II. EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND PROGRAM

Governing Law: A description of the educational program of the school, designed, among other things, to identify those whom the school is attempting to educate, what it means to be an "educated person" in the 21st century, and how learning best occurs. The goals identified in that program shall include the objective of enabling pupils to become self-motivated, competent, and lifelong learners. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(A)(i).

If the proposed school will serve high school pupils, a description of the manner in which the charter school will inform parents about the transferability of courses to other public high schools and the eligibility of courses to meet college entrance requirements. Courses offered by the charter school that are accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges may be considered transferable and courses approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the "A" to "G" admissions criteria may be considered to meet college entrance requirements. Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(A)(ii).

Mission

The Paramount Bard Academy is committed to providing a full range of students with an academically challenging curriculum, individually responsive and fully inclusive in its approach to teaching and learning, and dedicated to the idea that all children should complete high school prepared for thoughtful citizenship and ready to complete a college degree.

Educational Philosophy

The Paramount Bard Academy will provide an exemplary education for a broadly representative population of students from Delano, California and surrounding school districts with the goals of increasing the number of students who complete a postsecondary education and contributing to the development of students as self-motivated, competent, lifelong learners.

Specific Objectives for Achieving This Goal. The list of goals below is both expanded and described in more detail in Section III of this document as list of "Measurable Student Outcomes." This list is included here because it emphasizes the Paramount Bard Academy's focus on quantifiable goals that guarantee continued educational success leading to increased opportunities for employment and learning throughout the lifespan.

- Communicative competency. (The ability to read, write, listen, and speak effectively.)
- Core knowledge in subject areas.

- Technological competency/fluency.
- Academic literacy. (Understanding of key concepts in critical fields of study.)
- Self-discipline, self-reflection, and the capacity for self-directed learning.
- Graduation from high school including 30 earned credit hours of college course work.

Who is the Paramount Bard Academy attempting to educate?

The Paramount Bard Academy seeks to educate a population of students from the Delano community and nearby school districts who represent the full range of students who attend area schools. Delano Union School District (DUSD) and Delano Joint Union High School Districts (DJUHSD) are expected to be the principal sources for students attending the Academy. The student body makeup of the DUSD and the DJUHSD are described in the table below:

TABLE #1

District	2007-08 Enrollment	Number of Tracks	Hispanic or Latino	White	African-American	Asian/ Filipino	English Learners	Free & Reduced Price Meals
DUSD	7,629		83%	2%	1%	12%	49%	82%
DJUHSD	4,565		82%	3%	1%	14%	38%	76%

The two traditional public high schools in DJUHSD, Cesar Chavez High and Delano High, each serve over 2,000 students. The average size of the elementary and middle schools in DUSD is nearly 700 students.

The table below presents the academic achievement for the two local districts, including the data for the two regular high schools in DJUHSD. This data clearly shows room for improvement in both districts, as the ultimate goal for all schools in California is an 800 API.

TABLE #2

School/District	2006 API Statewide Rank	2006 API Similar Schools Rank	2007 API Base	Met Schoolwide Growth Target	Met All Subgroup Growth Targets	2007-2008 Program Improvement
DUSD	N/A	N/A	690	N/A	N/A	Year 3
DJUHSD	N/A	N/A	658	N/A	N/A	--
Cesar Chavez High	4	8	675	Yes	Yes	--
Delano High	4	7	668	Yes	Yes	--

The Paramount Bard Academy will be a public school, seeking to educate all children and demonstrate how an alternative model of classroom practice fosters learning and increases student achievement across a school population that reflects the local

demographic. The Paramount Bard Academy will open in 2009-2010, admitting 100 6th and 100 9th grade students as a campus of 200 students in its first year. In 2010-2011, an additional 100 6th and 9th grade students will enroll as Paramount Bard Academy students and this cycle of admissions will proceed in this manner until the school reaches its first goal of enrolling 700 students in grades 6-12 in the 2012-2013 school year. During the 2013-2014 school year, Paramount Bard Academy will develop its curriculum and begin hiring teachers to open its campus to 100 kindergarten students in the 2014-2015 school year. By 2019-2020, the Paramount Bard Academy will be operating at full capacity with 1300 students in grades K-12. See enrollment table below (Table 33) for the first five years of Paramount Bard Academy's matriculation and growth plan:

TABLE #3

Grade	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
6	100	100	100	100	100
7		100	100	100	100
8			100	100	100
9	100	100	100	100	100
10		100	100	100	100
11			100	100	100
12				100	100
Total Enrollment	**200**	**400**	**600**	**700**	**700**

The school will draw its population from the Delano Union and Union High School Districts and surrounding communities. More specifically, the Paramount Bard Academy seeks to recruit a representative sample of the students who attend school in either of the Delano school districts or nearby communities. Using an average of statistics from the two Delano districts, this would mean that the Paramount Bard Academy student body would be constituted as follows: 82.9% Hispanic, 12.8% Filipino/Asian, 43.6% English Language Learners, and 78.6% Free/Reduced Lunch (see table on page 7). As a charter school, the Paramount Bard Academy is open to all student applicants without qualification but will develop a program of community outreach and an information campaign to ensure that the population of students at the Academy reflects the prevailing demographic of the region. The profile of this population of students is correlated with lower student achievement rates. More specifically, socioeconomic status (SES) is the strongest predictor of achievement on standardized tests, English Learner students are disproportionately low-income, and English literacy is a necessary prerequisite to successful learning. These factors represent a unique educational challenge but a challenge that has been successfully addressed through educational planning that emphasizes a central focus on literacy development across the curriculum and forms of instruction that are responsive to student needs. As a model educational environment attempting to demonstrate what is possible when academic expectations are high and teaching is directed at addressing individual differences, it is imperative that the Paramount Bard Academy educates the same range of students as any other area public school.

What does it mean to be an "educated person" in the 21st century?

The Paramount Bard Academy believes that an "educated person" in the 21st century possesses much more than the core body of knowledge and key understandings mandated by state standards. In a world in which information proliferates and knowledge is power, the ability to access and analyze information for particular purposes, to understand and evaluate different ways of knowing, and to apply the analytic 'tools' of key academic disciplines to a range of problems are the necessary foundations for participatory citizenship and career success. In this sense, the values of a liberal arts education provide the basis for this school's curricular and instructional emphasis**.** A liberal arts education offers a broad range of studies in the humanities, the social sciences, and the sciences. This broad exposure provides students with a comprehensive education, including opportunities for learning in a variety of contexts and preparation for the challenges of college and the responsibilities of citizenship in an increasingly complex world. The range of academic subjects associated with a liberal arts education teach students how to think critically, learn effectively, and make meaningful connections. The abilities that lead to continued educational success and the qualities that employers look for in future employees are implicit to a liberal arts education and what we might also call academic literacy. These include effective communication skills, the ability to solve complex problems and work collaboratively with others, as well as a fundamental grasp of core ideas in various subject areas. We hold academic literacy as a primary educational goal and by this we mean the ability to be fluent with the knowledge and means to understanding that constitute key academic areas – especially in the areas of literature, the social sciences, mathematics, the arts, and the natural sciences.

How does learning best occur?

The Paramount Bard Academy is uniquely configured, integrating the work of an innovative public school with Bard College's Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program. Public school and college faculty work side by side on a common campus, supported by graduate students as teaching assistants, moving public school students towards success in college in an environment that actively engages educational theory and practice in the study of core academic disciplines.

These elements contribute to a culture that is meaningfully engaged with learning not only as the acquisition of skills and knowledge but also, and perhaps more importantly, as the development of forms of understanding that are directly connected to the responsibilities of adulthood, continued learning through the lifespan, and the demands of citizenship in the modern world. Such connections are essential to developing a learning culture that values intellectual competency and moral character. As John Dewey described the effect of such connections in ***Democracy and Education*** (1916), "For under such conditions, the school becomes itself a form of social life, a miniature community and one in close interaction with other modes of experience beyond school walls." At the Paramount Bard Academy, success in learning emerges from these conditions, which are shaped by **three key principles** and guided by research-based practices.

