

PROSPECTUS

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission: Young Women’s College Prep Charter School of Rochester (YWCP) will offer young women from the city of Rochester the opportunity to learn in a single-gender environment where a central focus is placed on preparation for college enrollment and graduation. YWCP will partner with families and the community to instill in each student a sense of leadership, responsibility, and ethics, supporting young women in their endeavors to achieve excellence in and out of the classroom.

YWCP will open with 75 students in seventh grade and grow to serve students in grades 7-12. The school will affiliate with the Young Women’s Leadership Network (YWLN), which supports five highly successful single-gender secondary schools in New York City and Philadelphia. The network also affiliates with schools in Maryland, Illinois, and Texas. The flagship YWLN school in East Harlem has celebrated a graduation rate over 96% for the past ten years, and every graduating senior has been accepted to college with significant financial aid. Over 75% of these students have graduated from or remain in college. YWCP will benefit from the structured and targeted support that YWLN provides for its network schools and affiliates. This includes:

- Technical support during the application and start-up phase;
- Onsite support from network experts including mentoring for the YWCP Principal;
- Participation in network professional development;
- Implementation of YWLN academic and advisory curricula; and,
- Support and guidance in the recruitment and hiring of leadership and staff.

Key Design Elements:

Single-gender: YWCP believes in educating the whole student and meeting the individual’s needs. A single-gender school offers students the opportunity to learn in an environment free from cultural and gender stereotypes, as well as many of the pressures and distractions of a co-educational school.

Small Schools Engaged in Leadership Development: YWCP is committed to knowing every student personally, intellectually, and emotionally; this is possible in a small school environment. Students will learn how to lead and work collaboratively with others. They will actively engage in projects that build their leadership skills, their ability to work as part of a team, and their capacity to positively impact their community. Leadership development will be part of the culture of the school and will be explicitly taught in Advisory, which will meet every day.

College Preparation: College preparation will begin in the seventh grade with college visits and ongoing discourse about college in each classroom. College exploration will be integrated into all aspects of the curriculum. A full-time college guidance counselor from CollegeBound Initiative (CBI) will be hired to work at the school. The college counselor will focus on guiding every student and her family through the complex admissions and financial aid processes.

Faculty: YWCP’s teachers will be experienced educators who believe in collaborative learning and are invested in their own professional development and growth. They will be committed to a longer work day and work year and see themselves as a part of a team and community with a shared vision and mission. YWCP will have the highest standards for classroom achievement. Classroom pedagogy will center on cooperative and collaborative practices, inquiry, and differentiation to meet the needs of all learners. Teachers will share a vision for helping every student to achieve personal mastery.

Professional Development and Leadership: Professional development will be an integral part of YWCP’s culture and teaching strategies. The Principal will be an instructional leader with many years of classroom experience, and expertise in developing an exemplary staff. During the school year, YWCP will devote one afternoon per week to professional development directly responsive to emerging student data, including: workshopping lesson plans, presenting teaching strategies, and sharing effective practices. Teachers will be expected to work for the first three weeks of August preparing their classrooms and curriculum for the year with guidance from the Principal, department chairs, and outside support. YWCP will hold an annual retreat for faculty and staff to establish the atmosphere and mindset for the school year. Peer observations will be built into the schedule, as well as team teaching opportunities.

Knowledge Management: YWCP will build a system of knowledge management that is defined and owned by every adult in the building. Knowledge management is, in its most simple terms, a system for sharing information across an organization, where a common language and a structure for documenting and organizing knowledge allow for continuous learning and improvement. YWCP will stay true to the spirit of a charter school, and commit to sharing practice with all other schools in a comprehensive and applicable manner.

Other Defining Characteristics:

- Longer school day (8:00am -4:00pm) with one hour classes
- Uniforms
- Advisory
- “Out of School time” – programming after school, weekends, breaks, and summer to provide opportunities and exposure to a wide variety of experiences and learning opportunities
- Partnerships with parents
- School-wide events that involve the community
- School-wide behavior management focusing on communication and problem-solving
- Extensive supports for students with disabilities and English language learners
- Weekly use of formative data to inform planning and instruction
- Attention to health and wellness to promote healthy female adolescent development

II. STUDENT POPULATION

A. Student Enrollment

Applicant Instructions: In the table provided, enter enrollment projections for the school, by year, for the first five years of operation.

Grades	Projected Enrollment Table				
	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2017-2018
K					
1 st					
2 nd					
3 rd					
4 th					
5 th					
6 th					
7 th	75	75	75	75	75
8 th		75	75	75	75
9 th			75	75	75
10 th				75	75
11 th					75
12 th					
Ungraded					
Totals	75	150	225	300	375

B. Target Populations

In response to the request for information regarding the target populations of Young Women’s College Prep Charter School of Rochester (YWCP), this section is structured as follows:

- Recruitment and Enrollment
- Serving the Target Populations (students with disabilities, English language learners, and students over-age for grade and below proficiency)
 - Staffing and Hiring
 - Identification
 - Planning
 - Curriculum and Instruction
 - Monitoring
 - Retention

Recruitment and Enrollment

As of November 2010, the Rochester City School District (RCSD) served 31,735 students with representation in the following sub-groups:

- 10.4% with limited English proficiency;
- 16.9% identified as students with disabilities;
- 79.7% qualifying for free and reduced price lunch;
- 49% female;
- 63% African-American; and,
- 22.8% Hispanic.

