

OPPortunity High School
A Community Partnership School
Design Proposal for Small School Opening in August 2009
Presentation to the Hartford Board of Education
November 5, 2008

Design Team Co-chairs

Bob Rath, Our Piece of the Pie, Inc.
 President and CEO

Dr. Christina Kishimoto, Hartford Public Schools
 Assistant Superintendent, School Design

Grade levels to be served during 2009-2010: Grade 9

Design Team Members

Name	Affiliation
Arzuaja, Kenny	Bulkeley Parent
Bello-Davila, Delia	Our Piece of the Pie, Chief Operating Officer
Brown, Donna	Hartford Public Schools, TESOL Teacher
Brown-Claitty, Wanda	Our Piece of the Pie, Director of Experiential Learning
Cathey, Donna	Our Piece of the Pie, Vice President of Integrated Programs
Dawes, Gerard	Our Piece of the Pie, Director of Youth Development Services
Gagliarducci, Kara	Hartford Public Schools, Teacher
Gilberto, Paula	United Way, Senior Vice President
Giuliano, Mary	Hartford Public Schools, High School Design Specialist
Golden, Lou	Junior Achievement, Executive Director
Glynn, Hector	The Village, Vice President
Gonzalez, Chabeli	Student
Gray, Samuel	Boys and Girls Club of Hartford, Executive Director
Grullon, Jessenia	Student
Hardy, Warren	Weaver Parent
Hasse, Ebony	Student
Hemmings, Alexandra	Classical Magnet Alumna/ Manchester Community College, Class of 2009
Hernandez, Jose	Student
Jackson, Sherlye	Weaver High School Freshman Academy, Principal
Knutson, Stephanie	Coordinator of Health Services
Leventhal, Jo-Anne	Our Piece of the Pie, Director of Communications and Development
Lizotte-Valentin, Pamela	Our Piece of the Pie, Teacher
McGravey, Jackie	Capital Workforce Partners, Future Workforce Division Manger
Moller, Regina	Director, the Village for Families & Children
Nabors, Pam	Capital Workforce Partners, Director of One Stop Services
Nardone, Alexander	Harford Public Schools, Chief Operating Officer
Nieves, Paula	Student
Oliver, Gloria	Hartford Public Schools, Career Technical School Design Specialist
Perez, Marlene	Bulkeley High School, Bilingual Teacher
Rey, Enid	City of Hartford, Director of Youth Services
Rodriguez, Allyson	Student
Rodriquez, Lydia	Parent
Russo, Kim	United Way, Assistant Director
Santiago, Crystabolina	Student
Sundean, John	Our Piece of the Pie, Board Member
Thomas, John	Our Piece of the Pie, Director of Support Services
Turner, Barbara	Grandparent
Vasquez, Benjamin	Student
Vazquez, Wilbert	Parent
Weisel, Tracy	Hartford Public Schools, Teacher
Williams, Neil	Parent
Wilson, Karima	Student

School Theme

- Youth Development ► Career Competencies ► Character Building

HARTFORD SYSTEM OF SCHOOLS
Phase II: School Design Specifications
OPPportunity High School
A Community Partnership School

Overview of School Model

Description of school type, accreditation & affiliation model; Theme/Content Focus

In recognition of the high numbers of students who have dropped out of our high schools and those who are at risk of dropping out, Hartford Public Schools and Our Piece of the Pie, Inc. have formed a partnership for the purpose of creating and sustaining a community school to serve those students most at risk of dropping out of the 9th grade. The school will be committed to providing students with a quality academic and youth development experience that prepares them for post-secondary education, meaningful employment, healthy personal and family relationships and participation in society.

The school will open with 100 ninth grade students. At full enrollment, the school will have approximately 200 students. OPPportunity High School will engage students by providing an educational environment that mirrors the workplace. In collaboration with community and business partners, the school will combine an academically rich curriculum and workforce readiness skills to deliver what students need to become effective global citizens, college students and successful workers.

Business simulations and competency based learning will be infused into the daily rigor of classroom instruction. Students will learn the academic content areas while practicing core business skills such as oral communication, customer service skills, computer literacy, interpersonal skills, personal qualities and job seeking skills. The school will develop the whole student from an asset based approach by layering core career competencies, academic rigor and youth development. The collaboration of the Hartford educational system and OPP's strength in the field of youth development and experiential learning will yield positive results for the target population. The goal is to have students become re-engaged and realize that learning and academic success is achievable for a viable future.

Regardless of one's previous educational experience, the school will meet students where they are and build academic proficiency for post-secondary readiness. Every student will be supported by an infrastructure that will ensure academic and personal success. This support will include Youth Development Specialists who will work closely with all school staff to meet individual student needs.

The school will build on research-based practices proven to increase student achievement and youth development progression in alternative educational settings. These dual specialties will focus on overcoming the challenges students face and their need to re-connect to society as contributing members. The system will include combining grade 9-12 student within cohorts; it will be a proficiency based system with graduation requirements determined by the number of earned credits and other requirements as mandated by the Hartford Board of Education.

The proposed school opening in August 2009 is contingent upon the identification of a suitable site that can be funded from the operations budget. Various sites are being explored.

