

BEACON SCHOOLS

PROPOSAL COVER PAGE

The Denver Public Schools and the Denver Classroom Teachers Association jointly recognize that all families demand rigorous and compelling academic choices for their students. To this end, DPS and DCTA will encourage teachers and principals to collaborate in the development and implementation of Beacon Schools. In Beacon Schools, teachers and principals will work closely together to exceed the expectations of the Denver Plan by establishing coherent and consistent instructional practice that leads to high academic performance for all students.

Provide the name of the **primary point of contact** for your proposal. This individual will serve as the contact for follow-up, interviews, and notices regarding this process. *Please note: names and contact information may be shared with external groups by DPS.*

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Names and roles of members applying:

Danell DeRudder – Humanities Facilitator
Mary Felix – 4th Grade Teacher
Shannon Hagerman – Principal
Mike Hare – Parent
Rae Harris – Enrichment Coordinator
Giselle Hummel – Kindergarten Teacher and DCTA Rep
Anne Jacobs – 1st Grade Teacher
Sharon Kelly – Parent and PTA President
Marj McKenna – ESL Resource Teacher
Barb Slenger – 2nd Grade Teacher and CSC Chair

Name of the Proposed School:

Montclair School of Academics & Enrichment

Proposed Site(s) for the School:

1151 Newport Street
Denver, CO 80220

SECTION I

ACADEMIC VISION STATEMENT

At the Montclair School of Academics & Enrichment, all students are provided with a set of experiences that will allow them to become lifelong learners while mastering the content of grade level standards. Our goal is to provide enriched and authentic learning experiences that promote children's engagement and motivation. All students participate in learning opportunities that are designed to build upon and enhance their individual strengths and talents. Our collective commitment is to provide an enriched, high quality education that meets the varying needs of children, encourages active parent involvement and enhances community engagement. Citizens of the 21st century will need to be creative, critical thinking individuals who are capable of working collaboratively, while maintaining a personal responsibility for becoming life-long learners. We believe all students should have access to a rich curriculum using instructional practices typically reserved for the gifted and talented. At the same time, children should be provided with the opportunity to learn at an appropriate pace and develop their talents and skills, in an atmosphere of respect that acknowledges and supports the development of their individual abilities and interests.

SECTION II EDUCATION PLAN

Since the fall of 2004, Montclair has been undergoing the intensive process of revitalization. Our efforts began in earnest with a survey of homeowners in the historic Montclair community that surrounds the school. Through this process we were able to better understand the community's perception of the school and identify several areas which required improvement. These included student achievement, instructional program offerings, overall school reputation, safety and discipline. With this information, a highly dedicated and focused group of individuals including teachers, parents, community members and administrators worked diligently to design a plan that was approved by the Board of Education in January 2005. As we are only in the second year of implementation, our Beacon Schools proposal incorporates the work that has taken place to date, while defining a path for future development and sustainability of the program. The proposed academic and operational goals for Montclair are as follows:

Goal #1: Develop and provide an enriched instructional program that is designed to meet the diverse needs and varied interests of a wide spectrum of learners.

Objective: Increase student enrollment by 10% per academic year.

Objective: Increase percentage of families attending from the Historic Montclair Community and/or choosing into the school by 10% per academic year until 50% attendance rate is achieved (currently at 20%).

Goal #2: Students at Montclair will learn from a highly skilled faculty that is empowered by rigorous professional development and data-driven instruction.

Objective: Increase the number of 3rd through 5th grade students performing at or above the proficient level in reading, writing and math as measured on CSAP by 10 percentage points per year.

Objective: Meet all AYP targets in reading and math on an annual basis.

Objective: Increase the number of students reading at or above proficient in Kindergarten through 2nd grades by 10% per academic year as measured by the DRA 2 assessment scores.

Goal #3: Develop a learning environment centered upon respect through collaboration with students, teachers, parents, volunteers and the local community.

Objective: Establish school/community partnerships, tutoring and mentoring programs with local businesses and community volunteers.

Objective: Develop community throughout the school by establishing a peer buddy program and opportunities for students of different grade levels to work together.

Objective: Extend our community of learners by providing and refining the extended day program available to students and parents.

The goals defined herein are in direct alignment with the Denver Plan in that they strive to improve the academic performance of all students while providing a set of experiences that will inspire children to become creative, responsible members of a global community.

Student success at Montclair has been less than optimal over the recent years. For the past two school years (2004-2005 and 2005-2006) we have failed to meet NCLB's requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in reading. As a result, using this measure, our current NCLB status is "School Improvement, Year 1." However, when one compares the results from the two school years, significant improvements were made. During the 2004-2005 school year 75% of the AYP targets were made as compared to 2005-2006 when 90% of the targets were achieved. Similarly, during the 2005-2006 school year, CSAP scores increased in 7 out of 9 categories and Montclair was ranked 5th amongst all DPS elementary schools for overall performance improvement. We are confident that with the continued implementation of the instructional model detailed herein, gains will continue to be made each year.

At Montclair, we want all students to develop the understandings and skills that will allow them to apply the big ideas embedded in the content standards to the grade level topics and focus areas. Rather than students being able to simply recall facts related to a topic, we want them to be able to apply their knowledge in a manner that encourages deeper level understanding and further exploration. This will better prepare all students for more complex studies in the various disciplines as they progress to higher levels of learning.