A number of families in Rochester seek alternatives to the RCSD. In the 2010-2011 school year, 266 families are home schooling their children, 724 students are enrolled in private schools (identified as RCSD students based on their utilization of district services), and 508 students participate in the Inter-district Urban/Suburban Transfer Program. In December 2010, active enrollment in Rochester charter schools was the following:

Eugenio Maria de Hostos Charter	340
Genesee Community Charter	175
Rochester Academy Charter	259
True North Rochester Prep (two schools)	451
University Prep for Young Men	162
Urban Choice	387
Total Charter School	1774
Charter School % of RCSD Enrollment	5.29%

Together, these charter schools currently report an additional 1,107 students on waiting lists, demonstrating a desire for the charter school option within the community of Rochester parents. Additionally, a large number of families choose the option of a parochial education. Currently, 1,498 Rochester students are enrolled in parochial schools (based on the number of students who receive RCSD services). Furthermore, the only single-gender parochial school for females in Rochester, Our Lady of Mercy High School, enrolled approximately 130 students from Rochester in the 2010-2011 school year. However, less than 50% of these students are African-American or Hispanic, showing an underrepresentation of the RCSD population in the only single-gender option for females in the city. One

possibility for this is that many families simply cannot afford the tuition. Further demonstration of the need for high-quality options for the girls of Rochester is the city's teen pregnancy rate. A 2010 report by The Children's Agenda of Rochester cited pregnancies in 11.6% of 15-19 year olds – a rate among the worst in the U.S. and industrialized world.

YWCP seeks to serve a student population that has not succeeded in traditional urban public schools. These students are a predominantly African-American and Hispanic, students qualifying for free and reduced price lunch, English language learners, and students with disabilities. The school expects to attract a large population of students entering below grade level. As such, YWCP is dedicated to effectively recruiting and retaining these students in numbers comparable to or greater than the RCSD.

Through the experience of its founders, the school's affiliation with the Young Women's Leadership Network (YWLN), and relationships with similar charter schools in Rochester, YWCP has identified a student recruitment strategy with a track record of success. The school has already begun and will continue to build relationships with churches, community organizations, shelters, public advocates, and other service providers throughout the city to build parent interest. Presentations to such groups play an important role in communicating the school's ability and intention to represent parent interests. Targeted marketing, including radio and cable television advertisements, and direct mail promotional materials, will also play a critical role in recruiting students within the target populations. These efforts will focus particularly on radio and television stations and mailing lists that reach low-income urban families and non-English speakers. A team of volunteers and board members are also meeting to write letters and opinion pieces to local publications such as, the Democrat and Chronicle, the Minority Reporter, and City Newspaper. YWCP will also work diligently to ensure that school informational materials are available in libraries, shops, recreation centers, restaurants, and other community gathering places throughout Rochester's most economically depressed neighborhoods, particularly the northeast zone (the crescent) of Rochester. The school has developed a budget with these specific recruitment efforts in mind.

All marketing materials developed by YWCP for the purposes of attracting new students and families will include information about the school's capacity to serve students with disabilities and English language learners, as well as students who have fallen behind grade level. In addition, all materials will be published and distributed with Spanish translations to ensure that Spanish-speaking families are effectively reached. When possible, YWCP will seek resources to provide translations in other languages, as over 60 languages are currently represented within the RCSD.

Through its collaborative relationship as part of the District/Charter Compact recently funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, YWCP will also work with the RCSD to support recruitment efforts. The school will participate in all district fairs and will coordinate with the RCSD's school selection office to disseminate information about YWCP. YWCP will adhere to all applicable state and federal regulations in recruiting and enrolling students.

Serving Target Populations

Staffing and Hiring

YWCP's model is designed specifically to serve its target population. To begin with, the school's staffing plan provides the capacity to deliver high-quality instruction to every student in the building through classroom instruction and through the necessary supports outside the classroom.

Students with disabilities: YWCP is committed to delivering the school's full slate of services to students with disabilities in a manner as integrated and unrestrictive as is permissible based on Individual Education Plans (IEPs) determined by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) of residence and all applicable federal laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of

the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and any other rights enforced by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR). YWCP will also comply with all New York State policies and regulations.

In addition to hiring a full team of subject-area teachers, YWCP will have one certified, full-time Special Education Coordinator on staff in its first year to manage and, where appropriate, deliver services to students with IEPs. The school may permit the Special Education Coordinator to assume additional administrative duties, but the school does not permit those duties to interfere with the Coordinator's responsibilities to ensure compliance with the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. As much as possible, special education services to students with disabilities will be provided in the general education classroom to support appropriate progress toward the general education curriculum. The expectation for all staff – general and special educators – is that they ensure that students with disabilities have access to the same rigorous curriculum as their non-disabled peers.

The Special Education Coordinator will work with the CSE of residence to identify and serve students with disabilities, ensuring that all required special education and related services are provided. YWCP will not convene its own CSE, make evaluations of children suspected of being disabled, create IEPs, reevaluate or revise existing IEPs, or conduct due process hearings. YWCP understands that these responsibilities belong only to the CSE of residence.

The Special Education Coordinator will also retain student data and prepare reports as requested by the RCSD and State Education Department in order to permit such entities to comply with federal law and regulations. All student records will be kept confidential and disseminated to teachers, related service providers, supplementary school personnel, and parents in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and regulations relating to the confidentiality of student records (34 CFR §300.560-577 and 34 CFR Part 99) and 8 NYCRR 200.4. Specifically, every teacher of a student with a disability will be given a copy of that student's IEP and training will be provided by YWCP's special education staff, prior to the implementation of the IEP, as needed to ensure understanding of the student's needs and the teacher's responsibilities related to the student's IEP.

