

Executive Summary

Mission Statement: The mission of Millennium Literacy Academy is to provide a well-balanced literacy based education which will equip students with the requisite skills—the ability to read, write, speak, think, and calculate with clarity and precision—to succeed in a knowledge-based, global society.

Millennium Literacy Academy (MLA) will serve 375 students in grades 6-8, starting with 275 students in the first operational year of 2009-2010. Initially, students will be accepted for grades six and seven; then grade eight will be added in 2010-2011. Millennium seeks to serve the communities along the Georgia Avenue and 14th Street corridors in neighborhood clusters 18 and 2—Petworth, Brightwood Park, Park View and Columbia Heights.

MLA is being established to accomplish one clear and measurable goal: to prepare students to learn and work in today's rapidly changing society. Literacy is the school's focus because literacy is the foundation for learning. Literacy is the driver of academic improvement across all subjects. Literacy is the key to high school graduation. For those reasons, Millennium will offer a developmentally responsive, literacy based educational program that will contribute to the formation of life long learners and leaders. Upon graduation from Millennium, our students will be equipped with the essential academic skills and confidence to succeed in high school, college, and beyond.

Key Features of Millennium Literacy Academy:

Literacy Focus: MLA is committed to helping our students improve their literacy and numeracy (numerical literacy) skills so that they met or exceed the proficiency standards in reading and math on the D.C. Comprehensive Assessment (DCCAS). Without a doubt, literacy and numeracy are fundamental gateway skills for learning core academic content, acquiring 21st century skills and performing on the job. Being an educated person in the 21st century begins with a high competency in literacy and numeracy and continues with a love of knowledge and the acquisition of skills which are required if one is to become a lifelong learner. A solid foundation in literacy and numeracy gives students the widest range of choices in their academic career and beyond.

In addition, Millennium understands the congruence between student efficacy and the essential skills included in 21st century multimedia literacy. This approach allows students to develop 21st century skills, including the ability to both understand and create messages, communications and works that include, or are constructed with, visual, aural and haptic (physical) elements as well as words¹. Students attending MLA will be equipped to engage in computer programming literacy, a skill that allows students to make and adapt digital technology in the fulfillment of individual and corporate needs.

Career-Related Learning Communities: Millennium will implement a school-within-a-school learning community model. Each learning community will have career-related theme, which will provide the opportunity for students to develop a basic understanding of potential academic and career paths. The academic and career areas of concentration are: Business and Information Systems, Science and Engineering Technologies, Human and Public Services, Construction and Architectural Services, and Arts and Humanities.

Developmentally Responsive Middle School Education: MLA will employ strategic organizational, instructional, curricular and assessment practices, based upon the developmental readiness, needs, and interests of young adolescents. MLA will utilize small learning

¹ Prensky, Marc. (2008). Programming: The New Literacy. EDUTOPIA, February, 2009.

community/school-within-a-school model, interdisciplinary team teaching, flexible scheduling, advisory programs, and looping to address the developmental needs of young teens. The research documents the benefits of such structures as having the most positive effect on student achievement, mental health, and student attitudes toward school for students of disadvantaged, underachieving, and low socio-economic backgrounds.

Home-School-Community Collaboration: Millennium will rely on an array of community resources and organizations to provide students with sufficient structure and support, such as: 1) Parents — We will offer parents opportunities to participate in whole school activities, day to day school affairs, and school governance; 2) Community Connections—The school will partner with universities, business community, and colleges to optimize student learning through the exploration of career and educational choices, and 3) Family Literacy Program — Millennium will bridge home and school literacy contexts by involving families in literacy activities with their children.²

Positive Learning Environment: MLA will ensure a school environment that gives young adolescents opportunities to learn and interact in a humane, respectful and psychologically safe learning environment. We will create an environment that lessens conflicts between educators and students and reduces discipline referrals and confrontations, teasing, bullying and harassment among students. To ensure such an atmosphere, the school will implement schedules, discipline procedures, teaching methods, school organization and guidance programs that place priority on the learner.

Professional Development: Professional development will be on-going with the ultimate goal of improving student learning. Professional development opportunities sponsored by the school will focus on four areas: (1) Content Knowledge – increasing teachers’ knowledge of a specific curriculum; (2) Instructional Strategies – methods and techniques for the presentation of information and activities; (3) Adolescent – information about the uniqueness of adolescent learners; and (4) Team Building – activities to enhance the staff sense of team and unity.

Empowerment Guidance and Counseling: Millennium’s counseling program will help empower students to meet challenges that often lead to problems in school and beyond. The empowerment model is a social change, advocacy, and counseling intervention that focus on promoting assets and fostering strengths. Millennium will take several approaches such as individual, small and large group counseling, and Empowerment Groups for Academic Success (EGAS), as well as adviser-advisee programs.

EDUMSART, LLC: EDUMSART will provide educational services to Millennium. The EDUMSART team has a proven track record with over 30 years of combined education, business, and management, technological and fiscal experience. The EDUMSART philosophy is that there are no failing schools, students or teachers. EDUMSART will provide 21st century solutions guaranteed to improve school, teacher and student performance.

² Bevans, Furnish, Ramsey, and Talsma (2001)