posters, quotes, and rubrics will be posted throughout the building to reinforce these messages.

Advisory and Advisors: Within each cohort, 12-15 students will be assigned to an Advisor within a homeroom named for a college or university. Each Advisor, also a staff member at Democracy Prep, will be the primary contact with the student's family and will talk with them at least once every two weeks. In Advisory, students receive explicit instruction in DREAM values and benefit from a small group of students with whom to share meaningful experiences.

College and Civic Expeditions, Field Trips, and End of Year Field Lessons: Supplemental enrichment activities that enhance our core academic program are designed to broaden the horizons of our students and to give them a better sense of their role as a citizen of their community, city, nation, and world. Each month, we schedule a Civic Expedition or College Expedition. College Expeditions include lessons on a college campus or college fair about specific aspects of college life such as arts, dorm life, laboratory science, sports, cultural organizations, and others. Civic expeditions include visits to historic sites, museums, art exhibits, and cultural or political events with assignments linked to relevant curricular material. Field trips will be held at the end of each of the first two trimesters and Summer Academy for students who have a certain DREAM Dollar balance in their account. The grand finale of each academic year is an earned three-to-five day field lesson out-of-state.

Keep It Personal: Feeling known, cared for, and respected is a prerequisite to the sense of personal value and well being necessary for effective learning. It is expected at Democracy Prep that the Campus Director, as well as the teachers and staff, know each student and family personally. By fostering this personalization, the school feels more like a team or a family than like an impersonal institution.

Help Students Envision a Bright Future That Inspires Them to Achieve: Research indicates that children who have a clear and positive image of their futures are better able to overcome the hurdles that being born into low-income communities can place before them. We will expose our students to the world of high school and college with the implicit and explicit message that with hard work they have all the tools and ability necessary to succeed in these institutions. Democracy Prep will present this message through classroom lessons, exposure to mentors and tutors from institutions of higher learning, and real and virtual tours of campuses.

Because we want our students to strive academically in order to earn life choices, we will also expose them to as much of the wider world of art, music, recreation, and nature as possible. Such exposure is essential to helping students to see the life that is possible for them (and for their communities) through

their own perseverance and commitment. This exposure includes art, music, theater, debate team, math team, and other enrichment classes as well as single and multi-day field trips to museums, local and national parks, high schools, colleges, and adventure programs.

At Democracy Prep, this includes monthly college trips or civic activities. Students at Democracy Prep will visit college campuses to build a sense of expectation and wonder about college and active citizenship. It also will include outings to theater productions, cultural celebration, electoral events, and many more opportunities for enrichment which ensure that students and parents alike don't believe that college is a question of "if" but rather "where."

(4) **Exemplary teaching.** Democracy Prep is committed to attracting, developing, and retaining exceptional adults to work in and for our schools. By providing excellent compensation along with an unrivaled professional environment, we seek to receive a minimum of 100 applications for every position available. Teachers also receive a competitive benefits package that improves over time as an incentive to promote longevity and reduce turnover.

Teachers at Democracy Prep are treated as professionals, provided with all necessary technology (computer, phone, voicemail, email, etc.), appropriate classroom supplies, a personal professional development budget, and essential support at all times. Teachers receive a minimum of two hours of preparation time daily, Monday through Thursday, dedicated exclusively to grading and lesson planning. Teachers have a preparation block twice a week at the same time as grade-level colleagues and twice a week with subject area colleagues to ensure the opportunity to collaborate, discuss pertinent student issues, and to be used for peer observation. Teachers held weekly meetings with the School Leader to refine plans for instruction and develop weekly lesson plans. In those meetings, the School Leader provides precise feedback based on classroom and video observations.

Grade Team Chairs: In order to add a more local level of instructional leadership, Democracy Prep will appoint one teacher in each grade Grade Team Chair. The Grade Team Chairs will be key leaders in the curriculum development, assessment analysis, and professional development processes for their grade. They will play a central role in driving the school towards excellence by ensuring that there are frequent, positive, data-driven, action-oriented discussions among teachers about what is working instructionally, what is not, and what can be done about it so that students can progress more quickly to mastery and beyond. With guidance from the Executive Director, the Grade Team Chairs manage their grade team in processes designed to maximize student achievement for that grade level and the school as a whole, including assisting in planning and carrying out regular professional development. Grade Team Chairs will receive a bonus stipend of no less than \$1,000.

