

Prospectus: Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literacy

I. Executive Summary

Mission Statement

The mission of the Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literacy is to provide a high quality charter school that delivers strong, authentic learning opportunities utilizing New York City's best educational resources. MCSSL inspires learners' engagement with a hands-on applied science curriculum and develops each student's skills with a cross-curricular literacy education producing exemplary levels of achievement and students equipped with the necessary foundation to complete high school and pursue careers in science.

Design Elements and Unique Characteristics

Educational research demonstrates that all students learn more effectively when provided with a hands-on approach and the chance to apply knowledge in the real world. A synthesis of 15 years of research by Bredderman (1982) reported that students in activity-based programs performed 20 percentile units higher than the comparison groups, with students who were disadvantaged economically or academically demonstrating the most gains. MCSSL will provide students with hands-on learning opportunities unique to New York City. Students will study, work, and learn in the city's museums, parks, and libraries and students will take the knowledge out into the world.

- Math and Social Studies instruction will be scheduled in blocks to allow for students to leave the traditional classroom and engage in hands-on learning experiences, as well as instructional opportunities in the city's museums.
- Science and Literacy will be scheduled together in three hour blocks. This allows for extensive science and literacy instruction to take place out of the classroom in the city's museums, parks and libraries.
- Full Inclusion – Collaborative Team Teaching: Two Teachers will be present in core subjects. (One Subject teacher and one SPED teacher.) Three teachers will be present in the Science/Literacy Blocked classes at all times. (Two General Ed subject teachers and one SPED teacher.)
- Cross-Curricular Core Subject Common Planning and Professional Development provided for teachers during students' daily first period (Physical Education/Electives Classes)
- Continual Ongoing Assessment using a variety of formal and informal assessment tools to collect data to drive instruction and construction of individualized instructional and remediation plans. These measures will also guide Individualized Extended Day and Saturday School instruction including AIS, clubs and volunteer opportunities.
- Intensive Parent Outreach

MCSSL's curriculum will be cross-curricular in design and naturally differentiated, as students will have the opportunity to learn in many capacities by using all their senses and by not being confined to the classroom, thus, allowing instruction to access a wide range of diverse learning styles. Direct instruction, as well as independent and group learning will be utilized throughout the curriculum. Additionally, MCSSL's blocked schedule design and fully inclusive learning environment allow for flexible student grouping based on need and interest, as well as provides the time students require to complete quality projects that demonstrate an understanding of core curriculum NYS standards using New York City's extensive resources. While our design elements are not traditional, MCSSL embraces all NY learning standards, expects to be held accountable, and will measure student progress using New York state standardized tests.

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MCSSL's daily common planning and professional development period creates the structure necessary to build a collaborative professional community and to support quality instruction. It embeds the time needed for teachers to be trained in and to practice student data analysis to drive decision making that best informs instruction and accountability, thus, supporting continual ongoing assessment, an essential element of MCSSL's curriculum. It allows for teachers to collaboratively plan across subjects and promotes reflective teaching practice. Additionally, it provides the opportunity for the creation of teacher teams whose work will be focused on action research, rooted in a concern for results, and aimed at exemplary instruction schoolwide across all subjects.

MCSSL will focus extensively on creating the successful parent outreach necessary to the success of a school and its students by building upon the six types of parent involvement identified by Joyce L. Epstein, Ph.D., of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University, National PTA created program standards of excellence.

Founding Group

The Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literacy's founding group consists of two dedicated NYC educators and parents with extensive experience working with diverse populations both in and out of the classroom, and committed to closing the achievement gap. They are highly qualified to launch, oversee and govern the Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literacy.

Amy Alfortish holds an MA from Columbia Teachers College in Educational Psychology: Reading Specialist and a BA in Secondary Social Studies Education. With her eight years experience as a middle school Language Arts teacher, five years Literacy Coaching experience, two years experience as a Comprehensive School Reform Facilitator, and her extensive experience leading Region 9 Literacy Professional Development Sessions, she possesses the skills necessary to effectively direct MCSSL's cross-curricular literacy instructional practice, to lead in building a collaborative professional community by directing common planning sessions and guiding meaningful professional development, as well as the expertise to successfully manage the school's intensive parent outreach program.