Partner Agency Profile: Our Piece of the Pie® (OPP®)

Our Piece of the Pie (OPP) is a leading youth development agency that helps Hartford's young people, ages 14 to 24, become successful adults, by effectively collaborating and partnering with schools, colleges, community agencies and businesses to promote independence and economic success. The organization has a focus on helping young people, regardless of any challenges and adversity they have endured, to maximize their potential and lead productive lives. OPP engages Hartford youth in long-term relationships and program services to help youth complete high school, receive occupational skill certificates, obtain 2 or 4 year college degrees and/or obtain long-term employment.

Pathways to Success is the cornerstone of OPP programs and services. There are two core elements of this youth development strategy: first, each youth has a plan which is individualized and based on an understanding of his or her aspirations, mapping a realistic path from where they are to where they want to go; second, every young person needs a caring adult in their lives who can advise them along their journey which will be referenced through this document as Youth Development Specialist (YDS). OPP's Pathways to Success is a unified, long-term approach to help youth access and attain a mix of educational, employment, and personal development opportunities that lead to success.

Major School Partners

The school recognizes that it must be rooted in the community and respond to the needs of the community. To this end, the school will:

- Ensure that parents, community and business organizations, and institutions of higher education will be collaborators in the school's success

- Utilize community resources that support the curriculum and classroom learning activities
- Design learning activities that connect students to their community, to career development and to college and university preparation

The following school partners are committed to working with the school in fulfilling its mission for student achievement and youth development:

- United Way
- Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
- City of Hartford, Office of Youth Services
- Capital Workforce Partners
- Boys and Girls Club of Hartford
- Junior Achievement
- Village for Families and Children (The Village)

Research Basis and Model Site(s)

The South Brooklyn Community High School is a model transfer school for replication, a partnership school between Good Shepherd Services and the New York City Department of Education. It is a small, academically rigorous diploma-granting high school for youth between the ages of 16 and 21 who have been enrolled in a New York City public high school for at least one year and, due to excessive truancy and/or dropping out, are too far behind in credit accumulation to be promoted to the next grade level in their current high school. These schools focus on accelerated credit accumulation, a student benchmark system and youth development. Their schools have records of success for youth who have fallen behind or dropped out of traditional high schools.

Youth development permeates all aspects of the curriculum, and the school is grounded in two foundational beliefs:

- Individualized attention is needed to achieve academically.
- Intensive support services are needed to overcome personal roadblocks to learning.

The essential components of the school include:

1. Partnership and shared leadership: principal as leader of the educational program and the GSS Program Director as leader of support and youth development services (*to be referred to in the proposed school as the OPP Program Director*)
2. Integration of an Advocate Counselor for all students (*to be referred to in the proposed school as the Youth Development Specialist*)
3. Youth development approach to instruction
4. Defined target population and admission process
5. Personalized small school environment

School Mission & Vision

Mission (purpose)

The mission of the high school is to provide an engaging and rigorous learning environment for Hartford's overage and under credited youth that will culminate in graduation with a high school diploma. The school will ensure students are college ready and prepared to navigate towards a college experience and career success.

The school will support the following *Core Beliefs* as adopted by the Hartford Board of Education:

1. *We believe all students can learn at or above grade level.*

The community partnership high school believes all students can achieve proficiency with the full commitment and preparedness of the school's skilled teachers and youth development experts and the effective effort of students themselves to become self-disciplined learners.

2. *We believe that the achievement gap must and can be eliminated by each student reaching their learning potential.*

The school believes that it is not a question of whether our students can learn at high levels but how we will collectively make this happen.

3. *We believe schools have an enormous impact on students' lives.*

The community partnership school will be fully committed to:

- Collaboration with all stakeholders to fulfill the mission of the school
- Expecting nothing less than each student's very best effort
- Holding each adult and student responsible for his or her own actions to demonstrate good character traits and to show respect for themselves and others.

4. We believe that all parents must be empowered to play an active role in their students' education.

The school will strive to engage at least one parent or caregiver in every student's academic and character development. To do so, it will require one adult to commit to the support of his/her youth and support their own development by providing social, family-oriented and academic programs and services.

5. We believe that community collaboration is fundamental to achieving and sustaining excellence.

The school will embrace the entire community for meaningful involvement in order to meet the needs of all students and improve student performance. Community resources are vital for strengthening the curriculum and developing personalized and relevant learning. Additionally, the school will develop a flexible school day and year in order to provide a more meaningful learning experience supported by multiple community resources.

Vision

The school will inspire in each student the desire to learn and succeed. It will guide each student to become an independent adult who maximizes his or her potential.

Student Body

The school is a small, academically rigorous diploma granting high school for youth 18 years of age or under who have been enrolled in high school for at least 1.5 years and earned less than 6.5 credits. Given that these students have not experienced success in a traditional high school setting, the community partnership school will provide a second chance for this target population to complete their education in an academically rigorous, small learning community supplemented by youth development services and community resources.

The school will provide the individualized attention needed for academic success as well as intensive support services for barrier reduction. A core value that will guide the work of the school is transformational relationship and the innate understanding that all youth can be successful with the appropriate structures and support systems in place.

Grade Configuration and School Size

Target Population

- Youth with 1.5 years of high school and who have fewer than 6.5 credits
- Students who choose to attend the school
- Students whose age is 18 years or younger

Admission Slots

- 20% youth with less than 1 credit
- 60% youth between 2- 4 credits
- 20% youth between 4 to 6.5 credits.
- Incubation enrollment of 75 to 100 students in grade 9, then scale up to 200.