Our education plan is centered upon the *Schoolwide Enrichment Model* (SEM) developed by Joseph Renzulli at the University of Connecticut. This model allows for students to become actively engaged in an enriched curriculum where high-end learning and talent development is encouraged for all students. The *Schoolwide Enrichment Model* is a detailed blueprint for total school improvement that is based upon the vision that "schools are places for talent development". The SEM takes into account the varying abilities, backgrounds, experiences and learning styles of each student and capitalizes upon these strengths and interests so that children are able to meet their greatest potential through an educational experience that is both challenging and individualized.

The DPS and Colorado Model Content Standards serve as the foundation for our instruction. To these we add an extensive enrichment program that helps students deepen their understandings of the curricular content. Our instructional program employs the DPS Literacy Plan, Everyday Math program and daily instruction in Science and/or Social Studies. An exceptional Visual Arts program, Physical Education/Dance Movement curriculum, Spanish language instruction and media technology are added to extend and enrich the academic program.

There are three components that serve as the centerpiece of the SEM. These include *Curriculum Modification Techniques*, *Enrichment Learning and Teaching*, and *Learner Profiles*. All three components play a fundamental role in designing each child's educational experience and define the overall structure of the program.

In the area of *Curriculum Modification Techniques*, the student's mastery of curricular content is assessed and the pace and level are adjusted to suit the learners' needs. Enrichment

and acceleration alternatives are made available for individuals and small groups of students who are working at approximately the same levels.

Enrichment Learning and Teaching is central to the success of the SEM. A set of strategies designed to promote active engagement in learning on the part of teachers and students is offered through this model. All enrichment activities complement the curriculum currently under study by the various grade levels. The enrichment program is comprised of the following components:

- Field Trips, Classroom Speakers and Supplemental Materials – To bring learning to life, a variety of curricular experiences are provided for students. Each class takes part in a multitude of activities designed to solidify concepts and extend the learning experience. These experiences further develop all students’ background knowledge.
- Independent Investigations – Throughout the school year, students who have expressed an interest in a certain topic and who are ready to apply their skills in an independent manner are invited to conduct an independent investigation under the guidance of the school’s Enrichment Coordinator/GT Teacher. Children are encouraged to dig deeply into content that is of particular personal interest and to practice research, communication and independent learning skills. Teachers are responsible for identifying students who are ready to take on an investigation.
- Enrichment Clusters – Small groups of students who share common interests come together to explore these interests, often in a problem-based manner. Everything the students do in the “enrichment cluster” is directed toward producing a product or conducting a service. All teachers and specialists are involved in facilitating the clusters. This is also an excellent opportunity for parent and community involvement. There are two rotations of clusters per school year. They take place once a week for 75 minutes, during the last eight weeks of each semester (i.e. 2nd and 4th quarters).
- Brown Bag Lunches – During the 1st and 3rd quarters of the school year, once a week students are invited to have lunch with experts in a variety areas. This is an optional experience where students can expand their background knowledge in self-selected areas of interest.

Finally, the *Learner Profile* is a vehicle for gathering and recording information as it pertains to students’ abilities, interests and style preferences and the impact they can have on their learning. This profile then serves as a body of evidence that progresses through elementary school with the children to show evidence of learning.

It is imperative that the instructional program be differentiated in order to meet the needs of all learners. Research indicates that for students to reach their optimal levels of learning, the learning environment must be structured in such a way that students are able to work at an appropriate pace with the necessary supports in place (Karen Rogers, 2005). As such, the *Montclair School of Academics & Enrichment* borrows key concepts from the *High Strides* program at Morey Middle School. The Early High Strides program provides accelerated instruction for highly motivated students and is built upon the premise that instruction should be based on the needs of the learner and requires a commitment on the part of the students, parents and teachers. Instruction in the core content areas is delivered at a rigorous pace.

Students are accepted to the *Early High Strides Program* at Montclair based on a nomination and qualification process where students’ abilities, interests and learning styles are considered.

Simultaneously, a *Progressive Education Program* is available to students who are not ready for Early High Strides. Rather it is a way to manage the expansive instructional needs of our diverse student population. Students in the *Progressive Education Program* participate in an extended literacy block designed to develop a strong foundation. When necessary, students who have identified learning needs (i.e. Special Education students, English Language Learners) have access to intensive instruction offered by specialists within the school. It is our intent that through inclusion and the Response to Intervention (RTI) model, students’ needs are met in a manner that is motivational and supportive. The SEM is a pivotal component of both programs.

For students in the Early High Strides program who are proficient in English and do not already speak Spanish, we also offer introductory Spanish. By partnering with the local company *Spanish is Fun*, we are able to offer classes to help children learn basic vocabulary and conversation skills. Students participate in a Spanish class once a week for 45 minutes. The costs associated with this partnership are covered by Revitalization funding and as such, allows us to provide this instruction without having to hire an additional teacher.

The culture envisioned for the Montclair School of Academics & Enrichment is one of acceptance and appreciation for the skills and abilities of all. High standards are set and achieved by all staff members including teachers, paraprofessionals, administrative and facility maintenance staff through rigorous professional development and open, honest communication that is built upon respect. In doing so, we model our expectations for students and parents.