Sabrina Ford holds a M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction, an MS in Education Administration, and a Permanent NYS School District Administrator License. She has acted as dean for a year and created the school wide discipline code. She has over ten years experience teaching secondary Science and Literacy, and has worked with the AMNH for over four years utilizing science secondary education , She was a lead teacher for Urban Advantage, has directed an SES program, led Teacher Professional development for Region 10, AMNH and the Bronx Zoo, and co-authored Region 10 Science Middle School Scope and Sequence. Sabrina Ford is exceptionally qualified to be MCSSL's Principal, as well as a highly effective instructional leader directing the MCSSL's Instructional Team as it engages in continual ongoing assessment and provides students with the hands-on real world applied science curriculum that is the mission of the school.

II. Student Population

A. Student Enrollment Table

Grades	Projected Enrollment Table				2017-2018
	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	
K					
1 st					
2 nd					
3 rd					
4 th					
5 th					
6 th	125	127	128	130	132
7 th		122	125	126	128
8 th			120	122	124
9 th					
10 th					
11 th					
12 th					
Ungraded					
Totals					

B. Target Population

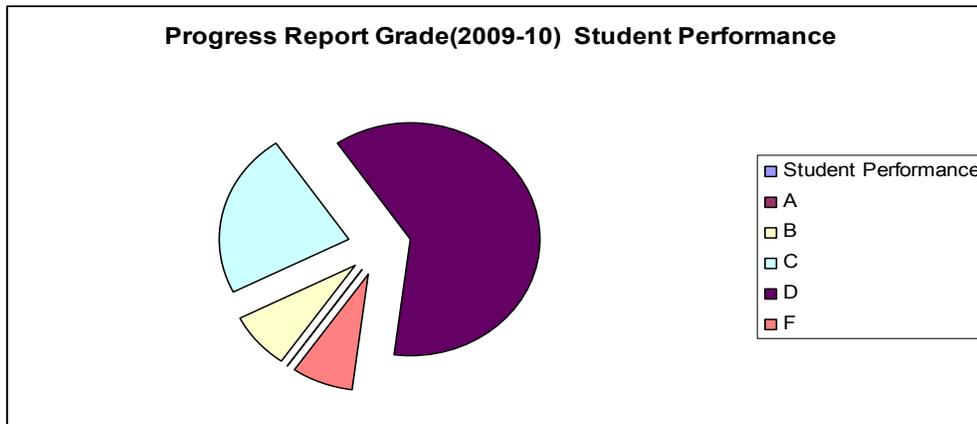
The Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literacy will provide an engaging individualized education to students in grades 6, 7, and 8. We expect our school population will reflect the current demographics of CSD 5 middle schools. According to school progress report data for 2009-2010 of the fourteen middle schools in CSD 5, the averages of the demographic data 95.4% were Black/Hispanic, 75.3% qualified for free lunch, 18.3 % were students with IEP’s, and 10.6 % were identified as ELL.

Also, according school progress report grades of CSD 5’s 14 middle schools most were not performing well: No schools serving the middle school population in CSD 5 received an A. Only four received a B (30.7 %), five schools received a C (38.5%), three schools received a D (23.1%), and one school received an F (.77%). Further analysis of CSD 5’s school progress report illustrates that student achievement grades were lower than overall progress grades. Again, none of CSD 5’s middle schools received an A for gains in student performance, only one school

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received a B (.77%), three schools received a C (23.1%), **eight of the fourteen schools received a D (61.5%)**, and one school received an F (.77%). It is clear from this data, that there is an urgent need for CSD 5 middle schools that can increase student performance on New York State ELA and Math Assessments. Data collected and analyzed from CSD 5's progress reports indicates that 69.7% of middle school students are approaching or below grade level in ELA, and 64% are approaching or below grade level in math.

