

Evaluation Summary Analysis—Amani Public Charter School

This form was completed by OISM staff at the conclusion of the Prospectus review, Full Application review, and Capacity Interview. The Evaluation Summary Analysis summarizes the main findings in the review process as well as:

- 1) a discussion of the applicant’s alignment with priorities of the law (as measured by the prospectus)
- 2) a discussion of the applicant’s quality of design (as measured by the Full Application), and
- 3) a discussion of the capacity of the founding group (as measured by the Capacity Interview).

APPLICANT INFORMATION		
Applicant Organization:		
Proposed Name:	Amani Charter School	
	Year 1	Year 5
Grade Levels:	5 th grade	5 th grade through 8 th grade
Enrollment:	80 students	320
Mission:	The mission of the Amani Public Charter School (APCS) is to provide 100% of Mount Vernon students who attend the proposed school from the 5th through 8th grade with the academic and critical thinking skills necessary to succeed in competitive high school programs, college and the career of their choice. APCS graduates are academically accomplished, intellectually curious, and civically engaged young people who tackle challenges diligently and creatively.	
Leadership:	The proposed charter school’s leadership team will consist of an Executive Director, a Director of Curriculum, a Director of Finance, School Social Worker, Special Education Coordinator, and ESL Coordinator. No specific candidates have been identified at this time for these positions.	
Governing Board:	The proposed charter school will be governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of seven to fifteen experienced members. The Board will establish 5 working committees: an Executive Committee, an Academic Accountability Committee, a Finance Committee, a Governance Committee, and a Development Committee. The	

founding members are:

Sidney Burke, a partner in the New York Office of a global law firm DLP Piper LLP (US), lends his own legal expertise and provides *pro bono* legal assistance for the proposed charter school. Mr. Burke received his J.D. from NYU School of Law and his A.B from Harvard University.

Gerald Coleman is a lifelong resident of Mount Vernon and a former member of the Mount Vernon Board of Education. He has worked as a business manager for a public charter school. Mr. Coleman earned a BA from the College of New Rochelle, a Masters of Business Education from Baruch College/City University and MBA from LIU School of Management (CW Post).

David Eichler is a Certified Public Accountant with extensive professional experience as a controller for a multibillion-dollar division of a public company. He earned his BS in Accounting from New York University.

Adell Dowdy is an educational professional with a career spanning over thirty years. Presently she is an Adjunct Professor in the Graduate Education Department of Mercy College, Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. She brings expertise in professional and curriculum development as well as school administration. Ms. Dowdy earned a BA from Benet College in Elementary Education and Reading, a MA in teaching from New York University and the Professional Diploma in Supervision and Administration from the City College of the City University of New York.

Stephanie McCaine is the Director of Admissions at Purchase College. She brings a strong operations background as well as visibility into the remote end of the Amani students' educational journey. Ms. McCaine is a graduate of Skidmore College.

Laura Francis is a lifelong resident of Mount Vernon is a former employee of the Mount Vernon City School District with extensive experience in curriculum development, assessment and technology as a tool to enhance learning. Ms. Francis earned a BS in Business Administration Marketing from the American University and the MS in Education from Fordham University.

Chanelle Hyde is founder of a local non-profit in the area and brings a strong community perspective. She is presently the Drug Market

Intervention Coordinator for the Mt. Vernon Police Department. She is currently pursuing her BA degree in Political Science from Fordham University. Ms. Hyde has deep ties with the Mt. Vernon community through policy advocacy and grassroots organizing initiatives.

Andrea Rogers, a professor at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at New York University, brings an international perspective from her work advising grassroots organizers in Africa and expertise in capacity building for not-for-profits. Ms. Rogers has a Master’s of Public and International Affairs and Economic and Social Development from the University of Pittsburgh and a Bachelors of Science in Foreign Service from Georgetown University.

Rich Thomas has a background in governmental affairs from his years as a special assistant in the Office of the Governor of New York State. Mr. Thomas is a graduate of New York University. He also attended the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Debra Stern is an Adjunct Professor at Concordia College. Ms. Stern attended New Rochelle Public Schools. She earned a BS from Cornell University, a MS from The College of New Rochelle, an ED.M at Teachers College, Columbia University and a MSW from New York University. She was a member of the Mount Vernon Library Board of Trustees and the Founding President of the Mount Vernon Public Library Foundation.

PROSPECTUS ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Inadequate	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds
			X

Analysis Summary
 The founding group appears to understand, as demonstrated in the prospectus, the role and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees. The group appears to understand its educational, legal, and fiduciary obligations as required by the Charter Schools Act and other applicable statutes.