The following timeline describes the implementation of our Beacon School proposal.

Year	Action	Evaluation
2007 Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with the implementation of and refining the use of the SEM as defined in the original revitalization plan and adopted herein for students in ECE-5th grade • Continue with vertical curriculum alignment and integrated, collaborative grade level planning in Science and Social Studies • Continue PD with staff • Implement marketing plan • Continue with student recruitment efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of student achievement data • Student, Teacher & Parent Satisfaction surveys • Parent Focus Groups • Teacher Focus Groups
2008 Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the possibility of expanding the Schoolwide Enrichment Model to a second campus to meet the needs of students in the upper elementary grades– location to be determined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student, Teacher & Parent interest surveys • Parent Focus Groups • Teacher Focus Groups
2009 Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schoolwide Enrichment Model and Early High Strides program fully implemented • Student enrollment at capacity at current location (approximately 410 students) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of student achievement data • Student, Teacher & Parent surveys

The following chart outlines what a typical day looks like for a student in either Early High Strides the Progressive Education program.

Early High Strides Program Student X (Student at/or Above Grade Level in Reading)	Progressive Education Program Student Y (Student at/or Below Grade Level in Reading)
<p>Profile: This 1st Grade student has applied and been accepted to the Early High Strides Program. X reads at 2nd grade level and is at grade level in math.</p>	<p>Profile: This 1st Grade student comes to Montclair from within the boundary area and has lived in the U.S. for 6 months. Y does not yet read, is at grade level on math concepts and needs ESL services.</p>
<p>9:00-11:00 Literacy Block: X will be working at his/her instructional level in reading, sometimes independently, sometimes with a group of students at the same level in reading. This block will also include work in writing.</p>	<p>9:00-12:00 Literacy Block: Y will be working at his/her instructional level in reading, sometimes independently and sometimes with a group of students at the same level in reading. In addition, Y will receive ELA services according to district policy and will receive Skills instruction during literacy time. This block will also include work in writing and English Language Development using the Avenues curriculum.</p>
<p>11:00-12:00 Literacy Extensions/Special Project Block: This segment of the day allows students to engage in learning activities that are related to literacy and to build upon individual and/or class interests. These extensions are project-based.</p>	<p>12:00-12:45 Lunch</p>
<p>12:00-12:45 Lunch</p>	<p>12:45-2:00 Everyday Math (EDM) Block: X will be working at grade level in the EDM program. When appropriate the teacher will supplement with enrichment activities and/or extensions.</p>
<p>12:45-2:00 Everyday Math (EDM) Block: X will be working at grade level in the EDM program. When appropriate the teacher will supplement with enrichment activities and/or extensions.</p>	<p>12:45-2:00 Everyday Math (EDM) Block: Y will be working at grade level in the EDM program. As needed, the teacher will individualize instruction to assure Y's progress.</p>
<p>2:00-2:40 PE, Visual Arts or Library</p>	<p>2:00-2:40 PE, Visual Arts or Library</p>
<p>2:45-3:45 Science/Social Studies Enrichment Block: Students will engage in interdisciplinary, differentiated activities that cover grade level, content area curriculum. Units will be planned collaboratively with teachers and "specialists" so that art, dance and PE are integrated into the curriculum.</p>	<p>2:45-3:45 Science/Social Studies Enrichment Block: Students will engage in interdisciplinary, differentiated activities that cover grade level, content area curriculum. Units will be planned collaboratively with teachers and "specialists" so that art, dance and PE are integrated into the curriculum.</p>

SECTION III

LEADERSHIP & STAFFING

The Leadership Team at Montclair is comprised of the following individuals:

Danell DeRudder – Humanities Facilitator
Mary Felix – 4th Grade Teacher
Shannon Hagerman – Principal*
Mike Hare – Parent*
Rae Harris – Enrichment Coordinator*
Giselle Hummel – Kindergarten Teacher and DCTA Rep
Anne Jacobs – 1st Grade Teacher
Sharon Kelly – Parent and PTA President*
Marj McKenna – ESL Resource Teacher
Barb Slenger – 2nd Grade Teacher and CSC Chair*

* denotes members of the original Revitalization Committee

Because this proposal is an adaptation of the school's Revitalization Plan, several members of the Leadership Team (including both parents) were a part of that committee. Others did not participate in the original design because they were either not a part of the original committee or they had not yet begun teaching at Montclair. In all cases however, the individuals on the Leadership Team have been a part of designing this proposal and have made a conscious choice to be a part of the faculty. They have demonstrated their commitment to ensuring that the Education Plan laid out in Section II is implemented as designed. The SEM is new to many and so the learning curve has been steep. However, the members of the leadership team have worked diligently to develop their understandings and are eager to share their learning as they guide others.