Year-by-Year Phase In/Out Chart

1. Year 1 (2009-2010) 75 to 100 students
2. Year 2 (2010-2011) 100 to 175 students
3. Year 3 (2011-2012) 175 to 200 students

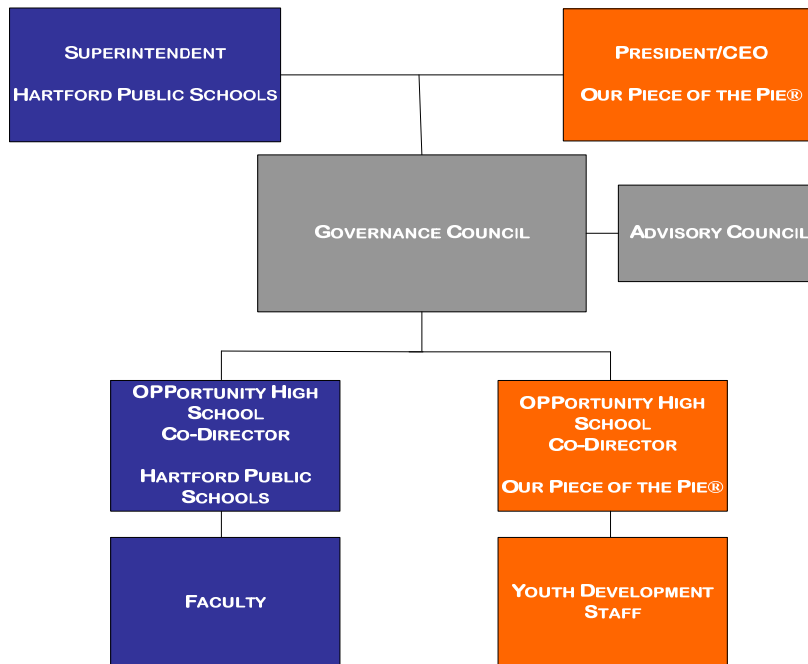
The goal is to be a capacity of 200 high school students by 2011-12.

Governance Structure

School Leadership

The school leadership structure will be modeled after a shared leadership model implemented at the South Brooklyn Community High School. The school will have a joint leadership model between the Hartford School System and Our Piece of the Pie. The following Leadership Flow Chart illustrates a proposed governance model:

OPPportunity High School Flow Chart



Oversight

The Superintendent of Hartford Schools and the President and CEO of *Our Piece of the Pie* will provide oversight of the school. They are committed to support the school as a true partnership and to oversee its implementation of the essential elements of the model that are vital to its success.

Governance Council

A School Governance Council will include representation from both HPS and OPP staff, students, parent, and partners and will be responsible for:

- Active and meaningful involvement of parent and student voice on the Council
- Active and meaningful involvement of business, community and higher ed partners on the Council
- The day-to-day accountability structure
- Recommendation of nominees for the Principal and OPP Director positions
- Hiring school staff
- Adherence to the school mission
- Implementation of the School Improvement Plan
- Budget in alignment with student learning outcomes

School Advisory Board

The School Advisory Board will be co-chaired by a community leader and a higher ed partner who will work with the school leadership teams to:

- Support school academic initiatives, curriculum enhancements and youth development
- Provide resource development and content expertise
- Develop dual enrollment courses and activities useful in adapting college education courses to high school content
- Provide opportunities for experiential learning outside school walls that are connected to classroom lessons

Joint School Leadership: The Community Partnership School Principal and OPP Director

Each leader has discrete areas of responsibilities; however, these leadership positions are collaborative in areas that include:

- Hiring of HPS and OPP staff consistent with their respective contractual and organizational procedures
- Staff meetings and team development
- Participation and planning for HPS and OPP events and professional development

- Course offerings and master schedule
- School-wide committees
- Day-to-day operations of the school
- The partnership model and school culture
- Integration of partnership programming

The HPS Principal/Co-Director

- Oversees the instructional vision of the school and all aspects of the educational programs
- Supervises HPS staff
- Plans and implements curriculum and instruction
- Develops professional development and training for curriculum and instruction for teachers
- Reviews data and assesses student needs; uses data to drive instruction
- Supervises food and nutrition, school safety measures, and school support staff
- Works with appropriate HPS staff regarding compliance issues for Special Education, English Language Learners (ELL), and all other policies
- Maintains school records and reports
- Manages school academic budget

The OPP Director/Co-Director

- Oversees development and delivery of comprehensive support services to students and their families
- Administers student recruitment and enrollment process and oversees the admissions process
- Supervises OPP Staff
- Coordinates and administers youth development training for all staff
- Develops student programs for master calendar
- Oversees administration of OPP public contracts and private grants, including compliance and reporting
- Hires, trains, and supervises Youth Development Specialist (YDS)
- Coordinates the development of Community Scholars work group with YDS
- Works with Guidance Counselor/Youth Development Specialist to assess student needs (academic and other)
- Assists in the development of year-round programming
- Coordinates parent engagement activities
- Develops and supervises the Student Leadership Group

HPS Faculty and the OPP Youth Development Specialists

At the classroom level, teachers and the OPP youth development specialists will work together to support the students and meet regularly to discuss student benchmark grades and student issues. Teachers, students, and youth development specialists work together to identify strategies that will facilitate student progress during assessment periods.