YWCP will provide substitute coverage for general and special education teachers as necessary to ensure that they are able to attend CSE meetings. As required by IDEA, the student's regular education teacher will be involved in the development and implementation of a student's IEP, provided that the student is participating in the regular education environment. YWCP will take a particularly active role in transition planning for students with disabilities to encourage the CSE to develop annual goals that are aligned with students' post-secondary goals. While YWCP may send the mandated procedural safeguards notice to parents, it is the responsibility of the CSE.

If YWCP is unable to directly provide services to the extent necessary, or a student with a disability demonstrates needs beyond the expertise of the school's personnel (for example, highly specialized related services), the school may contract for services or personnel from the district of residence. If necessary and feasible, YWCP will also contract with appropriately certified or licensed individuals to provide services under the school's direction. The services to be provided may include, but are not limited to:

- Speech language pathology and audiological services;
- Physical and occupational therapy;
- Counseling;
- Psychological services; or,
- Diagnostic and/or evaluative medical services.

In order to ensure proper staff training, YWCP will provide ongoing professional development in special education services for all faculty members. Professional development for staff involved with the education of students with disabilities will include the referral process to the CSE, development of a student's IEP, implementation of a student's IEP, evaluation of a student's progress toward meeting IEP goals and objectives, meeting reporting requirements to parents and CSEs, and assessment and discipline of students with disabilities. When planning and delivering professional development, YWCP will draw upon its relationship with the Norman Howard School, a local independent school for students with learning disabilities, and a national leader in this field.

English language learners: The school will also hire one full-time teacher for English language learners. In the first year of operation, this staff member will also teach a second language to general education students. YWCP's first-year budget is designed with the flexibility to hire one additional full-time employee if it becomes necessary to meet the needs of the actual enrolled student population. The school's staffing capacity in these areas will grow along with the school in subsequent years. Professional development and staff training before and throughout the year will focus on strategies related to identification, instruction, and monitoring to meet the needs of YWCP's diverse student population.

Identification

YWCP faculty and leadership will identify students' strengths and needs through a rigorous process during enrollment, but after acceptance to the school. This will include analysis of students' cumulative records, structured interviews with parents and guardians, as well as interviews with former teachers and other educators when possible. The data from transcripts and interviews will be utilized along with the results of an intake assessment administered within the first days of school. The intake assessment will provide further information to faculty and leadership regarding identification of student strengths and needs. This information will be used to inform services, interventions, and other instructional resources for students.

Students with disabilities: To ensure the success of students with disabilities at YWCP, the school will work with the CSE of residence to provide required services in accordance with federal special education laws. Generally, this means students will:

- Receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE);
- Be offered appropriate evaluations;
- Receive an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment (LRE);
- Be involved, with their parents, in the development of and decisions regarding the IEP; and,
- Have access to appropriate procedures and mechanisms, with their parents, to resolve any disputes or disagreements related to the school or school district's provision of FAPE and LRE.

YWCP will also comply with the federal Child Find requirements (34 CFR §300.125), which require schools to have a process in place for identifying, locating and evaluating students with disabilities. Students enrolling for the first time in a New York public school will be screened by a team of teachers (including both regular and special education teachers) to identify any indication that the child may need a specialized or intensive education program, or referral to the CSE.

English language learners: Students with English language learning needs will be identified early through the Home Language Questionnaire, included in both English and translated versions during the enrollment process. If the student's home language is not English, YWCP staff will conduct an interview with the student and parent, with every attempt to do this in their native language. The appropriate YWCP staff member will consult the State Education Department's resources on sample interview questions to develop an appropriate interview protocol. If the student speaks a language other than English, or little to no English, YWCP will administer the Language Assessment Battery (LAB-R). A score below the designated proficiency level on the LAB-R will determine a student's eligibility to receive services to

support English language proficiency. The LAB-R will only be administered once to any pertinent incoming student. If at any time, YWCP staff suspect limited English proficiency, the student will be tested to determine if services are necessary. Any limited English proficient students are required to be assessed annually using the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), and YWCP will adhere to this requirement. As part of the request for student records for incoming students, YWCP will request Spring NYSESLAT scores from the RCSD.

Planning

Planning for YWCP students will focus on each student's learning plan. For students with disabilities, this is the IEP; however, learning plans will be in place for all students. Using a broad array of intake data, faculty advisors will lead the process of developing a learning plan for each student. This will include a profile of strengths and needs demonstrated by the student, as well as specific strategies for meeting needs and developing strengths. The plan will include cognitive and developmental dimensions as well as affective dimensions; it will identify student passions and interests so these may be drawn upon when designing instruction. There will be additional dimensions for English language learners, identifying the strategies and programs that will best serve their language needs. For students who are over-age for grade or below proficiency, learning plans will include detailed strategies for credit recovery, and interventions (both academic and social/emotional) necessary get the student back on track.

Student learning plans will remain active documents as faculty and administration will use them to structure and inform planning at a weekly faculty meeting held on Friday afternoons. While advisors will be responsible for taking the lead on development and maintenance of the plan, every faculty member will use the document to inform instruction and drive discussion and co-planning. The plan will also be used as a tool to involve and inform parents and guardians of students' progress. When planning at YWCP, all students will be held to the school's high expectations, regardless of their specific needs.