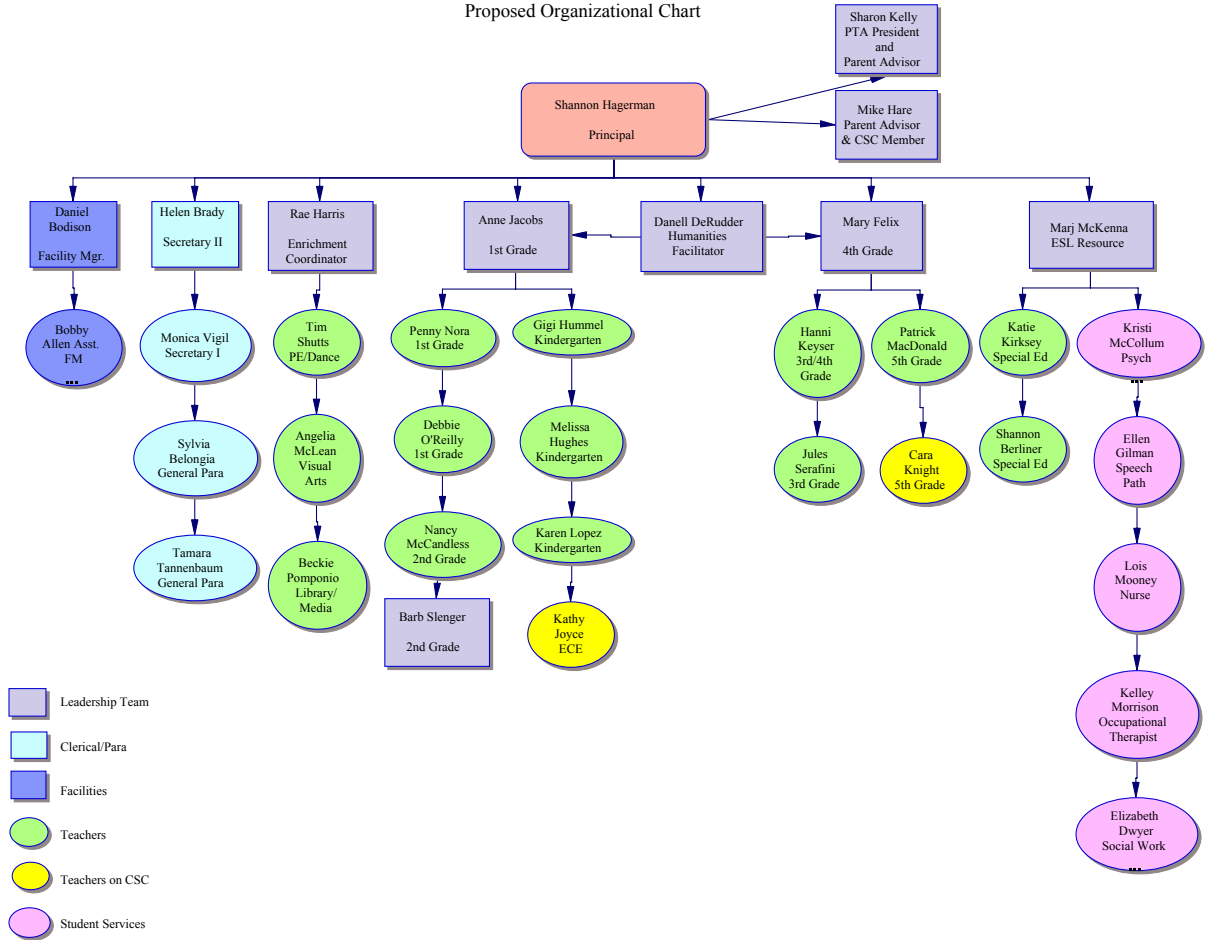
In designing the Leadership Team, considerable effort was made to ensure that those with experience in the areas of differentiation, enrichment, student data analysis and instructional best practices were included. The voices on our Leadership Team represent the needs of all students from beginning English Language Learners to accelerated students who are identified as Gifted & Talented. Each person plays a critical role in the design and implementation of this proposal. A brief synopsis of the members of the Leadership Team that demonstrates how their qualifications are aligned with the Education Plan is included in the Appendix.

Given that Montclair is in the second year of implementation with this model, the school start-up process is not of immediate concern. Over the past two years we have established a calendar of events and maintained a running log of reflections and suggestions for future improvements. These items help the Leadership Team begin preparations for the upcoming school year well in advance.

The projected composition of the faculty is as follows:

Position	FTE's	Explanation
ECE	1.5	We currently offer a full-day ECE program for 17 students. We'd like to expand the program to offer a half-day ECE option to meet the requests of parents.
Kindergarten	2.5	We are able to fill 2 full day Kinder programs. By having the half-day program, we are able to meet the requests of parents who prefer a half-day alternative. This also provides an option for class size overflow so that we do not have 2 very large full-day classes.
1 st Grade	3	Three 1 st Grade classes allow us to maintain class sizes of no more than 25.
2 nd Grade	2	Based on class sizes of no more than 25
3 rd Grade	2	Based on class sizes of no more than 28-30
4 th Grade	2	Based on class sizes of no more than 28-30
5 th Grade	2	Based on class sizes of no more than 28-30
Enrichment Coordinator/ GT Teacher	1	This position is critical to the implementation of the SEM and for professional development in the area of differentiation. This person is also the resource teacher for students with high-end learning needs.
Humanities Facilitator	1	This position is critical to the implementation of the DPS Literacy plan and to the process of curricular integration.
Physical Education/Dance	1	A recommendation set forth by the Revitalization Committee was to ensure that a full-day PE program was offered at Montclair.
Visual Arts	1	The Visual Arts program is a fundamental component of the SEM. It is also a focal point for our school because of the high caliber of student work.
English Language Resource	1	This resource position is critical to meet the instructional needs of students who come from around the world.
Special Education – M/M	1.5	To meet the needs of students with IEP's
Library Media Tech Para	1	A recommendation set forth by the Revitalization Committee to ensure that students receive instruction in the newly constructed library and media lab and that it is properly maintained.
Classroom Paras	10	To provide classroom teachers with instructional, support, reduce teacher to student ratio and to help create a safe learning environment
Principal	1	To oversee the implementation of the Beacon School Proposal