I. EDUCATION PLAN ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Inadequate	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds
		X	

Analysis Summary

The founding group presented a strong educational plan which clearly articulated their goals of providing “great teaching,” having an exemplary academic program,” and creating a “strong culture” toward fulfilling their mission. The application also identified the founding group’s specific absolute, comparative, and value-added goals established for this proposed charter school, and clearly demonstrated data analysis would be used to set or modify goals specific to students, teachers, and the proposed charter school as a whole.

The founding group stated that the proposed charter school would focus on literacy and numeracy and in their written plan identified the specific skills that the proposed charter school will develop in each of students. The proposed charter school will employ looping at grades 5 and 6; focus on interests and strengths as to engage and motivate students; develop a learning plan for each student; No Excuses Model; longer ELA and Math blocks; after-school enrichment and longer school day and year. The enrollment projections appear to be justified and realistic including for special education students and English language learners.

The founding group has very high expectations of its teaching staff, and will develop a personalized plan for each which identifies strengths and areas for improvement. The teachers will participate in approximately 80 hours of professional development per year, and data will be used to direct professional development and inform instructional needs.

The founding group’s narrative pertaining to community involvement and parental involvement was quite detailed and exemplary. The narrative was so powerful in this section and made it apparent that the founding group was “of” and “for” the Mount Vernon community. The passion and commitment of the founding group is evident throughout the written document.

The written application was less exemplary on the details of the “how” certain goals would be met. For instance, the written application described a curriculum aligned with State standards developed by its teachers with the guidance of a Director of Curriculum, but the details of how this would occur or what the process would look like were not extensive. The founding group was demonstrably persuasive in providing the reviewers with the details and answered questions raised from the application review. Additionally, despite indicating that significant amounts of time would be devoted to professional development, the application lacked sufficient detail in the school calendar presented to show when the over 80 hours of yearly professional development would occur. However, the founding group reminded the interviewers that some of this time would occur during the one day of week when students have early dismissal.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Inadequate	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds
			X

Analysis Summary

The founding group provided all required attachments, which included proposed by-laws and the code of ethics, prospective Board member resumes and questionnaires, an organizational chart with key positions, and identification of the roles and responsibilities for administering day to day activities.

The founding group clearly knows their community and they have designed recruitment strategies for attracting and retaining students accordingly. Evidence of parental interest is referenced in the application. The founding group has articulated a vision for community involvement, and one that is consistent with proposed charter school’s mission. The strength and commitment of community is evidenced throughout this application. The founding group has garnered support over a two year period from a broad base of the community. The founding group appears to have solid support from the College of New Rochelle.

The founding group appears to have the capacity to oversee the successful development and implementation of the educational program presented in the application.

III. FINANCIAL PLAN ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Inadequate	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds
		X	

Analysis Summary

The application includes a budget that is well-aligned with the mission, educational program, and staffing plan for the proposed school. The revenue and expenditure assumptions were clear. The founding group presented several options to house the proposed charter school.

The founding group clearly understands their financial obligations and demonstrated the group’s capacity to implement staffing and procedures to successfully operate and manage the proposed charter school. The groups has demonstrated its capacity to meet insurance, food service requirements, key financial obligations and reporting requirements.

One concern with the budget has to do with the facility options presented in the application. These facility options varied in cost, and depending on which is determined suitable, the impact on the proposed budget may be significant. Overall, the projected budget presented is consistent with the narrative and is reasonable.

CAPACITY INTERVIEW ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Inadequate	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds
			X

The founding group responded quite well—competently and sufficiently—to both general questions posed by the Assistant Commissioners and to specific questions posed by the reviewers.

The founding group is a very passionate group of individuals with the community knowledge of what a charter school opportunity may mean for their community, as half of the founding group was born, raised and educated in Mt. Vernon City School District. This group knows its community very well.

Additionally, the group articulated its understanding of what it means to hold a charter from the Board of Regents and the responsibilities the proposed charter school would have under the law. The group spoke to its educational plan—goals, staffing pattern, curriculum, professional development for teachers, special student population, accountability and the education of special needs and English Language Learners. The group also spoke to the use of data to inform teaching and learning as well as the decision-making process of the proposed charter school. Specifically, the group has within its vision and at every level a continuous cycle of data collection, data analysis, and decision.

There was discussion in the interview about teacher recruitment and retention. The group articulated a set of non-negotiable expectations for teachers and planned a fairly good beginning salary. Additionally, the founding group articulated in some detail the supports that teachers could expect from the proposed charter school.

COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY

Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	Inadequate
	X		

Analysis Summary

The founding group was persuasive on paper and more importantly in person of the need for a charter school within their community and of their ability to implement the kind of charter school they envision for their community. There are no remaining concerns that cannot be fully addressed during the pre-opening phase should this application be approved.