Curriculum and Instruction

Like the Young Women's Leadership Schools after which YWCP is modeled, YWCP is committed to designing and implementing innovative curricula and strategies specifically designed to provide low-income, minority students with a choice for excellence in their education. The success of YWLN schools is based on an educational approach that defies stereotypes and prepares students for college and leadership opportunities in the community.

Students with disabilities: YWCP will utilize an inclusion model for students with disabilities, ensuring that required and necessary supports and resources are in place within all classrooms to serve the needs of students with disabilities within the least restrictive environment possible. Outside counseling and physical, occupational, speech and language therapy will be provided, as necessary, in collaboration with the district of residence.

All programs and services for students with disabilities at YWCP will be provided in accordance with Education Law §2853(4)(a), applicable federal laws and regulations, and in accordance with the IEP designated by the CSE, including any reevaluations and revisions. YWCP will ensure that the programs and services indicated on each student's IEP are provided directly to the student during school hours.

English language learners: English language learners will be served through an English immersion model. Every effort will be made to ensure that students reach English proficiency at a rapid pace. English language learners will receive the same academic content instruction as their English-speaking peers. The amount of instruction in English (both spoken and written) will be modified accordingly for each student to ensure content acquisition. There will be structured time for intensive English language instruction during the school day, as well as during extended school day and Saturday instruction. Students will receive additional counseling, home visits, and parental counseling as necessary. If the English immersion

model is not succeeding with a student, another approach will be implemented, such as pull-out instruction with a certified aide or teacher under contract who speaks the student's native language.

Every aspect of school culture and curriculum will be designed to meet the needs of YWCP students and to prepare them for college acceptance and matriculation. Before incoming seventh-grade students arrive to school in September, they will participate in a summer bridge program that will allow teachers and administrators to assess where students are academically and also to identify social/emotional issues that may affect their learning. This program will also be made available to incoming ninth-grade students to facilitate the middle to high school transition.

YWCP will place great focus on literacy and the humanities. Reading and writing will be implemented across the curriculum. In particular, middle school students will participate in a writing class every day, which will be shared by all content-area teachers (i.e., one day the focus will be on writing and mathematics, and another day the focus will be on writing and social studies). Teachers will use the Friday faculty meeting to co-plan and ensure consistency and meaningful progression over the course of the week's writing lessons. The writing class will present specific opportunities to focus on needs demonstrated by students with disabilities, English language learners, and over-age for grade or below proficiency students.

Teachers will work in grade and subject teams to co-plan thematic units and disciplinary links between classes. Teachers will employ cooperative inquiry-based learning techniques to create their lessons and will have the opportunity to workshop those lessons at the Friday faculty meetings. Furthermore, YWCP teachers will have access to curriculum and training from YWLN schools and will be provided with model curriculum to help inform YWCP curriculum mapping and lesson planning. Along with the academic curriculum, each member of the faculty, including the Principal, will lead an Advisory class. These classes will meet daily to focus on academic and social/emotional needs, and areas such as time management, executive functioning, and interpersonal skills. Advisory will be a critical opportunity to address special needs within the student population.

The curriculum and teaching model at YWCP will focus on the following areas to meet every student's needs:

1. **Common planning time every day:** All core-subject-area and grade-level teachers will have common planning time. Common planning will allow for teachers to work together to scaffold skills between classes and grade levels in the school. The resulting seamlessness and consistency for students will be of particular benefit to those who have learning disabilities, students working toward English language proficiency, and students who are working toward grade-level proficiency.
2. **Small class sizes:** Wherever possible, YWCP will have small class sizes (20-25 students per class) and even smaller Advisory sections (12-15 students per Advisory).
3. **Block time for all core courses each week:** Every core course will have block time in the schedule each week for expanded core learning time. This schedule will increase core-subject learning time without eliminating valued enrichment and elective programs.
4. **Access to fine arts, music, dance, and elective programs:** YWCP will offer arts and music programs as well as a multitude of elective programs. Students will have the opportunity to pursue personal interests and talents and be exposed to specialist teachers and programs from the Rochester community. In particular, students with disabilities, English language learners, and over-age for grade or below proficiency students will enjoy access to these programs. They will not be denied access simply because they are receiving additional services to meet their needs.
5. **Strong Advisory Program:** As it is at across the YWLN, Advisory will be a cornerstone of student success at YWCP. Advisory classes will meet each day.

6. **Academic Accountability Every Day.** At the end of each school day, students will have the opportunity to remain to meet with teachers, ask clarifying questions, develop new understandings and knowledge, and to work on their homework. Extended day opportunities will be structured as well as unstructured to provide these opportunities. Additionally, students will be invited to school on indentified Saturdays to work on projects and access tutoring and interventions to address their needs.

Opportunities for YWCP's students will not stop in the summer. In addition to the previously mentioned summer bridge programs available to incoming seventh and ninth graders, YWCP will offer students summer college experience programs and job shadowing opportunities.

YWCP will leverage its relationships with outside institutions for the delivery of its educational services. The school will collaborate and work closely with the RCSD in the coordination of services for student with disabilities in particular. YWCP will participate fully in the Charter/District Compact to reap the added benefits of district support in serving its students. The school has already established and will continue to foster its ties with the Norman Howard School to strengthen and hone the delivery of services to students with disabilities. YWCP has also forged relationships with local educational organizations, including True North Rochester Prep, the Harley School, Strong Museum of Play, Nazareth College, Saint John Fisher College, and Rochester Institute of Technology. Resources available to YWCP through these institutions will aid the delivery of quality instruction.