1. **Teaching and learning is student-centered.** The Paramount Bard Academy attends to the learning needs of students in two dimensions. The first dimension has to do with the development of competent learners who possess the knowledge, skills, and cognitive abilities to become increasingly self-directed. This means that teaching is responsive to individual student needs, which is supported by small classes that allow teachers to deliver tailored instruction while maintaining a challenging curriculum. Forms of ongoing assessment become the basis for teachers to diagnose individual needs, evaluate teaching approaches, and respond with changes in instruction that support learning and provide forms of feedback that allow students to self-correct and become increasingly strategic and independent in their learning. Effective instructional design emerges from clear educational goals and responds to differences among individual students. To this end, all teachers will earn ***National Board Certification*** during their first years as faculty members. The forms of reflective practice that constitute the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards will be a part of regular practice, amplified by the classroom research that is a cornerstone of the graduate education of MAT students, which is guided by public school and college faculty.

   The second dimension provides key supports for young learners who are responding to a variety of challenges as they move towards adulthood. All members of the school faculty will be responsible for a cohort of students in **Advisory Groups** of ten to fifteen students. These advisory groups will meet on a daily basis for a variety of purposes, from the discussion of school-related issues to forms of academic support and the active exploration of issues that impact individual learning. Each advisor becomes the advocate for his/her students, making regular contact with students' parents and teachers and working closely with students to support their success.

2. **Literacy is the basis for successful learning.** The ability to read and write effectively is widely recognized as the cornerstone of successful school learning and an essential prerequisite for progress through college. The Paramount Bard Academy recognizes the need for students to develop these basic skills but goes beyond this narrower sense of literacy to include forms of literacy across the disciplines that are the hallmark of the highly competent learner. Fluency with the knowledge and concepts that constitute understanding in the arts, history, literature, mathematics, music, and the sciences is the basis for continued educational success. The Paramount Bard Academy also adheres to a culturally responsive pedagogy; high school and college faculty will actively connect the language and literacy of students' lives with the increasingly complex demands of what it means to be literate in the 21st century.

To this end, research-based literacy practices will shape pedagogical practices, building core skills and abilities in the early years of schooling. Writing and thinking practices developed by the ***Institute for Writing and Thinking*** at Bard College will provide a model for classroom learning that emphasizes the reflective use of language and collaboration to develop higher order thinking. Secondary literacy instruction will be based on the academic literacy practices developed by the ***Strategic Literacy Initiative at WestEd*****. (see http://www.wested.org)** Early literacy instruction, in grades K-8, will draw on the model of the ***Teachers College – Columbia University Reading and Writing Project***.

3. **The school curriculum reflects the authentic work and challenges of the core disciplines.** The Paramount Bard Academy curriculum will incorporate California standards but will emphasize a project-based learning approach that challenges students to develop the cognitive strategies necessary for success in college-level work. The academic year will be divided into units of study that are defined by performance assessments using the model of the ***College-readiness Performance Assessment System*** (C-PAS) developed by the ***Educational Policy Information Center*** (EPIC). These units will be developed through the collaborative efforts of the Paramount Bard Academy teachers and the MAT Program college faculty. Furthermore, these units will integrate learning across the disciplines, making connections between literature, history, mathematics, science, and the arts that reflect the interdisciplinary work that is common to research in these fields while emphasizing the ways that forms of understanding can be applied across domains.

   High school students will begin taking college courses offered on site by Bard College faculty members as soon as they demonstrate the motivation and have successfully completed necessary prerequisites. It is expected that all students will graduate from high school having completed a minimum of 30 college credits with increasing numbers of student earning an associate of arts degree in the liberal arts and sciences in the years ahead. The early college movement has demonstrated consistent success moving populations of low-income students into college, students who would more typically have struggled to complete their high school degrees. According to Gates Foundation data, there are159 early college high schools nationally; many of them are located in California but none yet in the region that will be served by the Paramount Bard Academy.

These three principles are realized through specific structures that constitute the Paramount Bard Academy educational program as follows.

1. ***Small school culture as learning support*** – at full capacity, the Paramount Bard Academy will enroll 100 students at each grade level, from grades K-12.
2. ***Reduced class size*** – the Paramount Bard Academy will maintain class sizes of no more than 18 students in grades K-5 and no more than 22 students in grades 6-12.
3. ***Advisory support*** – students will be organized into grade-level cohorts of 10-15 students attached to a single faculty member as their advisor. These advisory groups will meet daily to support learning under the guidance of the advisor, who will act as a student advocate and communicate regularly with parents/guardians to build and maintain links between school and home.
4. ***Highly competent, qualified teaching faculty*** – all teachers will satisfy predetermined standards for 'highly competent' teachers, will work to receive National Board Certification within their first year of teaching, and will remain active as learners within their selected academic fields. Teachers will meet all applicable "highly qualified" requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act.
5. ***Highly qualified classroom support*** – MAT Program graduate students will serve as assistant teachers during the apprenticeship cycle of their teacher education program. These students are a select group of college graduates with deep knowledge in their respective subject areas and an abiding interest in becoming successful teachers of their disciplines.
6. ***Core literacy practices across subject areas*** – the Paramount Bard Academy will emphasize a language rich environment, emphasizing literacy development across the subject areas to develop competent understanding in the core academic areas. Teachers will draw on the work of Teachers College - Columbia University Reading and Writing Project for instructional models in grades K-8, the work of the Strategic Literacy Initiative at WestEd for grades 9-12, and the work of Bard College's Institute for Writing and Thinking throughout grades K-12.
7. ***Project-based instruction*** – students will engage in learning that is prompted by the forms of inquiry that constitute each of the academic disciplines, developing knowledge and understanding in authentic contexts. Instruction will focus on the key cognitive strategies identified by the Educational Policy Improvement Center that build towards success in college. The Paramount Bard Academy will build instructional units that guide learning and ongoing assessments that shape the continued improvement of instruction in collaboration with the MAT Program faculty.
8. ***Ongoing assessment*** – in addition to attending to the educational standards and assessments of the State of California, the Paramount Bard Academy will develop forms of assessments that provide ongoing feedback for students and teachers – helping students become increasingly strategic and self-directed in their learning and allowing teachers to modify instruction to the individual needs of a range of students.

9. ***Block scheduling*** – classes will meet for extended periods of time to allow for sustained inquiry and in-depth engagements with the various subject areas.
10. ***Integrated curriculum*** – teachers will plan lessons collaboratively, building units of study across disciplines that allow for meaningful connections and the broad application of key cognitive abilities.
11. ***Art and Music*** – instruction and experiences in the visual and performing arts will be integral to the school curriculum.
12. ***College in the school*** – the presence of graduate students as apprentice teachers increases opportunities for individualized instruction and the inclusion of college faculty in education and the disciplines as members of the teaching community supports curriculum innovation and allows for college courses to be taught in school, fully integrated with the high school curriculum.
13. ***Extended school day*** – 'after school' programs that extend the school day will provide support and enrichment for all students, ensuring that students benefit from homework and remain engaged with what is implicitly valuable to study in various subject areas.
14. ***Extended school year*** – the academic year will be expanded to 190 days, creating two weeklong cycles for student presentations of work and projects to peers, teachers, and community members as part of end-of-the-semester assessments.
15. ***Regular cycles of parent-school interactions*** – advisory group leaders will communicate with parents of their advisees on a monthly basis and various forums for school-community engagements will be part of annual planning initiatives.
16. ***An emphasis on postsecondary education and lifelong learning*** – the integration of Bard College faculty and graduate students in the daily life of the school and the fact that classroom teachers are engaged in continued learning through MAT Program provides models for learning that foster a culture of educational aspiration and achievement.

A Further elaboration:

Please see **Appendix G – A Day in the Life of a Paramount Bard Academy Student**, which provides a brief description of the experience of a sixth and ninth grader during a typical day at the Charter School.

