

**THE LAW AND GOVERNMENT ACADEMY
at Hartford Public High School**

**Design Proposal for Small School Opening in August 2008
Presentation to the Hartford Board of Education
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Design Team Chair

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Grade Levels to be served during 2008-2009

10-12

Design Team Members

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Major Partners

Organization	Contact
Leadership Greater Hartford	Ted Carroll
The Hartford County Bar Association	Claudia Baio

School Theme

- Law
- Government
- Community Leadership

HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2007 School Design Specifications:
Law and Government Academy

Overview of School Model

- School type, accreditation and affiliations, theme/content focus, grade configuration, size, major school partner(s)

The Law and Government Academy at Hartford Public High School will be a college preparatory small school of 400 students that is dedicated to the study of the

- law,
- government and
- community leadership fields.

As part of Hartford High School, it will be NEASC accredited. During its first year, the Academy will encompass the sophomore, junior, and senior grades, and will number between 300 and 400 students. The Academy will form partnerships with local organizations that promote its mission, including the Hartford County Bar Association and Leadership Greater Hartford.

School Mission and Vision

- School purpose

The Law and Government Academy is a cooperative community composed of staff, parents, students, and community partners who are all dedicated to ensuring the success of the Academy's mission and vision.

The mission of the Academy is to:

- (1) create ethical community leaders,
- (2) who will be independent thinkers,
- (3) empower students to make good public policy decisions,
- (4) to create a better community, and who are
- (5) prepared for the challenges of post-secondary education.

The Academy Vision

The Academy is a college preparatory community that is dedicated to the rigorous study of the liberal arts and sciences with the vision of creating a responsible and motivated generation of young men and women who will use their talents for the betterment of the community.

The Academy will fulfill its mission and vision, and meet the needs of its diverse population by:

- Expecting its members to embrace high academic and social standards;
- Expecting its members to act in an ethical manner in all aspects of their lives;
- Providing its members with appropriate academic and social support services;
- Providing its members with continuous enrichment activities, including a summer bridge program, and after school and weekend activities;
- Providing its members with opportunities to develop strong interpersonal, social and communications skills;
- Providing its members with opportunities to connect with professionals in the law, government and community leadership fields;
- Providing its members with opportunities to serve their community; and
- Providing its members with post-secondary educational and career guidance

Governance Structure

- Leadership model, decision-making approach, school council role, school *Compact*

School Leadership

The leadership of the Law and Government Academy will work collaboratively to ensure the continuous realization of the Academy's mission and vision. It will be comprised of the following constituents:

- **Advisory Board:** The Advisory Board will consist of representatives from local post-secondary institutions, state and local governments, the legal community, non-profit organizations and other community partners. This Board will focus on building and maintaining the external relationships of the Academy.
- **Academy Governance Council:** Members of the Academy will exercise their rights and fulfill their responsibilities by participating in the decision-making processes affecting Academy matters. Academy staff, students, parents and community partners will responsibly participate in the regular meetings of the Governance Council. Participation in the Governance Council will provide a forum for meaningful discussions, recommendations and decisions affecting school policy.
- **Student Support Services Team:** The Student Support Services Team will include staff dedicated to guidance, post-secondary planning, learning support services, community partnerships, and curriculum and instruction. Membership on the team will be continuously evaluated and updated, and the team will regularly meet and coordinate to provide the support services needed for the Academy to fulfill its mission and vision.
- **Teacher Leaders:** Teacher leaders in every department will be responsible for coordinating curriculum and instruction within the content area. The teacher leaders will report to the Academy Principal.

Academy Principal

The Academy Principal will:

- Have a background in Law, Government, or Community Leadership;
- Lead by example – modeling “respectful, responsible, and reflective” leadership;
- Uphold the Academy’s mission and vision;
- Set clear expectations for the rights and responsibilities of all members of the Academy, and will hold all members accountable to those standards;
- Uphold the Academy Compact;
- Create and maintain community partnerships focused on the Academy mission;
- Oversee budget, curriculum, staffing, school improvement planning and professional development;
- Set high academic learning expectations within a collaborative teaching and learning school culture;
- Put students first in all decision-making; and
- Identify a strong leadership team that will include teacher leadership opportunities.

School Compact

Student’s roles and academic responsibilities will be articulated in the Academy Compact in which teachers, parents, families and students, as partners in education, sign an agreement specifying expectations around academy courses, study plans, applied learning, senior projects and graduation requirements.