Grade Team Chair Responsibilities include:

- Leading analysis of and facilitating Grade Team discussion of Math and ELA interim assessment results by the Grade Level Team four times each academic year; ensuring all members of the Grade Team emerge from the process with specific action plans designed to further student achievement;
 - Leading analysis of and facilitating Grade Team discussion of midyear assessment results by the Grade Level Team four times each academic year; ensuring all members of the Grade Team emerge from the process with specific action plans designed to further student achievement (Kindergarten only);
 - Chairing weekly Grade Team meetings at which the Grade Level Team will review lesson plans
-

and offer each other ideas, input, and feedback designed to ensure student success;

- Meeting with the Campus Director on a weekly basis to review results and plan future actions;
- Managing the grade-level folder on the computer network server and ensuring that curricular materials are well-organized and easily accessible for both current and future teachers; and
- Developing homework packets for the grade level for the year during the summer prep period.

16) **Sustainability.** Describe how the LEA will sustain the reforms after the funding period ends.

Democracy Prep takes great pride in its ability to drive outcomes for high-need children while operating sustainably on the non-competitive funding it receives from the local, state, and federal governments. Democracy Prep has consistently and purposefully demonstrated that higher spending does not equate to better results. Inadequate resources are not the challenge. As a charter network, Democracy Prep receives a significantly lower per-pupil allocation than do the district-run schools that produce worse results for the same families, often — by virtue of New York's innovative approach to allocation of space in public school facilities — on the same floors of the same buildings. Upon the completion of the three-year SIG funding period carved out in this proposal, Democracy Prep Louisiana's enrollment will have reached a scale that permits the school to sustain these reforms on public entitlement revenues.

SECTION 5: MODEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS (IF APPLICABLE)

17) **REAP.** (For an LEA eligible for services under subpart 1 or 2 of part B of Title VI of the ESEA [Rural Education Assistance Program] that chooses to modify one element of the turnaround or transformation model) Describe how the LEA will meet the intent and purpose of an element of the turnaround or transformation model that the LEA chooses to modify.

N/A

18) **Whole-School Model.** (For an LEA that applies to implement an evidence-based, whole-school reform model in one or more eligible schools) Describe how the LEA will:

- d) Implement a model with evidence of effectiveness that includes a sample population or setting similar to the population or setting of the school to be served; and
- e) Partner with a whole school reform model developer, as defined in the SIG requirements.

N/A

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- 19) **Restart Model.** (For an LEA that applies to implement the restart model in one or more eligible schools) Describe the rigorous review process (as described in the final requirements) the LEA has conducted or will conduct of the charter school operator, CMO, or EMO that it has selected or will select to operate or manage the school or schools.

The selection of Democracy Prep Public Schools was based on a close analysis of Democracy Prep's model, its approach to authentic community engagement, and a review of Democracy Prep's track record of achieving educational outcomes in turnaround settings.

Incoming Democracy Prep students are at high risk for academic failure. DPPS students typically arrive at school lagging significantly behind grade level in core subjects and in need of dramatic interventions to approach proficiency in Reading and Math. Notwithstanding these challenges, DPPS has established a sterling reputation for instructional effectiveness and producing breakthrough academic results. Since its inception in 2006, Democracy Prep has exhibited a remarkable ability to drive student outcomes for high-needs populations in one of New York City's most traditionally educationally underserved neighborhoods. These results are striking given Democracy Prep's unique commitment to serving every student regardless of how far behind they start academically and to maintaining low levels of negative student attrition.