High School Programs

The Paramount Bard Academy will offer a challenging academic curriculum in an environment that emphasizes the development of knowledge and understanding in core academic areas through authentic forms of inquiry and forms of teaching and assessment that address individual needs while building increasing self-direction and independence

in student learning. The educational goal of the Paramount Bard Academy is to ensure that every student graduates from high school with a minimum of 30 credit hours of college credit, fully prepared to complete a postsecondary degree.

The Paramount Bard Academy will seek to earn accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) (with the goal of achieving candidacy by July 2010) and to ensure that every student has the opportunity to graduate with University of California/California State University (UC/CSU) approved coursework.

College courses will be taught by Bard College faculty as a part of the regular high school curriculum. Students will receive Bard College credits for successful course completion. All courses will be submitted to the University of California and the California State University for course approval under the "a-g" admissions criteria. Approval for all courses will be submitted within two years of the opening of the Paramount Bard Academy.

The Academy will inform parents about the transferability of courses to other public high schools and the eligibility of courses to meet college entrance requirements through an annual information packet sent to student homes at the beginning of each school year with follow-up information to be provided by student advisors. Parents will also have access to all Bard College materials and information resources through the Academy website and by direct request to the Paramount Bard Academy.

Secondary Course Requirements

Students will fulfill course requirements through high school and college level coursework at the Paramount Bard Academy. All students must complete at least 30 credit hours of college coursework to graduate and all students may complete the course requirements for an associate degree by the time they have completed their high school education. All students will exceed the UC/CSU system "a-g" requirements. Students will fulfill the UC/CSU requirements by taking the following courses in the areas noted below for the indicated number of years:

<u>UC/CSU a-g Requirements Fulfilled by Paramount Bard Academy</u>

History/Social Science	2 years	Non-English Language	2 years
English/Literature	4 years	College Preparatory Electives	1 year
Mathematics	3 years	Visual and Performing Arts	1 year
Lab Science	2 years		

Students will be required to complete the following additional courses to complete high school requirements and graduate from the Paramount Bard Academy:

History/Social Science	2 years	Physical Education	2 years
Lab Science	1 year	Elective	1 year
Visual and Performing Arts	1 year		

Secondary Graduation Requirements

The Paramount Bard Academy approach to curriculum design and teaching will allow students to achieve the objectives set forth in this charter proposal, enabling all students to master academic content standards in core curriculum areas as adopted by the California State Board of Education and to exceed these standards by engaging in college level work and earning college credits prior to graduating from high school.

Elementary School Programs

During its first four years of operation the Paramount Bard Academy will focus its resources on the development of a program for students in grades 6-12. (See timeline description below in the section Students To Be Served.) The designs for curriculum and instruction at these grade levels are described in the pages that follow.

In its fifth year of operation, 2013-2014, the Paramount Bard Academy will develop curriculum and design instructional approaches with the goal of admitting students in grades K-5 beginning in its sixth year of operation, 2015-2016, upon its charter renewal. Experts in early childhood and elementary education will be hired to work with experienced elementary school teachers during this fifth year to build a K-5 program that anticipates the goals and expectations of the existing 6-12 program. The goal will be to create an educational model that not only increases the number of students who will excel in the middle and high school programs but also to raise expectations in the upper years by building student capacities in the early years.

It is important to note that the development and articulation of the K-5 program in the fifth year of operations of the Paramount Bard Academy coincides with the charter renewal process. This means that a detailed plan for the curriculum and structure of the K-5 program will be part of the materials submitted to the charter authorizer at that time and integral to renewal decisions.

Curriculum and Instructional Design

Guiding principles. The Paramount Bard Academy school curriculum will be aligned with California State Board of Education adopted content Standards as well as standards developed by those national professional organizations that represent the values and aims of learning in various academic fields. For example, the values and aims for learning in science are determined by the shared standards of the scientific community and include identified areas of core knowledge as well as an understanding and ability to apply standards associated with the scientific method as a set of accepted processes for establishing knowledge claims in the field. In history, there are recognized standards for the construction of a historical narrative based on criteria or values that determine the choices, uses, and interpretations of data. Standards and/or curriculum published by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), the National Academy of Science, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS), the Organization of American Historians (OAH), the American Historical Association (AHA) will inform/shape both curriculum and instructional designs. Bard College professors and Paramount Bard Academy teachers will collaborate on the development of curriculum, ensuring that content is structured in ways that emphasize the qualities of thinking and the forms of understanding that are authentic and essential to the respective areas of inquiry.

Though the teaching faculty of the Paramount Bard Academy and Bard College professors will develop curriculum and instructional approaches in the months leading up to the opening of the school, it is important to recognize that all curriculum design will be governed by a few basic principles.

1. Course content and expectations for student achievement are aligned with state and national standards and are aimed at preparing students for success in college and productive habits for lifelong learning.
2. A concept of literacy development, ranging from the acquisition of increasingly effective communication skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) to a conceptual fluency allowing for transfer of understanding across areas of inquiry, and research-based practices related to literacy development are implicit to instructional designs.
3. The primary structures for learning are units of inquiry aimed at answering questions or resolving problems that are the basis for the various forms of disciplinary practice and knowledge making.
4. Approaches to teaching are student-centered and appropriate to the knowledge and concepts being taught.
5. Assessment is structured as a means of informing teaching and learning, helping students become increasingly reflective and self-directed and ensuring that forms of instruction are modified to respond to individual student learning needs.

Refer to appendices E and F for further information on curriculum development and design.

Instructional Materials. Recognizing that "thousands of new and experienced teachers look to model lessons and instructional materials for instructional decision making support and for teaching strategies they can adopt that will enable them to accomplish the goals established in the curriculum frameworks," (http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/documents/instmatoverview.pdf) learning materials will be selected and/or developed by the faculty of the Paramount Bard Academy in consultation with faculty of the Bard College Master of Arts in Teaching Program, Delano Campus and in compliance with Education Code Sections 60040-60045 and 60048 and in accordance with guidelines provided by the document *Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content.* (http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/documents/socialcontent.pdf)

Though the instructional materials will align with State Standards, they will be selected to support the creation of a college-going culture and the development of knowledge, understanding, and academic skills identified as essential to continued academic success. Standard adopted textbooks will be part of Paramount Bard Academy classrooms but will typically serve an ancillary or supportive role in student learning, providing students with access to information in a condensed or summary form as a reference that builds context for other readings.

For example, sixth grade students will have access to a California Department of Education adopted text, such as **The World in Ancient Times**, published by the Oxford University Press, but will rely on primary and/or secondary sources for their study of ancient civilizations. In **Appendix F**, a sample unit on ancient civilizations is described that includes readings in texts such as:

Assmann, Jan. *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Baines, John and Jaromir Malek. *Atlas of Ancient Egypt*. New York: Facts on File Publication, 1988.

Buber, Martin. *Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant.* New York: Harper, 1958.

Hart, George. *Egyptian Myths*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990.

Freed, Rita E. *Egypt's Golden Age, The Art of Living in the New Kingdom, 1558-1085 B.C*. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1981.

Macauley, David. *Pyramid.* New York: Houghton, 1975.

Reeves, Nicholas. *The Complete Tutankhamen.* Thames and Hudson, 1990.

Wiesel, Elie. "Moses: Portrait of a Leader." In *Messengers of God: Biblical Portraits & Legends*, 174–210. New York: Random House, 1976

Romano, James F. *Daily Life in Egypt of the Pharaohs.* New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1984.

Similarly, science instruction in sixth grade would draw on resources like the State Board of Education-adopted CDO ***Focus on Earth Science*** but would emphasize a lab-based inquiry driven approach to learning in earth science. Scientific research articles and online resources at an appropriate level become primary texts in the sciences. Teacher developed materials that allow students to engage in observation, data collection, and

hypothesis testing allow students to engage in science as a disciplinary practice that is qualitatively similar to the work of professional research scientists. Connections to college faculty at Bard and Bakersfield Colleges allow students to engage with practitioners in the field in a variety of contexts that are part of the instructional 'materials' that constitute learning in a given subject area. Instruction is further enhanced by field trips and technological avenues that allow students to connect to databases and virtual communities online, building technological competencies in meaningful contexts. Curriculum materials will be developed by the Charter School faculty. The teaching faculty will be hired no later than May 1, 2009 with the expectation that they will work for a designated period of time prior to the opening of school to develop curriculum and prepare the necessary lists of curriculum materials for purchase. This work will be compensated beyond contractual salary at a rate to be determined.