Student Body

- Student profile, student roles and responsibility, homework expectations, student voice and leadership

The Law and Government Academy is a “School of Choice” for students residing in the City of Hartford. It will be comprised of students in grades ten through twelve. Students who apply to the Academy should have expressed or demonstrated an interest within the fields of law, government or community leadership. They must be willing to be held to the highest academic and social standards, to learn to act as role models and leaders within the community, to learn to advocate appropriately on behalf of themselves and others, to participate in community service activities, and to be dedicated to participating in the processes of positive social change and public policy development. To these ends, students will actively participate in the following activities, among others:

- The Academy Leadership Council;
- The Student Government;
- Moot Court/Mock Trial;

- Peer mediation and negotiation;
- The Academy newspaper;
- Peer tutoring;
- Student-led conferences;
- Service learning opportunities;
- Senior project opportunities;
- Summer bridge programs;
- High Hopes Achievement extended day program through Leadership Greater Hartford; and
- The Academy partnership with The Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice.

Research shows that students who are educated about the expectations regarding their academic and social behavior do better in school and on standardized tests, and have fewer behavior-related problems. Therefore, the Academy Compact will delineate the expectations for student roles and responsibilities, including student behavior, academic excellence, and community involvement.

Parental Role

- Parent commitment, opportunities for parents, parent voice

The Law and Government Academy believes that parents are partners in learning, and that active parents are the key to a student's academic and social success. Research shows that children of involved parents do better in school and on standardized tests, and have fewer behavior-related problems. To educate parents on the importance of their role, the Academy Compact will delineate the expectations for parent rights and responsibilities. Ongoing communications with parents through, among other avenues, open houses, orientation programs, parent-teacher conferences, and the Academy Leadership Council will reinforce the high academic and social expectations for all Academy members.

Each Spring, the Academy will host an open house for prospective students and parents. Open house will inform the families of the expectations for and opportunities available to all Academy members. In addition, incoming students and their parents will be required to attend a scheduled orientation prior to the opening of the academic year. At this orientation all members of the Academy will be introduced to the compact, which will include delineation of parental involvement. Upon enrollment parents will return for small group meetings with their students' direct advisor. At this time, the parental portion of the Academy Compact will be reviewed and signed. Parents will be invited to volunteer for and participate in various Academy organizations and events. These include, but are not limited to:

- Opportunities to participate in the Academy Leadership Council;
- Opportunities to volunteer within Academy classrooms;
- Opportunities to participate in awards ceremonies and other school events; and
- Opportunities to attend workshops and enrichment activities offered by Leadership Greater Hartford or other partners.

The parent portion of the Academy Compact will require that, among other things, parents attend orientation programs, attend parent-teacher conferences and scheduled meetings to review student progress, provide students with the required resources to meet the Academy's academic and social requirements, ensure student attendance and participation, review all progress and report cards, and keep the Academy informed of current contact information.

Parents will be advised that the Academy will maintain an open door policy for parents to continually communicate with the Academy.

Teacher Capacity

- Pre-certification and training, professional development, collaborative planning process, C&I expectations, and roles such as joint interdisciplinary unit development and team teaching

The Law and Government Academy believes that the success of the Academy is, in part, contingent upon a motivated and well-educated professional staff. As such, the Academy will define and establish the following structures for development of teacher capacity for improved student achievement.

- A majority of the faculty will have backgrounds in law, government or community leadership.

- Teacher roles and responsibilities will be governed by the Academy Compact;
- Teachers will use a Personal Learning Plan to address their own learning and professional development needs as they relate to improved student learning;
- Teachers who are new to the Law and Government Academy will participate in a formal orientation program;
- Teachers will collaborate within a structured format to discuss student work as a means to improve learning and teaching;
- Teachers will develop interdisciplinary curriculum that focuses on essential questions;
- Teachers will engage in ongoing, sequential professional development that supports the Academy's beliefs in rigor, relevance and relationship;
- Teachers will be encouraged to become certified to teach Advanced Placement, Early College Experience, and dual credit classes;
- Teachers will be provided with professional development opportunities to expand their knowledge in the fields of law, government and community leadership and the Academy's chosen pedagogical methods; and
- Teachers will engage in a learning partnership with The Bronx School for Law, Government and Community Justice.

Curriculum and Instruction

- Pedagogical approach, curriculum design, learning environment and classroom design, field trips and extended classrooms, language requirements, technology

Pedagogical Approach

The Law and Government Academy is dedicated to creating students who will become independent thinkers. Consequently, its pedagogical approach will be rooted in the Socratic Method as a means of achieving the Academy's mission of creating independent thinkers who will become appropriate advocates. In addition, the Academy believes that every student is capable of meeting and exceeding the standards for academic and social success. In order to support the diverse needs of our students, staff will be continually trained in and will employ methods of differentiated instruction.

