

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. EARLY COLLEGE REVITALIZATION PLAN UPDATE

Creating Great Thinkers, Great Communicators, and Great Leaders

Prepared For:

Denver Public Schools
School Innovation Grant Advisory Committee

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"We are a rigorous school with a devoted faculty relentlessly focused on the academic and personal success of all our students".

Principal Michael Gaither, 2005

Martin Luther King Jr. Early College is in the second year of implementing its five year revitalization plan that was developed with significant community input over the course of nearly a year. The original plan was approved by the DPS Board of Education on June 16, 2005. At its core, this plan has been about the fundamental transformation of the school's culture and a reconnection of the school with the community it serves. This report is organized using the major subject areas being used by the DPS Innovations Committee:

- Education Program
- Community Engagement
- Demographics & Enrollment
- Physical Learning Environment
- Fiscal Sustainability

The MLK of today is a far different place than it was just two short years ago. MLK Jr. Early College has become, through an enormous amount of work, a highly focused learning center in pursuit of new and innovative ways for our faculty, staff, and students to acquire knowledge. We came together as a school and community in search of ways that we could better serve our kids to prepare them for the rigors of the global marketplace.

Through the revitalization planning journey we embraced the need to rethink both the **what** and the **how** of learning and we challenged ourselves to look beyond incremental changes and instead embraced a "**systems approach**" to remaking our school. It was through these questions that the early college was founded. We are proud of our accomplishments to date, but know we still have a long way to go.

INTRODUCTION

The **Revitalization Plan Update** for Martin Luther King Jr. Early College has been prepared in response to questions provided to us by the district's School Innovation Grant Advisory Committee. As stated above, we are in year two of a five year organizational transformation. We have successfully completed each of our respective goals and objectives to date as more fully described in our "Transformational Timeline" that has been included in the report as Attachment #3.

Our faculty and staff remain fully committed to fully implementing MLK's Revitalization Plan and the Green Valley Ranch and Montbello communities support continues to grow as more people learn about the exciting changes underway at MLK and the broader collaboration among the fifteen plus far northeast schools. We believe that MLK Jr. Early College represents one of the many shining examples of the Denver Plan in action.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

Academic Program and Alignment with Work Force Development

Early College Model

The basis of our overall program offering is founded on a small, highly rigorous early college. The goal is to prepare MLK student's to successfully enter and complete post secondary studies without remediation. What makes MLK especially unique is the 6th -12th grade continuum, which eliminates one transition point (middle to high school) and provides us upwards of seven years with our students to nurture their academic and career interests. The Revitalization Plan includes many of the recommendations from the district's high school reform report and is also aligned with the goals and objectives of the Denver Plan.

Draft Course Matrix for Early College

Through ongoing conversations with the Community College of Aurora, our partner in the early college, we have outlined an initial course matrix that provides a roadmap for our students to follow as they move between high school and college academic work. The matrix is enclosed as Attachment # 1.

College 101-401 (*Skills Development for Post Secondary Success*)

To further support our students achieve post secondary success, we have developed a series of classes that are linked to the high school grade the student is currently enrolled. Presently, our entire 9th grade class is taking College 101, as 10th graders they will take College 201, etc. as the move from grade to grade. The course is offered Period 1 to every student. It incorporates resources from six important strands.

First, students are exposed to learning, studying, and personal success strategies from a college text called *Cornerstone*. Second, they use vast resources from AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), which is a nationwide college preparatory program employed schoolwide at the Early College. Third, the planners apply exercises from a four-year curriculum notebook from the DPS Career and Tech Ed (CTE) department. Fourth, we use miscellaneous resources from current events and our teachers' professional experience (such as Step Up to Writing to improve our students' writing skills). Fifth, we engage guest speakers—such as Rana Black from College-in-Colorado—to speak to our students about college and careers. Sixth, we schedule study hall sessions (called “tutorials”) for our students to engage in intensive studying in their core classes. We believe College 101 is a key element of our students' success.

Over the course of College 201, 301, and 401 our students will have ample time to think about their dreams and receive the resources to help achieve them.