Emphasis on Academic Literacy Development

Academic Literacy. Paramount Bard Academy will incorporate the deliberate use of research-based literacy practices into all content area classes in order to build academic literacy. The emphasis at Paramount Bard Academy will be on the integration of authentic practices in the disciplines (i.e., the practice of Wineberg's "corroboration" in the study of history) with literacy practices (i.e., a graphic organizer that helps students delineate information from multiple sources). Researchers have found that "the nature of the disciplines is something that must be communicated to adolescents, along with the ways in which experts approach the reading of a text" (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008, p. 51). The Paramount Bard Academy will be uniquely situated to provide this instructional approach in that its partner faculty from the Bard College Master of Arts in Teaching Program will include experts in the disciplines and in literacy who are working collaboratively with the school to develop curriculum that is both demanding and culturally attuned. For example, in a ninth grade unit that integrates students' own experiences with literature and history in response to the essential question, *Why do we seek the new?,* students will study the emergence of the Blues as text while learning how to "read" both the historical and literary significance of a revolutionary movement in music. A detailed description of these units, as well as additional models in science and mathematics, can be found in the **Sample Units** section of this proposal, **Appendix F**.

Framework for academic literacy instruction. The following framework will guide the approach to academic literacy instruction for *all* students at the Paramount Bard Academy. Each item of the framework is aligned with English-Language Arts Content Standards for the California Public Schools. In particular, we will draw on instructional practices that have been developed by Bard's Institute for Writing and Thinking, Columbia University's Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, the Strategic Literacy Initiative at WestEd, and the work of Susan Dutro and E.L. Achieve. In order to flesh out these more abstract concepts, examples are provided from our sample interdisciplinary units in ancient civilizations and literature for sixth grade. For each strand (English and history), students will respond to the same essential questions: *Who am I, and where do I belong?* For clarity, these units will be referred to as the "sixth

grade *Exodus* units" in the examples below; detailed descriptions of the *Exodus* units can be found under **Sample Units** in subsequent sections.

1. **Teachers will provide access to a variety of high-interest texts at students' independent and instructional reading levels.** Units of independent reading (Bomer, 1995) will be incorporated into all instructional units. For example, in the sixth grade *Exodus* units, students will individually select from a variety of young adult novels that explore the quest for identity. Faculty and apprentice teachers will provide one-on-one conferences with students to address individual reading needs.

2. **Teachers will use explicit and embedded reading comprehension strategy instruction across all content areas.** Research-based literacy practices developed by the Strategic Literacy Initiative at WestEd will be combined with cognitive strategies for reading and writing that have been pioneered by the Pathway Project at UC Irvine. For example, in the *Exodus* units, students will design concept maps that define in context what it means to be civilized and create visual analogies between past and contemporary civilizations. Most importantly, students will become fluent in the cognitive tools that expert readers use: *How do I make sense of text? What is my purpose for reading? What questions are raised? What is missing?*

3. **Students will be asked to write in a variety of modes both to extend and demonstrate their understanding of content.** Based on the methods used in Bard's Institute for Writing and Thinking, students will maintain daily journals (and/or weblogs) in which they write in response to teacher-directed prompts that are designed to sharpen students' thinking about text. For example, in the sample units in Appendix F, students will respond to a series of writing prompts that explore the relationship between action and anger in an examination of characters in key narratives from ancient times and texts. Final projects will include the creation of a visual map that is illustrative of the "quest myth" in literature and the production of a script for a television documentary that describes how the ancient Hebrew experience offered a shared sense of identity. Working to develop essential concepts, students will build a repertoire of ideas and writing strategies as they advance into subsequent units on the Egyptians and Greeks.

4. **Teachers will use a balance of classroom organizational structures (one-on-one, whole class, small group, pairs).** The Teachers College Reading/Writing Project and the Strategic Literacy Initiative at WestEd provide exemplary models for how to create organizational structures in classrooms. At Paramount Bard Academy, block scheduling will be used to maximize these organizational features. For example, in the *Exodus* units, students will read independently from self-selected young adult literature to explore the quest for identity, participate in literature circles in which they collaboratively solve sociohistorical problems, form reading partnerships to write dialogues that extend from James Weldon Johnson's "Let My People Go," and participate in Socratic Seminars in which

they discuss what constitutes the notion of liberation. Small group instruction, as in literature circles; one-on-one instruction, as in reading and writing workshop approaches; and Socratic Seminar are all organizational structures for instruction that are supported by the longer periods of time available through block scheduling. Each approach requires additional 'startup' time and extended interactions that benefit from the continuity of extended time on task.

5. **Teachers will use a balance of instructional approaches (modeling, scaffolding, guided practice, and independent practice).** Block and Pressley (2001) claim that there is consensus among literacy researchers that regardless of the program being used, effective teachers provide a deliberate balance of instructional approaches. *Modeling*, which often takes place in a "mini-lesson" (Bomer, 1995), consists of explicit instruction in the declarative, procedural, or conditional use of cognitive strategies for reading, writing, speaking, and/or listening. For example, in the *Exodus* units, the teacher will demonstrate, using a "think aloud" (Daniels & Zemelman, 2004), how he or she goes about reading and comparing two major translations of *Exodus*. Next, the teacher will *scaffold* students' reading by asking them to work in pairs; students will take turns reading/thinking aloud from the same set of texts. For *guided practice*, students will continue to read individually, stopping every 2-3 minutes to note their thinking in a journal. For *independent practice*, students do not require prompting from the teacher; rather, they will be able to read, respond to, and critique two related texts on their own volition. These processes are often recursive, of course; the teacher frequently returns to each phase throughout a unit as needed.

6. **Teachers will make deliberate connections between students' native languages/cultures and academic literacy.** Effective literacy instruction is responsive to students' native languages and cultural backgrounds (Alvermann, Hinchman, Moore, Phelps, & Waff, 2006). Paramount Bard Academy will systematically incorporate students' strengths and interests into the curriculum. For example, in the *Exodus* units, students will consider what it means to "belong" to the variety to a variety of communities in Delano (and beyond) as a bridge to understanding the formation of communities in the ancient world. Furthermore, students' ongoing literacy practices will consist of opportunities to make choices about what to write and what to read. At the end of the term, students will have completed a writing portfolio in response to *Who am I, and where do I belong?* that incorporates a variety of subject matter and genres.

7. **Paramount Bard Academy will provide expert tutoring and instruction for students who need additional support in building academic literacy.** Students who need (or who seek) additional support will not fall through the cracks. During each academic block, faculty and apprentice teachers will be available to provide small-group instruction or tutoring through one-on-one conferences. Furthermore, Paramount Bard Academy will offer an extended school day and school year that provides additional support for all students to achieve.

8. **Teachers will conduct continuous cycles of formative assessment.** Aside from the California state tests, teachers at Paramount Bard Academy will design classroom-based assessments that provide a more nuanced view of students' progress over time. Teachers will have opportunities to meet outside of class in order to conduct Looking at Student Work Sessions (see www.lasw.org). These sessions will be geared towards formative assessment in that teachers will review and critique their own assignments, analyze how students perform across tasks and disciplines, and develop instructional plans that are responsive to students' needs.

9. **Teachers will participate in ongoing professional development in literacy instruction.** Faculty at the Paramount Bard Academy will participate in professional development that is provided by the Strategic Literacy Initiative at WestEd. Also, teachers will work with the Pathway Project at the University of California, Irvine, to design curriculum that is particularly responsive to the needs of adolescent English language learners. The Pathway Project, which has incorporated research from the Strategic Literacy Initiative at WestEd, has demonstrated that an explicit focus on the development of cognitive strategies in reading and writing will result in higher achievement (on both standardized and classroom-based assessments) for English language learners at the secondary level.