Monitoring

YWCP will implement a rigorous assessment system, including classroom and grade-level formative and periodic assessments that will help teachers to evaluate their effectiveness, identify gaps in student learning, and develop plans to address these gaps. Teachers will use the Friday faculty meeting to review assessment data and plan together to meet student needs. The review of this data will allow the faculty to determine the effectiveness of interventions and services in place for students with disabilities, English language learners, and over-age for grade or below proficiency students. Teachers will adjust interventions and services in response to the successes and shortcomings demonstrated in the data. At-risk students, in particular, will benefit from this system because academic problems compound rapidly for such students. Skills left un-mastered hamper a student's ability to grasp subsequent material and lead to a downward spiral that, if not quickly identified, can be almost irreparable for many students. YWCP's formative assessments will ensure that students who do not grasp material are promptly identified before problems can compound. Teachers can be assured of the effectiveness of one lesson before moving on with a student and parents and guardians will have accurate and timely information about their child's progress.

YWCP will administer standardized tests and New York State exams, providing the appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities and English language learners. For students with learning disabilities, the appropriate time modifications and proctors will be available. If a student's IEP determines that a student cannot participate in regular state assessments, the New York State Alternative Assessment (NYSAA) will be administered. YWCP will coordinate and communicate with the appropriate CSE to monitor the progress of students with disabilities by:

- Seeing that referrals are made for students suspected of having a disability;
- Fulfilling reporting requirements of the resident district;
- Ensuring that all appropriate school staff participate in meetings of the resident district CSE; and,
- Establishing a reporting structure in accordance with applicable laws whereby the CSE of residence is provided with progress regarding the degree to which the services identified on the IEP are being provided.

The school will ensure equal access, in accordance with IDEA Section 602 DEFINITIONS (9) FREE APPROPRIATE EDUCATION (A) (B) (C) (D), IDEA SECTION 614. EVALUATIONS, ELIGIBILITY, INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS, AND EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENTS.

In compliance with 34 CFR §300.750, YWCP will submit an annual report to the State Education Department detailing the number of students with disabilities it serves, the nature of each student's disability, and each student's educational placement and setting. Regarding reports that are the responsibility of the CSE of residence, YWCP will make any necessary data available to the district in a timely fashion. The school will also comply with 8 NYCRR §119.3, which details requirements for the "Charter School Report Card" and includes information relating to students with disabilities.

In compliance with 34 CFR §300.750, YWCP will annually submit all required reports by the appropriate dates due, including, but not limited to, the following:

- VR 9 *Count of Students with Disabilities Provided Special Education and the Settings in which Students with Disabilities are provided services*
- PD-6 *Special Education Personnel*
- VR 10 *Report of Students with Disabilities Exiting Special Education*
- PD-8 *Students with Disabilities Suspended for Disciplinary Reasons*
- SEDCAR-1 *ASEP Request for IDEA Suballocation*

The Special Education Coordinator, in conjunction with the Principal, will be responsible for ensuring the collection, maintenance, and reporting of all data regarding students with disabilities. The reports listed shall also be provided to the school district of residence and the State Education Department, as required. English language learners' proficiency in English will be measured periodically to determine the level of services required. YWCP will also administer the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) to English language learners. As appropriate, scores on this assessment will inform a student's declassification as an English language learner.

Retention

The most effective step YWCP can take to ensure that students and families choose to remain enrolled through high school graduation is to build and maintain a school that meets the needs of every student by preparing them effectively for college in a nurturing, academically rigorous environment. In order to successfully retain all students regardless of need, YWCP's leaders will work to build a strong and consistent school culture. Based on the experience of similarly successful schools, this culture will be one rooted in trust that fosters and encourages risk-taking. The school will be a culturally sensitive environment focusing on response to the needs of the student population. YWCP will also seek to serve the needs of the whole child through pursuing the establishment of an on-site mental and physical health clinic in partnership with a local organization. The founders of YWCP recognize that schools develop robust school cultures through exceptional effort and a determined approach. This is why, in addition to studying the YWLN school model, school leaders will examine schools around Rochester (both district and charter) that are most successful in this regard and will structure professional development to share lessons learned with YWCP staff.

YWCP has made communication with parents a hallmark of its approach. Each student in the school will participate in daily Advisory, which will inform routine calls home and meetings (including home visits) to check in with parents. Any concerns or challenges regarding the needs of students will be identified early and addressed swiftly. In addition to Advisory, specialized communication with parents will include report card nights, behavioral calls, late arrival calls, and missing homework calls. Parents and guardians will meet with advisors and teachers regularly to review students' learning plans and share the progress

attained. YWCP's special education staff will work with classroom teachers to ensure that parents of children with special needs are informed of how their children are progressing toward their IEP goals and in the general curriculum. At the end of each term, progress reports regarding each student and her learning plan, as well as copies of all report cards, will be provided to the student's parents or guardians, and IEPs will be provided to the CSE of residence.

There will be a structured system for escalating any issues that may lead to a student's withdrawal from the YWCP community. Formative and periodic assessment data will highlight any academic needs that may hinder a student's success at YWCP. If a student's needs cannot be met through instruction or other school-level interventions, YWCP will draw upon its community partnerships to address any academic or social/emotional needs. YWCP is committed to making every effort to ensure that every student earns a YWCP diploma and entrance into college.