Career Exploration/Business Advisory Council

The final piece to our plan includes the opportunity for our middle and high school students to increasingly explore career options. As early as this coming spring we will be kicking off our initial Business Advisory Council (BAC), to assist us in making our course work more relevant. For our high school students, we will be seeking support from our BAC members to serve as speakers, mentors, provide internships, and project-based learning opportunities. We are also closely monitoring the work of the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation and the eleven industry sectors they have identified as workforce development opportunities for the state.

Academic Outcomes/Evaluation Strategies & Tools

Middle School Metrics & Interventions

With a relentless focus on student achievement, the middle school faculty relies on a variety of data to implement meaningful academic interventions for students. As more fully described in the original Revitalization Plan, we have instituted a series of new and/or expanded educational efforts to measure student achievement including, but not limited to: Data Teams, Double Block Schedule, Read 180, MAPS, expansion of AVID strategies and use of Student Planners

High School Metrics

As a new school, the Early College high school does not have an evaluation database just yet. However, with the leadership of the Northeast principals, our teachers have studied how to become a “data team.” The teachers have pulled the student’s 8th grade CSAP scores along with the Fall 2006 Benchmark data to start working on advancing each student’s proficiency level. For example, the data show our students need more help with writing. The faculty in the high school immediately implemented Step Up to Writing in the College 101 class to address certain deficiencies. The ability to respond immediately with appropriate academic interventions is critical to a small school’s success.

With the flexibility of College 101, the core teachers are able to meet as a data team while the students are in a College 101 section as a group—such as when a speaker is visiting or when the students are practicing writing to a prompt.

Fundamentally, the key outcome for our 12th graders will be high school graduation and matriculation to the college, university, or technical school of their choice, followed by timely graduation from those institutions with an appropriate degree. The faculty in the high school is working diligently to prepare all of our students to be able to meet these goals.

As we continue to fine tune our new high school program, it is our intent to select a series of meaningful metrics to evaluate our success in preparing our students for their high school and post secondary credentials. One of the primary methods for tracking each student will be through the use of a **Personal Learning Plan** (PLP). Each student will prepare an initial PLP in the spring of each year as part of their College 101 requirements. PLP’s will be updated and monitored through College 201-401. Other indicators that will be used to measure student and school success shall include:

- GPA
- PSAT
- SAT/ACT Scores
- Accuplacer
- Dual Credits Earned (while in high school)
- Remediation Rates & Course Work
- Scholarship Dollars Earned
- College Acceptance Rates
- College Graduation Rates (how many MLK students complete their post secondary program)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Central to our continued success, is the ongoing engagement of our parents, students, teachers, staff and community partners who are fundamental to the execution of our five-year Revitalization Plan. Key components of our community engagement plan include, but are not limited to:

Surveys – on an ongoing basis we will be engaging our students, parents, and other key stakeholder groups through both electronic and paper generated surveys.

Parent & Student Workshops – workshops are offered monthly on a variety of college prep-type subjects. Most recently, workshop topics included an overview of AVID, Cornell note-taking, and our College 101 course.

9th Grade Newsletter – published twice each month, this informative newsletter is available in both print and electronic versions. It highlights up-to-date information about early college and is intended to help reinforce our rigorous college-prep environment.

School Website – the website was completed redone this year as part of the schools transition into a 6th – 12th grade early college high school.

DEMOGRAPHICS & ENROLLMENT

Demographics: Our High School

Total Number of students: 89 (first 9th grade class)

Female	55
Male	34

Asian	03
African- American	29
Hispanic	53
White	04

Percentage of students from the following schools:

Martin Luther King Jr.	68%
Omar D. Blair Charter School	9%
Rachel B Noel	5%
Other DPS Schools	8%
APS/Aurora Other	6%
Out of State/Move Ins/New	4%

Enrollment Plan: Growth of Our High School

Overview

We are targeting a total enrollment, grades 6-12 by 2010 at 1200 students with an approximate mix of 700-800 middle school students and 400-500 high school students. We understand that both the high school and total student counts vary from the original plan. Modifications are based upon a more in depth understanding of the highly personalized early college experience we are trying to provide our students as a direct response to increasing the number of DPS students who successfully enter and complete their post secondary credentials and prepare them for the rigors of the global economy. We also see the smaller number of students as a way to differentiate MLK Jr. Early College from other more traditional comprehensive school options.