Montclair School of Academics & Enrichment
Proposed Organizational Chart



As noted above in the organization chart for the school, members of the Leadership Team are the primary contacts for different groups of people within the building. Concerns or issues can be brought to these individuals for discussion during Leadership Team meetings. This chart is not to preclude open conversation directly with the principal. This structure exists to enhance communication and collaboration throughout the school.

As a part of the Revitalization effort at Montclair prior to the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year, all teachers at Montclair had to re-apply for their positions using the job descriptions provided in the Appendix. Since that time, all new faculty members have had to demonstrate the alignment of their qualifications with the instructional program at Montclair. We anticipate that being named a Beacon School will provide all faculty members with an opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to implementing the model as designed.

The Leadership Team will collaborate with other members of the faculty to examine student work, achievement data and interest surveys in order to define schoolwide instructional goals. Through vertical grade level conversations based on student work, members of the faculty will establish agreements of what students should know and be able to do when entering and exiting the various grade levels. As a result of these professional conversations, members of the faculty will hold one another accountable for meeting instructional goals building wide.

SECTION IV

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At Montclair, we maintain the highest of expectations of all faculty members. As such, teachers are expected to demonstrate effective skills in the areas of Instruction, Assessment, Curriculum and Planning, Learning Environment and Professional Responsibilities. Our goal is for all instruction to be differentiated for students based on their instructional needs and prior knowledge. To facilitate this level of differentiation teachers are expected to have or develop a firm understanding of how to modify and extend curricular activities to allow all learners to not only access the content, but to also establish independent learning skills. Furthermore, with curricular enrichment as a fundamental underpinning of this instructional model, teachers must have the ability to identify the essential questions of the grade level curricular content and then be able to design instruction that brings learning to life through relevant enrichment experiences.

Because there is a wide range of experience, personal interest and professional expertise among our teachers, the professional development program must be differentiated for adult learners. The Leadership Team also believes it is critical for teachers to have input into the structure, content and design of professional development activities so that they are meaningful and based upon need. As such, the professional development opportunities at Montclair are determined as the year progresses.

To build the instructional capacity of the Montclair faculty, we have identified a Humanities Facilitator and Enrichment Coordinator whose primary responsibilities are to work with teachers in the areas of literacy instruction, differentiation and integrated, enriched curricular planning. Additionally, staff members with expertise in other instructional areas are called upon to share their knowledge. Through teacher-to-teacher peer observations, in-building learning walks, professional book study groups and the examination of student work, our goal is to create a community of learners who are invested in their own professional learning.

The funds brought into the school through Revitalization have been used to provide intensive professional development in the areas of instructional design, curricular enrichment, differentiation and instructional interventions. It is anticipated that a substantial proportion of the remaining funds will be reserved to continue providing professional development opportunities during the 2007-2008 school year. We also plan to conduct a staff retreat in June 2007 to further advance our instructional practices while providing an opportunity for new staff members to build relationships while learning about the instructional program at Montclair.

SECTION V

ENROLLMENT

Prior to Revitalization, Montclair's enrollment was on a steady decline. In 2004, there were just over 230 students. Montclair's attendance/registration boundary area contains two very distinct socioeconomic extremes. The dividing line between these areas falls along Quebec Street. Several low-income apartments, multi-family and single-family dwellings can be found in the area east of Quebec. The area is home to many Hispanic and African families in addition to a large immigrant population from a variety of countries including Afghanistan, Russia, and Turkey. The high percentage of economic and ethnic diversity prevalent in this area is coupled with a high mobility rate. Families frequently move in and out of the rental units, thereby causing an enrollment stability issue for the school. During the 2004-2005 school year 99% of students enrolled at Montclair came from the eastern portion of the boundary area. Families from the western portion of the boundary area known for its eclectic mix of historic homes were not attending Montclair. In fact the general assumption made by many was that the students attending Montclair were bussed to the school from other areas of the city when in fact, they were coming from within the designated boundary area, only blocks away from the school. Through the collaborative work of the Revitalization Committee, approximately 20% of the 230 families now attending Montclair come from the historic community or choice into the school.

Given that our current enrollment for ECE-5th grade is just over 320 students, we have determined that the minimum enrollment for Montclair in the 2007 school year as 300 students. By using a class size limit of 25 students in the primary grades and 28 in the intermediate grades, the maximum number of students that could be enrolled at Montclair is approximately 410. This would require that a center placement program for Adaptive Functional students be relocated to another school. If this program remains at Montclair, we will not have the necessary amount of classroom space required to offer at least two classes at each grade level. The above-noted class size limits are recommendations from the CSC and were made in consideration of community input and the availability of physical space within the building. They are used as guidelines for class configuration and have been provided to ensure that the teacher to student ratio still allows for effectively differentiated instruction. Additionally, in order to attract neighborhood families, we have made a commitment to keeping class size in the primary grades as small as possible. This has translated into some larger class sizes at the intermediate levels. In the upcoming school year, we will have to add a second 3rd grade and a second 4th grade to avoid overcrowding.

