

Hoboken Charter School

Charter Application
1996

Charter School Application

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Executive Summary

The Hoboken Charter School espouses the belief that all children enter the world naturally eager and equipped to learn; to a great extent, they enter school with the same proclivities. Teachers at the Hoboken Charter School will be dedicated to this belief, and will be experienced in the process of "child watching;" they will be skilled observers of the learning process, knowing how and when to step in for appropriate mediation, and when to leave the learner alone to discover for him/herself the idea being explored, analyzed and assimilated. One of the unique and promising features of the Hoboken Charter School is the concept that teachers are self-identified learners. They are viewed less as those who teach, show or elucidate, and more as those who are intimately involved in the learning process, and so understand the absolute need for exploration, confusion, questioning, guidance and understanding. Central to the philosophy of the elementary school is Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development, the "distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers." A good teacher can identify the point at which some guidance is warranted, and will either provide this him/herself, or will pair the seeker with a more able peer.

Central to the mission at the Hoboken Charter School is the practice of service learning. Students need to make links between their classroom learning and the real world. Service learning provides students a way to apply what they have learned in school in meaningful ways within their community. It also provides the community with needed services. Students feel useful and challenged, experience an increased sense of competence, hold more positive attitudes about the community, and have a greater sense of responsibility. They practice caring behaviors as they learn about and appreciate diversity among people and environments. For example, students may assist in a day care center, survey and report about environmental issues, or spend time helping at a senior citizen group. Students of service learning find that their efforts are valued by peers and society as they discover that they can make differences in positive ways, and that they are able to connect with caring adults in the community, thereby establishing themselves as contributing members of that community.

These instructional practices and perspectives on learning presuppose that mistakes are necessary steps toward understanding, and so should be honored and celebrated, and given time play themselves out in accordance with the individual and dominant style of the learner. The human mind is a complex organ whose intricate workings and far-reaching capacities have yet to be fully understood and explored. The curriculum at the Hoboken Charter School is designed to reflect current research that each children's fundamental desires to know and to learn are manifested in

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different ways, and are guided by a variety of individual strengths. Howard Gardner, whose work with Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education has led to the current theory of multiple intelligences, has found through his research that "we have to try to help all students discover areas where they have some strengths and to encourage that kind of connection making."

If students are truly allowed to tackle the questions of the world in accordance with their personal styles, so teachers are going to have to be dedicated researchers in a constant state of observation and reflection. Teachers at the Hoboken Charter School will participate in a teacher-as-researcher program, and will view their mission as one of gaining insight into the pursuit of understanding. Teachers working in this capacity must have a true fascination with the many questions learners encounter as they go about their work of discovery.

"This kind of researcher would be a teacher in the sense of caring about some part of the world and how it works enough to want to make it accessible to others; he or she would be fascinated by the questions of how to engage people in it and how people make sense of it; would have time and resources to pursue these questions to the depth of his or her interest, to write what he or she learned, and to contribute to the theoretical and pedagogical discussions on the nature and development of human learning." (Duckworth, Eleanor, *The Having of Wonderful Ideas*, p. 140)

Just as the curriculum will be designed to accommodate a broad range of learning styles, it will be the work of the teachers to see that children have the freedom to express their learning in a variety of ways. It is the expression of what one learns that will, in part, help to make the experience memorable for the learner. That expression may take the form of a written paper, a dramatic performance, a 3-dimensional model, the production of a video documentary, or a drawing, depending on the particular personality of the child. It is essential that the student feel secure in his or her learning style and have the expression - and its assessment - be accepted as valid and meaningful responses. This means that a teacher will have to suspend his/her own projections and expectations as to the outcome of a given learning experience, and instead be open to unforeseen possibilities.

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1. Mission of the Charter School

a. Identify and describe any specific area of concentration or theme in which your charter school may be focused (i.e., math & science, technology, or the arts).

The mission of the Hoboken Charter School rests on a fundamental assumption: if schools are to be effective in meeting the needs of students, teachers, parents and the community, the traditional concept of school and schooling must be rethought and redesigned. Our proposal for a K-12 school reflects our belief that attention to the development of the whole child is a necessary precondition to a successful educational experience. We believe that a community composed of learners of all ages fosters a spirit of interdependency that allows individuals to grow and develop in a nurturing, caring, and compassionate environment. Students will thrive in environments in which expectations are clear and consistent at all levels, and in which they are known - not only by their peers, but by the entire school community. In a K-12 school, the transition from elementary to middle school and from middle to high school is made easier because the values underlying a student's education remain the same.

We envision a school in which students of all ages and abilities are engaged in educational activities that bring them together in the spirit of collaborative inquiry and understanding. The value to young students of seeing older students achieve and enjoy learning cannot be overstated. This relationship provides younger students with a concrete example of the benefits of working hard and achieving academic goals. Additionally, older students gain a sense of pride and accomplishment when they are given the opportunity to discover their capacity to serve as positive role models to the school's younger members. This constant reinforcement of the value of interdependence is consistent with our theme of service learning. Through community service experience, problem identification, action and evaluation, and ongoing personal reflection, students will become active, contributing members of the school community, the City of Hoboken, and beyond.

The Hoboken Charter School recognizes that teachers and students must be given the appropriate time and space in which to work and learn. Moreover, this work and learning must be focused on the continuing development of the learners' minds. We insist that students clearly exhibit mastery of their school work, that teachers engage in continual re-examination of their practice, and that parents and community members use the school to further their own continuing education and personal development. To achieve these ends, we will seek to provide meaningful and appropriate incentives for students, teachers, parents and community partners to succeed. Underlying these efforts is a structure and system of governance that is simple and flexible, and so able to meet the unique needs of a diverse population and community.

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b. Describe the basic mission of your charter school.

The Student

We believe . . .

Students need opportunities to use their minds well and prepare them to live productive, socially useful and personally satisfying lives. Each child is unique, has a natural desire to learn, and learns through interacting with his/her environment; each child is an independent, resourceful and creative thinker.

A rigorous, world-class education is required to prepare all students for the demanding realms of the marketplace and the civil society. While students must acquire skills applicable to the workplace, they must also possess skills and knowledge that will allow them to be informed and productive members of a democratic society. Students must view themselves as caring young people who are part of a larger community. Our commitment to service learning reflects this belief.

The Curriculum

We believe . . .

An experientially based curriculum that ensures active participation in academics, arts, service, and personal growth instills in students a sense of involvement and obligation to themselves, one another and the community. We recognize that a love of learning is essential to continuous learning, and that true education is a process, not a product. To accomplish this:

- Instruction is integrated, flexible and individualized so that each student can, in his/her own way and in his/her own time, acquire the cognitive, social and physical skills needed to become a responsible and capable citizen as well as a self-directed, lifelong learner.
- The curriculum serves as a framework which guides students' learning. At each grade level, the curriculum builds on itself to develop in students more complex skills and a broader knowledge base. At the same time, it allows for multiple points of access to engage the different learning styles and intelligences of students.
- The curriculum is supported by state-of-the-art technology so that all students are skilled in the use of the tools of the 21st Century (e.g., computers, telecommunications, the Internet).

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The School Culture

We believe . . .

The school should be a small, distinctive and intimate community which shares a common vision and is governed democratically and inclusively, with essential issues decided at the school level.

To achieve this, the school:

- Provides a warm, supportive environment in which all children feel welcome and accepted.
- Recognizes the dignity and worth of each individual and celebrates the importance of individual differences and potentialities.
- Reflects the diversity of Hoboken and understands that it is an essential defining characteristic of the school.
- Fosters in its students personal and civic virtues such as integrity, courage, responsibility, diligence, honesty, kindness, service, and respect for all persons. These values are continually modeled, taught, expected, practiced and celebrated by all members of the learning community.

Teachers, Parents, & the Community

We believe . . .

Teachers need to be committed to and accountable for the full development and expression of their talents as teachers and as teacher-researchers.

The characteristics we seek to cultivate in children are identical to those essential to teachers and parents in their quest to become lifelong learners alongside their children.

No school can complete its educational mission without the support, trust and active participation of a student's family and the school's partners, both public and private. Open and continuing communication is essential if these relationships are to develop successfully.

A school should be accountable to its own immediate community – including parents, students and staff, as well as to the larger public community – and should serve as a laboratory in which new ideas and innovations can be explored, developed and then shared publicly.

c. Based on your mission, describe the overarching goals which your charter school will seek to attain.

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The four cornerstones of the Hoboken Charter School -- academic, artistic, civic, and personal -- are unified by two basic educational practices: learner-centered education and service learning.

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Learner-Centered Education

A learner-centered school is a place where teachers and students are committed to one another and share collectively in the school vision. It is a self-governing learning community where all decisions are seen in terms of the question, "What is best for learners?" In a learner-centered school:

- Students understand the purpose of learning and are actively engaged in realizing their potential.
- The curriculum is a process through which learners actively look for answers, work through problems cooperatively, access information, synthesize and analyze it, present their hypotheses, test them, and develop new questions to be explored.
- Students become partners with their teachers as they both move the learning process forward. We believe that this kind of educational experience leads to more sustained and powerful learning that generalizes to other situations.
- Students work collaboratively in small groups, debate and discuss in small and large groups, work independently, and listen and view material as a whole.

We believe that students who are able to see the interconnections of various subjects and who learn that learning itself is a process of synthesis and analysis, also use these skills to address issues of relevance in their own lives and communities. In this way, the community itself becomes an extended classroom of the Hoboken Charter School.

Service Learning

By embracing service learning in its mission, the Hoboken Charter School is committed to the belief that students need to make links between their classroom learning and the real world. Service learning provides students a way to apply what they have learned in school in meaningful ways within their community. It also provides the community with needed services. Students feel useful and challenged, experience an increased sense of competence, hold more positive attitudes about the community, and have a greater sense of responsibility. They practice caring behaviors as they learn about and appreciate diversity among people and environments. For example, students may assist in a day care center, survey and report about environmental issues, or spend time helping at a senior citizen group. Service learning students find their efforts are valued by peers and society as they discover that they can make differences in positive ways. Service learning helps students connect with caring adults in the community, and helps them establish themselves as contributing members of that community.

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The form which service learning takes will vary and be adapted to the developmental needs of the students, allowing for the maximum learning opportunities for each young person. Students may visit a senior citizen center, where they can listen and share stories. Younger children can draw pictures illustrating the seniors' lives while older students can research something about the days when the seniors were young.

In the context of the K-12 school, service learning provides an excellent way for younger and older students to work together collaboratively. For example, older helpers can tutor younger students. Even the youngest students can help identify a community problem and assist in developing and implementing youth-defined solutions.

Reflection -- a time for thoughtful discussion, problem solving and planning -- is a key component of the service experience. It is during reflection that students actively and self-consciously process and integrate their service experiences. By carefully considering and discussing concrete events at the service sites, students gain more complex understandings about the nature of tasks performed, about their own strengths and weaknesses, and about alternative strategies for enhancing performance. Learning the value of such reflective behaviors, and practicing these skills in a safe, supportive environment, will provide students with a skill useful in many areas of school and beyond. Reflection activities may include group discussions, journal writing, critical thinking activities, research projects, and other ways students can think about their service experiences in relation to their other academic areas and their own lives.