Curriculum Design

The Law and Government Academy believes in a rigorous college-ready curriculum that meets the highest levels of college admissions standards. Basic academic requirements will include:

	English	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Language	Other	Other
Grade 10	Composition (1.0)	Geometry or higher (1.0)	Biology with Lab (1.5)	Civics and Government (1.0)	Language 1 (1.0)	Computer Applications & Research (1.0)	Phys Ed (.5)
Grade 11	Literature or AP English (1.0)	Algebra II or higher (1.0)	Chemistry with Lab (1.5)	American History or AP American History (1.0)	Language 2 (1.0)	Civil Law (.5) and Criminal Law (.5)	Phys Ed (.5)
Grade 12	Public Speaking or AP English (1.0)	Pre-Calculus or Calculus or Statistics(.5)/ Economics (.5)	Physics or AP Environ. Science or Forensics (1.0)	Urban Studies (.5) and Senior Project or Internship (.5)	Language 3 (1.0)	Community Service Seminar w/Service Hours (1.0)	Leadership Course (1.0)

- Students who have already had Geometry in grade nine will have additional options in their Mathematics track

Student Plan of Study

Upon entering the Academy all students will complete a Comprehensive Plan of Study outlining their intended elective choices.

World Languages

Initially, French and Spanish will be offered.

Education in Community Leadership

All students are required to participate in bettering their community by completing 120 service learning hours. Students will complete these hours by volunteering with an approved organization in their field of choice.

Use of Technology

Students will be educated in the use of technology through the Computer Applications and Research class. Students will learn, among other things, methods of online and print research, word processing, spreadsheet applications, and Power Point and other multi-media presentations. Students will employ this knowledge through assignments given in content area classes.

Extended Classroom

Research shows that students who engage in the most rigorous course of study have higher levels of college admissions and lifetime success. To that end, the Academy will offer students a summer bridge program, summer advancement classes, Saturday classes, and Advanced Placement, Early College Education, and College and Career Pathways classes to maximize the number and variety of classes that they will take. Students will not be granted early dismissal absent special circumstances.

Community Partnerships

- Internships, job shadows, mentoring, after-school and weekend programming, job placements, college sponsorships, interdisciplinary community experiences

The Law and Government Academy will create an Advisory Board that will consist of representatives from local post-secondary institutions, state and local governments, the legal community, non-profit organizations, and other community partners. This Board will focus on building and maintaining external relationships.

The Academy will continue developing partnerships with the following organizations, among others:

Hartford County Bar Association and local Minority Bar Associations

The Bar Associations will continue to provide enrichment speakers, mentorships, internships and job shadowing opportunities, as well as a Law Club (in coordination with the Connecticut Rivers Council of the BSA) and access to a moot court competition.

Connecticut Public Safety (Forensics Lab)

The lab will provide speakers for classes, learning opportunities for staff and guidance in the development of a forensics curriculum.

Office of the Mayor

The Hartford Office for Youth Services is the funding source for the internship program. This office is also the site for the Youth Commissioners, a chartered body of students who advise the Mayor.

Leadership Greater Hartford

LGH will be the Academy's partner in organizing the High Hopes Achievement Program, a grant-funded after school tutoring, mentoring and enrichment program. LGH will also be instrumental in making further connections with local non-governmental organizations.

Judicial Branch State of Connecticut

The Academy will continue to partner with the Judicial Branch to provide internships and job shadow opportunities, speakers, and access to the state courts.

Connecticut Legislature

The Academy will continue to partner with the State Legislature to increase exposure for our students to the legislative process. Activities may include internships, job shadowing and volunteer activities for service learning hours.

Connecticut Rivers Council BSA

The Council will continue to run the Law Club in conjunction with the Hartford County Bar Association. The Academy will also partner with the Council to bring Moot Court and Mock Trial opportunities to students.

UCONN Law School

The Academy will develop a relationship with the Law School to provide exposure to all aspects of legal education.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Design

- By grade, by grade grouping, readiness for feeder school

The Law and Government Academy will develop essential skills in our students that are aligned with federal and state standards. Ongoing progress will be monitored through the use of common formative and summative assessments in combination with a cumulative student-driven portfolio. This data will inform and allow the differentiation of instruction. All teachers will be expected to utilize an approved course syllabus in their instruction which will explain the course content, and teacher expectations regarding the students' academic and social performance.