In 2007 and in subsequent years, we will continue to offer ECE through 5th grade at Montclair. In 2007 we would like to expand the ECE program to include a half-day option in addition to the current full-day Head Start program. Early estimates indicate that there is significant interest in the academic program at Montclair and that providing another alternative for ECE students in the area will help drive Kindergarten enrollment in future years. We anticipate keeping our two full-day kindergarten programs as well as the half-day Kindergarten program. Being able to do so will ensure that class size remains within the recommended limits.

Marketing and recruitment has been an important focus at Montclair for the last two years. We have worked diligently to create a brand image that is recognized throughout the community. We are currently working with Schoolhouse Communications to further develop our marketing plan. Through our work with Schoolhouse Communications, we will streamline the school's print materials and further develop the school web-site.

Our marketing efforts to date have been very successful. All prospective parents are welcomed to Montclair by the principal and taken on a comprehensive school tour. We host a number of Open Houses and regularly attend school choice fairs throughout the community. We have made a concerted effort to reach out to families in the area through regular publications in community newsletters and participating in community events (i.e. 4th of July Picnic, Easter Egg Hunt, etc.) We communicate with families via our school marquee, newsletter and both the school and district websites.

In the past the principal, parents and teachers have represented Montclair at local school choice fairs. Having parents participate in these events has not only been unique, but has also been highly effective in establishing relationships. A number of informal "Prospective Parent Pizza Parties" have also taken place. Prospective parents appreciate having the opportunity to meet other parents and to have conversations about the school prior to making a final decision.

Throughout the year various events are also held to showcase Montclair by featuring student artwork and enrichment projects. These expositions are well attended by both parents and community members.

Finally, through our extensive community survey at the beginning of the revitalization effort, many parents shared concerns about their children's academic needs being adequately met. The most immediate concern was that if a child came to Montclair with strong literacy skills already in place, they would not be challenged academically. In order to alleviate this concern, the Early High Strides program was developed. Admission to the Early High Strides program is application based and incorporates the following criteria: district assessments, teacher recommendations, parent nominations, and the student's commitment to learning, along with a review by an approval committee. Parents and/or teachers complete the application on behalf of a student. Students may be admitted to the Early High Strides program throughout the course of the school year if their academic performance indicates a need. Students' acceptance to the program is reviewed on a yearly basis.

SECTION VI

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Research indicates that family and community involvement has a significant impact on student achievement. In particular, the study titled *Supporting Parent, Family and Community Involvement in Your School*, by Deborah Davis and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (2000), summarizes the following key research findings:

- Studies of families show that what the family does with the children is more important to student success than family income or the education level of the parents. Parental participation improves student learning whether the child is in preschool or in the upper grades, whether or not the family is struggling economically or is affluent, or whether the parents finished high school or graduated from college.
- Both students and schools benefit from active participation by families in the process of educating children. These benefits include higher grades and test scores, better attendance and homework completion, fewer placements in special education, higher graduation rates, and more positive attitudes and behaviors in general.
- Parent involvement is more than good attendance at school-sponsored events or having a strong volunteer program. The strongest support for learning occurs at home through positive parenting styles, nightly reading, homework policies and high expectations.

Additionally, Joyce Epstein's (1995) Six Types of Partnerships Framework, clearly defines several categories of engagement that exist between schools, families/guardians and communities. The categories include:

Parenting – helping families establish home environments to support children as learners

Communicating – the use of effective forms for school-to-home and home-to-school communications

Volunteering – the recruitment and organization of the school's volunteer program

Learning at Home – helping families assist their children with homework and recognizing other learning at home opportunities

Decision Making – including parents, students and community members in the school decision-making process

Collaborating with the Community – the identification and integration of resources and services from the community

Both Davis's and Epstein's work has shaped the thinking behind Montclair's community engagement endeavors. Over the past two years, the principal and faculty have worked diligently to establish strong community connections and in that time, partnerships with local businesses, government officials and volunteer organizations have greatly improved the levels of community engagement.

Parent involvement at Montclair is encouraged and expected. At the beginning of every school year, parents are asked to complete an interest survey and to volunteer in some capacity at least once during the school year. Efforts are taken to ensure that translation services are provided at parent/teacher conferences and meetings and we also offer free English classes for parents. These classes are designed to provide parents with the language skills needed to communicate with teachers and to help their children succeed at school.

Recently, a series of focus group meetings was held to determine how school-to-home communication could be improved. At meetings such as this, in addition to CSC meetings, parents are partners in supporting the school's vision.

Montclair's strategy to incorporate innovative community engagement is built upon the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM). Through curricular enrichment activities such as Brown Bag Lunches and Enrichment Clusters, those who may typically have been uncomfortable volunteering in an elementary school setting are encouraged to step forward and work with students in their own areas of professional expertise or personal interest. As a result of the intense involvement and commitment on the part of our parents and community members, many events that began as fundraisers such as the Mingle for Montclair and the Spring Plant Sale and Fun Fair have become as much about bringing the community together as they are about raising funds for the school.