10. **Paramount Bard Academy will create a Literacy Team** (Lent, 2007). The role of the Literacy Team is to guide the ongoing evolution of curriculum and instruction, assessment, and professional development related to building academic literacy for Paramount Bard Academy students. The team shall consist of members who are representative of all grade levels and subject areas, the administration (preferably the principal), the guidance department, and parents.

Technological Literacy – An Integrated Approach

The need for skills and understanding related to the use of available technologies is widely recognized as an essential characteristic of successful students seeking advancement in school and in future careers as adults. It is also recognized that the regular use of technologies in meaningful contexts provides the forms of developing practice that ensure the acquisition of key competencies.

For this reason, the use of appropriate technologies in the context of regular classroom instruction will be the basis for developing fluent technological know-how. Not only will teachers be expected to employ technology for purposes of instruction but also, and more importantly, students will use technologies to build understanding in their academic studies. The use of online databases, computing technologies, modeling software, word processing, and communication/presentation programs are essential to the authentic work of the core academic disciplines. Student access to laptop computers in classrooms and

desktop computers in a dedicated computer room will ensure that teachers are able to build technological literacy through meaningful learning challenges in their classrooms.

Programs in the Visual and Performing Arts

Fine Art. I its first year, the Paramount Bard Academy will hire two full-time art teachers and all students will engage in the study and practice of the visual arts. This will include courses in art history/appreciation as well as individual electives in the practice of such arts as drawing, painting, printing, sculpture, ceramics, jewelry design, computer graphics, and photography.

Music. In its second year, Paramount Bard Academy will hire two full-time music teachers and students will have the opportunity to engage in the study and practices of music, including lessons in instrumental and vocal music, and regularly scheduled classes such as band, chorus, orchestra, music theory, and the history of music.

Dramatic arts. By no later than the second year, students at the Paramount Bard Academy will have the opportunity to engage in aspects of theater production, staging plays and creating performances that connect to various areas of the academic curriculum.

Sample Instructional Units and Curriculum Design Principles

In the appendices that follow are more particular examples of curriculum units, including some description of overarching goals and structures that characterize the design for curriculum and instruction at the Paramount Bard Academy. **Appendix E** provides descriptions of disciplinary principles – key ideas about knowledge making that define the work of each of the core academic disciplines and articulate the structure for teaching and learning. **Appendix F** provides sample units in each of the core disciplines, illustrating how the principles described in Appendix E become designs for classroom learning practices. These curriculum units are included in this petition as models that offer a 'picture' of curriculum innovation at the Paramount Bard Academy and provide initial frames for the planning that will follow when the teachers are hired to develop the full school curriculum in collaboration with the MAT Program faculty during the months prior to opening the school.

Plan for Students Who Are Academically Low Achieving

This section of the proposal addresses the issue of low academic achievement with two questions in mind:

1. Is the Paramount Bard Academy structured in ways that anticipate and support individual learning needs and approaches so that students are consistently meeting challenges successfully and the phenomenon of low achievement is a less common occurrence?
2. Is the Paramount Bard Academy able to accommodate a presenting history of low achievement in new/incoming students in ways that build success over time?

Both questions can be answered affirmatively. Structures described in the previous pages include forms of individualized instruction, as well as ongoing assessment and diagnosis that foster teaching as a clinical profession to identify early those students who may be struggling academically. Advisory groups, homework support built into the school day, and extended periods of instructional time are other elements that contribute to a learning culture that acknowledges and responds to individual learners while maintaining challenges that build towards critical academic competencies associated with college-level work. Educational research has clearly linked literacy skills to academic achievement and that is why literacy development is quite purposefully placed at the center of curriculum and teaching designs at the Paramount Bard Academy. (See pages 21-24, above, for further elaboration of Academy literacy practices.)

Low academic achievement can also be attributed to a number of factors that can be grouped into two primary categories – the social/emotional and the cognitive/physiological. The former category includes issues of motivation, identity, self-efficacy, self-expectations, personal/family issues, interpersonal relations; in other words, factors that are primarily emotional in nature but no less significant or potentially intractable than specific learning disabilities. Cognitive/physiological factors are that range of learning difficulties that can be linked to particular disabilities, many of which have been identified and can be determined through diagnostic testing. How Paramount Bard Academy will respond to this latter category is described in the section below in the Section on Serving Students with Disabilities.

In either case, the experience of lower achievement or ‘falling behind’ can result in lower motivation due to a sense of failure and a belief that ‘catching up’ is not achievable. The Paramount Bard Academy approaches these dimensions of low achievement in two ways:

1. An emphasis on prevention is realized through systems of ongoing assessments that allow teacher and student to monitor progress, providing regular feedback that allows the teacher to modify instruction, provide critical support, and make sure that the student is able to participate in the learning community with a sense of competency. Additionally, an instructional approach that asks students to be reflective in their work while communicating standards and expectations clearly (through the use of rubrics and models, for example) allows students to self-assess, leading to increasingly independent, self-directed learners.

2. Creating a culture of caring with an emphasis on college-going builds instrumental relationships directed towards positive accomplishments. Small class sizes, advisory groups, an extended school day, tutorial teaching associated with problem based learning, portfolio assessments, as well as regular school contact with home and family are all elements that strengthen interpersonal relationships in learning contexts in and out of school. Students are able to affirm an identity of self-direction and productive interdependence through meaningful interactions with others that are integral to the Paramount Bard Academy learning environment.

Student Team Study Process. One way that these ongoing assessments will be used and a culture of caring will be realized is through what has come to be known as a *Student Team Study Process.* Typically, this is a process that is implemented when a student is determined to be at risk of failure, gathering all the pertinent individuals (including parents and teachers who work with a student in various capacities) to look at data related to student learning and achievement and develop a plan to respond to the student's needs. At Paramount Bard Academy, this process is enhanced through a structure of instructional study teams, made up of student advisors and teachers who share students in common, that meet once a week for the explicit purpose of discussing individual student progress. The responsibility of each advisor is to 'check in' on the progress of at least one-fourth of the students in his/her advisory group so that all students are reviewed in these instructional study teams in the course of a four-week cycle. Any identified concerns will be addressed by the team and a plan for that student will be constructed and communicated to the student and parents in a conference. A date will be set to check in on progress and next steps will be taken as indicated.

Plan for Students Who Are Academically High Achieving

The Paramount Bard Academy curriculum is designed to provide continual challenges for all students. Courses are planned around essential questions that allow for open-ended inquiry and projects that encourage students to build critical thinking and research skills. Small class sizes, the added presence of graduate students as teaching assistants, and extended blocks of time for study and reflection support an individualized approach to learning in which students have ready access to caring, thoughtful adults who can help students build on their questions, encouraging the curiosity and passion for learning that are the hallmark of high achieving students. It is a core belief of the Academy that this learning structure will increase the numbers of high achieving students over time.

Students in the Paramount Bard Academy may also enroll in college-level courses as soon as they demonstrate the capacity for these academic challenges. Flexible scheduling options create opportunities for more individualized learning plans that accommodate understandable differences among students in development, motivation, aptitudes, and interests.

The active inclusion of parents in the life of the school is one added element that addresses the needs of all students by strengthening the connections between school and community and building a culture of high expectations that fosters continued achievement. Opportunities for parent involvement include:

a. Monthly parent contact with student advisors allow for regular dialogue about student progress and individual learning plans.
b. Parents and other community members sit on panels to assess student exhibitions and portfolio presentations, engaging in the evaluation of student work and learning.
c. Parents, students, and teachers meet to discuss student progress at least twice during the school year near the midpoint of each semester.
d. Parent volunteers are welcomed in the classroom and specific opportunities are planned during the school year, including leadership in extra-curricular activities, participation in field trips, and committees to address aspects of continued school development.