Service learning is especially appropriate for a diverse urban environment such as Hoboken. Urban environments present multiple challenges to the healthy development of all children. These challenges become particularly evident among adolescents. Adolescence is a period of profound physical, emotional and social change when students are at great risk for becoming alienated from school and society. Throughout their lives, but especially during adolescence, young people experiment with different roles and identities, struggle between the desire for independence and the need for peer and adult acceptance, and seek opportunities for meaningful involvement in social activities. Early adolescents have the capacity to integrate others' perceptions into their self-image and frequently look to others to help develop a positive, realistic image of self. During this period, young people can be empathetic toward others, but need safe environments in which the expression of caring is supported, rather than disdained, by peers or adults. In the cognitive domain, where reasoning remains more easily applied to concrete objects and events, early adolescents are exploring their capacities for abstract thinking. They are becoming better at monitoring their cognitive processes and are better able to reflect upon their actions and thinking. With environmental and social support they are able to utilize the information gained from their insights. Thus, the reasoning

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and problem-solving processes of early adolescents are best supported within a social context that links concrete experiences to abstract thought. In short, the social environment of early adolescents is critical for the development of identity, perceptions and cognitions, and service learning is one way schools can help with students development in these areas.

At the Hoboken Charter School service learning provides a framework for integrating curriculum areas. Experiences at the students' service sites will be discussed and expanded upon within different subject areas. Thus, service learning will provide a common experience from which different subject areas can draw activities. Furthermore, students' activities at a service site may also reinforce classroom learning. In the context of the K-12 school, service learning provides an excellent way for younger and older students to work together collaboratively. Even the youngest students can help identify a community problem and assist in developing and implementing youth-defined solutions. For the older students, the benefits for those who tutor younger children include increased feelings of competence and self-worth, as well as providing students with an acceptable way to learn material from a lower grade and to apply knowledge acquired. Additionally, journal writing, a key reflective activity, can serve both as an early writing activity for young children and as literacy training for older students. If journals are kept on the computer, computer skills are also practiced.

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2. Goals and Objectives of the Charter School

a. Describe the broad academic/educational goals and objectives of your charter school which will promote high student achievement [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 5(d)].

The Four Cornerstones: Academics

All students at the Hoboken Charter School take a rigorous academic program in the humanities and the sciences. This program is supported by the use of computer technologies that extend the walls of the school and make student-driven exploration and research an integral component of each student's academic experience. Instead of covering vast amounts of content only superficially, we are committed to the exploration of concepts and ideas in depth. Instruction is focused on large, interdisciplinary, curricular themes. This approach, combined with intensive individual attention, makes it possible for all students to meet and exceed State standards. Students will be able to apply concepts from mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts during classroom activities as well as in real life applications. They will develop effective organizational skills and study habits. Students will work collaboratively and independently to solve problems which integrate knowledge across areas and which often have no best solution. Appendix A presents a sample assessment rubric for the fourth grade level indicating the types of performances expected of students.

The Four Cornerstones: Arts

As students learn in and through the arts, they discover a crucial cultural tool for making sense of their lives, their relationships, and themselves. Artistic experiences which nurture and challenge students involve in the making of visual symbols: the taking of one thing (paint, a written text or score, the human body) and it to embody or refer to some other experiential content. Working in a symbolic language, be it artistic, mathematical, scientific or verbal, requires a wide array of thinking skills, from the rudiments of learning to the most critical appraisals. The arts offers students at all levels the opportunities to make choices, interpret implications, judge relationships and make sophisticated perceptions. In the making of visual symbols, an innumerable number of possibilities are opened for knowing the world beyond the self in entirely new ways, and for constructing personal and shared meaning. Students are encouraged to express themselves through a wide variety of artistic media, including painting and drawing, sculpture, music, theater and movement. Learning in the different media will be keyed to the needs and desires of the individual student, and the student is given the support needed to develop a vital mode of expression and communication through the arts. Students will learn from artists, musicians, actors, dancers, and writers working in the community. Through the ArtsBridge partnership, they will learn by sharing artistic experiences with students in other schools in the community. Students will learn in museums, theaters, galleries, studios and other cultural settings, and will share and celebrate in the community's and the world's cultural lives. The desired outcome for all students is:

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ability to understand, construct meaning and express oneself in the artistic languages of materials, gesture, musical tone, etc.

ability to acquire knowledge through symbols of artistic language, and to manipulate multiple symbolic forms.

ability to make critical, informed judgments and interpretations about the arts and aesthetics.

ability to recognize the relationship between the arts and society, and the connection to one's own culture.

ability to discuss and debate and defend points of view thoughtfully.

ability to develop sophisticated perceptions.

b. Describe non-academic goals and objectives which will promote high academic achievement.

For purposes of this application, we have placed the following two “cornerstones” under the non-academic category. However, we resist the notion that there is any aspect of the school that is not academic. We do not see these two cornerstones as ancillary to the academic life of the school. In fact, these two are of critical importance to the success of our mission and are at the heart of all academic endeavors.

The Four Cornerstones: Personal Growth

Students at the Hoboken Charter School develop an understanding of their own responsibility to themselves – that their success is ultimately tied to their ability to see themselves as worthwhile human beings. Developing self-esteem is a critical first-step in this process. Students with high self-esteem are more willing to explore ideas and issues of personal relevance and to take intellectual risks. In order to accomplish this, the school places a significant emphasis on personal development – physical, emotional, and psychological. Students learn to deal with conflict both in and out of the classroom. Through sports, students learn the value of working cooperatively to achieve a team goal. Alternatively, in meeting individual physical challenges they recognize their capacity for meeting and exceeding personal goals. They learn to receive and give positive criticism and to recognize its value in the development of ideas and relationships. Students are educated about their bodies and minds and taught how to maintain the health of both. The reason for this focus is simple: students who have learned how to value and care for themselves are better able to value and care for others. Students will learn reflective skills and recognize their value. They will display increases self-esteem, have self-discipline, hold positive attitudes toward learning and demonstrate a sense of personal responsibility by attending class regularly, and completing assignments on time. They will demonstrate a respect and tolerance for others, including those of different cultural backgrounds, gender, ages and economic levels.

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The Four Cornerstones: Civics

Because one of the motivating principles behind the Hoboken Charter School is service learning, it is a priority that students develop a strong sense of civic duty and responsibility. Our goal is for each student to recognize his or her importance as a member of the Hoboken community, and how his or her actions affect the life of the community and, by extension, the world. More importantly, we want our students to recognize their potential as agents of change in these communities. We want students to feel responsible for the state of their streets, neighborhood and town. We want our students to understand what it means to be a citizen in a democracy – to understand that a democracy requires active participation, not passivity. Through service learning and membership in the school community, we want our students to discover a responsibility to others, a passion for justice and equality, and an obligation to work towards social and political change that upholds these democratic virtues. Student will become engaged in a meaningful project which contributes to the community and proves them with opportunities to assume leadership roles and be personally responsible. They will have a sense of being part of the community and see themselves as having the ability to contribute to this community. Student will have respect for the environment, their city, their neighbors, and their school.. Eventually, this community will extend to the large community of all people. Students will be able to recognize community needs, develop plans for meeting these needs, participate in implementing these plans, and evaluate their efforts.

Extracurricular Activities

We are currently developing a program that will enable us to offer our students a wealth of opportunities. We are seeking a relationship with the Hoboken public schools that will allow our students to participate in that system's already well-formulated sports programs. This will not only encourage a good relationship between the children from the different schools, but will also allow our rather small population to have the experience of a full sports program.

We are also planning to offer as many other programs as the community can support. We envision a program run by the community that draws on its considerable strengths. Local artists will conduct workshops in a wide variety of media and techniques. Local musicians will offer individual instruction and supervise student groups. Writers from the community will supervise writing groups and assist in the production of student publications. To supplement these endeavors, we hope to provide studio space for a select group of artists, musicians, and writers who will serve as artists-in-residence and will work with Hoboken Charter School classes.

Local business owners will conduct entrepreneurial workshops, and community leaders and activists will be the mentors for school leadership organizations. The possibilities are as varied as are

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the strengths of the city. We also envision older students in the school designing and providing activities for younger students. These might include after-school games, historical walks, nature walks, scavenger hunts, etc. Also, academic clubs will be made available to interested students. This would include such groups as French club, Chemistry club, peer and cross-age tutoring, speech and debate. Student achievement will increase through participation in these activities by providing students ways to pursue interests at greater depth than possible during the school day. Furthermore, these activities provide social opportunities for students to interact, problem solve, collaborate and assume leadership skills.

The Advisory Group

We are currently exploring the development of advisory groups that will allow students to develop, both individually and in a group context, the inquiring habits of mind that mark a scholar. For older students, Socratic seminars, discussion groups, debates on school and community issues, and philosophical investigations might be one component. For younger students, activities might be centered around the development of leadership skills, self-esteem, conflict resolution and listening skills.

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3. Description of Founders

a. Provide information on the founders, including their names, background, experiences, relevant certifications/licenses and corporate/business affiliation. When listing parents, specifically identify which schools in the district in which the charter school will be located their children attend.

Stacey Gruber has a Masters in Education (1991) from Harvard University. She holds teaching certificates in Biology (New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts) and General Science (New York). She has taught biology, physics, chemistry, and mathematics at the secondary level in several urban public schools

Deborah Hecht, has a Doctorate in Educational Psychologist from New York University and is currently investigating the impact of student participation in service learning. She has been a resident of Hoboken for over 20 years and has two children, ages six and two and a half.

Mark Silberberg has a Masters in Education from Harvard University, and is completing a doctorate in sociology and education at Columbia University Teachers College. He holds teaching licenses in Biology (New York), General Science (New York and Massachusetts), Secondary English (New York and Massachusetts), and Behavioral Science (Massachusetts). He is currently seeking New Jersey certification in these areas. He has taught English, physics, chemistry and mathematics at the secondary level in both urban and suburban public schools.

Jill Singleton, an independent reading specialist and educational consultant, has lived in Hoboken most of her life, and attended Hoboken public schools through eighth grade. She currently works with children and their families around issues interfering with successful school experiences. She holds teaching certificates in Massachusetts and New Jersey, both as an elementary school teacher and as a consulting teacher of reading grades K-12. She has two children ages two and a half and five months.

Joan Rafter is an associate professor of psychology and psychology coordinator at Hudson County Community College in Jersey City. She is in the final stages of completing a doctorate in education with a specialization in the psychology of reading. She is a lifelong resident of Hoboken, and is the mother of two grown children.

Paula Ohaus has a Bachelors in Education from Trinity College in Ireland. The mother of one-year-old triplets, Paula has lived and taught in Hoboken for nearly 10 years. She coordinated the highly-acclaimed theatre program at The Hudson School, where she received an award for her work in bringing together students from public and private schools for creative work in the arts.