Enrollment Projections: Middle School 6-8

We will continue to work closely with the district to incrementally reduce the total number of middle school students to that of our increasing number of high school students.

Enrollment Projections: High School 9-12

Key Assumptions for the high school grades:

- Capacity/High School Grade - 125
- Add one high school grade per year to establish building-wide transformational culture

Class of 2010 Goal: 125 Actual: 90

Class of 2011 Enrollment Goal: 100 Stretch Enrollment Goal: 110

Class of 2012 Enrollment Goal: 110 Stretch Enrollment Goal: 115

Class of 2013 Enrollment Goal: 115 Stretch Enrollment Goal: 120

Marketing

Words and images matter. Taken together they can frame what we believe, both as an individual and as an organization. The creation of our marketing collateral has been purposeful in the goal of accomplishing two fundamental objectives. First, change the general perception of MLK through a bold new vision and mission, ultimately supported by concrete accomplishments.

Secondly, provide a combination of research-based program offerings that differentiate MLK Jr. Early College from other local and regional high schools. These core objectives have been achieved through a series of inter-related marketing approaches:

Video

We developed a moving 8-minute video to tell the story of MLK Jr. Middle School and its transformation into the MLK Jr. Early College High School. The video has been distributed to both current and potential students.

School Brochure

The brochure provides highlights and areas of focus about the 6th – 12th grade program. Its central theme, which is printed on the front cover, captures the essence of our school and our commitment to our students. From the outset, the brochure makes clear who and what we are about, “*A rigorous school with a devoted faculty relentlessly focused on the academic and personal success of all our students*”. A copy of the brochure is enclosed as Attachment #2

Slogans: Reinforcing the Vision and Mission

As the big ideas from the Revitalization Plan have been introduced, we have developed a series of slogans to reinforce our new vision, mission, and culture. Examples include: *The MLK Way*, *Got your learn on*, and *Creating Great Thinkers, Great Communicators, and Great Leaders*.

DPS Choice Office Enrollment Process

Of equal or greater importance going into the 2007-08 school year, we have been able to align our recruitment efforts with that of the DPS Choice Office. Last year, for a variety of reasons, we missed the cut-off dates to get into the official mix of marketing our brand new high school program throughout the district. We are already scheduled to make the following school visits to promote the small, early college high school. Visits scheduled include: Park Hill, Smiley, Rachel B. Noel, Florida Pitt Waller, and Howell. In addition, we will also be meeting with parents and students from Omar D. Blair as well as new housing developments and existing community's that lye in close proximity to MLK Jr. Early College that may reside in other neighboring school districts.

Transformational Timeline/Key Project Milestones

From the outset of the planning effort, we identified a series of manageable implementation action items that would allow us to measure important milestones throughout the revitalization plan's execution. To date we have met all of our critical milestones and will continue to use the timeline as an important measurement tool as we move forward with our Revitalization Plan through 2010. Our “Transformation Timeline” is provided in Attachment 3.

PHYSICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The remaining (major) facility improvements identified to ideally support the small early college high school that were listed in the original plan dated June 16, 2005 have been moved to the Citizens Committee on Capital Needs effort. The specific items being reviewed by the committee relative to MLK Jr. facility needs include: the construction of high school gymnasium, the construction of auditorium, the replacement of old windows throughout school, expanded parking for high school, and miscellaneous classroom enhancements for high school grades.

FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Revitalization Plan budget is provided in Attachment #4. As we have done from the outset, our plan outlined a five year budget to support the schools transformation. The budget includes dollars needed to implement the new high school program one grade each year, including staff development and related marketing to support our enrollment strategy as a small early college high school. Based upon the expenditures made this year from the “revitalization funds” for our high school counselor and early college transition coordinator, we have \$89,858 in funds remaining from the revitalization dollars committed toward the plan. It is our intent to allocate those remaining funds over the remaining three years as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>DPS Revitalization Funds</u>	<u>Foundation Matching Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
2007-08	\$35,858	\$35,858	\$71,716
2008-09	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$70,000
2009-10	<u>\$19,000</u>	<u>\$19,000</u>	<u>\$19,000</u>
Total	\$89,858	\$89,858	\$160,716