Democracy Prep's pioneering turnaround of Harlem Day, a failed East Harlem charter school, provided unmistakable evidence of Democracy Prep's ability to provide transformational educational opportunities to high-need students. In 2011, the New York City DOE Progress Report ranked Harlem Day in the 3rd percentile of all public schools in the City. In 2010, it was in the bottom 1% citywide and the lowest performing school of any kind in Harlem. In 2012, after Democracy Prep began its turnaround, Harlem Prep grew a staggering 93 percentile points to reach the 96th percentile of New York City Schools. The school received an overall "A" on its Progress Report in 2012, and student performance on Math and ELA assessments improved dramatically from the prior year at Harlem Day ("HDCS").

In 2012, Freedom Academy Charter School in Camden was one of the lowest performing schools in New Jersey. Rather than close the school and disperse its students into the failed district system that would soon come under state control, the school's authorizer allowed Democracy Prep Public Schools to launch a high-stakes turnaround effort. Remarkably, in its first year as a Democracy Prep school, the newly renamed Freedom Prep placed in the 94th growth percentile statewide on its New Jersey School Performance Report. In lauding Freedom Prep's transformation, the New Jersey Department of Education's Chief Innovation Officer cited the school's "incredibly strong growth scores" as concrete proof that achievement gaps can be reversed and eradicated in the right educational environments. Once on the verge of being shuttered on account of persistent underperformance, Freedom Prep now consistently ranks among the highest growth middle schools in the State of New Jersey. Freedom Prep stands as a tribute to what many have long understood to be true: in a climate of high expectations, Camden's students are capable of accomplishing extraordinary feats and of serving as change agents responsible for rehabilitating the civic infrastructure of their community.

20) **Timeline.** The LEA must include a timeline delineating the steps the LEA will take to implement the selected intervention at the identified school.

See Section E.

C. BUDGET: Include the FY14 LEA Application Budget form with this LEA Application Narrative. The LEA budget must indicate an amount of the school improvement grant the LEA will use each year in the school it commits to serve.

In the FY14 LEA Application Budget form, provide a budget that indicates an amount of the school improvement grant the LEA will use each year to:

- Implement the selected model in the school the LEA commits to serve;
- Conduct LEA-level activities designed to support implementation of the selected school intervention models in the LEA's schools; and
- Support school improvement activities, at the school or LEA level,

LEA Application Budget Form included with this application:

Yes

No

Budget Summary

The LEA must provide a budget that indicates the amount of school improvement funds the LEA will use in the school it proposes to serve and the funds it will use to conduct LEA-level activities designed to support implementation of the selected school intervention models in the LEA's Tier I and Tier II schools, or priority and focus schools.

If SIG funds will be used by the LEA/CMO, describe how the funds will be used to support SIG activities.

Note: An LEA's budget should cover three years of full implementation and be of sufficient size and scope to implement the selected school intervention model in each Tier I, Tier II, priority, or focus school the LEA commits to serve. Any funding for activities during the pre-implementation period must be included in the first year of the LEA's budget plan. Additionally, an LEA's budget may include up to one full academic year for planning activities and up to two years to support sustainability activities. An LEA may not receive more than five years of SIG funding to serve a single school. An LEA's budget for each year may not exceed the number of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools, or the number of priority and focus schools, it commits to serve multiplied by \$2,000,000

1. LEA/CMO Proposing a 3-Year Implementation Plan for a School

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	3-Year Total
School-Level Activities	\$317,577.57	\$371,072.50	\$313,145.00	\$1,001,795.07
LEA/CMO-Level Activities	\$		\$	\$
Total Budget	\$317,577.57	\$371,072.50	\$313,145.00	\$1,001,795.07

Year 1 Budget: Full Implementation

Year 2 Budget: Full Implementation

Year 3 Budget: Full Implementation

2. LEA/CMO Proposing to Implement a Model at a School on the First Day of the Upcoming School Year

	Year 1		Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	5-Year Total
	Pre-Implementation	Full Implementation					
School-Level Activities	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
LEA/CMO-Level Activities	\$		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Budget	\$		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

Year 1 Budget: Pre-Implementation / Full Implementation

Year 2 Budget: Full Implementation

Year 3 Budget: Full Implementation

Year 4 Budget: Sustainability Activities (optional)

Year 5 Budget: Sustainability Activities (optional)