District 5's NYC Middle School Progress Report Grades (2009-10)



Closing the achievement gap:

Only three of CSD 5's middle schools showed any measurable improvement in scores for students in the lowest performing third for ELA and only one out of 14 showed measurable gains for students in the lowest performing third for math. This can be further supported by the average CSD 5's middle school gains of only **1.37 bonus points for closing the achievement gap**. It is clear from the data, that CSD 5 has an urgent need for a middle school that can meet both state and city requirements, by increasing student performance on standardized state assessments and by closing the achievement gap.

ELL and SPED population

Although the English Language Learners and Special Education student population data is included in the citywide lowest performing third and achievement gap findings, further analysis reveals the critical need for CSD 5 middle schools that better support these students.

Of the 6th grade ELL students in CSD 5, 56.3 % scored a level 1 and 40.2% scored a level 2, with only 3.6% of the population performing at grade level on the New York State ELA assessment. Of the 7th grade ELL students in district 5, 47.7% % scored a level 1 and 49.5% scored a level 2, with only 2.8% of the population performing at grade level on the New York State ELA assessment. Of the 8th grade ELL students in CSD 5, 57.7 % scored a level 1 and 41.2% scored a level 2, with only 1.0% of the population performing at grade level on the New York State ELA assessment. The trend of declining performance is evident with only 1% of CSD 5's ELL student population meeting grade level standards in ELA upon entering high school.

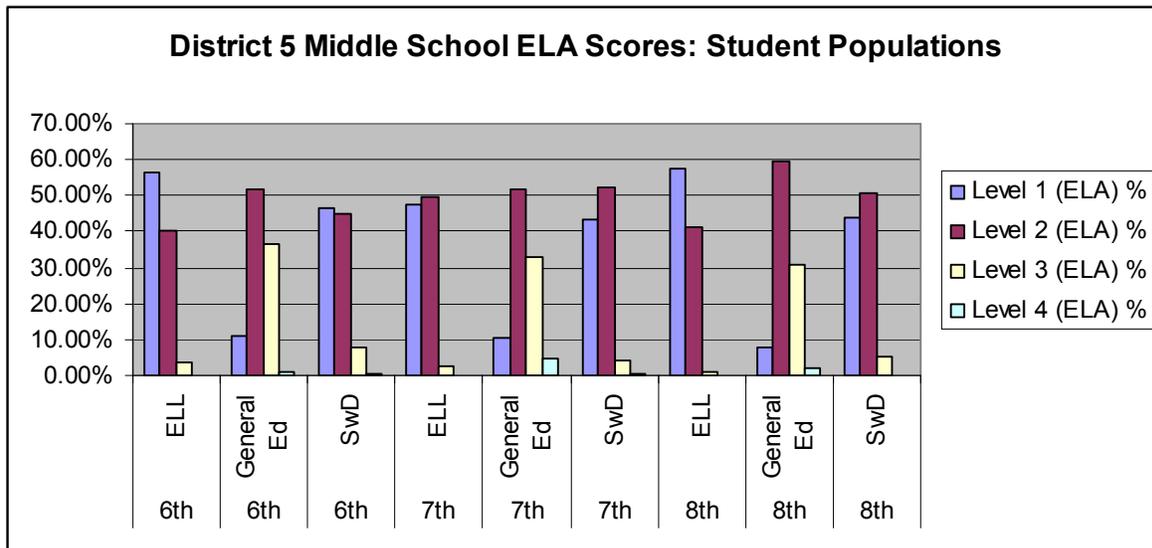
The overall analysis of the data reflects a similar trend of declining performance for CSD 5's Special Education student population with only 5.2% of the students leaving 8th grade performing at grade level in ELA down from 7.7% in 6th grade. Of the 6th grade student

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population with disabilities in CSD 5, 46.7% scored a level 1 and 45.1% scored a level 2, with only 7.7% of the population performing at grade level on the New York State ELA assessment. Of the 7th grade student population with disabilities in CSD 5, 43.3% scored a level 1 and 52.1% scored a level 2, with only 4.2% of the population performing at grade level on the New York State ELA assessment. Of the 8th grade student population with disabilities in CSD 5 44.0% scored a level 1 and 50.7% scored a level 2, with only 5.2% of the population performing at grade level on the New York State ELA assessment.