HPS Faculty

The teaching faculty is responsible for curriculum development and mapping, aligning course content with state standards and the integration of literacy across the curriculum. They also will:

- Develop interdisciplinary units with applied learning opportunities
- Infuse youth development themes and principles into the curriculum
- Set proficiency targets and conduct twice-monthly benchmark assessments
- Prepare students for the State CAPT exams
- Collaborate with the youth development specialists on student progress
- Plan professional development and goal setting

Youth Development Specialist (YDS)

The Youth Development Specialist serves as the student's chief advocate and primary support person throughout his or her educational experience at the school. The student to YDS ratio of 25 to 1 will ensure individual attention and support. The YDS will:

- Counsel students one-to-one
- Monitor student benchmark assessments
- Conduct small group sessions twice per week with his or her advisory group
- Conduct student outreach and provide attendance support
- Develop elective and required after-school programming
- Provide linkage to OPP Pathway's programs
- Oversee crisis intervention and conflict mediation

- Assist students with post-graduate plans
- Develop and monitor Individualized Service Plans with students
- Work with parents/caring adult to ensure involvement in the student's education/life
- Systematize data collections and document student's progress toward their goals

Youth Employment Specialist (YES)

The Youth Employment Specialist is responsible for linkages to the workforce development and career competency reinforcement both in and outside the classroom. The YES will:

- Administer the job readiness program
- Develop and facilitate workshops to prepare students for internship placements and seminars for students once they have been placed in internships
- Cultivate internship placements
- Monitor and track internship progress and communicate regularly with YDS

College Specialist

The College Specialist is responsible for linkages to higher education and post-secondary educational experiences and will:

- Facilitate college readiness training seminars and college fairs
- Work with the staff to ensure students' compliance with graduation requirements
- Ensure each student has a viable post-graduation plan
- Coordinate campus partnership, tours, and scholarship resources
- Coordinate financial aid and SAT Prep workshops, college essays and applications, etc.

Parent Leadership Development

Parents/caring adults will have opportunities to participate in referral based support services that may include:

- English as a Second Language supports
- Family literacy seminars
- Drug counseling
- Community resources
- Parenting classes
- Independent living classes
- Child care
- High School Equivalency Certificate
- Participation on school committees

Student Leadership

A Student Advisory Council will have an active voice in determining school and student policies. These opportunities may include:

- Opportunities for student voice and roles regarding day-to-day operations
- Opportunities for students to exercise leadership skills both within the school and the greater community.

Curriculum & Instruction

Curriculum and instruction will be guided by:

- Commitment to the principles of Rigor, Relevance and Relationships
- Workshop Model of instruction
- Practices for strength-based youth development
- A college-ready and rigorous academic program that recognizes individual strengths, needs and learning styles as well as students' varying levels of credit attainment
- Career competencies and workforce development skills in partnership with Capitol Workforce Partners
- Alignment with 21st Century skills
 - Flexibility and adaptability
 - Initiative and self direction
 - Social and cross cultural skills
 - Respect and understanding
 - Self direction and motivation
 - Ability to search, evaluate synthesize and communicate information
 - Healthy, ethical and responsible life skills

Curriculum Design/Course of Study

A multi-disciplinary curriculum structure will be driven by best practices and OPP's strength in contextual learning within the integrated fields of:

1. Academics
2. Life and Career Skills
3. Youth Development

This unique setting for academic learning will be coordinated and monitored through the strong collaboration of the Youth Development Specialists, Youth Business Manager, and Academic Instructors. OPP's award-winning youth businesses will creatively engage youth in companies that generate products and services of interest to young people and the community. This "work and learn" model is the foundation of OPP's successes surrounding contextual learning and youth engagement and will be woven into the design of the school. Courses of study will be divided into four twelve week semesters. A suggested yearly schedule is **attached**. Students may participate in three strands of instruction that will be developed by the school staff. The curriculum design framework will include:

- Alignment with district, state, and national standards
- An interdisciplinary, cross-curricular approach
- Bloom's Taxonomy as the core instructional philosophy
- Targeted intervention strategies
- College ready core curriculum with elimination of tracking and leveled courses
- Literacy and numeracy plan across the curriculum
- Real world application
- Heterogeneously grouped classes that encourage diverse and differentiated learning
- Formative, summative and multiple forms of assessments
- Embedding of youth development practices, life and career skills and 21st century skills into curriculum

Pedagogical Approach & Classroom Design

Pedagogical approaches will be research-based. The following guidelines will provide the basis for classroom instruction:

- Classroom instruction will provide for rigorous, engaging hands-on activities and assignments that have real world relevance. Experiential activities will include the operation and management of small school-based enterprises. Simulations will be embedded into curriculum instruction and extended day learning activities.
- Differentiated instruction, meeting students at their skill levels and scaffolding instruction, will be a core strategy. Differentiated instruction will provide each student with different ways to understand content.
- Learning environments will simulate real world experiences with classrooms and common areas displaying student accomplishments, especially as they reflect the business and professional climate of the school.
- An accelerated teaching environment will maximize learning through relevancy. It will bridge the gap between school and work through a rigorous academic curriculum and authentic job readiness trainings.
- The school will nurture relationships and enrich community. For example, the cafeteria will be an extension of the classroom where workplace professionalism as well as a family model environment will be taught and practiced.
- Life skills embedded into the curriculum will include accountability, responsibility, the ability to trust and be trusted, and other skills necessary to be a contributing member of their family, community, and society.
- A daily school-wide routine will feature school updates, celebration of student achievement, poetry, newspaper review, vocabulary, and a daily concept or quote that encourages community spirit.
- Student-centered instruction will emphasize students' cultures, interests and abilities.