3. LEA/CMO Proposing a Planning Year for a School

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	5-Year Total
School-Level Activities	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
LEA/CMO-Level Activities	\$		\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Budget	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

Year 1 Budget: Planning

Year 2 Budget: Full Implementation

Year 3 Budget: Full Implementation

Year 4 Budget: Full Implementation

Year 5 Budget: Sustainability Activities

D. ASSURANCES: Provide the following assurances as part of the application for a School Improvement Grant.

The LEA must assure that it will:

- 1) Use its School Improvement Grant to implement, fully and effectively, an intervention in each school that the LEA commits to serve consistent with the final requirements;
- 2) Establish annual goals for student achievement on the State's assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics and measure progress on the leading indicators in section III of the final requirements in order to monitor each school that it serves with the school improvement grant, and establish goals (approved by the SEA) to hold accountable its schools that receive school improvement funds;
- 3) If it implements a restart model in a school, include in its contract or agreement terms the authority to hold the charter operator, charter management organization, or education management organization accountable for complying with the final requirements;
- 4) Monitor and evaluate the actions a school has taken, as outlined in the approved SIG application, to recruit, select and provide oversight to external providers to ensure their quality;
- 5) Monitor and evaluate the actions schools have taken, as outlined in the approved SIG application, to sustain the reforms after the funding period ends and provide technical assistance to schools on how they can sustain progress in the absence of SIG funding; and,
- 6) Report to the SEA the school-level data required under section III of the final requirements.

LEA agrees to Assurances:

Yes **No**

E. TIMELINE: Use the charts below to provide a brief timeline for implementation of the SIG intervention model at the school the LEA commits to serve. Include significant grant activities, budget items, deliverables, etc. Where applicable, specify any SIG-funded activities to be provided by the LEA.

Year 1: 2015 - 2016 School Year

Intervention Activities

- Check here if Year 1 is for Planning
- Check here if Year 1 is for Pre-Implementation
- Check here if Year 1 is for Full Implementation

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Costs</i>
<p>The Academic Collaboration Team (ACT) – This will be a specialized group of educators trained to provide support and targeted instruction to ensure all students at Democracy Prep, regardless of family background, income, race, religion, language proficiency, or disability can achieve academically and reach success in college and citizenship. The ACT Team will provide targeted support to students at academic risk, including but not limited to those who are classified as English Language Learners or needing an Individualized Education Plan.</p>	<p>Throughout the year</p>	<p>\$17,630 + Benefits</p>
<p>Co-Teachers – Co-teachers for each grade level splits time between both classrooms and work closely with lead teachers to identify problem areas using assessments and technology integrations. Co-teachers deliver interventions for scholars in a variety of settings, primarily via one-on-one, push-in support (integrated co-teaching). Pull-out, small-group instruction (SETSS) is largely utilized for scholars with</p>	<p>Throughout the year</p>	<p>\$154,250 + Benefits</p>

Year 1: 2015 - 2016 School Year

Intervention Activities

- Check here if Year 1 is for Planning
 Check here if Year 1 is for Pre-Implementation
 Check here if Year 1 is for Full Implementation

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Costs</i>
<p>special needs who are taught by ACT teachers, while co-teachers target the rest of the class for added support throughout the lesson.</p> <p>Technology - DPPS supplements their instruction every day with technology through the use of document cameras, projectors, Chromebooks, iPhones, and MacBooks in order to make content engaging and explorative. Scholars K-12 use Chromebooks to ensure a high level of computer literacy needed in college and beyond. Teachers employ a wide variety of programs to help differentiate instruction and prepare scholars for the next generation of computer based standardized tests.</p> <p>External Affairs Manager – Individual is responsible for engaging the community, including scholars, family, elected officials and other persons of interest. This person will help organize school-based events such as Family Leadership Council meetings and “Coffees and Conversations” roundtables, and external advocacy opportunities.</p> <p>Books – Various books will be sent to the school library and multiple classrooms for scholar use</p>	<p>Beginning of the year</p> <p>Throughout the year</p> <p>Beginning of the year</p>	<p>\$14,000</p> <p>\$60,000</p> <p>\$9,400</p>

Year 1: 2015 - 2016 School Year

Intervention Activities

- Check here if Year 1 is for Planning
- Check here if Year 1 is for Pre-Implementation
- Check here if Year 1 is for Full Implementation

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Costs</i>
throughout the year.		