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Jim Ohaus holds an MBA from the Harvard Business School and has been president of the Ohaus Corporation since 1986. He is the father of five children, the youngest of whom are triplet boys born last October.

Eduardo Lopez, a native born Chilean and a graduate of Hoboken High School, is the owner of 9th Restaurant in Hoboken. At the age of 37, Eddie is embarking on a career of academic remediation, and is committed to public education reform in Hoboken.

Jane McGurdy is the mother of a four-year-old boy whom she is currently homeschooling. The McGurdy family is committed to raising their son in Hoboken, and view the concept of charter schools as a useful tool for stabilizing the community by providing public school alternatives for those families who might otherwise move when their children become school age.

b. Describe any partnerships with existing public schools, institutions of higher education, private entities and or community groups. If none, please so state.

Artsbridge is one exciting partnership we have formed with The Hudson School, a well established private school known for its nurturing support of the arts. Because of this longstanding commitment to the arts, The Hudson School is a uniquely appropriate partner for this innovative program, which will function to bring together Hoboken children from charter, district and private schools to work together and form meaningful relationships through participation in a variety of artistic events. We propose that ArtsBridge can be a unifying vehicle to reflect, support, nurture and celebrate Hoboken's diversity. Hoboken is a village community comprised of multiple family groups: families from all over the world, families who have resided in Hoboken for generations, families who have just arrived, families who are highly educated, families who have had minimal schooling, families who live in shelters, and families who want for nothing. Hoboken's families are spread out across our Mile Square City, and meet one another at the city parks, the soccer field, and now, through ArtsBridge, at the artistic events which celebrate our children.

ArtsBridge provides a cooperative opportunity for all the Hoboken students, public, private, parochial and home schooled, to come together to share in the creation and expression of community celebrations of music, art, language and theater. ArtsBridge provides a community based expression and extension of our commitment to bringing students together in the spirit of collaborative inquiry and understanding, another way the community itself becomes an extended classroom of the Hoboken Charter School, another opportunity to appreciate diversity among people and environments, another venue for students to connect with caring adults in the community, and

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another way for students to establish themselves as contributing members of the community.

ArtsBridge is an opportunity for students, teachers, parents and community partners to participate together in supporting Hoboken's richness of diversity, vitality and pride. ArtsBridge is a wonderful expression of the philosophy of the Hoboken Charter School that children must learn to listen, be reflective, be active participants in the community, and develop mutual respect for all others.

The Hudson School is a well established school in the community known for its nurturing support of the arts, and thus is a uniquely appropriate partner to provide the arts to the children of Hoboken. Paula Ohaus, one of the founding members of the Hoboken Charter School, is a former Hudson School teacher who worked in just this capacity for several years; through musical productions, Ms. Ohaus worked with 80 students from a variety of Hoboken schools - public and private. Several different community members and groups were brought into the production as well, including local mime artists and stage combat experts; the Hoboken Board of Education donated theatre space; students from Stevens Institute of Technology assisted with lighting and set design; a local group of Russian artists designed and painted the sets; parents contributed their many talents from carpentry to sewing; local merchants donated supplies and took out ads in the playbill. This highly collaborative framework later earned The Hudson School a prestigious award.

It is this kind of cooperative endeavor involving the entire community that we envision in our Artsbridge program. Some of the areas we may seek to pursue include:

- An annual exhibition of children's artworks in a high quality installation with reception.
- An annual Celebrate Our Students day in which each school participates by contributing a performance of instrumental or vocal music, dance, costume design, drama, visual arts, or display of a creative product conceived of and created by the students.
- An Annual "Celebrate Our Students " day in which each school participates by contributing a performance of instrumental or vocal music, dance, costume design, drama, visual arts, or display of a creative product conceived of and created by the students.
- A partnership with our local T.V. network Channel 18 whereby students can host their own new program, or read from their own writings and poetry. Such performances could also be held in our local Barnes & Noble bookstore.

In addition to the Artsbridge program with The Hudson School, we are currently in the process of developing partnerships with Rutgers University, Bank Street College, Columbia University Teachers College, City University of New York, Liberty Science Center, The National Helpers Network, St. Mary Hospital, Stevens Institute of Technology, Common Sense, St. Peters College, Montclair State and local private schools. We are also in the process of developing

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relationships with Hoboken community-based organizations to support the service learning component of the schools educational plan. We are seeking collaborations which will help us support our students and teachers as well as provide access to current educational innovations. We recognize there are many exciting, new educational programs and we anticipate the Hoboken Charter School can be a site where many such programs can be introduced and benefit our community of learners

We are envisioning these relationship taking many forms. Our relationships will provide support for our teacher as researcher program, allow us to introduce new and innovative educational programs, provide support for the service learning component, and strengthen our links to the community. A great deal of time will be spent during 1997-98 developing these relationships. To date we have spent time collecting information about programs which we find particularly interesting. For example, Family Literacy, The Reciprocal Learning Project of Common Sense, Family Math. We have also gathered materials from organizations which have similar philosophical beliefs to ours. For example, the Southern Poverty Center, has materials which address the teaching of tolerance and diversity which are very interesting. We will contact them in hopes of developing some type of collaborative working relationship. One responsibility of the Working Board will be to review the box of materials we have collected and to identify programs and projects both locally and nationally which would benefit the school. We will then contact these programs and begin to develop our relationships.

Our business and community partnerships will allow us to provide mentoring and internship experiences for our students. These experiences will serve a critical function in that they will allow students to develop relationships with adults who can support and further extend their learning. Also, given our service learning orientation, many of these business/community relationships will be used to facilitate ongoing service projects. And finally, our business partnerships will allow us access to funding that is not available through the state. We envision a school in which every student has access to a computer, and through that the Internet and the World Wide Web. We also want to provide our students with a complete library, including books and multimedia materials. We are seeking corporate funding to help us realize them.

4. Governance Structure

a. List the Board of Trustees providing their names, addresses, corporate/business affiliations, higher education affiliations and other qualifications including any state certifications and licenses; also describe how they were chosen; or if the board has not been established, describe how they will be chosen [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 5(c)].

We envision two boards: a board of trustees, which will act in an advisory capacity, and a working board, which will be responsible for the overseeing of the school's day-to-day operations.

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One reason we have chosen to establish two boards is because we recognize the amount of work that will be required before the school opens and during the first years of operation, and that the people we will be contacting for the Board of Trustees are not likely to be in a position to donate the time necessary to get the school up and running.

Board of Trustees

At this time, we have not finalized our Board of Trustees. However, we are in the process of contacting individuals who we think will fulfill necessary roles. The founders are reaching out to community members who not only understand the unique perspective and needs of our charter school, but who are also committed to its success and have a thorough understanding of and appreciation for the challenges unique to the city of Hoboken. The Board of Trustees, which will act primarily as an advisory board, will be comprised of community members and others interested in improving Hoboken education who can demonstrate the ability and desire to fulfill the roles we have outlined in part "d" of this question. In order for the governance structure of the school to be effective, the board must consist of a coalition of people reflective of Hoboken's diversity. In keeping with the school's mission of community action and involvement, we are seeking the participation of various community leaders. To date, the following people have committed themselves:

Suellen Newman, 506 Park Avenue, Hoboken. Ms. Newman is the director of the Hudson School, a school for gifted and talented children which has been serving grades 5-12.

Joan Rafter, 1023 Bloomfield Street, assoc. professor of psych, and psychology coordinator, at Hudson County Community College, with a specialization in the psychology of reading.

John

Tony Felella, 906 Bloomfield Street, Hoboken. Mr Felella is a Vice President and Controller of Financial Products at Lehman Brothers.

Jim Ohaus, 906 Castle Point Terrace, Hoboken. Mr. Ohaus is the president of the Ohaus Corporation, and holds an MBA from Harvard University.

Anne Lockwood, 1027 Garden Street, Hoboken. Ms. Lockwood, who has two sons ages five and eight, holds a Masters in Art History and a diploma in art conservation from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. She currently is a candidate for a Masters in Education at Columbia Teachers College. She served as the assistant director at All Saints Day School in Hoboken, and served as a Trustee on that board for four years.

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Jill Singleton (founder)

Deborah Hecht (founder)

Working Board

We envision a board that will grow and change as the school evolves and its needs emerge. Initially, we will need people who are enthusiastic about working on the development of relationships that will facilitate the service learning component of the curriculum, and who are excited about participating in making the mission of this child-centered, progressive community school a reality. Initially, this board will be comprised of the school founders (excluding Deborah Hecht and Jill Singleton, who will serve on the Board of Trustees), parents, business representatives and other community members who have expressed an interest in working toward the realization of the charter.

At this point, the following people have agreed to serve as members of the Working Board: Anne Gammons is an English as a Second Language teacher who is also certified in elementary and high school English. She currently serves on the leadership team at her school. Ann Cusack is a long-time Hoboken resident and works in the advertising-sales field. Pat Moore is a school psychologist and is very involved in youth issues. He was instrumental in introducing a midnight basketball program. Pooni Holst is former service learning trainer of teachers at the National Helpers Network. In addition, parents and community members have expressed willingness to commit time beginning this spring.

b. Specify the extent to which any private entity will be involved in the operation of your charter school and the percentage of the Board of Trustees that are members of that entity.

The Hudson School (see section "c" of this question) has agreed to work in a partnership with the Hoboken Charter School around the creation of a community-based arts program, whereby all school-age children - from district, charter and private schools - can participate in a variety of activities designed to enhance their participation with the creative and performing arts, e.g., music, theater, and foreign language. Suellen Newman, the Director of the Hudson School, will serve on the Board of Trustees of the Hoboken Charter School. We are in the process of establishing relationships with several research universities and teacher training programs (e.g. Rutgers University, Stevens Institute of Technology, Bank Street College). While our collaborations with universities and

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community organizations will benefit the school, we do not anticipate that they will be involved with the governance of the school.

c. Describe the selection process whereby an advisory grievance committee, consisting of both parents and teachers, will be established, as well as the procedures for complaint review.

The School-Based Action Team will consist of a group of teachers, students and parents and will be responsible for hearing grievances. The Advisory Grievance Committee will make non-binding recommendations to the board concerning the disposition of a complaint brought by an individual or group alleging a violation of the provisions of the act. We are also in the process of gathering information from other charter schools concerning the composition of grievance committees and procedures for complaint review. We will use this information to draft an initial plan for the grievance procedures of the Advisory Committee (see Section 17, page 36).

d. Describe the role of the Board of Trustees, including the involvement of teachers, parents and students in the governance of your school.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The primary responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are to:

- Oversee the administration and operation of the school,
- Insure that policies and practices are consistent with the school's vision,
- Adopt and approve an annual budget,
- Appoint a school director (for an overview of the school director's role see appendix 8) and hire school personnel,
- Oversee capital development and fundraising initiatives.
- Report to the Hoboken School District, Hudson County, corporate and foundation sponsors, parents and the community at-large regarding all significant activities, program evaluations and outcomes, and/or policy changes.