Plan for English Language Learners

Overview

Paramount Bard Academy will meet all applicable legal requirements for English Learners ("EL") as it pertains to annual notification to parents, student identification, placement, program options, EL and core content instruction, teacher qualifications and training, re-classification to fluent English proficient status, monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness, and standardized testing requirement. The Academy will implement policies to assure proper placement, evaluation, and communication regarding EL's and the rights of students and parents.

English learners

Given that many of the students at the Paramount Bard Academy will be English learners (ELs), the school will adhere to the recommendations made by the Educational Alliance at Brown University (Coady, Hamann, Harrington, Pacheco, Pho, & Yedlin, 2003) based on a review of research literature that highlights effective instructional practices for ELs. Local resources like the program developed by E.L. Achieve will also play a key role in shaping English language instruction. (http://www.elachieve.org/) In the successful programs reviewed, researchers identified the following patterns:

1. ELs are heterogeneously integrated into all aspects of the academic program;

2. teachers provide access to challenging academic content while explicitly teaching and modeling the skills that students need to achieve in academic environments;
3. students have opportunities to read and write in a variety of genres;
4. teachers value and build upon students' native languages and cultures;
5. teachers expertly use multiple instructional approaches;
6. students are continually engaged in conversation and collaboration with teachers and peers; and
7. teachers participate in ongoing professional development.

In the framework for academic literacy instruction provided in the next section, qualities of effective instruction for ELs are woven into each component. Researchers note that effective literacy instruction for English learners follows the same principles as effective literacy instruction for native English speakers (Olson & Land, 2007).

Home Language Survey

The Academy will administer the home language survey upon a student's initial enrollment into the Academy (on enrollment forms).

CELDT Testing

All students who indicate that their home language is other than English will be CELDT tested within thirty days of initial enrollment[1] and at least annually thereafter between July 1 and October 31st until re-designated as fluent English proficient.

The Academy will notify all parents of its responsibility for CELDT testing and of CELDT results within thirty days of receiving results from publisher. The CELDT shall be used to fulfill the requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act for annual English proficiency testing.

Reclassification Procedures

Reclassification procedures utilize multiple criteria in determining whether to classify a pupil as proficient in English including, but not limited to, all of the following:

[1] The thirty-day requirement applies to students who are entering a California public school for the first time or for students who have not yet been CELDT tested. All other students who have indicated a home language other than English will continue with annual CELDT testing based upon the date last tested at the prior school of enrollment.

- Assessment of language proficiency using an objective assessment instrument including, but not limited to, the California English Language Development Test or CELDT.

- Participation of the pupil's classroom teachers and any other certificated staff with direct responsibility for teaching or placement decisions of the pupil to evaluate the pupil's curriculum mastery.

- Parental opinion and consultation, achieved through notice to parents or guardians of the language reclassification and placement including a description of the reclassification process and the parents opportunity to participate, and encouragement of the participation of parents or guardians in the reclassification procedure including seeking their opinion and consultation during the reclassification process.

- Comparison of the pupil's performance in basic skills against an empirically established range of performance and basic skills based upon the performance of English proficient pupils of the same age that demonstrate to others that the pupil is sufficiently proficient in English to participate effectively in a curriculum designed for pupils of the same age whose native language is English.

- The Student Oral Language Observation Matrix will be used by teachers to measure progress regarding comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar usage.

Total Physical Response (TPR). Developed by James J. Asher in the 1960s, TPR is a language-learning tool based on the relationship between language and its physical representation or execution. TPR emphasizes the use of physical activity to increase meaningful learning opportunities and language retention. A TPR lesson involves a detailed series of consecutive actions accompanied by a series of commands or instructions given by the teacher. Students respond by listening and performing the appropriate actions (Asher, 2000a). Asher emphasizes that TPR can be the major focus of a language program or an extremely effective supplement, but that in order for it to be truly effective, training should include "a special course along with hands-on experience monitored by a senior instructor who is also skilled in the intricate applications of TPR" (par. 11). *(For a detailed review of the research validating this approach, as well as sample lesson plans and examples of how to use it in the classroom, see Asher, 2000b.)*

Cooperative Learning. Robert E. Slavin (1995) has shown cooperative learning can be effective for students at all academic levels and learning styles. Other research indicates that cooperative learning can be an "effective vehicle for learning content and learning in a second language" (Calderon, 2001; Cohen, Lotan, Scarloss, & Arellano, 1999; McGroarty, 1989, as cited in Calderon, 2001, p. 280). Cooperative learning involves student participation in small-group learning activities that promote positive interactions. As Cochran (1989) notes, "Cooperative learning makes sense for teachers who have

Limited English Proficient pupils in their classes because all students are given frequent opportunities to speak and because a spirit of cooperation and friendship is fostered among classmates." Through a shared learning activity, students benefit from observing learning strategies used by their peers. EL students can benefit from face-to-face verbal interactions, which promote communication that is natural and meaningful (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1994; Kagan, 1994). Calderon suggests that "cooperative learning is effective when students have an interesting well-structured task such as a set of discussion questions around a story they just read, producing a cognitive map of the story, or inventing a puppet show to highlight character traits" (2001, p. 280).

Language Experience Approach (also known as Dictated Stories). This approach uses students' words to create a text that becomes material for a reading lesson (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002). Students describe orally a personal experience to a teacher or peer. The teacher or another student writes down the story, using the student's words verbatim. The teacher/student then reads the story back as it was written, while the student follows along. Then the student reads the story aloud or silently. Other follow-up activities can be done with this approach. In this way, students learn how their language is encoded as they watch it written down, building sight word knowledge and fluency as they use their own familiar language. This approach allows students to bring their personal experiences into the classroom—especially important for culturally diverse students (Peterson, Caverly, Nicholson, O'Neal, & Cusenbary, 2000).

Dialogue Journals (Also known as Interactive Journals). This approach is a way for teachers to engage students in writing. Students write in a journal, and the teacher writes back regularly, responding to questions, asking questions, making comments, or introducing new topics. Here the teacher does not evaluate what is written, but models correct language and provides a nonthreatening opportunity for EL students to communicate in writing with someone proficient in English, and to receive some feedback (Peyton, 2000; Reid, 1997). Reid's literature review and her action research project show dialogue journaling with a teacher to be beneficial in improving spelling and fluency. This is also a practice developed by the Institute for Writing and Thinking at Bard College. Known as 'dialectical notebooks', it is one of many practices that engage students in the practice of thinking through informal writing, building literacy and the language of thinking in a community of collaborative learning and reflective language exchange. Loop writing, freewriting, focused freewriting, metacognitive writing, and various writing to read activities are part of the strategies that have emerged from the work of the Institute as ways to build language competencies in a 'low stakes' manner with 'high end' results.

Academic Language Scaffolding. The term "scaffolding" is used to describe the step-by-step process of building students' ability to complete tasks on their own (Gibbons, 2002). Academic language scaffolding draws on Cummins's research into Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Cummins, 1981). Scaffolding actually consists of several linked strategies, including modeling academic language; contextualizing academic language using visuals, gestures, and demonstrations; and using hands-on learning activities that involve academic language. These strategies

are a central part of sheltered instruction methods, but can be used in any classroom context. *(See Gibbons [2002] for specific scaffolding strategies.)*

Native Language Support. Whenever possible, EL students should be provided with academic support in their native language (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Even in English-only classrooms, and even when an instructor is not fluent in a student's language, this can still be done in a number of ways. According to Lucas and Katz (1994), a student's native language serves several important functions: it gives students "access to academic content, to classroom activities, and to their own knowledge and experience" (paragraph 5). In addition, they found that it also "gave teachers a way to show their respect and value for students' languages and cultures; acted as a medium for social interaction and establishment of rapport; fostered family involvement, and fostered students' development of, knowledge of, and pride in their native languages and cultures" (paragraph 24).