TABLE

Grade	Student	Level 1 (ELA) %	Level 2 (ELA) %	Level 3 (ELA) %	Level 4 (ELA) %
6	ELL	56.3 %	40.2 %	3.6 %	0
6	General Ed	10.8 %	51.9 %	36.4%	.8%
6	SwD	46.7%	45.1%	7.7%	.4%
7	ELL	47.7%	49.5%	2.8%	0
7	General Ed	10.2%	51.8%	33.1%	4.9%
7	SwD	43.3%	52.1%	4.2%	.4%
8	ELL	57.7%	41.2%	1.0%	0
8	General Ed	7.8%	59.5%	30.6%	2.1%
8	SwD	44.0%	50.7%	5.2%	0



The Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literacy will achieve measurable gains in student achievement on ELA and math state test for all students. Our school design will focus on improving literacy skills by making it a crucial part of learning in all subjects. Our literacy and science based program will also help students to move across grade levels with exceeding levels

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being our goal for all students. MCSSL will bring the success CSD 5 and its students deserve and can accomplish.

Outreach, Recruitment, Admission/Enrollment Plan and Retention

Outreach

The Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literacy will be recruiting 7th graders for its first year of operation; we will be recruiting these students from other CSD 5 schools. Our message to the community, parents and students that we are recruiting will include specific mention of students with disabilities and English Language Learners, and how MCSSL's unique hands-on instructional approach, utilizing New York City's exceptional educational resources, as well as MCSSL's cross-curricular literacy instruction provides enormous advantages and until now unrealized opportunities for all students to excel. Recruitment will occur in CSD 5's neighborhoods insuring that MCSSL receives students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Additionally, MCSSL will recruit students from a variety of other New York City areas in the hopes of providing a diverse educational learning environment. While MCSSL will diligently recruit students in CSD 5 and, as well as other districts, we fully intend to focus intently on recruiting students from the current middle schools in CSD 5 where over 65 % have demonstrated little or no gains in student achievement, and maintain D's or lower on their school's progress reports for student progress and achievement. We believe that parents of the students in CSD 5's middle schools would appreciate an alternative for their children, especially those parents of ELL students or children with disabilities.

Recruitment

The Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literature will use several means of recruitment for potential students and their families. MCSSL's founding members will meet with community leaders in CSD 5 as well as CSD 5's political leaders. MCSSL's founding members plan to hand out information and meet local parents and students outside neighborhood grocery stores, subway entrances, post offices and other less formal community areas. Information will be provided at out demo science lessons that will be hands-on for children of the neighborhood to participate.

- Information sessions will also be held outside and in local libraries. Again hands on science activities will be presented.
- Free hot dogs and science demonstrations to entertain kids. Founding members will be available to speak with parents *interrupters will be provided.
- Printed material will be translated into different languages including Spanish, Chinese. etc
- MCSSL will host a street fair.
- MCSSL members will go into CSD 5 elementary schools to set up science demo lessons.
- MCSSL members will contact guidance counselors of elementary schools and other CSD 5 middle schools.
- MCSSL will reach parents and students in current failing middle schools in CSD 5 offering an alternative and new approach to education.
- MCSSL will place advertisements in local community newspapers in all Spanish and other languages to attract ELL students and parents
- MCSSL members will visit neighborhood parks and other recreational places to speak with parents and students about our school. We will set up science demonstrations as well as have a hands-on activity for children.