WORKING BOARD

Although tentative, we envision the following as specific areas of responsibility for the Working Board:

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- President/Strategic Planning Officer: Oversees execution of mission statement, implementation of program initiatives, and development of long term goals.
- Treasurer: Oversees annual budget, staff salaries and benefits, and accounts receivable.
- Secretary: Responsible for arranging board meetings, board correspondence, minutes, applications for new students.
- ¥ Community Liaison: Oversees community outreach initiatives, open houses, recruitment, media relations, and publicity.
- ¥ Educational Policy (Teacher Issues): Oversees Teacher-Researcher programs, teacher workshops, and teacher evaluations.
- ¥ Educational Policy (Student Issues): Oversees student assessment program, parent-teacher meetings, school referrals, special services.
- ¥ Parent Involvement: Oversees new students orientations, parent involvement programs at the school, parent education and parent workshops.
- ¥ Service Learning: Oversees service learning program, identification of sites, overseeing program.
- ¥ Development & Fundraising: Oversees external grants, fundraising initiatives and development of school wide events (e.g. book sales, bake sales, trips).

This work will be done in conjunction with the School-Based Action Team (see below) which will be responsible for creating working groups to accomplish the specific tasks and initiatives

Other Governance Body: The School-Based Action Team

Upon the granting of the charter, the founders will suggest the following tentative model be considered and developed by the Working Board. The School-Based Action Team (SBAT) will meet on a weekly basis. The SBAT is comprised of school directors, teachers, parents, students, and community members. SBAT members will serve terms of an as yet undefined period of time. Representatives will include teachers and students following the model of a student senate in which students from each grade level represent the interests of their peers. The SBAT will not serve as an actual policy-making entity, but will present recommendations to the Board. In keeping with the mission of the school, all members of the school community have an obligation and opportunity to be involved in the day-to-day decisions of the school. We envision a model in which students of all age, parents, and teachers have an opportunity to participate in the governance of the school.

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5. Educational Program

a. Describe the curriculum to be offered [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 5(d)].

We are currently in the process of defining interdisciplinary thematic strands. All students will be required to meet current state standards for graduation. It is expected however that students will far exceed these minimum requirements. The curriculum is an essential tool in bringing children of all ages and experiences together. Students at all levels will explore their relationships with each other and their roles as learners. At all levels students will be both learners and teachers.

The unifying focus of the Hoboken Charter School is the creation of a dynamic, coordinated curriculum running from kindergarten through 12th grade. As a single entity, the Hoboken Charter School will have the ability to share resources, collaborate in innovative teaching methods across grade levels, and sustain continuous parental involvement.

In order to meet our curriculum goals in the areas of knowledge, skills and values, the Hoboken Charter School has adopted the following broad outcomes for its students. We believe they are reflective of the recent reforms in instructional methodology and the core curriculum content standards. These outcomes are:

KNOWLEDGE – All Hoboken Charter School students will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the core disciplines.
- Demonstrate knowledge of languages and cultures different from their own.
- Demonstrate knowledge of technology and its role in society.
- Demonstrate personal responsibility in their lives.

SKILLS – All Hoboken Charter School students will:

- Construct meaning from experiences and new information.
- ¥ Demonstrate problem-solving and critical thinking skills.
- ¥ Manage their time efficiently and set appropriate goals.
- ¥ Express themselves effectively in oral, written and artistic forms.
- ¥ Be self-directed learners.

VALUES – All Hoboken Charter School students will:

- Learn from relevant life experiences.
- Be productive, independent and interdependent, responsible citizens.
- Demonstrate sensitivity to the global environment.
- Demonstrate appreciation for diversity.

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- Demonstrate personal integrity as contributing members of society.
- Demonstrate a love of learning.

The four-year goal of the Hoboken Charter School is to develop and implement a curriculum that will address these goals and outcomes. Prior to and during our first year, we will focus on program design and staff development, and continue to implement the first phases of the framework for a K-12 curriculum organized around a core of basic content areas: Integrated Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Geography and History, Social Studies, the Arts, Foreign Languages, and Physical Health and Development. Within the context of each discipline and of the educational goals of the Hoboken Charter School, students will master the appropriate content-related skills and develop a value system that will enable them to be productive citizens.

ELEMENTS OF THE CORE CURRICULUM: DISCIPLINE & CONTENT

Integrated Language Arts

Excellent literacy skills – reading, writing, thinking and listening – are the focus of every academic endeavor at the school. Students will be expected to use “real skills for real purposes.” By becoming effective language users, students will develop an appreciation of, and a confidence with, the scope and power of language in all of its forms. At the elementary level, whole language philosophy will provide the foundation for instruction, with an appropriate blending of direct instruction in phonics and sound-symbol relationships when needed. The desired outcome for all students is:

- Performance at an advanced level of reading, writing, speaking and listening; comprehension of texts.
- Development of an educated imagination; use of language to function as informed and effective citizens in society, work and lifelong education; and development of a love of literature.

Mathematics

Students develop mathematics skills through the use of manipulatives, simulations, and exploration. They develop a concrete understanding of abstract mathematical concepts through hands-on work, and will apply their knowledge of mathematics to authentic problems in other disciplines. The desired outcome for all students is:

- Expression, interpretation and use of mathematical ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
- Construction of valid arguments using mathematical concepts and procedures; and application of mathematical concepts to real world situations.

Science

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Discovery-based instruction allows students to develop an understanding for the basis of the scientific method, as well as the opportunity to make scientific inquiries into the natural world surrounding them. By learning about the problems and resources in their own environment, students will be able to develop an environmental awareness necessary for understanding pressing global issues. Hands-on experiments allow students to experience and understand scientific concepts. This facilitates a lasting desire to discover the hows and whys behind many daily occurrences.

- ¥ Understanding of the use of the scientific process in problem solving, developing the habit of critical thinking, and learning to construct a body of concepts through experiential activities and communications.
- ¥ Integration of physical, earth and life sciences in understanding natural phenomena.
- ¥ Use of technology for information retrieval, data acquisition and analysis, and communications.

History/Geography/Social Studies

Through exposure to multiple sources (and thereby multiple perspectives), students develop an understanding of the concept of recorded history, temporal relationships, and the important link between history and geography. Subject matter includes the study of one's personal and family heritage, as well as the history of the immediate and global community. Students will also learn about social customs and relationships, especially those evident in their own community. The desired outcome for all students is:

- Understanding the meaning of time and chronology; analysis of cause and effect, continuity and change; understanding the importance of religion, philosophy, and other major belief systems in history; evaluation of diverse sources of information.
- ¥ Development of an awareness of place; understanding human and environmental interaction; comprehension of world regions and their historical, cultural, economic, and political characteristics; use of tools and artifacts of geography.
- ¥ Recognition of the dignity of the individual and the importance of ethical issues in the context of societies; understanding the complexity of cultures, basic economic problems, and the relationship between society and law; recognition of the status of minorities and women in our society throughout history, and the role of immigrants; understanding of the basic principles of democracy and the origins of basic constitutional concepts, and the foundations of good citizenship.

The Arts

Students are encouraged to express themselves through a wide variety of artistic media, including painting and drawing, sculpture, music, theater and movement. Whenever possible, students learn from artists working in the community, with an emphasis on the creative process. Students are

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given the support needed to enable the use of the Arts as a viable mode of expression. The introduction of differing types of media (pencil drawing, ink drawing, oil painting, water color painting, sculpture, etc.) occurs as it is deemed appropriate by, and for, the student. In addition, students are exposed to a wide variety of musical ideas and genres, as well as to types of theater and movement. Each artistic medium will be explored in depth. The desired outcome for all students is:

- Ability to express one's own creativity.
- Ability to make critical, informed judgments about the arts and aesthetics.
- Ability to recognize the relationship between the arts and society, and the connection to one's own culture.

World Languages

Students are exposed to a variety of foreign languages. They are also encouraged to recognize the different languages spoken within their own community and to appreciate the fluid, changing nature of language. Students receive formal instruction in at least one foreign language. The desired outcome for all students is:

- Recognition of the multi-lingual characteristics of the Hoboken community and its connection to the larger global community.
- Ability to use a second language to communicate accurately and appropriately, whether reading, speaking, writing or listening.

Physical Development and Health

Students participate in a wide range sports and physical challenges. Students are educated about their bodies and minds and how to maintain the health of both. The desired outcome for all students is:

- Ability to set and achieve physical goals.
- Ability to work with others in a group or team setting.
- Understanding of human growth and development, and sexuality at the secondary school level; ability to plan a physical fitness program; understanding of nutrition, substance abuse, the nature of illness.

A significant focus of curriculum design will be on staff development. A key to successful implementation of a restructured program is a commitment to allowing adequate time for teachers to study, absorb and practice new techniques collaboratively and with trained leaders. As we explore new possibilities for curriculum design, we will structure and coordinate planning time in order to assure staff the necessary time to develop an outstanding instructional program.

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b. Define the school calendar, school day schedule and hours of operation [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 5(g)].

The Hoboken Charter School uses block scheduling to provide periods of learning time longer than the traditional 45-minute class. Extending the length of learning time creates more time for in-depth investigation of subject matter and is consistent with an inquiry-based, problem-solving approach to instruction. Longer blocks of learning time promote a culture of sustained focus on important ideas, and reduce the wasted minutes of passing time and beginning and ending class periods.

Block scheduling provides teacher teams with long, uninterrupted blocks of learning time. Flexible scheduling can then be used to create weekly schedules that best meet the needs of the curriculum. Blocks of time can be shortened or lengthened to accommodate field trips, guest speakers and laboratory experiences. Flexible and block scheduling at the secondary level creates multiple opportunities for expanding the curriculum outside the classroom walls and into the community. Field-based learning experiences, including community service learning, collaborations with cultural institutions, and apprenticeships are all concrete ways for students to learn and apply new concepts in meaningful and relevant ways.

At the Hoboken Charter school, a typical day for a student in grade 9-10 will begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 3:10 p.m. (although we expect many students will stay longer to participate in after-school activities). A teacher's day will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 4:00 p.m. A typical K-2 student's day will begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 2:10 p.m. (although, again, we expect many students will stay longer to participate in after-school activities). A teacher's day will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. Since the school is committed to serving both the child and the child's family, provisions will be made for before and after school programs for students and their families.

c. What grade range or ages will your charter school serve [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 5(f)]?

Initially, the Hoboken Charter School will have pre-K, K, 1,2, 9 and 10 grade programs. The school will expand each year and will be a fully-functioning pre-K to 12 school after five years.

d. How will your educational program provide for innovative strategies and practices that will promote high student achievement?