By the end of tenth grade all students will demonstrate an understanding of local, state and federal government processes and structure. In addition, all students will demonstrate an understanding of various computer applications by producing a research-based project in the fields of law, government, or community leadership. By the end of eleventh grade all students will demonstrate an understanding of various aspects of the American civil and criminal legal system. By the end of twelfth grade students will have completed a senior project or internship that demonstrates their ability to effectively communicate through speaking and writing; effectively advocate on behalf of themselves and others; act as leaders in the community; and critically analyze real-world issues. Students will demonstrate that they are prepared to embark upon further study and/or practice in the fields of law, government, and community leadership at the post-secondary level.

College Readiness

- Career explorations, *Plan of Study*, college visits, mentoring programs, dual credit opportunities, AP courses, college advisory

The Law and Government Academy believes that all students who graduate from the Academy should be prepared to further their education at the post-secondary level. Students will be prepared to successfully transition into college:

- Course requirements will be aligned with the recommendations from Governor Rell's Proposal for Education and The National Commission on Excellence in Education, as well as the Connecticut State University System entrance requirements.
- The course requirements are characterized as a college ready curriculum, which is enriched with a combination of Career Paths, Honors, Advanced Placement, and Early College Experience classes.
- The selection of course electives will be aligned with the student's postsecondary course of study interest area and/or intended college major.
- Participation in the advisory activities, service learning hours, job shadowing, and internships will allow students to make informed decisions concerning their intended career path.

- All entering tenth grade students and other new enrollees will complete a college ready Plan of Study for high school. This plan will be reviewed annually and aligned with postsecondary planning.
- Students will be educated about their postsecondary options through Upward Bound, Career Beginnings, Crossroads Cooperative, guidance services, guest speakers, college visits and partnerships, and other pre-college readiness programs.

School Culture and Climate

- Code of conduct and behavior expectations, orientation and bridge programs, learning expectations, school uniform

Code of Conduct, Behavior Expectations, and Learning Expectations

The Law and Government Academy will encourage all members of the Academy to act in an ethical and professional manner within the Academy, and to transfer that behavior to experiences in the greater community. To that end, Academy behavior will be governed by the Academy Compact that will include a strict dress code of business attire for all members. Academy members will be informed of these expectations through orientation and summer bridge programs. As stated earlier, the Academy expects all students to meet and/or exceed state and national academic standards through the successful completion of a rigorous academic program.

Orientation Program

Each Spring, the Academy will host an open house for prospective students and their parents. Open houses will inform the families of programs, opportunities and expectations for all Academy members. In addition, incoming students and their parents will be required to attend a scheduled orientation prior to the opening of the academic year. At this orientation all members of the Academy will be introduced to the compact, which will include delineation of the rights and responsibilities of all Academy members.

Bridge Programs

In conjunction with Leadership Greater Hartford and the University of Connecticut Law School Black Law Students Association, students will be expected to participate in a Summer Bridge Program offering enrichment opportunities and assistance with academic and social skills.

School Schedule

- Length of day, co-curriculum, Saturday academies, optional programming, Summer School

The Academy will use staggered staff start/end times to provide students with an extended academic day. The school day will begin at 7:40 a.m. and end at 3:25 p.m., providing the opportunity to implement a 90 minute 4.5 block schedule. Students will be required to participate in extended-day, Saturday, and summer bridge programs to increase their exposure to enrichment activities that will help them meet the high academic and social standards of the Academy.

Support Services

- Tutoring, special education, community services, parent support programs

The Law and Government Academy will support all students based on their learning or support needs. The Academy will create a Student Support Services Team, which will include staff to provide support in guidance and academic planning, post-secondary planning, internship and service learning opportunities, and curriculum and instruction planning.

Students will complete a Plan of Study upon transition from ninth to tenth grade or upon entry into the Academy. This program will reflect special education support and language acquisition support as necessary for each student. Individualized Education Plans, 504 plans and other legal documentation will be in alignment with each student's needs and reflect their enrollment and interest in the Academy.

After school tutoring, appointments with teachers, Saturday school support and other opportunities for student support and advancement will be provided to all students. Attempts will be made at all times to include every student in the general curriculum by providing modifications and accommodations where required.

Professional development will be provided to Academy staff aligned with continuous collaborative work to best structure support services and to best support special needs and ELL learners. Professional development for general curriculum teachers will address their needs and concerns in supporting special needs and ELL learners in their classrooms. Special education and ELL personnel will provide support to the general education teachers throughout the school year to best support learners in the general curriculum.

Application Process

- Process, timeline, and requirements

The Law and Government Academy will participate in the district Open Choice enrollment process.