

Executive Summary

Vision/Mission

The mission of our public charter high school is (1) to provide a rigorous 9th- 12th grade standards-based college preparatory curriculum to maximize our students' academic achievement, (2) to provide an interdisciplinary curriculum which integrates international studies themes across the academic curriculum leading to an International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma and (3) to prepare our students to be self-directed, life-long learners equipped to be engaged citizens of their school, community, country and world.

Educational Focus

National Prep proposes the creation of a 9th-12th grade school targeting students in Ward 7 and Ward 8 that combines challenging academics with real-world experiences and prepares students for high school achievement, post secondary success and productive citizenship. All students will be required to take a full interdisciplinary core program, including mathematics, English/language arts, science, a world language and art. Students will also participate in morning Advisory, an intensive 3-week Winterim program, weekly Town meetings, academic internships, international themed activities, and participate in regularly scheduled opportunities for enrichment, support activities, and electives. To address the 'failure to achieve' conundrum of high schools in the District of Columbia, the school will emphasize several interrelated instructional evidence and research-based approaches and strategies to promote student learning and achievement:

- Project-based instruction
- Differentiated instruction
- Cooperative learning
- Curriculum integration
- Presentations of learning
- Internships and Field Studies
- Direct Instruction
- Small class size and low teacher to student ratios
- Reader's and writer's workshop model

These approaches will all be used in a 'context of team teaching'. Students will advance from Prep I (9th grade), to Prep II (10th grade), to Prep III (11th grade), to Prep IV (12th grade) based on their mastery of the content standards for each performance level and core academic subject area.

In addition, we will provide an opportunity for students to experience thoughtfully developed real-world/experiential curriculum that will provide hands-on and "minds-on-work" for our students. These strategies and instructional approaches will not only begin to dismantle the culture of no and low achievement, but also provide enhanced and exciting educational opportunities for all matriculating students at National Prep.

National Prep will integrate international studies themes (e.g. world geography and culture, global systems and relationship, international perspectives), inquiry and coursework/subunits across all academic areas of the curriculum. Students will be expected to study at least one world language. National Prep students will have the opportunity to travel abroad through student exchange programs to practice these language skills and experience different cultures; they will learn together about different countries, building acceptance, empathy and friendships across socioeconomic, racial, linguistic and ethnic lines. National Prep students will be required to adopt a region of study at each grade level as a cumulative and collective process of studying the world. This will provide our student's with an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of at least one world culture, world region, or international issue grades 9 through 12. Students will have the opportunity to

participate in the school's international baccalaureate program, an intensive 2-year course of study that begins in the 11th grade (in year 3), has six academic subject areas (including the humanities and the sciences) and leads to the International Baccalaureate Diploma. In addition, the school will offer international business and global studies specialization beginning in SY 2010-2011.

The founders of National Collegiate Preparatory PCHS along with its Education Design Team subcommittee, understand that no single instructional strategy or single school will, by itself, be adequate to mitigate decades of under education and poor education of children in the targeted wards. We also understand that many of our students will come to school 2-3 years below grade level, lacking self-confidence, and with tremendous gaps in their knowledge base and skill sets. However, a school working together with families, community and university partners, can combine help to "greenhouse" a culture of achievement and commitment to learning necessary for academic success. These philosophies, values and practice, will, we believe, serve our students well in college and in the 21st century global workforce. National Collegiate Preparatory will implement four design principles that translate our principles into four school core practices. The four National Collegiate Preparatory principles are: 1) every student can achieve and meet high academic standards regardless of their learning styles, abilities or socio-economic status; 2) parental and community involvement as essential ingredients for student success; 3) small school design promotes positive student outcomes; and 4) teaching students with varied learning styles and abilities to be prepared for collegiate success.

These principles are vetted via a whole-school implementation of the following practices: 1) data driven decision-making with linkages to other high performing schools to ensure 'best practice' teaching, learning and assessment; 2) creation of small school culture of 'professional learning communities and 'communities of practice' that support faculty, staff, parents and administrators; 3) creating a high school with a school-wide culture of high expectations and shared character values, and academic achievement that embrace *Honor, Scholarship and Leadership*; and 4) building an interdisciplinary curriculum that supports and promotes student mastery.

National Prep will also use the Coalition of Essential School's research-based *Common Principles* to serve as guideposts for meeting of our academic, non-academic goals, and implementing our practices with fidelity.

The school will utilize the Restorative Discipline model that emphasizes including members of the school community to develop a moral stance and helping the offender to understand they are responsible for their own behavior. Restorative practices are designed "to help students stay connected to the school and their peers even when they have made a mistake or when they have been a victim of wrongdoing." Students will learn there are positive and negative consequences for their behavior. Our model will teach students to think beyond their actions and make the best choices for all situations in life. The National Collegiate Preparatory Code of Conduct will describe expectations of behavior as an enrolled student. Further, students will understand the consequences for not following the rules and rewards they can earn for positive behavior.

National Collegiate Preparatory Public Charter High School will open in 2009-2010, with 125 ninth grade students. The school will add a new 9th grade class each year until it reaches maximum capacity of 325 students in grades 9 through 12. The teacher student ratio will not exceed 20 students per class. Each classroom will be staffed by a lead teacher, a Teaching Fellow and academic support teacher. The school has plans to locate in Ward 7 or Ward 8.