Strategies for Serving English Learners. The Paramount Bard Academy recognizes that English language literacy is the foundation and basis for learning and continued academic progress and success. The instructional program for academic literacy described on pages 21-24, above, is designed to promote language acquisition and the development of literacy skills critical to intellectual development and success in school. Instructional planning across academic areas will emphasize a differentiated approach that is responsive to individual learning needs while maintaining challenges and standards for all students. For example, a high school biology unit on photosynthesis and cellular respiration would engage all students with key questions and knowledge essential to a useful understanding of these processes while providing a variety of materials and forms of instruction that support the English language learner in accessing the information, participating in classroom inquiry, and building the vocabulary of terms and ideas necessary to subsequent learning. Instructional materials and strategies, curriculum designs, and the culture of classroom learning at the Academy emphasize the development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills essential to continued academic success across all subject areas and aligned with California English Language and Content Standards.

The Academy will comply with the applicable requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act with regard to ELs and will meet all applicable legal requirements for ELs. The Academy will develop and implement policies to ensure appropriate evaluation, placement, and communication regarding ELs and the rights of parents and students.

Serving Students with Disabilities

Overview

Paramount Bard Academy ("Charter School") shall comply with all applicable State and Federal Laws in serving students with disabilities, including, but not limited to, Section

504 of the Rehabilitation Act ("Section 504"), the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act ("IDEIA").

Paramount Bard Academy shall be categorized as a "public school" within the District in conformity with Education Code Section 47641(b). The School shall comply with a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") between the District and the School.

Paramount Bard Academy shall comply with all state and federal laws related to the provision of special education instruction and related services and all El Centro SELPA policies and procedures; and shall utilize appropriate SELPA forms. The School shall not discriminate against any pupil with a disability in the admissions process or any other aspect of operation.

Paramount Bard Academy shall be solely responsible for its compliance with Section 504 and the ADA. The facilities to be utilized by the School shall be accessible for all students with disabilities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Paramount Bard Academy recognizes its legal responsibility to ensure that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program of the School. Any student, who has an objectively identified disability which substantially limits a major life activity including but not limited to learning, is eligible for accommodation by the School.

A 504 team will be assembled by the Principal and shall include the parent/guardian, the student (where appropriate) and other qualified persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, placement options, and accommodations. The 504 team will review the student's existing records; including academic, social and behavioral records, and is responsible for making a determination as to whether an evaluation for 504 services is appropriate. If the student has already been evaluated under the IDEIA but found ineligible for special education instruction or related services under the IDEIA, those evaluations may be used to help determine eligibility under Section 504. The student evaluation shall be carried out by the 504 team who will evaluate the nature of the student's disability and the impact upon the student's education. This evaluation will include consideration of any behaviors that interfere with regular participation in the educational program and/or activities. The 504 team may also consider the following information in its evaluation:

- Tests and other evaluation materials that have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and are administered by trained personnel.

- Tests and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need, and not merely those which are designed to provide a single general intelligent quotient.

- Tests are selected and administered to ensure that when a test is administered to a student with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level, or whatever factor the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills.

The final determination of whether the student will or will not be identified as a person with a disability is made by the 504 team in writing and notice is given in writing to the parent or guardian of the student in their primary language along with the procedural safeguards available to them. If during the evaluation, the 504 team obtains information indicating possible eligibility of the student for special education per the IDEIA, a referral for assessment under the IDEIA will be made by the 504 team.

If the student is found by the 504 team to have a disability under Section 504, the 504 team shall be responsible for determining what, if any, accommodations or services are needed to ensure that the student receives the free and appropriate public education ("FAPE"). In developing the 504 Plan, the 504 team shall consider all relevant information utilized during the evaluation of the student, drawing upon a variety of sources, including, but not limited to, assessments conducted by the School's professional staff.

The 504 Plan shall describe the Section 504 disability and any program accommodations, modifications or services that may be necessary.

All 504 team participants, parents, guardians, teachers and any other participants in the student's education, including substitutes and tutors, must have a copy of each student's 504 Plan. The site administrator will ensure that teachers include 504 Plans with lesson plans for short-term substitutes and that he/she review the 504 Plan with a long-term substitute. A copy of the 504 Plan shall be maintained in the student's file. Each student's 504 Plan will be reviewed at least once per year to determine the appropriateness of the Plan, needed modifications to the plan, and continued eligibility.

Services for Students under the "IDEIA"

The following description regarding how special education and related services will be provided and funded is being proposed by the Charter School for the sole purpose of providing a reasonably comprehensive description of the special education program in the Charter Petition, and is not binding on the District. The specific manner in which special education and related services will be provided and funded shall be set forth in

a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU"), delineating the respective responsibilities of the Charter School and the District, which MOU shall be executed at least six (6) months prior to the commencement of operation, or as otherwise agreed upon by the parties. The following provisions are meant to summarize the Charter School Petitioner's understanding of the manner in which special education instruction and related services shall be provided by the Charter School and the District based upon the Petitioner's knowledge of District special education procedures. The following language aligns the typical "industry standard" arrangement between a school district and a charter school and aligns with State and Federal law which requires that students in charter schools receive special education and related services in the same manner as any other student in the District. *The language that follows is not meant to unilaterally bind the District, or to preclude alternative arrangements between the District and the Charter School as agreed upon in a MOU:*

Paramount Bard Academy intends to provide special education instruction and related services in accordance with the IDEIA, Education Code requirements, and applicable policies and practices of the Special Education Local Plan Area ("SELPA"). The Charter School shall remain, by default, a public school of the District for purposes of Special Education purposes pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b). However, after two years of operation under this charter, the Charter School reserves the right to make written verifiable assurances that the Charter School shall become an independent LEA and join a SELPA pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(a) either on its own or with a grouping of charter school LEA's as a consortium.

As a public school of the District, solely for purposes of providing special education and related services under the IDEIA pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b), in accordance with Education Code Section 47646 and 20 U.S.C. 1413, the Charter School seeks services from the District for special education students enrolled in the Charter School in the same manner as is provided to students in other District schools. The Charter School will follow the District and SELPA policies and procedures, and shall utilize SELPA forms in seeking out and identifying and serving students who may qualify for special education programs and services and for responding to record requests and parent complaints, and maintaining the confidentiality of pupil records. The Charter School will comply with District protocol as to the delineation of duties between the District central office and the local school site in providing special education instruction and related services to identified pupils. An annual meeting between the Charter School and the District to review special education policies, procedures, protocols, and forms of the District and the SELPA and District protocol, will ensure that the Charter School and the District have an ongoing mutual understanding of District protocol and will facilitate ongoing compliance.

As long as Paramount Bard Academy functions as a public school of the District solely for purposes of providing special education and related services under the IDEIA pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b), then we would anticipate that a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") would be developed between the

District and Paramount Bard Academy which spells out in detail the responsibilities for provision of special education services and the manner in which special education funding will flow to the students of the School.

The District shall be designated the Local Educational Agency ("LEA") serving Charter School students. Accordingly, the Charter School shall be deemed a public school of the District pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b) and 47646(a). The Charter School agrees to adhere to the requirements of the Local Plan for Special Education and to District policies. As a public school of the District, solely for purposes of providing special education and related services under the IDEIA pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(b), in accordance with Education Code Section 47646 and 20 U.S.C. 1413, the Charter School seeks services from the District for special education students enrolled in the Charter School in the same manner as is provided to students in other District schools.

The Charter School acknowledges the importance of cooperating with the District so that the District can provide special education services to Charter School students. The Charter School agrees to promptly respond to all District inquiries, to comply with reasonable District directives, and to allow the District access to Charter School students, staff, facilities, equipment and records as required to fulfill all District obligations under this Agreement or imposed by law. The Charter School believes that the allocation of responsibility for the provision of services (including but not limited to referral, identification, assessment, case management, Individualized Education Plan ("IEP") development, modification and implementation) shall be divided in a manner consistent with their allocation between the District and its school sites.

Staffing

All special education services at the Charter School will be delivered by individuals or agencies qualified to provide special education services as required by California's Education Code and the IDEIA. Charter School staff shall participate in all mandatory District in-service training relating to special education.