Literacy across the Curriculum

Because literacy is fundamental to learning, support for literacy development at the secondary level is vital to student success and will include:

- Curriculum based measures for reading across the curriculum
- Curriculum embedded assessments
- Diagnostic Reading tests
- Program pacing, supplemental supports for struggling students and English Language Learners support.

A standards-based English Language Arts program will integrate three areas:

1. Literacy across the curriculum

Instructional staff, regardless of content area, will establish specific goals and strategies organized around research-based learning strategies used by effective learners.

2. Character-based literacy

The literacy program will infuse character education, core ethical values and social-emotional competencies into the curriculum. The lesson plan format will include elements of focused instruction to engage students in thinking

about the learning and to reflect on how the learning connects to their own lives and behaviors.

3. Youth development literacy

Literature will be relevant to students' lives.

Core Math Program

Students will complete a minimum of three courses in mathematics: Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II. Students will master concepts in algebra that will play an integral part in their post-secondary educational experiences.

Math instruction will include:

- Focus on standards-based lesson designs that include real-world, open-ended problems that will help students reach proficiency for state mathematics assessments
- Classroom activities that include exploring concepts of algebra as well as daily practice with reflection
- Engaging projects will help students understand how algebra is used in various careers.
- Junior Achievement curriculum will be incorporated into the core math curriculum with its unique approach that applies math skills and concepts into student-led business projects.

Core Science Program

Science instruction will include:

- Physical Science, Biology, Chemistry and Physics
- An integrated literacy, math, science and history approach as the framework for a "hands on" science program in grade 9. For example, instruction in a Transportation Unit would present a rigorous interdisciplinary experience for students in automotive technology and motor engineering
- Development of core scientific inquiry skills
- Development of problem solving skills through data collection and interpretation, analyzing, questioning, and observation.

Core History Program

The school's rigorous history program will help students develop research skills while learning to find and exam primary documents within the following course offerings: American History and Immigration, World Geography and International Studies, Civics, and Global Political Systems. Within the school's mission to re-engage students with society, the history program will help students to investigate and reflect on their own civil rights, responsibilities, and obligations towards their country and global society while exploring their families' immigration history and contributions to history, literature, art, music, and culture.

History instruction will include:

- Constitutional law and civil rights and liberties with a focus on immigration
- Investigation of different political systems with identification and analysis of various global government structures
- Investigation of the forces that shape the political, social and economic institutions in modern America as it relates to Hartford and beyond
- An anthropological case study of a modern community that the student chooses to study

Arts and Music Program

The Art and Music Program will re-connect the students to society by developing pride in their culture and community. Students will participate in a visual arts presentation of their work via a public art project. Student will learn about public art in urban centers and learn about grassroots and establish art institutions in Hartford.

Art instruction will:

- Develop basic skills and techniques that are required to produce works of art
- Encourage individual creativity through hands on experiences and teach students to communicate effectively about the arts in a context that will bring relevance to the past and relate the arts to their present cultural environment
- Provide students with the tools to evaluate, assess, and respond to historically significant music and art, as well as works of art that they produce themselves

Music instruction will:

- Provide students with an opportunity to form a Latin Band, a Steel Drum Band and/or a home-grown band that reflects their cultural heritage and pride
- Teach students about music around the world

Physical Education/Health/Wellness Program

The Physical Education program will:

- Guide students into being physically active for a lifetime

- Explore physical education through martial arts, Connecticut's state park hiking trails, and community runs and bike rides to expand student's knowledge of health and wellness beyond traditional gym programs
- Offer other athletic programs coordinated with intramural or out of school activity

The Health programs will:

- Build positive self-image
- Provide access to health services and referrals to community healthcare providers, classroom instructors, school nurses, parents, and community healthcare providers who work as a team to support student health
- Provide a system for referral and support for those needing counseling services.
- Support a safe school environment. School staff will work collaboratively to provide a clean, safe, drug-free and weapon-free environment.
- Work with the food service staff to provide meals that are nutritious and appealing food choices for youth
- Will involve parents, teachers and community members in health promotion efforts and policy making.

World Language Program

The school will offer Spanish during the first year of implementation. Other world language courses will be explored by the school staff via direct language instruction and technology-based instruction.

Course Schedule

Students will progress through the educational experience following a personalized course schedule based on the courses that each student needs to graduate as set forth by the *Hartford Board of Education Graduation Policy*. This purposeful scheduling plan allows for individual student pacing and individual student course needs for meeting required credits toward graduation. The schedule will be based on twelve four week semesters using a block schedule that will provide time for deeper exploration of topics, case study work and hands-on research.

Sample schedules illustrating this scheduling plan are **attached**: Student Learning Plan Model I, Student Learning Plan Model II, and Accelerated Learning Plan.

English Language Learner Support Approach

The Community Partnership School will serve students with limited English Proficiency using 12 research based components (Calderon 2007).