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We believe that our commitment to service learning and learner-centered education will promote high student achievement by bringing “real-world” issues into the classroom. Additionally, the structure of our classrooms will foster meaningful relationships among students and between students and teachers that is essential to high achievement. We recognize that the types of partnerships required for a service learning program to be effective require time and effort to establish. During the 1997-98 years we will develop these relationships. Poonie Holst, former Program Officer of the national Helpers Network has agreed to help us develop these relationships. Members of the Working Board will be responsible for initially coordinating these relationships and a staff person will be hired to oversee the program. Before the school opens we will initiate several community based service projects open to local youth. These activities will allow us to develop relationships within the community and help assure the mission of the school is publicly known.

e. Describe any partnerships which would enhance high student achievement through support services such as health, nutrition and counseling.

Though our service learning program and our commitment to community outreach, we anticipate partnerships will be formed with several organizations which will help enhance student achievement through a variety of support services. For example, we are approaching the local hospital, St. Mary Hospital, to create a partnership whereby they can provide resources and expertise to the school and its families. St Mary Hospital has a strong standing commitment to the community. It is currently unclear how this relationship will evolve. At a minimum we would like to see representatives from the hospital provide health information and basic medical screenings to the students and families (e.g., vision screening, first aid information, drug and alcohol prevention awareness). We are also working to develop a relationship with a Hoboken-based food service organization (possibly a restaurant or caterer) that can provide nutritionally sound varied meals for our students. This relationship would also include a breakfast program. We would like to connect both of these partnerships with our service learning program, thereby providing students with additional opportunities for making connections with the community and their learning.

We believe that a student's learning is enhanced when the family is also supported. During the 1997-98 period we will work toward establishing additional partnerships which can provide such support to the family. The types of services we would like to see available include literacy and English language training for parents, counseling for families in crisis or families with a child experiencing learning difficulties, and drug prevention programs. Our hope is that by establishing working relationships, if not partnerships, with a variety of institutions, we provide many of these services or at least be able to help locate services when they are needed.

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6. Student Assessment

a. Describe the method of assessing whether students are meeting the educational goals of your charter school, or the process by which assessment will be developed [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 5(d)].

The main method of assessing student performance at the Hoboken Charter School is through portfolio and performance assessment. The portfolio will be a representative sample of student work, completed and collected by the student over the course of the school year. The portfolios will give a picture of the student's problem-solving, reasoning, and critical thinking skills, emphasizing complex and realistic tasks over time.

Students will select work for inclusion in their portfolios, which will provide the basis for parent-teacher-student conferences.

Exhibitions and performances will require students to use their knowledge in personally meaningful ways. A large measure of the exhibition's meaning, therefore, is also to be found in how the student prepares for it. The exhibits will be realistic and will provide an opportunity for students to develop their own assessment criteria as they demonstrate the depth of their understanding of a particular topic. Students will define a problem and organize, plan and pursue long-term objectives as they conduct independent research. They will review and revise their work as part of this process.

The academic goals and objectives of the Hoboken Charter School are consistent with current state standards. Moreover, we view these standards as minimum competencies and anticipate that students at all grade levels will exceed them. To convey the specificity with which these standards will be addressed, we have chosen a standard from each discipline area and have provided an example of a "performance" that students will be expected to master in order to show competency in the given area. We have chosen standards for the fourth grade as this benchmark year will coincide with our charter renewal. Please see appendix A for a delineation of the standard and the Hoboken Charter School "performance." Development of assessment rubrics for these standards will be an ongoing project. However, we plan to complete a critical portion of this work during our planning year. An example of a set possible rubrics is presented in appendix (?), page (?).

b. Describe any assessment indicators your charter school has established which are in addition to those established by law [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 5(d)].

To provide students with the optimal educational opportunity, the Hoboken Charter School curricular expectations will initially be drawn from the New Jersey core curriculum content standards. These expectations will be improved and refined as the Charter is implemented over a four-year period. Students will be required to demonstrate competency in each subject area. Prior to

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and during the first year of the charter, a committee of staff and community members will develop a rubric of required skills and competencies for each grade. The student's portfolio of individual work, selected projects and exhibitions, grades and standardized test scores will be compared to the rubric by a Progress Review Committee prior to his/her anticipated last year in that grade. Areas of strength and weakness will be noted, and a specific goal will be prepared for each instructional area. The student will then have a full year to bring these targeted areas up to the competency level. The Progress Review Committee may also prepare differential standards for a student to reflect that student's individual learning strengths.

Our philosophy is also strongly influenced by the work of Howard Gardner, and his identification of seven types of human intelligence. We believe that children are gifted in many areas, most of which have not been taxed nor even encouraged previously in school. Our evaluation program will attempt to blend the notion of outcome-based evaluation with Gardner's work, encouraging children to demonstrate their learning in a variety of modes. For example, a student might choose to demonstrate problem-solving through a musical composition, or bring a philosophical insight to life through an allegorical dance routine.

While designing engaging “performances” for students is of critical importance, having some meaningful method for assessing the performance is absolutely critical. The criteria for the assessment will be explained to the student at the onset of the activity. So students know what constitutes different levels of success. Presenting the rubric at the start of the activity also assures students understand the assessment criteria. Furthermore, students can help establish the assessment criteria by defining terms and activities. Examples of work from previous years can be show to better help students to see the differences between assessment levels. In addition these standards and the accompanying criteria will be given to parents so that they comment on their relevance and help establish performance criteria. Thus, parents and students will be an integral part of the assessment process and cal work together in conjunction with parents toward reaching the goals. In this way communication among parents, students and teachers are effectively maximized. Within the school, the development of rubrics forces teachers to engage in clarifying discussions with each other to better articulate the content and levels of the rubric and how they fit with the mission of the school We have provided in an appendix sample rubrics that indicate the direction we would like to more in developing assessment rubrics for the Hoboken Charter School. The development to these rubrics will occupy a major portion of our planning year.

Students who struggle with traditional modes of learning will be provided with opportunities to learn and succeed by participating in activities which they find engaging and challenging. For example, if some students find it easier to demonstrate mathematical skills through a service learning

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project (e.g., designing a park requiring measuring, calculating expenditures, etc.) they will be provided with opportunities to demonstrate competence in this way. For others, the arts may provide opportunities to demonstrate competence. The Hoboken Charter School seeks to maximize student opportunities for success by providing opportunities which students find engaging.

Graduation from the Hoboken Charter School (grade 12) is dependent on successful completion of all course work, including a senior thesis, as well as a successful defense of a completed Graduation Portfolio. In addition, a student will be considered ready to graduate from the Hoboken Charter School when he or she:

- demonstrates grade-appropriate mastery of basic skills.
- possesses extended academic knowledge
- demonstrates strong research skills
- applies problem solving skills to complex problems
- chooses and defends a good solution from other possible alternatives
- can adapt and generalize information
- demonstrates innovative use of technology
- demonstrates competency in a fine art
- demonstrates competency in a sport or physical activity
- demonstrates competency in a second language
- ¥ holds a high standard for personal conduct and democratic values
- ¥ demonstrates social responsibility
- ¥ demonstrates leadership in groups
- ¥ demonstrates good skills in resolving interpersonal conflict

c. How will your charter school ensure high academic achievement as assessed through the statewide assessment program?

We will provide a course of instruction that is consistent with the standards of the State of New Jersey. In addition, we feel our emphasis on small classes and student investment in learning and personal responsibility will ensure student academic success as defined by the state. Our emphasis, however, is not on students simply meeting minimum standards or competencies, but on exceeding them by engaging students in significant and meaningful work. We expect all students to satisfy all state requirements with regard to assessment tools that are currently in place or under development.

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d. How will your charter school address the needs of students who do not perform at acceptable levels of proficiency on the statewide assessment program?

As we have discussed elsewhere in this application, the Hoboken Charter School will be a small community of learners, where students are well known by each other and their teachers. Students who do not perform at acceptable levels on the statewide assessment programs will be given remediation. Through programs such as peer tutoring, reciprocal learning, and service learning students will have the opportunity to develop and practice skills. Teachers will work collaboratively to help develop an program which draws upon a students strengths to help the student develop in areas which are less strong. We will also rely upon the school psychologist to help design programs for these students. Additionally, our relationships with institutes of higher learning, and teacher education programs we anticipate will provide a wealth of resources and innovative ideas. We are committed to seeing all students learn to their fullest.

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7. Admission Policy and Criteria

a. Describe your student admission policy and the criteria for evaluating the student to be admitted [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 5(e) and 7].

The Hoboken Charter School will not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, color, sex, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation. Nor will student selection be based on grades, disciplinary history, letters of recommendation, test scores, athletic ability, or socio-economic status. We see it as our responsibility to inform the entire Hoboken community about the Hoboken Charter School experience. The only policy regarding admissions is that prospective students and parent(s) or guardian(s) must attend an informational interview to ensure they understand the school's philosophy in addition to completing an admissions application.

b. Describe the random process your charter school will use to select students if there are more applicants than there are spaces available [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 8(a)].

The Board of Trustees will establish an admissions Committee. This committee will design a lottery system to ensure that the composition of the student body of the school reflects that of the community. The public lottery will be conducted in the spring and overseen by our board of directors and any interested parties from the local community (e.g., School Board members, council persons). The date, time, and location of the lottery will be announced in the local papers as well as at school board and City Council meetings.

c. Define the "reasonable criteria" which will be used to evaluate prospective students [c. 426, P.L.1995 Section 7].

Students who reside in the Hoboken school district will be given preference in enrollment. Prospective students who have siblings already enrolled in the school will be given priority when the number of applicants exceeds the number of spaces (this provision includes students from out of the district).

d. Define the terms and conditions of non resident student enrollment [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 8(d)].

Non-residents may be admitted only if there are available spaces that have not been filled by residents of the Hoboken community. All other terms and conditions of admission that apply to residents also apply to non-residents (see 7a).

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e. Define how the admission policy of the charter school will, to the maximum extent practicable, seek the enrollment of a cross section of the community's school-age population including racial and academic factors. How will you publicize the school to attract a cross section of students [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 5(e), 7, 8(e)]?

We will consult census data to get an accurate picture of the demographics of the Hoboken community (including racial, ethnic, and economic factors). We plan to consult with representatives (i.e., council persons, Planning Board members, business leaders, community activists, religious leaders) from each of the various Hoboken communities so that they can inform their constituents of the option of the Hoboken Charter School for their children. We will hold several open forum meetings to promote the school, to address any concerns and to answer questions about the school. A committee of parents, community leaders and others has been established to develop an aggressive community out-reach plan. To date, they have identified key members and organizations in the community who will be approached to help publicize the school and its mission. The forums, workshops and community projects planned for 1997-98 (see 11a & b) will further publicize the school.

f. Define any policies which will focus admissions to a particular grade level or to areas of concentration reflecting the mission and goals of your charter school.

There are no formal policies other than a willingness to explore learning within the context defined by the basic values outlined in the mission statement. Admissions initially will be limited to grades pre-K, K, 1,2, 9 and 10. This will allow for the cross age -- reciprocal learning to occur from the opening of the school.

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8. Student Discipline Policy and Expulsion Criteria

a. Describe the criteria your charter school will follow to suspend or expel students [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 9].