III. SCHOOL DESIGN

The model of Young Women's College Prep Charter School of Rochester (YWCP) will fulfill the following eligibility criteria and outcomes:

a. Increase student achievement and decrease student achievement gaps in reading/language arts and mathematics;

YWCP will provide a first-rate education to female students who come from underprivileged backgrounds and who enter the school with diverse experiences in middle school academic achievement. The school is designed to attract minority, Title I students who make an informed choice to attend a 7-12 single-sex college prep charter school.

Research has proven that this school model is best suited to underperforming students who can benefit from both the rigor and whole-child approach of the school. The research of Dr. Cornelius Riordan of Providence College has yielded data to demonstrate that the effects of single sex schools are greater for poor children and minorities. His extensive review of the literature points toward theoretical rationales, which will be internalized in the YWCP model: a greater degree of order and control, more positive same-sex student role models, a reduction of sex difference in curriculum and student opportunities, reduction of sex bias in teacher-student interactions, elimination of invidious gender dominance, sexual harassment and predatory behavior, greater leadership opportunities, greater staff sensitivity to sex differences in learning styles, and parent and students engaged in pro-academic choice.¹ With regard to academic achievement, Dr. Riordan states "specifically, disadvantaged students in single-sex schools, compared to their counterparts in coeducational schools, have been shown to have higher achievement outcomes on standardized tests of mathematics, reading, science and civics". (ibid. p. 18)

YWCP will replicate the Young Women's Leadership Network (YWLN) model. A strong affiliation with the network (please find a letter of support from the YWLN attached as Appendix A), as well as the co-founder, Laura Rebell Gross's, experience as a staff member for 7 years, head of the English Department (at the East Harlem school), and network consultant will ensure fidelity to YWLN's proven approach. This model is based on teaching the whole girl with specific aims in leadership development, health and wellness, and early career and college awareness. Advisory is an essential component to the school

¹ "The Impact of Single-Sex Public Schools: Fact or Fiction?", Cornelius Riordan, Ph.D., Providence College, National Conference on Single-Sex Public Schools, 2008, Philadelphia, Pa., p. 39.

model, specifically in developing and honing organizational and leadership skills. Students will meet within Advisory every day. Teacher schedules will be organized so that every teacher is responsible for taking on leadership roles outside the classroom including: Advisory teams, Grade teams, Content teams and Data teams. Student and teacher schedules will be flexible and innovative to allow for extended blocks, daily Advisory, common planning, and blended learning/co-teaching experiences, particularly in the middle school grades.

YWCP will have an academic focus on literacy and writing across the curriculum. Reading and writing standards will be established in all disciplines. Middle school students will spend an hour a day in a writing section that is shared by humanities, science, math, and language teachers to reinforce writing across the curriculum. YWCP will hold students accountable for meeting and exceeding local, state, and federal standards. Differentiated professional development will be provided weekly in Friday faculty meetings and through an open door policy between teachers and leadership. The school will operate with a longer school day (8:00am -4:00pm, as well as regular Saturday sessions) and a longer school year.

This model has produced excellent results in student achievement for the ten graduating classes at the Young Women's Leadership School of East Harlem (TYWLS East Harlem). The graduation rate has been above 96% for the past ten years, with every graduating senior accepted and matriculating into college. In 2009-10, the majority of middle school students at YWLN schools in New York City outperformed their peers across the city on New York State standardized math and English/Language Arts exams. Sixth graders at TYWLS Astoria and TYWLS East Harlem scored 22% higher than their city peers on the math exam. Sixth, seventh, and eighth graders at TYWLS Astoria scored 25% higher than their city peers on the English/Language Arts exam.

In 2010, 88% of the senior class of TYWLS East Harlem graduated with a New York State Regents Diploma (including 14% with Advance Regents Diplomas). Other New York City YWLN schools are in early years of operation and have not yet graduated their first cohorts. In 2009, citywide, less than 45% of students graduated with a Regents diploma. This demonstrates YWLN's significant increases in student achievement in a student population that is 92.2% African-American and Hispanic (based on December 2010 reporting), illustrating the Young Women's Leadership model's powerful impact in decreasing the achievement gap. In 2005, TYWLS East Harlem was recognized as a Breakthrough High School by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Likewise, in March of 2006, TWYLS East Harlem was recognized by Ed Trust and by New York State as a High Performing/Gap Closing School.

b. Increase high school graduation rates and focus on serving at-risk high school student populations (including re-enrolled drop-outs and those below grade level);

As noted above, YWCP is modeled after the highly successful YWLN schools in New York City, specifically, TWYLS East Harlem. The YWCP goal for every student is acceptance to and graduation from a four-year college. College preparation and college readiness will permeate every aspect of YWCP classrooms and culture, from seventh through twelfth grade. Beginning with the first tenth-grade class, YWCP will employ a full-time college guidance counselor in the school.