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- MCSSL will post flyers announcing free weekend science learning sessions in Central Park, and Morningside Park. These sessions will offer a chance to get parents and students to learn about the many science wonders found in area parks. This will allow MCSSL to attract interest from diverse populations.
- MCSSL will make radio and TV announcements translated to reach many diverse populations including English Language Learners.
- MCSSL will establish a website and will use this as a mechanism to communicate with interested, prospective families
- Enrollment applications for MCSSL will be available online as well as at the school facility.
- MCSSL will distribute recruiting materials about the school's mission, curriculum, leadership, and the application process to public places such as libraries, YMCAs, youth centers, community agencies, local bodegas, restaurants, churches, mosques, laundry mats and post offices.
- MCSSL will also advertise and inform parents about services we intend to offer the families of our students, such as, GED classes, English Language Classes, and personal finance.

Admission/Enrollment

The Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literacy will not screen students based on scores, grades, language acquisition or any other criteria. We want our students to want us; if the student or/and parent chooses our school, than we will serve that family. We will make it clear to MCSSL families that parent involvement is encouraged, as we are a community inside and outside of the classroom. In keeping with §2854(2) (b), any student qualified under the laws of the state for admission to a public school is qualified for admission to the Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literacy. We intend that students of MCSSL will be a representative group of CSD 5, as previously stated in section II. If the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the grade level or our facility at the end of the enrollment period, students will be accepted from among applicants by a random selection process.

Retention

The Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literacy will maintain high retention rates not only with our unique instructional design intended to foster academic success, but also with the help of its Intensive Parent Outreach program that will create a strong sense of school community. Constant parental contact will be maintained via weekly news letters, bi-monthly student progress reports, AM and PM office hours for parents, an open classroom policy, pancake weekends, dinners, potlucks, parent socials, and evening and Saturday classes for parents with babysitters provided that include English Language Courses, GED, Computer Skills, Personal Finances, Résumé etc.

• Demonstrate understanding and capacity to meet state and federal requirements regarding identification and education of the likely ELL population

The Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literacy will not discriminate against ELL and LEP students or their families, and will demonstrate good faith efforts to attract and retain enrollment of ELL and LEP. MCSSL will comply with all applicable laws including Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 as well as the Federal Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974. MCSSL's core belief is that all students can learn and can achieve. MCSSL's community outreach and recruitment, as well as community programs offered will be used to recruit ELL and

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LEP students. Second Language Learner students who have not been evaluated will be identified by using the LAB-R. MCSSL's continued goal with ELL and LEP students will be to ensure students master the English Language Arts skills necessary to become a former ESL student, no longer in need of services. MCSSL will further support its ELL population by reaching out to organizations such as LACA (Latin American Community Alliance) to organize weekend and evening programs such as LEAF (Learning English among Friends) that promote English language learning for both students and parents.

In accordance with MCSSL's mission and core belief that students should be educated in an inclusive setting, English Immersion models will be implemented for instructional purposes. The ELL teacher will work along side the content teacher in inclusive classroom or non-classroom settings. Additional instruction will be provided to ELL students on Saturdays, after-school etc. ELL students will not be excluded from extra curricular activities, or electives. All notices sent home as well as student progress reports will be translated, and an interpreter will be provided for parent-teacher conferences if needed. All ELL students will be assessed for progress using the NYS ELA assessment. The NYSESLAT will provide indicators of proficiency and determine when a student will exit from ELL services and supports. ELL students will engage in continual ongoing formal and informal assessments including the NYSESLAT to inform instructional decisions and to make adjustments to support the individualized instruction that each ELL/LEP student receives.