The discipline policy of The Hoboken Charter School is such that suspension and expulsion of students will be used only as a last resort. Parents and school staff will be responsible for creating an environment that promotes positive behavior and problem-solving skills both at school and at home. The following is a tentative list of offenses that could lead to suspension or expulsion. It should be noted that students will not be expelled for solely academic reasons.

1. Threatened, attempted or caused physical injury to another person.
2. Possessed, sold or furnished any firearm, knife, explosive or other dangerous object.
3. Possessed, used, sold, furnished or been under the influence of any controlled substance, or alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind.
4. Committed robbery or extortion.
5. Caused or attempted to cause damage to school or private property.
6. Committed an obscene act (including those motivated by bias or prejudice) or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
7. Offered, furnished or sold any drug paraphernalia.
8. Engaged in sexual harassment, as defined in the New Jersey Education Code.

The Board of Trustees may expel a student from the Hoboken Charter School upon the finding that the student committed one or more of the offenses and that (a) other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct or (b) that due to the nature of the violation, the presence of the student causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the student or other students and staff. In cases of suspension, the student must not go on the school campus unless otherwise authorized by the school administration. In the event that a student may be suspended for a period longer than one school day, an impartial advisory board, composed of teachers, will review the student's case and advise the school administration as to further suspension or other possible courses of action. The parent or guardian is to meet with the school administration or, if indicated, the advisory board to attempt to bring a satisfactory resolution to the suspension.

b. Describe any rules or codes of conduct which will govern student behavior.

and

c. Describe your charter school's disciplinary policy.

The Hoboken Charter School is grounded in the belief that every member of the school must listen, be reflective, and accept individual responsibility for his or her own words and actions. There

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will be an absolute ban on violence and an insistence on respect for others and honesty. Beyond these, the school and its codes of conduct can become an important forum for learning and practicing the principles of democratic justice. We plan to implement a simple and straightforward democratic process by which any member of the school community can initiate a change in school rules (aside from those required by law). Almost all the rules, procedures, and guidelines in a student handbook will be developed and refined using this process. In addition, students and teachers will have a clearly defined appeals process with which to resolve anything from a student's attitude of uninvolvedness to a teacher's evaluation of student performance or an administrator's supervision of staff.

Establishment of the code of conduct which will govern student behavior and the school's disciplinary policy are critical to defining the accepted culture of the Hoboken Charter School community. The code of conduct will set the minimum expectations for student conduct in the school. However, it will also set expectations for positive, contributing behavior. The code of conduct will be developed by students, parents, school staff, and the Board of Trustees. The goal will be to develop a common set of values to which all can subscribe, rather than focusing on those areas where discrepancy exists in belief systems. Among the areas expected to be included are:

- The responsibility for oneself and one's actions.
- The responsibility to help others in need.
- A core values including honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, and courtesy.
- Respect for diversity including the physically and mentally challenged, people of different races, cultures, genders, religions and belief systems.
- Expectations for acceptable academic effort, including homework completion.
- Expectations for personal behavior.
- Expectations for interpersonal interaction including each person's right to be treated with respect, kindness, dignity, and fairness.
- Expectations for respect for property and the belongings of others and of the school.
- Individual responsibility for intervention when a student observes a violation of the conduct code.
- Standards for communication between staff member, students, and parents in the case of infractions of the code of conduct.
- Guidelines for referral of students to the Fairness Committee.

We are in the process of gathering information on models being used by other schools. Prior to the opening of the school, we will develop a tentative, working code of conduct and disciplinary policy. When the school opens, the school community will engage in a school-wide project to refine,

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revise, and formalize the code of discipline and student handbook. We believe that this activity is critical to establishing the democratic values that are at the heart of our mission.

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9. At-Risk and Bilingual Students and Students with Disabilities

a. Describe how your charter school will meet the needs of at-risk students.

The Hoboken Charter School is designed to be a school which will interest and educate all possible students. It is designed to create an environment in which all students are given the individualized attention that is necessary for them to succeed. The commitment to educating all students to the highest possible standard is critical to meeting the needs not only of students, but of society and our democratic tradition as a whole. What causes a school to rise to the challenge of educating all students is the leadership and shared vision and values of the school. The Hoboken Charter School is founded on the following premises:

- We must change perceptions about human capacities.
- The classroom is not preparation for life; it is life itself.
- We must build on the natural interests, desires and abilities children bring to school.

Services and support will be in place to ensure that non-academic issues are managed. In addition to creating an environment of high expectations for all students, the Hoboken Charter School believes that it is critical to make education meaningful and relevant for all students. The Hoboken Charter School is committed to introducing students to successful role models and mentors from within the Hoboken community who can help students develop a vision of where they want to go and what it takes to get there.

Our model of service learning will create an environment in which all students can achieve and where difficult academic tasks can be learned in a non-academic setting. For example if a student is having trouble grasping mathematical concepts, opportunities for learning and practice through a service project might range from helping to design a lower level math curriculum (to reinforce simple skills and gain confidence) to working at an internship that requires the student to apply basic math to real world situations.

The services and programs that we will provide to all of our students are consistent with the regulations outlined in subchapter 6 of the N.J.A.C.. 6:8, Programs and Services for Pupils at Risk. We will focus on the needs of all of our students and their individual strengths and abilities. We envision a program that addresses the needs of “at-risk” students not through policies of redress, but through policies of empowerment.

b. Describe how your charter school will meet the needs of limited English proficient (LEP) students.

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We expect a number of students who speak a language other than English at home will attend the Hoboken Charter School. Although we plan to have a comprehensive English as a Second Language program, we are seeking a waiver from the requirement to create a bilingual program. Because the Hoboken Charter School will be a small interdependent community, we are planning a model of remediation in which students with higher English skills will be responsible for helping those who are not achieving at grade level. We plan to use peer and cross age tutoring as well as make available service projects in which students learn to help each other. Students will help to design and implement the programs, and even bring them to other schools who are interested in sharing in this project.

The Hoboken Charter School is currently in the process of researching different methodologies for addressing the needs of its limited English proficient (LEP) students and will seek outside funding to help with the development of such programs. We will bring to bear as many resources as possible, but will also look to the community for help as well. We are committed to:

- The belief that sensitivity to cross-cultural communication is of fundamental importance.
- Remaining aware of students' backgrounds, including native language, cultural environment, educational history, school experience, health conditions, and family and other social support systems.
- Understanding the overt and covert aspects of a student's culture.
- Distinguishing language differences (characteristics of learning English as influenced by the native language) from speech disorders (language difficulties resulting from mental or physical disorders).
- Parental involvement in children's schooling.
- Partnerships with community organizations that can help to facilitate communication with families and parents.

For those students whose English ability is sufficiently limited that "mainstreaming" may prove more detrimental than beneficial, we are exploring the possibility of an intensive immersion program. Resources will be a critical issue here, but we are opposed to the notion of traditional "bilingual" programs that have shown limited efficacy in developing the English language skills of non-native English speakers. This is an area in which we plan to conduct substantial further research during 1997-98.

c. Describe how your charter school will meet the needs of students with disabilities.

At the Hoboken Charter School we believe in a policy of inclusion. If we want citizens who take an active and thoughtful part in our democracy, they must be educated for this in school – working together on equally challenging problems, and using every possible talent toward their

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solutions. To this end we are committed to bringing the necessary resources to bear to ensure that all Hoboken Charter School students are educated.

Getting students of different levels to work together well implies new teaching methods and sometimes entirely new curricula. This effort requires time, practice, and freedom from evaluation procedures geared to a more traditional conception of schooling. Mixed age and ability grouping will allow the benefits of peer tutoring and cooperative learning to be maximized. Students will have the opportunity to learn from working with more able peers, as well as to serve as the "expert" in a learning relationship with students less able than themselves in a given area. Furthermore, small class size and flexible scheduling will maximize student potential for learning and development.

The curriculum will be designed to accommodate a wide range of ability and experience. In instances in which an organic learning disability is suspected or confirmed, local public school resources will be utilized. All efforts will be made to have a learning specialist on staff. Our collaborations with universities with strong education programs will provide additional support. In general, instances in which a discrepancy between ability and performance exists, instruction will be child-specific and will be *accelerated*, not *decelerated*, as is often the case with traditional remedial instruction. We believe that when schools are small enough, and when their structures simple enough, teachers can remain quite flexible in how they challenge individual students. This structure facilitates early intervention efforts which are critical to a student's eventual success. Additionally, by creating a curriculum which is focused around themes or projects that include all students, we believe that the needs of students can be more effectively met.

As with the at-risk and LEP students, we are in a unique position to help students with disabilities. Our focus on service learning will allow us to create a learning environment in which students can focus on their strengths and examine what they have in common with other students rather than their differences. They will also have the opportunity to learn what they can offer their community, which will enhance their self esteem and enable them to realize their value as members of the learning community

At the Hoboken Charter School we seek to define student IEPs in terms of capabilities and focus upon empowerment and self-determination. We seek to identify and strengthen existing student capacities so that students can be challenged to succeed in meaningful ways. In this manner students can use their capacities to develop strategies to overcome difficulties in ways that are personally relevant. For example, students with learning disabilities will not be given materials that are less demanding or assignments with lower expectations. Instead, their IEP will focus on

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strategies that will allow them to engage effectively with materials that are part of the “mainstream” curriculum.

Project-based curricula also have the advantage of requiring a variety of skills from students, not just the narrow competencies (like verbal deftness or math acuity) that have traditionally defined children as gifted or slow. Working on a group project, students recognize the interdependency of ideas and of their own abilities. Our goal is that all students will not only be reached, but challenged to move beyond self-imposed limits. Most importantly, we see it as the school's responsibility to open the door as wide as possible to every student. We rely upon research in cognitive science, such as that of Harvard's Howard Gardner, redefines “intelligence.” By holding high expectations for all students the Hoboken Charter School, seeks to establish rigorous standards for all. Because we believe that all students have intellectual power, we see it as our responsibility to provide a variety of routes to let them exercise it.

The ability to service the needs of physically challenged individuals will be largely dependent upon the facility acquired for the school. This question will need to be researched and carefully considered in the coming weeks and months. The Hoboken Charter School will seek the support of the local school system in this matter.

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10. Charter School Staff

a. Provide a copy of the certificates for all classroom teachers including principals and professional support staff; also include a description of their proposed qualifications [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Sections 14(c) and 5(h)].

Upon receipt of an approved charter, an admissions committee will be established to recruit necessary staff. Positions will be widely advertised in local papers and through professional journals. Ms. Gruber and Mr. Silberberg, two of the school's founders, plan to apply for teaching positions. The licence of Anne Gammons, who is on our Working Board, is also attached.

b. Describe your charter school staff responsibilities [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 5(h)].