In order for this proposal to be sustainable, it is imperative that all embrace the work so that the system is lead from within. Regular checks must be made along the way to ensure that things are working and that adjustments are being made as necessary. At every point along the way, parents, students, teachers, and the community must be actively engaged in the school to help create the environment and learning experiences for all students. To do any less will undermine the entire change process. Parents and community members have been critical players in the redesign of Montclair. This has paid off in that they are now some of the school's strongest advocates. As Meg Wheatley states, "they will only support that which they have helped to create."

SECTION VII

SUSTAINABILITY

The plan set forth herein has been intentionally designed to allow for fiscal durability and long-term sustainability. We have used our revitalization funds judiciously with the majority of the money being used to provide the permanent enhancements required to increase the school's appeal to young families. In so doing, Revitalization has left a legacy to the community with the makeover of the school library, the purchase of equipment and curricular materials required to extend and enrich learning and the upcoming completion of playground upgrades.

It is our expectation that the remaining revitalization funds allocated to Montclair will carry forward for 2007-2008 school year. This will ensure that we are able to continue with the implementation of the Education Plan as designed while still actively recruiting new students. In future years, it is anticipated that increased enrollment coupled with prudent budget management will provide the additional funding and teacher allocations required to fully implement the program.

Additional opportunities such as the School Innovation Grant, 21st Century Community Learning Center grant, Lights on After School grant and others will be pursued by the school's Grant & Fundraising Committee. We will also continue to establish and develop relationships with local businesses through the School/Community Partnership Program in the hopes that these alliances will bring further resources to the school through in-kind donations and sponsorships.

Montclair parents and the PTA are also committed to supporting the Education Plan at Montclair. Costs associated with our extensive curricular enrichment offerings are defrayed by the collection of a \$15 enrichment fee at the beginning of each semester from all students. The PTA has agreed to supplement this fund by providing scholarships to students unable to contribute and by contributing a portion of their budget to the School Activity Fund.

If we are to maintain the integrity of our instructional program, it is imperative that we limit class size to not more than 25 students in the primary grades and not more than 28 in the intermediate grades. To increase class size will undermine our recruitment efforts. As a result, it is probable that in the next 2 years, we will outgrow our current location where we are able to serve approximately 400 students. Over the upcoming months, we will begin investigating the possibility of expanding this proposal to include middle school. In the event that we are able to do so, we will need to consider moving part of the program to an additional location. This would allow us to increase enrollment across all grade levels in addition to expanding into the middle school grades. It is anticipated that by offering a middle school program based on the Schoolwide Enrichment Model would be highly appealing to parents and the community.

In the long-run, the sustainability of this model is dependent upon not only having the right leadership in place, but on ensuring that teachers have the appropriate professional development and support to implement the education plan and that parents feel included and empowered to participate in their child's education.

APPENDIX A

LEADERSHIP TEAM OVERVIEW

Individual resumés have been included as an electronic attachment to the Beacon School RFP submitted to Nan Baumbusch. The following paragraphs provide a brief summary of the members of the Leadership Team.

Danell DeRudder is new to Montclair this year as the Humanities Facilitator. She has had many years of experience as a teacher and Literacy Coach and is a member of the Planning Guide and Benchmark Assessment Committees. Danell truly understands data-driven instruction and is able to help teachers with the implementation of best practices required to meet the needs of all learners.

Mary Felix has been a member of the Montclair faculty for over 11 years. In that time, she has been a reading specialist and teacher. Over the last 2 years, she has had experience teaching students in both the EHS and the PEP programs. As the Site Assessment Leader, Mary is responsible for coordinating the administration of all assessments and helping teachers understand student achievement data reports.

Shannon Hagerman* is now in her third year as the principal of the Montclair School of Academics & Enrichment. As an instructional leader who followed a non-traditional path to the principalship, Shannon offers a different perspective to educational leadership. She has established strong relationships with students, teachers, parents and members of the Montclair community in order to revitalize the neighborhood school.

Michael Hare* is the parent of a 1st grade student. His family lives in the Historic Montclair community and he and his wife (Amy) have been instrumental in realizing educational reform at a school they had previously discounted. Upon being accepted to the Polaris program for Kindergarten, Mike and Amy made the choice to decline the offer so that their son could attend his neighborhood school. Mike has developed an intense understanding of the SEM and is a reliable, pragmatic voice on the school's CSC.

Rae Harris* has an extensive background in Gifted and Talented instruction and is an expert in the area of differentiation. In her capacity as the Enrichment Coordinator, she has developed a deep understanding of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model and works directly with teachers to help them plan learning experiences that are both differentiated and enriched.

Giselle (Gigi) Hummel came to Montclair from Mitchell Elementary. Through her own personal research and professional development, she offers a program that is accelerated and interest based and meets the needs of highly advanced 5 year-olds. As the building DCTA Rep, Gigi maintains open communication with her principal and colleagues and promotes positive interactions with the teachers' union.

Anne Jacobs is a young, vibrant, teacher in her 3rd year at Montclair. She has demonstrated a strong understanding of the DPS Literacy program, Everyday Math and the need for curricular integration in the areas of Science and Social Studies. As a 1st/2nd grade teacher, Anne refined her skills related to differentiated instruction. She has taught both EHS and the PEP programs at Montclair and understands the instructional needs of learners from across the spectrum.