1. Teachers will receive assistance and models for developing lessons.
2. Teachers will provide direct, explicit instruction.
3. Students will learn how to read a variety of texts that progress to grade-level texts quickly.
4. Content teachers will teach depth and breadth of words at all times.
5. Teachers will use collaborative-text-based reading that repeat new words multiple times.
6. Teachers will teach reading and writing skills adapting delivery in the following way:
 - select comprehension strategy,
 - conduct read-alouds to model fluency and comprehension strategies,
 - conduct partner reading to practice comprehension strategies and comprehend content, and
 - debrief with the whole class about the content and skills (linguistic, metalinguistic, comprehension, social, and cooperative learning) learned.
7. Teachers will teach the different writing genre required by each content area, including the various formats for technology.
8. Teachers will use strategies throughout the lesson to anchor knowledge, check for understanding, and assess individual student learning.
9. Teachers will include a variety of formats to gauge progress on literacy and content in student assessments.
10. The quality of implementation will be assessed with specific observation protocols supported by technology in order to have instant reports for teachers and administrators.
11. Systematic and comprehensive professional development throughout the year will be necessary to sustain any program, approach, or instructional change.
12. Learning Communities will assist teachers with implementation of these teaching and learning strategies.

Intervention Program (2+ years behind; 1 year behind; 5-minutes behind)

The school will include READ 180 by Scholastic, Inc. for its intervention reading program and will incorporate it into the partnership school design. READ 180 is a proven, research-based, intensive reading intervention program designed to significantly raise academic achievement of participating students. This instructional curriculum is intended to develop phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension in alignment with Connecticut state standards, Connecticut's English Language Arts standards, and the Hartford Public School standards. While motivating and engaging struggling teen readers at their own pace, the program offers high-interest materials, interactive computer programs, and individual and small group instruction. Computer-aided assessment tools are built into the software thus reading instruction

is continually informed and adapted by each student's program. Students and their parents/guardians will be notified of development through monthly progress reports that clearly define reading goals, improvements, and efforts. Students and parents are provided with a list of reading recommendations appropriate to the students' skills and interests as well as with the resources to support reading at home.

OPP's Supplemental Education Services program has a history of success with READ 180 which has been effectively used to boost academic achievement, attitudes toward reading, and to help students in grades 9-12 progress toward Content Standards 1 and 2.

Math Intervention Section for insertion (Follows the Reading Intervention-READ 180 section)

OPportunity High School will explore two math intervention programs called Achiever! and Mechanics. Brainchild programs present easy and effective ways to measure and assess student progress throughout the school year. Standards-based reports help gather data quickly and easily to assist educators and administrators in making informed decisions. Educators have the ability to individualize instruction with Achiever! and Mechanics. Educators can intervene early and often, and adjust instruction in areas where students are struggling. The tools engage all students including English language learners and struggling students that have a variety of learning styles and/or disabilities.

Achiever! is a web-based program aligned with Connecticut state standards. It utilizes multimedia instruction, practice state tests, and formative assessments for adjusting instruction.

Mechanics gives struggling students a place to find success based on their current skills and move up. With the ability to switch from English to Spanish, this series teaches math skills, from basic math to algebra that should have been learned in grades 1 to 8.

Instructional Technology

The school will implement innovative technology and multimedia educational strategies to meet the rigorous demands in competitive education and employment markets. These applications will enhance each student's educational experiences by creating a variety of methods to meet individual learning styles by teaching students how to manage/handle information and by creating opportunities to develop better critical thinking skills. According to Bloom's Taxonomy, as students move through the hierarchy of learning, their studies should progress towards higher-level thinking skills. Technology can facilitate this process with authentic curriculum integration.

Technology will be infused in the program courses through on-line learning resources like READ 180 and Credit Recovery. The school will also employ various technologies for accelerated and advanced learning in the classroom, such as the Connecticut Virtual Learning Center website which facilitates on-line learning. The Connecticut Virtual Learning Center offers on-line supplemental courses to Connecticut public high schools. This resource will complement the student's electronic portfolio with classes in world languages and/or advance placement. If students take advantage of this option, they will be assigned to a school mentor and take an assessment to determine if virtual learning matches their learning style. In addition, students will interface with technology on a daily basis through the use of electronic student portfolios and e-mail. E-mail will serve as the primary tool for tracking communication and information delivery. This will not exclude face-to-face interaction but will equip students with needed business skills to increase Microsoft Outlook proficiency. Students will employ Outlook as a time management resource to prioritize goals, follow daily agendas, make appointments, and track school assignments. Computer literacy directly links to CT Workforce Partners career competencies and will be infused into the school's culture to prepare students for post-secondary transition and/or work readiness preparedness.

Capstone Experience

Course requirements will include four credits within a chosen strand and one credit for Capstone Experience. Strands will be defined based on students' interest areas and career explorations which may include college courses. The Capstone Experience, a senior demonstration, will pull together a significant aspect of the skills and knowledge acquired during their experience in the school. It will be a one credit course that will culminate with a project, portfolio, internship or other research task in the second semester of the senior year.

Homework Expectations

Homework will be viewed as one of several methods teachers can use to show students that out of school expectations will equip students with needed problem solving and decision making skills that employer and higher education institutions require. Homework can yield a considerable increase in academic performance, but its positive outcome is contingent on (a) teacher preparation and availability to review the task, (b) assignments appropriate to the skill, attention, and motivation level of the student, and (c) appropriate home environment conditions.

Students will learn how to work well with limited supervision while making appropriate decisions. Homework will reinforce the importance in learning, reasoning and thinking creatively to solve problems. These are all competencies students must

learn for future education and/or workforce transitions.

Learning Outcomes & Assessment Design

Assessment Design

The school will utilize the Connecticut State standards as its core curriculum framework. Course expectations in the form of benchmarks will be defined in the course syllabus. Benchmarks will be tracked in a developmental continuum that will determine:

- a. Early developmental standards
- b. Developing standards
- c. Mastery standards
- d. Exceeding the standard

All incoming students will take a uniform reading comprehension screening to assess their reading level. Students may not transfer into the English curriculum until they meet the developing standards level of the continuum. Intensive intervention strategies will include READ 180.