College preparation will be the focus for every student, regardless of past performance. Should current performance demonstrate that a student is off the track toward graduation and college readiness, the appropriate interventions will be implemented immediately to address the student's needs. This will be accomplished through the weekly faculty meetings that focus on detailed, student-level data, and a flexible approach to planning curriculum and instruction, which is responsive to the formative data available to faculty. The founders of YWCP anticipate that the majority of the entering student population will be minority, with Title I status, which can be qualified as "at-risk" in light of this population's current performance in the Rochester City School District (RCS D). YWCP will focus student recruitment

efforts on the northeast zone of Rochester, where 89.5% of the students are African-American or Hispanic, 88% of the student population qualifies for free and reduced price lunch, 19% are designated as students with disabilities, and 8% are English language learners. The federal poverty rate in the northeast zone is over 400% higher than that of the Rochester metro area.² While these demographic statistics parallel that of TYWLS East Harlem, whose student population for the 2009-2010 school year is 92% African-American and Hispanic, with approximately 83% receiving free and reduced price lunch, the achievement data is far from similar. The schools in the northeast zone of Rochester reported an average graduation rate of 45.8% for the 2005 cohort; this is a difference in graduation rate of over 50% between TYWLS East Harlem and northeast zone schools in Rochester. Through affiliation with YWLN, which has consistently outperformed surrounding peer schools, YWCP anticipates enrolled students to dramatically outperform the current graduation rate of northeast zone schools.

c. Focus on academic achievement of middle school student populations and preparation for transition to high school (if applicable);

YWCP middle school students will work to achieve high school readiness. In order to be promoted to high school, middle school students will need to demonstrate proficiency in all core content areas. Through implementation of the YWLN model, the YWCP scope and sequence will include high school opportunities for many eighth-grade students. In addition, every eighth grader will be required to conduct a portfolio defense as an exit standard for middle school. Middle school students will receive:

- Summer bridge program for rising ninth graders to prepare students for the transition into high school curriculum and culture;
- Intensive, cross-disciplinary, daily instruction in writing;
- Curriculum designed through horizontal and vertical planning to ensure preparation for high school coursework;
- Lessons aimed at instilling a sense of accountability for students' own learning;
- Use of the outcome-based grading system; and,
- Advisory curriculum focusing on time management, organization, note taking, self-advocacy, and other key skills critical for success in high school and college.

d. Utilize a variety of high-quality assessments to measure understanding and critical application of concepts;

YWCP will communicate learning standards and course goals to parents and students. Students will be assessed on a regular basis and teachers will use this formative data weekly to inform instruction. Formative and summative assessments will include teacher-driven, as well as grade-wide assessments, aligned to the New York State Standards as well as the Common Core Standards. This will allow for teachers to assess the effectiveness of their classroom instruction, and will also allow for analysis of grade-level data to identify and address trends across classrooms. Teachers will provide students and parents with frequent feedback on their progress and strategies for improvement. YWCP will give students multiple and varied opportunities to demonstrate their evolving understanding, knowledge, and skills related to the standards over the course of the year. Assessments will be scaffolded to show augmentation of skills by grade level, and they will support the ongoing curriculum mapping and development of the teachers.

YWCP faculty will employ assessment strategies that reflect embedded strategies for differentiation.

² Federal Reserve System and Brookings Institution. 2008. "The Enduring Challenge of Concentrated Poverty in America." Washington, DC.

Most critical to student achievement will be the formation of our Data Inquiry Team. As a new school, this team will consist of the Principal and all teachers/counselors. The Data Inquiry Team will collect, analyze, and disseminate the results of data to the school community in the weekly faculty meetings and this data will be the basis for the action research projects of the teachers. As the school grows, YWCP envisions the work of the Data Inquiry Team to become the common practice for all grade levels and departments

e. Increase implementation of local instructional improvement systems to assess and inform instructional practice, decision-making, and effectiveness;

YWCP will build upon the culture and systems in place within the YWLN to ensure that planning, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted consistently, and that every student is on track toward graduation and college readiness. To accomplish this, the school team will focus on creating and maintaining consistent structures and systems, as well as fostering a culture within the faculty that empowers every educator in the building to take ownership of student learning. Adults will hold each other accountable and provide the feedback and support necessary to keep every student on track.

As instructional leader of the school, the Principal will be in classrooms daily. The Principal will prioritize first-rate classroom instruction as the most important part of her job. This will be made possible by the Director of Operations overseeing many of the day-to-day operational priorities of the school. In addition to the immediate feedback provided to teachers after classroom visits, the Principal will use the week's observational data to inform the agenda of the weekly faculty meeting on Friday afternoons after early student dismissal. This meeting will provide a structure for sharing and assessing the effectiveness of the week's instructional practice. It will also provide a forum for co-planning amongst the faculty. This will facilitate interdisciplinary units, horizontal planning across grade levels to ensure a common language and consistency across classrooms, as well as the vertical planning that will be critical to students' success at the commencement level.

While the Principal will use his or her observations from the week to inform the discussion, the faculty will take ownership of this weekly meeting as well. Teachers will present lessons, sharing successes and challenges, focusing on differentiation addressing needs of English language learners, students with disabilities, and other diverse needs within the student population. They will also review data from formative, periodic, and summative assessments to ensure that every student meets the identified standards. Finally, the faculty will focus on planning for the upcoming week, using long-term curriculum maps as the guide, and adjusting these accordingly as they review and discuss the data. This includes grade-level and classroom planning as well as interventions for specific students in need.