The Foundation for Education Excellence, MLK’s key community funding partner, has agreed in principal to match the district’s revitalization funds dollar-for-dollar over the remaining three years to help support the successful transformation of the school into a rigorous 6-12 early college high school. All remaining fund categories, as described within updated budget, are meant to allow MLK to add a high school grade each year until we have the full compliment of middle and high school grades by the 2009-2010 school years. We believe, based upon the targeted enrollment numbers identified, the program will be fully sustainable as a 6-12 early college high school without the need for additional resources beyond those normally allotted to the middle and high schools under the annual DPS budgeting process. In order to complete our budgeting for the next couple of years, we need to work with the district on answering these two questions:

1. What HS allocations will MLK receive next year independent of school enrollment at the 9th and 10th grade? (e.g.. counselor, student advisor, library). MLK should roll in year with respect to positions as part of the phase in.
2. What plans does the school district have next year for instructional support through the mill levy or other sources? (e.g.. 10th grade lang arts, math, social studies, and science)

Martin Luther King Jr. Revitalization Plan
Transformational Timeline

2004-2005 Calendar Year (March 2005 – May 2005)

- Submit Revitalization Committee Report to DPS/BOE (**task complete**)
- Begin rehire/hire new teachers and staff (**task complete**)
- Conduct preliminary facility assessment study (**task complete**)

2005-2006 Calendar Year (June 2005 – May 2006)

- Purchase and implement curriculum enhancements for 6-8 grade (**task complete**)
- Begin teacher/staff training in curriculum enhancements, new MLK mission, and objectives (**task complete**)
- Implement Student Assessment/Benchmarking tool(s) to track individual student performance
- Implement student uniform policy (**task complete**)
- Host orientation classes from incoming 6th grade students and parents (**task complete**)
- Launch marketing campaign to inform community about the new MLK (**task complete**)
- Begin identification and selection of Business Advisory Council members (**task complete**)
- Begin integrating “project-based learning” opportunities within classrooms (**task complete**)
- Assemble ECHS transition team, including the hiring of a project manager, needed support staff, and issue specific consultants (**task complete**)
- Conduct site-based tours of existing ECHS programs & facilities (**task complete**)
- Hire 9th grade teachers; conduct required training (**task complete**)

2006-2007 Calendar Year (June 2006 – May 2007)

- Conduct evaluation of curriculum enhancements for 6-8 grade/1st year review (**task complete**)
- Host orientation classes from incoming 6th grade students and parents (**task complete**)
- Host orientation classes for incoming 9th grade students and parents (**task complete**)
- Teacher/staff training (**task ongoing**)
- First 9th grade class begins (**task complete**)
- Phase I building improvements implemented to support 9-12 grade configuration (**task complete**)
- Recruit and implement Student Ambassador Mentoring Program (**task in progress**)
- Launch initial Business Advisory Council (**pending**)
- Hire 10th grade teachers; conduct required training (**pending**)

2007-2008 Calendar Year (June 2007 – May 2008)

- Conduct evaluation of curriculum enhancements for 6-8 grade (2nd year review)
- Host orientation classes from incoming 6th grade students and parents
- Conduct evaluation of 9th grade class program components
- First 10th grade class begins
- Phase II building improvements implemented to support 9-12 grade configuration
- Continue implementation of Student Ambassador Mentoring Program
- Continue implementation of Business Advisory Council; recruitment of new members
- Hire 11th grade teachers; conduct required training

2008-2009 Calendar Year (June 2008 – May 2009)

- Conduct evaluation of curriculum enhancements for 6-8 grade (3rd year review)
- Host orientation classes from incoming 6th grade students and parents
- Conduct evaluation of 10th grade class program components
- First 11th grade class begins
- Phase III building improvements implemented to support 9-12 grade configuration
- Continue implementation of Student Ambassador Mentoring Program
- Continue implementation of Business Advisory Council; recruitment of new members
- Hire 12th grade teachers; conduct required training

2009-2010 Calendar Year (June 2009-May 2010)

- Conduct evaluation of 11th grade class program components
- Host orientation classes from incoming 6th grade students and parents
- First 12th grade class begins
- Phase IV building improvements implemented to support 9-12 grade configuration
- Continue implementation of Student Ambassador Mentoring Program
- Continue implementation of Business Advisory Council; recruitment of new members
- Celebrate graduation of first 12th grade class!