Performance Benchmarks

The grading system will be transparent; students will be familiar with grading rubrics and their academic standings at all times. Additionally, the school will investigate and implement an accelerated credit process where credits toward graduation requirements may be awarded on a course competency system rather than seat time and Carnegie units.

Teacher Capacity

Theme-Specific Certification Requirements

All content area teachers will be highly qualified as determined by certification requirements of the State of Connecticut. Preparation and certification for youth development specialist must include:

- Mandated state training for adolescent professionals
- Completion of Youth Development Training
- Bachelor's degree in education, human services, and/or related area

It is essential that all staff have a sincere desire to work with the students looking to complete graduation requirements in an alternative setting. Staff must be willing to work proactively, regardless of content expertise, in integrating and embedding youth development and life and career skills into the curriculum and to provide interdisciplinary instruction.

The hiring process for all staff will include assessment of content knowledge, passion for teaching and interest in working with the school's defined population. All staff will be expected to implement their outside interests and talents within the curriculum, where appropriate, and for extended day enrichment and support activities

Training and Professional Development Program

A comprehensive staff development design will begin with an initial five-day workshop followed by another five days of lesson integration and parsing of texts over the summer months. When school starts, teacher practice in the classroom is accompanied with weekly 30-45 minute discussions with teacher colleagues in Teacher Learning Communities (TLCs). In addition to the collegial learning at the school site, additional days of in-service will be planned as refreshers and for building additional concepts, skills, and creative application. Lead teachers will be identified to become peer coaches or mentors of beginning teachers who need more technical assistance. If we are to individualize student learning, we must begin by individualizing teacher learning.

The following professional development options will offer teachers the opportunity to train in areas of needed professional growth:

- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- Principles of Learning
- Academic reviews
- Youth development practices
- Career competency standards
- Active hands-on learning strategies
- Grading system
- Student Personalized Learning Plan
- Capstone Projects
- Lesson plan development
- Peer coaching
- Action research (individual or with colleagues)
- Student portfolios
- Literacy across the curriculum

Teaming/Collaborative Planning Expectations

Teachers' Learning Communities (TLCs) are places and spaces where teachers can collaboratively examine, question, develop, experiment, implement, evaluate, and create change. (Calderon, 2007, "A Framework For Improving Achievement in the Content Areas") As part of an in-service program, teachers need to learn how to set up and run their own TLCs in

order to work collaboratively to:

- Analyze student performance data
- Set proficiency targets in each subject area
- Re-evaluate student outcomes every 2 weeks with varied benchmark assessments
- Work on instructional improvement
- Study student writing and rubrics used
- Share instructional strategies

School Schedule

Length of School Day

- The school will operate on a 12 month academic calendar year and will meet the academic needs of students year-round. This year-round calendar allows for rolling admissions and continuously supports current enrollees to earn credit and engage in school.
- The school will run four 12 week cycles.

Co-Curriculum Programming

The school will offer co-curricular programming and out-of-school activities to provide additional academic and youth development opportunities. These may include:

- Workforce development/service learning activities accepted as an integral part of the school day and integrally aligned with classroom lessons
- Collaboration with community and business partners to infuse workforce competencies into the curriculum
- Out of school activities, such as:
 - Connections to community/school programs for sports, recreation, and music
 - Opportunities for academic supports and credit recovery
 - Opportunities for academic enrichment
 - Opportunities for youth development activities

Community Partnerships

Role of Partners: Advisory/Curriculum/Embedded Activities

Major school partners will provide the students and staff with the following:

- Capital Workforce Partners will play a major role in the school's development in embedding its *Career Competency System* into the curriculum. CWP will be responsible for the teaching of the competencies and for aligning the competencies with workplace experiences that CWP will provide.
- Junior Achievement programs will be embedded into the curriculum to create real world connections.
- The Mayor's Office for Youth Services will work closely with the school to provide out of school activities aligned with the school's theme for youth development.
- United Way will provide access and information to multiple community resources needed by students and families.
- The Village will play a vital role in offering mental health resources to students and families.
- Boys and Girls Club of Hartford will provide recreational outlets and programming for students.

Internships/Job Shadows/Mentoring/Community Experiences

- A year round school schedule will allow concentrated time for students to gain professional experience in a business setting reinforcing the career competencies students are developing in the classroom. All internship/externships will be coordinated by the Youth Employment Specialist and will include paid and unpaid experiences.
- Extended day time will help establish a culture that encourages key academic and social skills development: college preparatory services, study skills, academic interventions and enrichments, soft skills and job readiness training and skills that promote future economic opportunities.
- Expectations will be defined for internship participation.
- 21st Century Skills will be incorporated in extended day activities for increased readiness for the global market.
- A Service Learning project with the potential to earn 1 credit will be offered. OPP is the lead agency for National Youth Service Day, a concentrated community service programming effort to enhance civic and community awareness and participation during the month of April. During this time students will participate in service learning projects designed to build and beautify the Hartford community.

Community Partnerships

Community resources that will support the youth development services and parent/guardian development will include:

- Hartford Public Library
- CT Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc.