Year 2: 2016 - 2017 School Year

Intervention Activities

Year 2 is for Full Implementation

Activities	Timeline	Costs
<p>The Academic Collaboration Team (ACT) – This will be a specialized group of educators trained to provide support and targeted instruction to ensure all students at Democracy Prep, regardless of family background, income, race, religion, language proficiency, or disability can achieve academically and reach success in college and citizenship. The ACT Team will provide targeted support to students at academic risk, including but not limited to those who are classified as English Language Learners or needing an Individualized Education Plan.</p>	<p>Throughout the school year</p>	<p>\$165,000 + Benefits</p>
<p>Social Workers - Each DPPS campus employs at least one licensed social worker who is responsible for providing clinical interventions including at-risk counseling, behavioral support, crisis management, bereavement support, social skills training, frustration tolerance, organizational skills, academic motivation, conflict resolution with peers, and assertive skills training.</p>	<p>Throughout the school year</p>	<p>\$100,000 + Benefits</p>
<p>Professional Development – DPPS sends teachers to high</p>	<p>Throughout the school year</p>	<p>\$40,000</p>

Year 2: 2016 - 2017 School Year

Intervention Activities

Year 2 is for Full Implementation

Activities	Timeline	Costs
<p>quality professional development offered by Uncommon Schools, Building Excellent Schools, and other providers.</p> <p>Technology - DPPS supplements their instruction every day with technology through the use of document cameras, projectors, Chromebooks, iPhones, and MacBooks in order to make content engaging and explorative. Scholars K-12 use Chromebooks to ensure a high level of computer literacy needed in college and beyond. Teachers employ a wide variety of programs to help differentiate instruction and prepare scholars for the next generation of computer based standardized tests.</p>	<p>Start of the school year</p>	<p>\$14,000</p>

Year 3: 2017 - 2018 School Year

Intervention Activities

Year 3 is for Full Implementation

Activities	Timeline	Costs
<p>The Academic Collaboration Team (ACT) – This will be a specialized group of educators trained to provide support and targeted instruction to ensure all students at Democracy Prep, regardless of family background, income, race, religion, language proficiency, or disability can achieve academically and reach success in college and citizenship. The ACT Team will provide targeted support to students at academic risk, including but not limited to those who are classified as English Language Learners or needing an Individualized Education Plan.</p>	<p>Throughout the school year</p>	<p>\$110,000 + Benefits</p>
<p>Social Workers - Each DPPS campus employs at least one licensed social worker who is responsible for providing clinical interventions including at-risk counseling, behavioral support, crisis management, bereavement support, social skills training, frustration tolerance, organizational skills, academic motivation, conflict resolution with peers, and assertive skills training.</p>	<p>Throughout the school year</p>	<p>\$100,000 + Benefits</p>
<p>Professional Development – DPPS sends teachers to high quality professional development offered by Uncommon Schools, Building Excellent Schools, and other providers.</p>	<p>Throughout the school year</p>	<p>\$45,000</p>

<p>Technology - DPPS supplements their instruction every day with technology through the use of document cameras, projectors, Chromebooks, iPhones, and MacBooks in order to make content engaging and explorative. Scholars K-12 use Chromebooks to ensure a high level of computer literacy needed in college and beyond. Teachers employ a wide variety of programs to help differentiate instruction and prepare scholars for the next generation of computer based standardized tests.</p>	<p>Start of the school year</p>	<p>\$14,000</p>
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Year 4: 2018 - 2019 School Year

Intervention Activities

- Check here if Year 4 is for Full Implementation (Optional)
- Check here if Year 4 is for Sustainability Activities (Optional)

Activities	Timeline	Costs

Year 5: 2020 - 2021 School Year

Intervention Activities

Check here if Year 5 is for Sustainability Activities (Optional)

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Costs</i>