All staff are expected to:

- ¥ value and commit to the purpose and mission of the school.
- ¥ have experience integrating service learning into the curriculum
- have experience working with mixed-aged groupings
- engage in curriculum design, implementation, and evaluation.
- explore new methodologies and curricula with the goal of improving teacher efficacy through participation in the teacher-as-researcher program.
- provide a challenging curriculum and appropriate learning strategies that will meet the individual needs of the students in a stimulating environment.
- be flexible and creative
- keep parents regularly informed of each child's academic and social progress.
- support and promote students' appreciation of and participation in a multicultural society.
- model behaviors and practices that will lead to the development of a positive and productive school culture.
- work in a collegial fashion with teachers, students, parents, and community members.
- participate in the governance of the school.
- recognize their own role as learners and engage in self-directed and school-supported professional development.
- share their work within the school community and make it available to the public community.

Specify security and protection to be afforded to employees of your charter school in accordance with the streamline tenure guidelines established by the Commissioner [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 14(e)].

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All procedures outlined in appendix A of the Charter School Application regarding the conduct of the Hoboken Charter School and its Board of Trustees with respect to dismissing or reducing the compensation of a streamline tenured employee (providing corrective action, process of notification, documentation and time frame of action) will be strictly adhered to. In addition, the Board of Trustees will see to it that all employees are aware of and understand their rights and responsibilities under the streamline tenure plan. These guidelines will be posted in the school and will be a part of the staff member handbook.

d. Provide a detailed explanation and justification for any adjustments which your charter school will request to expedite the alternate route program which will provide for the certification of persons who are qualified by education and experience [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 14(c)].

Teachers with substantial experience who are not certified by the State of New Jersey will be encouraged to apply for positions at the Hoboken Charter School. We will be formulating measures that will expedite the alternate route to certification program to accommodate the experienced but not certified teacher.

e. Describe the criteria and standards to be followed in the hiring of charter school staff.

All candidates must hold or be willing to seek a New Jersey State teaching license, albeit through a modified alternate route program. All candidates will be assessed on their ability to meet the staff responsibilities as outlined in 10b. Prospective candidates will submit a written application (including a statement of their philosophy of education and representative pieces of their work as a teacher), and will be interviewed by a Hiring committees including staff, students, and parents. Staff hired after the school is operational will be asked to give a demonstration lesson. Candidates who have the approval of the Hiring Committee will be referred to the Board of Trustees who will make the final decision regarding the hiring of a prospective teacher.

f. Describe the targeted staff size and the teacher-to-student ratio.

Our targeted teaching staff size (including aides) for our first year of operation is seven teachers, one floater, six aids. This includes some teachers who will have responsibilities in both the elementary and high school. Too often, high teacher/pupil loads and limited opportunities for teachers to collaborate make it difficult to provide the individualized attention that some students need in order to be successful. Teachers need sufficient time to interact with individual and small groups of students about the quality of their work. The most important step towards accomplishing

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this is to reduce each teacher's pupil load. The Hoboken Charter School is committed to keeping class sizes at or below 20.

g. Describe your policies and procedures regarding the following: salaries, contracts, hiring and dismissal, and benefit packages.

The salary scale for the Hoboken Charter School staff will be established by the Board of Trustees, and will reflect the parameters outlined in the charter school application booklet. Interviews of prospective teachers will be handled by the Hiring Committee, comprised of staff and Advisory Committee members. Candidates who have the approval of the Hiring Committee will be referred to the Board of Trustees who will make the final decision regarding the hiring of a prospective teacher.

Dismissal of non-tenured teachers is the right of the Board of Trustees. However, the Trustees must act in good faith. They must have sufficient documentation to warrant a dismissal and must be able to show, in cases relating to pedagogy and practice, that a reasonable effort was made to provide corrective intervention. In cases of conduct unbecoming, neglect, misbehavior and other offenses that are not directly related to pedagogy, the Board may call for dismissal without providing corrective intervention.

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11. Parental and Community Involvement

A key element of the mission of the Hoboken Charter School is the involvement of parents and the community in the school. Communication among parents teacher students and the community will be encouraged through many avenues.

a. Describe the procedures to be implemented to ensure significant parental involvement in the operation of your charter school [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 5(i)].

The educational literature is replete with evidence of the value of parental involvement in a child's education. We also believe that when parents are involvement in their child's learning, the child benefits in many ways. Academically, what is learned in school can be reinforced at home in both formal and informal ways. Parents can use this knowledge to reinforce and extend school learning in meaningful ways. Parents are also more likely to find ways they can contribute to, extend or develop a class project when they know what and how their child is learning.

The Hoboken Charter School encourages parents to be participants in education and this might involve teaching a "special" activity, arranging for a trips, etc. Another benefit when parents are actively involved in their child's education, is that they demonstrate that they value education and find learning enjoyable. By modeling such behaviors students too learn to value learning. An added benefit of having parents involved in the school is that students become comfortable with a wide range of adults. Both younger and older students learn to effectively communicate with different adults.

We envision a school in which parents find their input and involvement welcomed and are often seen visiting classes, tutoring students, helping out, and initiating and developing special projects. The school will have an "open-door policy" which encourages and welcomes parent participation and presence. The varied talents, experiences and interest of each parent will be recognized and ways they can enrich students education will be looked for. Parents will attend at least two teacher conferences per year and must attend at least one all-school assembly during the course of the year.

Parents will be active members of the school in many ways. Parents will serve on the various governance boards – Board of Trustees, the working Board, the school based action team. They will have a say in the evaluation of the school. Assessment rubrics will be shred with parents and their feedback requested. A weekly newsletter, written by students and faculty will be sent home. This newsletter will briefly describe each current classes activities. The Director and Site Based Action

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Team will provide further information about the school's activities. Parents also will be encouraged to contribute to the newsletter as will members of the Boards. The newsletter will also keep parents informed of school upcoming activities (e.g., trips, assessments, etc.), especially important for parents who are unable to visit the school on a regular basis.

An additional way parents will be able to stay in touch will school events will be through a parent hot-line, homework hot-line and teacher voice-mail system. An area of communication being considered is the establishment of Web site for families with access to e-mail. A dream of the school would be to lend all students a home computer and develop a system of communicating among families and school. For example, teachers could post all homework so parents and students could always access their assignments. Parents could set up private messages for students to keep them and their parents informed of progress. In this way the parent-teacher meetings will be on-going rather than only periodically.

Soon after the charter is granted the Board of Trustees and the Working Board will begin to plan and conduct a series of forums focusing on education in Hoboken and the role that the Hoboken Charter School will service in the community., These forums will provide an opportunity for the school to present its mission to the unlike A minimum of three forums are planned with guides speakers. Topics such as 1. Service Learning – its value for youth and the community 2) Alternative assessment of student performance and 3) gender and cultural equity in the classroom are being considered. As staff are hired, these meeting will provide the community with opportunities to get to know them.

During the planning year workshops will be offered to the community. Space for these workshops will be donated by Jill Singleton. These workshops will model the types to be available at the school. For example, one workshop might deal with strategies for dealing with homework. Another might present ways to help a young child learn to read. Unlike the forums, these workshops will be very educationally focused. Once the school is open we will make available to parents such programs as "Family Math" and "Family Literacy." These are intended to help parents learn new activities and strategies for reinforcing school learning at home.

b. Provide information on the manner in which community groups will be involved in the charter school planning and development process [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 5(k)].

The mission of the school is defined by its links to the larger community. The service learning program is grounded in the belief that education does not exist only within the walls of a school building, but becomes richer, more meaningful and more interesting when students can see its

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application and impact within the community. Community groups will be involved in the Hoboken Charter School in many ways. First, as service sites. Close relationships will be established with groups such as the local senior citizens center and other schools to provide meaningful experiences for our students. We are also exploring collaborations with other community groups to provide services to our students and families. Representatives of several community groups will serve as Trustees, including an associate professor at Hudson Community College. Our outreach plans involve local community groups . During the 97-98 year we will develop relationships and programs with local community groups. One example of the type of program we propose is a bridges program, which is described above.

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12. Charter School Facility

a. If you do not have a facility, describe your present options for designating a school facility.

The mayor of Hoboken has committed his support to help locate appropriate municipal space for the school. In addition, we have enlisted the help of two Hoboken-based Realty Companies to focus our search for a facility. A number of sites have been suggested and are under consideration.

b. Describe plans for acquisition of a facility.

Our current plans are to lease space in a public building for our first year of operation.

c. If you have a facility, describe and provide an address for the physical facility in which your charter school will be located [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 5(j)].

Not applicable.

d. Describe financial plans for acquisition of the facility.

We are exploring the availability of federal grant money as well as private funds to help us finance a facility. We will seek financial support from local and state businesses. The amounts budgeted for space represent the current rentals for school space in Hoboken.

e. Describe renovation needs for the facility, including estimated cost and anticipated source of funding for renovation.

Not applicable.

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13. Financial Plan

a. Provide the specifics of the financial plan for your charter school; include a description of the charter school fund development plan [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 5(l)].

We are in the process of identifying potential contributors to the school development fund. If we are granted a charter we will begin the formal process of soliciting contributions. We envision using this fund to support facility acquisition and renovation, technology implementation and professional development initiatives. We have identified over 50 foundations in New Jersey which support educational reform efforts and are collecting their applications and annual reports. We have been in touch with several who have expressed an interest in our work. Furthermore, we will seek the support of the local banks and community businesses. Our proposal has been shared with the local Chamber of Commerce and its President has offered his support. Our working board will include a fund-raiser who will oversee these activities. In addition, one of our founders, Dr. Deborah Hecht, has experience securing foundation money for educational research and has agreed to oversee our efforts. None of the anticipated revenues to be received from our fund raising efforts is included in the first years budget projects because of the uncertainty of obtaining funds. Although we are highly confident of obtaining private funds because we will have all of 1997 to fund raise.

b. What provisions will be made for auditing of your school pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:23 et. seq [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 5(l)]?

We plan to conduct audits in accordance with GAAP. Those standards require that we plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material mistreatment. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. The auditor will at year end review the financial performance against the initial budget and financial projections. The cost of the services for an outside bookkeeper and an independent auditor has been budgeted for the first year.

c. What are your charter school enrollment projection for the first four years?

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	
Pre-K	20	20	20	Note: Pre-K & K are half day programs.
K	20	20	20	Only three years are presented since school will
open				
Grade 1	20	20	20	in September 1998.
2	20	20	20	

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3		20	20
4		20	20
5			20
6			20
7			20
8			20
9	20	20	20
10	20	20	20
11		20	20
12		20	20

d. What are your charter school non resident enrollment projection for the first four years? What is your ultimate enrollment goal for non resident students?

We anticipate the number of students from outside Hoboken will be less than 3% per year.

e. Identify the districts from which the projected enrollment was determined.

Hoboken traditionally has a large number of children attending private or parochial schools. We anticipate applications from students who reside in Hoboken and currently attend public and private schools in the district.

f. Using the attached budget summary sheet, follow the directions and prepare a first-year budget covering projected sources of revenue, both public and private, and planned expenditures.

See attached

g. Describe your charter school cash flow management plan and how it will ensure a smooth cash flow from the local district.

See attached

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14. Transportation

Describe your procedure and timeline for notifying each district of residence of your transportation needs.