- CT Parent Info. & Resource Center
- City of Hartford, Office of Youth Services and Public Health Department
- Teen & Young Parent Support Group
- Neighborhood-Based Family Support Guide for Families w/ Young Children
- CT Juvenile Justice Alliance
- Hartford Juvenile Review Board

Higher Education Partners

The school will investigate and develop articulation agreements with local institutions of higher education to provide opportunities for:

- Student enrollment in dual credit courses
- Attendance at college fairs
- Participation in college visits

Business Partners

The school will investigate and develop business partnerships that will:

- Bring business people into the schools to work with students, teachers and administrators on projects that align with the school mission, theme, and curriculum
- Provide internships, mentors and job shadows
- Supplement and strengthen classroom lessons with real world experiential learning in business and industry
- Provide technology training

High School/College Readiness

Plan of Study and Transition Planning

Each student upon enrollment will complete a Personal Learning Plan where they will document and track their progress toward graduation requirements and towards their individualized post high school goals.

Dual Credit/Advanced Placement

During Year One of implementation, the school will establish an AP program and articulation agreements with colleges for dual credit courses including on-line course credit opportunities.

Career Explorations

Career exploration will be integrated into the curriculum and include activities such as:

- Use of portfolios and personalized learning plans for tracking career goals and progress toward graduation and college preparedness
- Visits to colleges, universities and training centers
- Completion of CHOICES Interest Profile
- Career Fairs
- Participation in a Capstone presentation to experts in the field
- Development of knowledge and workplace competencies and behaviors
- Junior Achievement curriculum integration
- Inclusion of Career Competencies standards in the curriculum

College Visits and College Advising

The school will develop multiple opportunities for:

- Visits to college campuses
- Learning about college options
- Earning college credits through summer study and dual credit
- Collaborative activities with college students

School Culture & Climate

The school culture and climate will be characterized by

- An unmistakable sense of mutual respect where students are empowered to have an active voice
- Clear community expectations for respect and behavior
- An exceptionally clean facility where students take pride in their school
- The display of the school’s mission

School Compact

One important developmental aspect that OPP has studied is providing healthy forums for youth to discuss challenging issues and topics with positive resolutions. OPP has found the Full Value Contract (FVC) to be comfortable for students and staff to discuss major life challenges through a guided activity. The activity begins with contract construction and a reflective daily process called “Rap Up.” In this process, students express remorse, provide praise, and more importantly learn how to ask for help.

One major factor that transpires during the Rap up process is the playing field is leveled; both students and staff are responsible for actively participating and listening to each other’s needs. This provides a non-punitive outlet for youth and staff to feel comfortable to express feelings and solutions for resolving conflicts and celebrating successes. By eliminating the avoidance factor which often builds up and then escalates into larger issues, this process has proven to be a healthy method for student to adult and peer to peer expression. The Full Value Contract will be incorporated into the School Compact, a signed agreement which specifies the roles and responsibilities of teachers, parents and students as partners in education for improving student outcomes. An outline of the Full Value Contract is **attached**.

School Uniform

A school uniform will be determined by the school staff.

Behavior Support Program

The behavior support program will be grounded in one-to-one, personalized relationships

- The school will establish a Mental and Physical Health Sub-committee that will support students as they learn to set individual goals, make good personal decisions, and meet academic goals.
- The school will consider the adoption of TARGET - Trauma Affect Regulation: Guidelines for Education and Therapy for adolescents and pre-adolescents – This model equips youth with the skills needed to self-regulate behavior which is essential for future workforce development. The TARGET model naturally supports the Full Value Contract and will be embedded into model.

Parental Role

The school recognizes the importance of family and supportive adults to ensure the success of the youth and will work to make sure that they are appropriately involved in their children’s experience at the school.

In Academics

- Participation in student learning activities
- Participation on the School Governance Council and parent associations
- Use of the school facilities: technology, library, etc.
- Support and facilitation for student experiential activities

In School Culture/Climate

- The school will utilize volunteer parent liaisons for additional parental/caring adult supports and outreach.
- The school will identify ways to link parental/caring adult involvement to academic credit, such as the completion of a service learning project that requires parent/special person involvement.
- The school will provide linkages with other community initiatives like the Fatherhood Initiative at The Village to provide on-site support groups for parents and parenting teens. The same would be encouraged for mothers.
- The school will provide opportunities for the parent/caring adult to grow with their student, such as ESL classes, substance abuse treatment programs, legal resources, etc.

Support Services

Special Education Program

The school will develop targeted assistance for both Special Education students and English Language Learners. This support, tutoring programs and counseling services, will be developed as required and assessed.

Support Services Model

In addition to academic support systems for the Special Education and ELL students, the design team recommends three models for consideration:

- Adopt a trauma focused model to be infused into the school’s principles of rigor, relevance and relationships.
- Create a social development progression (youth development sequence) to embed into the curriculum
- Create a full service Wellness Center

Application Process

As part of the enrollment process, each student who chooses this Academy will be required to participate in an interview and in-take process. A parent or guardian must be present during the interview. This interview will assist school staff in determining individual needs of each student such as :

- Individual resilience
- Level of motivation for completing high school requirements
- Risk profile
- Individual student assets and interests

The interview team will determine appropriate use of research based instruments such as motivation scales, etc. for the assessments and interview process.

The school will serve students across all four transportation zones.

Attachments

- 1. Model for Twelve Week Semester Calendar** (*Curriculum Design/Course of Study*, pp 6-7)
- 2. Model Course Schedules: Individualized/Paced Learning Tracks** (*Course Schedule*, p 9)
- 3. Full Value Contract** (*School Compact*, pp 13-14)