- **Demonstrate understanding of and capacity to meet state and federal requirements regarding the identification and education of students with disabilities.**

The Manhattan School for Science and Literacy welcomes students with disabilities. It is our core belief that all students, including special education students, if given a chance, the right instruction and educational support, can achieve as well as, if not exceed, their general education counterparts. MCSSL's fully inclusive, hands-on cross-curricular instructional model is designed to reach all students, and is especially effective for students who have approaches to learning that differ from the more traditional methods found in many schools. MCSSL will seek to attract and retain students with disabilities. All students with disabilities will be educated in the least restrictive environment possible; MCSSL will consist of all inclusive classes where Special Education teachers work with content area teachers in the same classroom or non-classroom environment. Special Education teachers will monitor the effectiveness of lessons to support and collaborate with content area teachers in refining lessons to differentiate instruction. Protocols will be created to safeguard the privacy of students as per § 408 law. MCSSL will contract or hire any other personnel needed to serve the MCSSL's special education population. These include, but are not limited to: speech language, occupational therapy, recreation, counseling, mobility service etc.

The Manhattan School for Science and Literacy will follow all state and federal guidelines for students with disabilities and consult the Committee on Special Education (CSE) to provide students with support services. MCSSL will also follow rules that govern identifying students with disabilities by creating a Student Support Team. MCSSL will adopt a referral method as outlined in the regulations of NYS Commissioner of Education in accordance with Part 200.4. a referral may be made by any teacher, parent or person in parental relationship, a professional staff member of the school, a physician, a judicial officer, a representative of a state agency, or

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a student over 18 years of age. All educational services provided to students will conform to all applicable federal laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). All special educational programs and services at MCSSL shall be provided in accordance with Educational Law § 2853(4) (a). Initial evaluations, re-evaluations and revisions of IEPs, are the responsibility of local educational agency- the school district of a student's residence (34 CFR§ 300.2, 300.312 and 300.340 et al).

III School Design

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

Educational research provides extensive evidence that the Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literacy's nontraditional design elements and unique characteristics that include: a hands-on science curriculum, cross-curricular literacy, fully inclusive classes, regularly scheduled common planning and professional development embedded into the schedule, and continual on-going formative assessment provide all students with the means and opportunity to achieve academic success.

The educational research regarding the implementation of a hands-on science curriculum, such as the curriculum that will be implemented at MCSSL, demonstrates increases in student achievement in science, as well as in other academic subjects. A Report on Achievement: Effects of Hands-On Science in Dade County, Florida (1996) demonstrated that students in schools using hands-on science instruction outperformed other students not only in science, but also in Reading Comprehension, Mathematics Computation, and Mathematics. Additionally, J.D. Valdez (2001) found that reading scores for students of minority ethnic groups' who received hands-on science instruction increased at higher rates than their non-minority counterparts. Valdez suggests that hands-on science content may provide an effective means of reducing the achievement gap that exists between ethnic groups. Amaral, et. al. (2002) found that for English learners who experienced hands-on science instruction demonstrated improvement in reading, writing, and mathematics, while Bredderman (1982) concluded from his study that a hands-on science curriculum can make a positive contribution to the development and acquisition of language skills for English language learners.

The educational research in support of a cross-curricular literacy curriculum like that which will be utilized at MCSSL is extensive and widely accepted. Research into the topic by Perkin (1986) found that many of the important concepts, strategies, and skills taught in language arts are "portable." They transfer readily to other content areas. The concept of perseverance, for example, may be found in literature and science. Strategies for monitoring comprehension can be directed to reading material in any content area. Cause-and-effect relationships exist in literature, science, and social studies. A cross-curricular literacy curriculum supports and promotes this transfer. Thaiss (1986) determined that cross-curricular teaching provides the conditions under which effective learning occurs. Students learn more when they use their language arts skills to

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explore what they are learning, write about what they are learning, and interact with their classmates, teachers, and members of the community.

Research in support of collaborative inclusion instructional practices similar to MCSSL's design is strong. Research by Elliott (1992) suggests that successful inclusion practices depend on restructured schools that allow for flexible learning environments. Educational research has shown highly favorable results for special education students receiving a hands-on science curriculum in a fully inclusive academic setting similar to MCSSL's design. Data collected in numerous studies including Cawley et al. (2002), Cooney et al. (2006) and Idol (2006) suggests that students with disabilities in science inclusion classes perform significantly better than those students in remedial or resource room settings and reported significantly higher standardized statewide test scores, for students with disabilities compared to their segregated counterparts. In fact, the academic success of students with disabilities was comparable to that of general education students, and the passing rate for special education students was equal to or higher than that of their general education peers.