The Principal of YWCP will lead a culture of shared decision-making, which fosters a sense of collective accountability and support. The data reviewed in the weekly meeting will highlight needs within the teaching population as well as the student population. As instructional leader, the Principal will facilitate the identification of needs within the faculty. However, the strategies utilized to address faculty needs (e.g., workshops, observations, one-on-one meetings) will be executed by all of the adults in the building. As needs arise, different adults will be identified to lead support depending on experience, talent, and specific successes that they have achieved. As the school grows, teachers will also have the opportunity to lead and support colleagues through positions as content and grade department heads. As students are taught the skills to become effective leaders themselves, these traits and behaviors will be modeled for them throughout the adult community.

f. Partner with low-performing, local public schools to share best practices;

Upon approval, YWCP will join the newly established District/Charter Compact in the city of Rochester, which was recently funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Through the compact, district and charter leaders will commit to collaboration in the interest of positive outcomes for all students in the city of Rochester. Part of this compact includes a commitment from charter schools to “fulfill their roles as laboratories for innovation and as providers of high-quality education options in Rochester.” This includes a specific commitment to sharing effective practices with the schools of the Rochester City School District. While the mission of YWCP will drive the school to make every effort to connect and share practice with schools in need, the compact will also provide a structure and community that will facilitate the identification of these schools, as well as the platforms through which practices are shared.

g. Demonstrate the ability to overcome start-up challenges to open a successful school through management and leadership techniques;

The founders of YWCP recognize the unique challenges inherent to the establishment of a charter school. In addition to the management provided by its founders, leadership team, and board of trustees, YWCP will draw on the resources of its affiliate network, the experience of similar charter schools, and leverage key institutional relationships to ensure that the school is positioned to successfully meet even unexpected issues during start-up. YWCP is committed to careful, sustainable growth throughout its term.

Among YWCP’s first initiatives in planning for the school’s opening are the recruitment, hiring, and extensive training of a Principal and Director of Operations. This step has already begun, with the goal of filling both key leadership positions approximately one year before the school opens its doors. Having both the instructional and operational management roles established so far in advance will provide school leaders with an optimal capacity to successfully carry out school start-up planning and implementation. This kind of preparation gives the school a greater ability to tackle the inevitable unanticipated issues that arise in the establishment of a charter school. Both the Principal and Director of Operations will benefit from strategic opportunities to visit and learn from similar high-performing schools and engage in rigorous professional development throughout the course of start-up.

Many of the potential challenges faced by charter schools during the start-up phase can be mitigated to a sizeable extent through planning and drawing upon the experiences of other high-achieving schools. YWCP will benefit directly from its affiliation with the YWLN throughout the school’s establishment. The network will provide valuable support around school design, curriculum development, Principal training, and school culture blueprinting. YWLN has an extensive track record of successfully supporting the start-up phase with similar public schools in the New York City area as well as with charter schools in Chicago and Baltimore. Additionally, YWLN recently worked with the Charter Management Organization, Brighter Choice, to support the opening of the Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls.

In addition, YWCP has forged and will continue to develop collaborative relationships with local educational institutions throughout planning and start-up. YWCP has already gained valuable insights into charter school start-up best practices from Uncommon Schools’ True North network, which currently operates two high-performing schools in Rochester (and is opening a third), and dozens of others in the RCSD. Another valuable educational supporter is the Norman Howard School, a local independent school and leading expert in the education of students with learning disabilities. Furthermore, participation in the District/Charter Compact will provide YWCP with additional two-way support in the areas of design implementation, practice and knowledge sharing, operations, school choice, and school quality.

YWCP has developed an extensive master planning document based on the insight and experiences of similar outstanding schools. The document identifies each critical start-up task to be accomplished in the year before the school’s opening and maps out a timeline and work plan for the completion of each task.

This living roadmap, in conjunction with visits to other excellent schools and high-quality training, will be a critical tool for the Principal and Director of Operations throughout YWCP's opening process. The document will identify detailed systems for escalating issues to the appropriate individuals and board committees. YWCP leadership will draw upon the diverse skills available through the YWLN and YWCP's board of trustees including experts in: finance, law, development, marketing, fundraising, and education. School leaders will identify benchmarks for their progress at each stage. The school's strategy in approaching the start-up phase is to anticipate the challenges that come with opening a charter school, and establish the leadership capacity to meet each one, whether planned or not.

h. Demonstrate the support of the school district of location and the intent to establish an ongoing relationship with such district;

At the conception stage of YWCP, the co-founders met with RCSD's Senior Director of School Innovation, Mary Doyle. The purpose of this meeting was to ensure that the structure and focus of YWCP as a single-gender secondary school aligned with the district portfolio plan. This meeting informed a number of decisions, and began a close relationship with the RCSD. Please find a letter of support from Mary Doyle attached in [Appendix B](#).

The District/Charter Compact described above will drive the ongoing relationship between YWCP and the RCSD. Through the compact, the district commits to:

- When possible, making the benefits of economies of scale available to charters;
- Remove obstacles or barriers that hinder the success of charters;
- Protecting autonomies of charter schools and honoring state statutes; and,
- Actively sharing demonstrated best practices with charters.

YWCP will commit to: serving all students in need (including students with disabilities and English language learners), transparency regarding student mobility and achievement, and sharing demonstrated effective practices with district schools. This relationship will allow YWCP to participate in district opportunities such as school choice fairs, and events and workshops that will benefit enrollment and staff development.

i. Provide access to viable education alternatives to students in regions where there are a lack of alternatives.

As of the 2010-2011 school year, 9 charter schools are operating or approved in the city of Rochester. Of these schools, only 1 currently serves grades at the high school level. Furthermore, these schools reported a combined waiting list of 1,107 students in the fall of 2010, demonstrating a great interest among Rochester parents for charter school options. YWCP will be the only public single-gender option for females in the city of Rochester. The only other option for an all-girls education is one parochial school (Our Lady of Mercy High School).