Since Hoboken is a square mile, except in the case of non-resident students, transportation will not be an issue. When non-resident applicants complete the application for admission they will also be asked to fill out an application for transportation. Since we plan to hold our lottery before May 15, we will be able to forward transportation applications to the relevant districts in a timely fashion.

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15. Waiver of Regulations

Describe and provide a justification for any waivers of regulations which the charter school is requesting [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 5(m)]. Please note that c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 11(a) provides the Commissioner with authority to grant waivers from regulations only. This provision does not grant authority to waive state statutes.

We are requesting waivers to a number of regulations that we believe would hinder our ability to provide an appropriate academic setting for all students. Many of the exceptions we are requesting are consistent with the Commissioner's Strategic Plan for Systemic Improvement of Education in New Jersey (June 7, 1995)

Regulations concerning Special Education:

- Composition of Child Study teams (N.J.A.C. 6:28-3.1(b))

We do not plan to have a learning disabilities teacher on staff. One of our founders, Jill Singleton, a reading and learning specialist, has agreed to provide consultation. We plan to seek outside funding to support the services of a learning specialist. Furthermore, our partnership with St. Mary Hospital will provide additional resources which will help us with our evaluations.

- Evaluation (N.J.A.C. 6:28-3.4)

As our budget will not allow us the resources to evaluate every incoming student we are requesting the right to examine the evaluations completed by the Hoboken Public Schools personnel for those students who come to us from the Hoboken Public Schools.

- Determination of Eligibility (N.J.A.C. 6:28-3.5)

We are requesting the right to classify students in categories different from those outlined by the state. We will focus on individual strengths and needs. It has been shown that "mainstreamed" special needs students gain as much from inclusive classes as they do from non inclusive classes. We would like to provide our students with a consistent rhythm to their day, rather than having them constantly removed from class and therefore from the learning community. Because we will be a small school, we will have the luxury of fewer students to track, allowing us more time to spend on the needs of each child. We intend to create individual plans in conjunction with the parents and the Child Study Team for the students who exhibit special needs. In this way we hope to create a situation in which the child's needs are being served without marginalizing or otherwise hampering the development of the student.

However, we are aware that there are some students with profound disabilities for whom mainstreaming can be problematic. It is our intention to consult with the special needs coordinator for the Hoboken Public Schools in cases where the needs of the students cannot be served sufficiently by our model.

- Individualized Education Program (N.J.A.C. 6:28-3.6)

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As stated in question 9 above, we plan to create IEPs which encourage students to move forward and improve rather than focusing on what the child cannot do. We recognize that there are some children with profound disabilities which prevent them from achieving at level. However, even for these children, we want the IEP to reflect the best the child can do and serve to push them forward in their learning. The IEP will incorporate the student's service learning experiences which will be designed (with the student, parents and Child Study Team) to further the goals outlined in the IEP. This is consistent with N.J.A.C. 6:28-3.6 (2).

- Related Services (N.J.A.C. 6:28-3.8)

Due to budget constraints we will be unable to provide occupational and physical therapy (as per section 2). However, under our proposed partnership with St. Mary Hospital, we will be able to provide health care workers from the community to assist us when needed. We will also be unable to provide transportation as outlined in section 5 unless state funds are provided with which we can purchase a school van.

Regulations concerning Bilingual Education

- Required programs for limited English proficient pupils (N.J.A.C. 6:31-1.4 (c))

As stated in question 9, we do not plan to provide a bilingual program. We will provide an English as a Second Language program. This is consistent with N.J.A.C. 6:31-1.5(b) which states a district can request a waiver and "establish an instructional program alternative." As our school serves a pre-K to 12 population, this age range makes a bilingual program impractical. In addition, this type of program would be inconsistent with our mission which encourages inclusion rather than separation.

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16. Charter School Self-Evaluation and Accountability

a. Describe the process which will be used for charter school self-evaluation; include the role of the Board of Trustees, administrative and teaching staff, parents and students, and consultants.

The Hoboken Charter School will be involved in continual self-evaluation to assure the school is true and accountable to its mission. We view this as a learning process and a way of keeping the school community informed about and accountable for its growth and development. The self-evaluation as we conceive it is a multi-faceted activity which involves parents, teachers, students, the Boards and the community. Only by considering each facet can a full picture of how the school is functioning within its stated goals be developed. Each constituency will provide information and participate with the Board of Trustees in examining the performance of the school. Collectively they will integrate this information to provide a cohesive picture of the school.

We view the process of self-evaluation and accountability in the same way we view our educational mission. We must continually explore, evaluate, reflect, learn, and improve if the Hoboken Charter School is to remain the dynamic and current learning environment we propose. How the school proceeds with its own evaluation will model the thinking and evaluation processes we expect of all students in the school .

The mission of the school to include all members of the school community in its governance and operation should create an environment in which all are comfortable providing praise and criticism in the hopes of improving the working of the school. The self-evaluation will rely on input from all members of the community (parents, teachers, students) as well as solicit feedback from community partners, school volunteers, faculty consultants, and others involved in the school.

The following represents a list of the types of data we will use to evaluate the school.

Students:

- demonstrate appropriate academic achievement - are students achieving at identified benchmarks (evidenced by students portfolios, grades, narratives)
- demonstrate positive attitudes toward school and learning (evidenced by student self-reports, teacher observations and parent reports)
- report successful service experiences and report an awareness of self-responsibility
- attend school regularly and arrive on time
- participate in school governance, school wide activities, etc.
- follow school and class rules
- complete homework and other assignments

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show respect for others and self

Teachers:

Participate in the teacher as researcher program, producing a project at the end of their project
report continued self-learning

Become actively involved in the governance of the school

participate in parent - teacher meetings

demonstrate positive attitudes toward students, parents and co-workers

Parents

Participate in school based activities (parent-teacher conferences, workshops, etc.)

report positive attitudes on a yearly survey to include questions about a) their child(ren)s
attitudes toward school and learning; b) awareness of the mission of the school; c) teacher,
director, boards, etc. effectiveness;

actively contribute to the school's educational program by visiting school, helping in
classrooms, etc.

Community Outreach:

number of applications

a review of the outreach process

site evaluations for each of the service sites

Board of Trustees

attendance at meetings

awareness of and participation in school activities

At present we have outlined the following steps to be taken

parent surveys to be sent home a minimum of two times a year -- December & June which ask
parents to reflect upon their own involvement and child's involvement in the school

teacher observations, to be conducted by a committee established by the Board of Trustees at
least twice a year

observations at the service sites at least twice a year

self-evaluation surveys completed by the Board of Trustees and Working Board annually

non-teaching staff evaluations completed annually

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We will work with the Center for Advanced Study in Education to review our evaluation procedures and to develop a more comprehensive evaluation during year two. The purpose of this evaluation will be to

- determine the extent to which the charter proposal has been implemented
- determine the effectiveness of the program
- make recommendations for modifications that would increase program effectiveness

We are also exploring the possibility of establishing a network with other charter schools in which member schools would work together to help each other accountable for high and rigorous standards. The network would establish a system of accountability and of support toward meeting such high standards in ways that make sense to them. The network would be required to account publicly for its work in three domains: educational outcomes, equity and fiscal responsibility. A similar program is currently be initiated in New York City through the New Your Networks for school renewal.

b. Describe how your charter school self-evaluation process will support development and dissemination of the required annual report.

Since self-evaluation, both formal and informal, will take place on an ongoing basis, development of the required annual report will emerge naturally out of the day-to-day practices in the school. This information, which will be collected by School-Based Action Team work-groups and outside consulting groups will synthesized by a committee overseen by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will be responsible for dissemination of the annual report and for making sure that it is accessible to all interested parties.

c. Describe the system your charter school will use to maintain school records and disseminate information regarding that system to the community.

All of our school records will be kept on a central computer system which will be located on site. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, all information, with the exception of a student's personal records, will be public information.

d. How will your charter school staff be evaluated? Describe your standards/criteria for staff performance evaluation.

As with all evaluations at the Hoboken Charter School we view staff evaluations as a way for learning and improving rather than judging. Ultimately, it will be the responsibility of the director

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and Board of Trustees to ensure that the staff are all meeting state requirements for proper pedagogy. However, the primary body responsible for on-going staff evaluations will be other staff members, although this process will be overseen by the school director. A peer-review process will be established by which teachers will observe each others classes and offer suggestions to insure that all staff members live up to the standards of teaching and planning necessary to maintain a rigorous academic setting. The staff of the Hoboken Charter School will be evaluated in much the same way that the students are. Staff members will be expected to establish a portfolio of their work which will include but not be limited to sample lesson plans, peer evaluations, self evaluations, video or audio tape of a lesson, student work, and student evaluations. These portfolios will be reviewed by other teachers. Teachers will be encouraged to reflect upon these responses and develop plans for personal growth and development. Each teacher also will be expected to present her or his research project. These presentations will be open to all members of the Hoboken Charter School community including parents, teachers, and board members. We will seek the support of a university collaborator to help us work further on our teacher evaluation component. We view this as a learning opportunity for teachers which could be maximized by the involvement of a School of Education university program.

The Board of Trustees will evaluate the Director. Parents and teachers will be asked to complete a brief survey to identify strengths and areas of improvement. Staff will also be evaluated by school directors on their adherence to the Charter School staff responsibilities, outlined in section 10b.

17. Timetable

Provide a detailed timetable of projected steps and dates leading to the opening of the charter school.

Assuming that we are informed that our application was accepted in January 1997:

Request copoes of curricula from the state

Begin adaptation of curricula by interdisciplinary teamsand identify programs to pilot interdisciplinary units

Pilot interdisciplinary units

Evaluate results of interdisciplinary pilot program and make adjustments as necessary

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18. Liability and Insurance

Describe the following insurance coverage plans for your charter school [c. 426, P.L. 1995 Section 14(a)].

- Health
- Automobile liability for pupil transportation
- General liability
- Property
- Officer and employee liability, including any performance surety.

Through our partnership with the Hudson School we are exploring the feasibility of buying into their insurance plan. We are also exploring the possibility of receiving coverage under the insurance plans that cover existing Hoboken Public Schools or the City of Hoboken.

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19. Documentation

Please submit copies of the following documents:(If not available, please provide a brief explanation as to why a document is not available and/or when it will be available)

- Certificate of occupancy issued by the local building inspector
- Annual fire certificate of inspection
- Health inspection certificate
- Any proof of compliance with federal and state health and safety regulations

These documents are conditional on obtaining a school facility. When we have obtained a facility these documents will immediately be forwarded to your office.

- By-laws

Relevant by-laws (Board of Trustees, Advisory Committee, Hiring Committee, Fairness Committee, Parent Teacher Association) will be submitted as these documents are written.

- Any or all contracts

Will be provided as contracts are written and subsequently entered into.

- Incorporation documents

- Any or all leases

Will be provided as leases are written and subsequently entered into.

51% of

- For existing public schools converting to a charter status, the petition signed by at least

the parents and 51% of the teachers.

Not Applicable.

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