The evidence in support of collaborative planning time for teachers is strong. A summary of findings from The Principals' Partnership, A Program of Union Pacific Foundation, suggests that focused and goal-driven collaborative planning time, similar to the design MCSSL will implement helps teachers become more highly qualified by improving teaching strategies. Moreover, researchers Yevonne Goddard, et. al. (2007) found a positive relationship between teacher collaboration and differences among schools in mathematics and reading achievement. A 2008 practice guide from the U.S. Department of Education offers additional support for the instructional benefits of teacher collaboration. It cites teacher collaboration as a frequent approach to improving instruction in 35 chronically low-performing schools that achieved dramatic turnarounds defined as substantial gains in student achievement within three years.

Research into ongoing student assessment of learning like the design that will be implemented at MCSSL clearly demonstrates the benefits of continuous feedback on the effectiveness of instruction and ability to indicate areas where a change in instructional strategy may be needed.

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

The Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literacy's hands-on science curriculum, cross-curricular literacy instruction, common teacher planning and professional development program, and continual on-going assessment are all designed to reach all students at a variety of proficiency levels to strengthen their skills and ensure that they each make the necessary progress to experience academic achievement and a successful transition into high school. However, while academic achievement is key for the successful transition of middle school students to high school students, it is not the only factor. Motivation and engagement are also essential. These characteristics can be significantly influenced by students' learning environments. Research provided by Fredricks et. al. (2004) shows that students are more motivated and engaged when they are in environments that are intellectually challenging and

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socially supportive. MCSSL's curriculum is deliberate in its intention to inspire interest to better motivate and engage students through its curricular design and fully inclusive and supportive environment.

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

The Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literacy's continual ongoing assessment will be utilized to monitor student progress, to identify students in need of additional support, and to examine teacher effectiveness. Ongoing assessments will be standards-based, use multiple measures of student achievement, and be aligned to NYS learning standards curriculum guidelines and performance indicators. The assessments will include pre- and post-tests utilizing previous New York State ELA, Math and Science Assessments, Aquity, diagnostic tools on ARIS, criterion-referenced performance assessments, running records, pre- and post-tests (CFA's) for instructional units, as well as the NYSESLAT for ELL students.

Analysis and reporting of assessment results will be an informative, timely, interactive, and used to guide continuous improvement in teaching and learning. Additionally, these assessments will be used to promote the expectations that all students can and will be successful, and that assessment is a part of learning, not the end of learning.

Previous ELA, math and science state assessments will be administered during the first week of school and scored by teachers during collaborative planning and professional development. Data collected from student test results will be used to drive instruction. Teachers will meet students where they are to help them gain and master skills.

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

The Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literacy is committed to using guidelines to evaluate performance. Continual ongoing assessment is a feature of MCSSL instructional design. MCSSL's daily common planning and professional development sessions will be utilized to develop teachers understanding of the importance of data analysis on instructional practice, to guide instructional decisions and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Thus, all teachers will be trained to use Aris for preliminary and ongoing assessment, as well as Aquity to monitor and support progress. Teachers will also work collaboratively to develop local instructional improvement systems including rubrics to evaluate each student's individual progress to better identify and plan for each student's next instructional step, as well as pre- and post-tests, or Common Formative Assessments, to measure each student's understanding for the purpose of illuminating the teacher's instructional effectiveness.