Sharon Kelly* came to Montclair in the fall of 2004 to request a tour. At the time, her oldest daughter was attending Kindergarten at Steck because her previous experiences at Montclair had been less than inviting. She volunteered to serve on the school's Revitalization Committee and began spending many hours at the school. In the fall of 2005, Sharon transferred her daughter to Montclair for 1st grade and now has a second daughter in the ECE program. Sharon is currently in her second year as President of the re-established PTA and is highly dedicated to the revitalization effort at Montclair.

Marj McKenna joined the Montclair faculty in August, 2006 as the English Language Resource teacher. Living in the Montclair community, Marj had heard about all of the exciting changes taking place and decided to apply. She has a keen sense of observation and is highly sensitive to the needs of all language learners. She works tirelessly with parents to make them feel welcome at school and to help them understand how to help their child.

Barb Slenger* is now in her 5th year at Montclair. She has a wide range of teaching experience throughout the district and brings with her a creative, enthusiastic perspective. As the Literacy Coach, Barb established close working relationships with the teachers. With the restructuring of the Literacy Coach model, Barb chose to accept a 2nd grade teaching position at Montclair in order to remain at the school. Barb was a member of the original Revitalization Committee and is currently the CSC Chairperson.

APPENDIX B

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

ALL TEACHER POSITIONS:

The successful candidates for teaching positions at Montclair School of Academics & Enrichment will possess the following:

Personal Qualities:

- ✓ Enjoys and actively participates in collaborative efforts with grade level colleagues, vertical teammates and specialists.
- ✓ Establishes and maintains high academic and behavioral expectations for all students.
- ✓ Has a strong belief that talents can be nurtured and developed.
- ✓ Is comfortable with change and has a willingness to challenge own beliefs and practices.
- ✓ Is a cooperative, flexible, team player.

Skills:

- ✓ Experience teaching in a differentiated classroom, preferred, or a willingness to become informed about differentiation and practice differentiated instruction.
- ✓ Experience implementing the DPS literacy program and Everyday Math program.
- ✓ Experience with interdisciplinary instruction.
- ✓ Excellent classroom management skills.
- ✓ Excellent communication skills with students, parents and colleagues.

FOR EARLY HIGH STRIDES (EHS) POSITIONS:

In addition to the qualifications listed above, successful candidates for the designated EHS classrooms will possess the following:

Personal Qualities:

- ✓ Understands the needs and intricacies of working with students who have been identified as high achieving and/or Gifted and Talented.
- ✓ Contributes a creativity, flexibility and style that encourages students to develop deep understandings of curricular content.
- ✓ Enjoys supportive parents and will work to build a strong relationships with students and their families.
- ✓ Enjoys “thinking outside the box”.

Skills:

- ✓ Ability to extend and enrich the grade level curriculum.
- ✓ Ability to provide support for students in the development of higher level thinking skills that will enhance curricular content and personal interest.

FOR THE ENRICHMENT COORDINATOR/GT SPECIALIST POSITION:

The successful candidate for this position at the Montclair School of Academics and Enrichment will possess the following:

Personal Qualities:

- ✓ Enjoys and actively participates in collaborative efforts with classroom teachers and specialists.
- ✓ Establishes and maintains high academic and behavioral expectations for all students.
- ✓ Has a strong belief that talents can be nurtured and developed.
- ✓ Is comfortable with change and a willingness to challenge own beliefs and practices.
- ✓ Is a cooperative, flexible team player.

Skills:

- ✓ At least 5 years experience offering differentiation professional development
- ✓ Experience with implementing DPS literacy program, Everyday Math program and curricular content areas K-5
- ✓ High level familiarity with the Schoolwide Enrichment Model
- ✓ Experience with interdisciplinary instruction.
- ✓ Excellent organizational skills and flexibility.
- ✓ Excellent communication skills with teachers, students, and parents
- ✓

FOR THE VISUAL ARTS POSITION:

In addition to the general teacher qualifications listed above, the successful candidate for the Visual Arts program will possess the following:

Personal Qualities:

- ✓ Contributes an artistic flair, creativity, flexibility and style that enhances the entire learning environment
- ✓ Enjoys supportive parents and will work to build a strong visual arts presence within the community.
- ✓ Enjoys “thinking outside the box”.

Skills:

- ✓ Ability and willingness to document the learning process in a visually appealing manner throughout the school
- ✓ Ability to extend and enrich the grade level curriculum.
- ✓ Ability to provide support for students in the development of artistic talents and skills that will enhance curricular content and personal interest.

FOR THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION/DANCE POSITION:

In addition to the general teacher qualifications listed above, the successful candidate for the Physical Education/Dance Movement program will possess the following:

Personal Qualities:

- ✓ Contributes an energetic, positive enthusiasm for learning through movement
- ✓ Motivates students to take safe risks in a supportive environment where self-confidence is built
- ✓ Enjoys working with colleagues and parents to promote physical well-being throughout the school

Skills:

- ✓ Ability and willingness to explore learning through movement
- ✓ Ability to integrate the grade level curriculum.
- ✓ Ability to provide support for students in the development of physical coordination and skills that will enhance curricular content and personal interest.