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

The Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literacy will collaborate with Mr. Recy Benjamin Dunn, Executive Director, and Charter Schools Office to identify CSD 5 low performing schools with whom to develop learning partnerships. MCSSL's founding members and staff will work with local schools to share curriculum, lessons plans, resources, and best practices. MCSSL will open its doors to staff of other local schools so that teachers and administrators may come to observe our school, its students, teachers and parents. MCSSL will invite neighboring low-performing schools

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to collaborate on professional development opportunities for teachers. These opportunities could include partnerships with the city's learning institutions, university(s), technology, differentiated instruction practices and parent involvement. MCSSL teachers will observe at partner schools and share their observations with MCSSL faculty during collaborative planning and professional development sessions. MCSSL's staff will also participate with local public school staff in professional development provided or sponsored by the New York City Department of Education.

MCSSL intends to be a learning community in a community of professionals.

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

A successful school has many components but some are absolutely essential. Parent involvement is key and crucial not only to student success, but the schools ability to build climate and culture. The parents of our students and our school's community are its culture. MCSSL will reflect the diverse cultures of our students and create a school that celebrates and uplifts our students' traditions and roots. MCSSL's culture will be a place where everyone is accepted and expected to achieve high academic success. Our teachers, parents and students will share this as one. The most important way to create a positive school culture is to get our students, parents and staff to "buy in" believe we are all working toward one goal ,and that goal is academic success and achievement. We will be a place where respect for self and others is most important, a culture of disciplined behaviors that increase our abilities to achieve our goals. The climate of a school is what's inside once the doors are open and students enter. The climate will be one of respect, acceptance and hardwork. MCSSL will provide a positive climate by creating and utilizing strict discipline codes that ensure that every student can focus on education. Our teachers will be supported and respected as professional individuals who have important and necessary input. MCSSL will create its school's culture by immediately contacting parents and hosting get together for parents and students. We will work with parent schedules, make hello and welcome phone calls to our students and parents. Our teachers will begin working together before schools starts. We will support our teachers with staff induction and professional development. Our teachers become founding members. The teachers will be screened and interviewed and chosen based on a sound well planned hiring selection process. The selection committee will include founding members, parents and students as well as community leaders.

Before school begins, MCSSL will be known well by parents and students. Our parents will be invited to register for classes offered by MCSSL; we will open the school and provide a safe place for students to come and work in our classrooms, paint our school's halls and also offer tutoring. Our school will also be opened to attract our less academically interested students by beginning try-outs for sports teams and/or adult supervised recreation.

Our school will begin with an open door policy allowing our students to drop in during the summer before school begins and on weekends.

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MCSSL's founding members are well trained and qualified to manage and lead a school. Sabrina Robin Ford has a MS in Education and School Leadership as well as a NYS SDA license She has learned how to manage school budgets as well as how to manage a staff of teachers. As a dean and teacher she understands the importance of school discipline. As a Reading Specialist and Literacy Coach, Amy Alfortish possess the skills necessary to direct MCSSL's cross-curricular literacy curriculum ensuring that it employs high expectations for each student's reading and writing at all grade levels and in all subject areas, and as a former School Reform Facilitator knowledge and understanding to successfully manage MCSSL's intensive parent and community outreach. Both members have worked with teachers as leaders in professional development and both believe in a collaborative environment where teachers and leaders work together collaboratively on all aspects of the school.

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

The Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literacy will work in collaboration Mr. Recy Benjamin Dunn, Executive Director, Charter Schools Office and The Division of Portfolio Planning to determine the most appropriate site arrangement for MCSSL, preferably in CSD 5.

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

The Manhattan Charter School for Science and Literacy will provide CSD 5 students with a viable alternative for middle school students to the current inadequate and underperforming middle schools provided in CSD 5. As previously stated, none of the schools serving the middle school population in CSD 5 received an A in either achievement or performance. Four received an unsatisfactory grade of either a D or and F for student achievement and eight received an unsatisfactory grade of a D or an F in student performance. Finally, with only three of CSD 5's middle schools showing any measurable improvement in scores for students in the lowest performing third for ELA and only one out of 14 showing measurable gains for students in the lowest performing third for math, it is clear, that CSD 5 has an urgent need for a middle school that can meet both state and city requirements, by increasing student performance on standardized state assessments and by closing the achievement gap.