It is the Charter School's understanding that the District will be responsible for the hiring, training, and employment of site staff necessary to provide special education services to its students, including, without limitation, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and resource specialists unless the District directs the Charter School that current District practice is for the individual school sites to hire site special education staff or the District and the Charter School agree that the Charter School must hire on-site special education staff. In that instance, the Charter School shall ensure that all special education staff hired by the Charter School is qualified pursuant to District and SEPLA policies, as well as meet all legal requirements. The District may review the qualifications of all special education staff hired by the Charter School (with the agreement of the District) and may require pre-approval

by the District of all hires to ensure consistency with District and SELPA policies. The District shall be responsible for the hiring, training, and employment of itinerant staff necessary to provide special education services to Charter School students, including, without limitation, speech therapists, occupational therapists, behavioral therapists, and psychologists.

Notification and Coordination

The Charter School shall follow District policies as they apply to all District schools for responding to implementation of special education services. The Charter School will adopt and implement District polices relating to notification of the District for all special education issues and referrals.

The Charter School shall follow District policies as they apply to all District schools for notifying District personnel regarding the discipline of special education students to ensure District pre-approval prior to imposing a suspension or expulsion. The Charter School shall assist in the coordination of any communications and immediately act according to District administrative policies relating to disciplining special education students.

Identification and Referral

The Charter School shall have the responsibility to identify, refer, and work cooperatively in locating Charter School students who have or may have exceptional needs that qualify them to receive special education services. The Charter School will implement District and SELPA policies and procedures to ensure timely identification and referral of students who have, or may have, such exceptional needs. A pupil shall be referred for special education only after the resources of the regular education program have been considered, and where appropriate, utilized.

It is the Charter School's understanding that the District shall provide the Charter School with any assistance that it generally provides its schools in the identification and referral processes, and will ensure that the Charter School is provided with notification and relevant files of all students who have an existing IEP and who are transferring to the Charter School from a District school. The District shall have unfettered access to all Charter School student records and information in order to serve all of Charter School's students' special needs.

The Charter School will follow District child-find procedures to identify all students who may require assessment to consider special education eligibility and special education and related services in the case that general education interventions do not provide a free appropriate public education to the student in question.

Assessments

The term "assessments" shall have the same meaning as the term "evaluation" in the IDEIA, as provided in Section 1414, Title 20 of the United States Code. The District will determine what assessments, if any, are necessary and arrange for such assessments for referred or eligible students in accordance with the District's general practice and procedure and applicable law. The Charter School shall work in collaboration with the District to obtain parent/guardian consent to assess Charter School students. The Charter School shall not conduct special education assessments unless directed by the District.

IEP Meetings

It is the Charter School's understanding that the District shall arrange and notice the necessary IEP meetings. IEP team membership shall be in compliance with state and federal law. The Charter School shall be responsible for having the following individuals in attendance at the IEP meetings or as otherwise agreed upon by the District and Charter School: the Principal and/or the Charter School designated representative with appropriate administrative authority as required by the IDEIA; the student's special education teacher; the student's general education teacher if the student is or may be in a regular education classroom; the student, if appropriate; and other Charter School representatives who are knowledgeable about the regular education program at the Charter School and/or about the student. It is the Charter School's understanding that the District shall arrange for the attendance or participation of all other necessary staff that may include, but are not limited to, an appropriate administrator to comply with the requirements of the IDEIA, a speech therapist, psychologist, resource specialist, and behavior specialist; and shall document the IEP meeting and provide of notice of parental rights.

IEP Development

The Charter School understands that the decisions regarding eligibility, goals/objectives, program, services, placement, and exit from special education shall be the decision of the District, pursuant to the District's IEP process. Programs, services and placements shall be provided to all eligible Charter School students in accordance with the policies, procedures and requirements of the District and of the SELPA and State and Federal law.

The Charter School shall promptly notify the District of all requests it receives for assessment, services, IEP meetings, reimbursement, compensatory education, mediation, and/or due process whether these requests are verbal or in writing.

IEP Implementation

Pursuant to District policy and how the District operates special education at all other public schools in the District; the District shall be responsible for all school site implementation of the IEP. The Charter School shall assist the District in implementing IEPs, pursuant to District and SELPA polices in the same manner as any other school of the District. The District and Charter School will need to be jointly involved in all aspects of the special education program, with the District holding ultimate authority over

implementation and supervision of services. As part of this responsibility, the Charter School shall provide the District and the parents with timely reports on the student's progress as provided in the student's IEP, and at least quarterly or as frequently as progress reports are provided for the Charter School's non-special education students, whichever is more. The Charter School shall also provide all home-school coordination and information exchange unless directed otherwise by the District. The Charter School shall also be responsible for providing all curriculum, classroom materials, classroom modifications, and assistive technology unless directed otherwise by the District. The Charter School shall comply with any directive of the District as relates to the coordination of the Charter School and District for IEP implementation including but not limited to adequate notification of student progress and immediate notification of any considered discipline of special education students in such matters, the petitioners would notify the District of relevant circumstances and communications immediately and act according to District administrative authority.

Interim and Initial Placements of New Charter School Students

For students who enroll in the Charter School from another school district outside of the SELPA with a current IEP, the District and the Charter School shall conduct an IEP meeting within thirty days. Prior to such meeting and pending agreement on a new IEP, the District and the Charter School shall implement the existing IEP at the Charter School, to the extent practicable or as otherwise agreed between the District and parent/guardian.

Non-Public Placements/Non-Public Agencies

The District shall be solely responsible for selecting, contracting with, and overseeing all non-public schools and non-public agencies used to serve special education students. The Charter School shall not hire, request services from, or pay any non-public school or agency to provide education or services to special education students without the prior written approval of the District. The Charter School shall immediately notify the District of all parental requests for services from non-public schools or agencies, unilateral placements, and/or requests for reimbursement.

Non-discrimination

It is understood and agreed that all children will have access to the Charter School and no student shall be denied admission nor counseled out of the Charter School due to the nature, extent, or severity of his/her disability or due to the student's request for, or actual need for, special education services.

Parent/Guardian Concerns and Complaints

The Charter School shall follow District policies as they apply to all District schools for responding to parental concerns or complaints related to special education services. The Charter School shall instruct parents/guardians to raise concerns regarding special education services, related services and rights to the District unless otherwise directed by the District. The Charter School shall immediately notify the District of any concerns raised by parents. In addition, the Charter School and the District shall immediately bring to the other's attention any concern or complaint by a parent/guardian that is in writing and/or which involves a potential violation of state or federal law.

The District's designated representative, in consultation with the Charter School's designated representative, shall investigate as necessary, respond to, and address the parent/guardian concern or complaint. The Charter School shall allow the District access to all facilities, equipment, students, personnel, and records to conduct such an investigation.

The Charter School and the District shall timely notify the other of any meetings scheduled with parents/guardians or their representatives to address the parent/guardian concerns or complaints so that a representative of each entity may attend. The District, as the LEA, shall be ultimately responsible for determining how to respond to parent concerns or complaints, and the Charter School shall comply with the District's decision.

The Charter School and the District shall cooperate in responding to any complaint to or investigation by the California Department of Education, the United States Department of Education, or any other agency, and shall provide timely notice to the other upon receipt of such a complaint or request for investigation.

Due Process Hearings

The District may initiate a due process hearing or request for mediation with respect to a student enrolled in Charter School if the District determines such action is legally necessary or advisable. The Charter School agrees to cooperate fully with the District in such a proceeding. In the event that the parents/guardians file for a due process hearing, or request mediation, the District and the Charter School shall work together to defend the case. In the event that the District determines that legal representation is needed, the Charter School agrees that it shall be jointly represented by legal counsel of the District's choosing.

The Charter School understands that the District shall have sole discretion to settle any matter in mediation or due process. The District shall also have sole discretion to file an appeal from a due process hearing or take other legal action involving any Charter School student necessary to protect its rights.

SELPA Representation

It is the Charter School's understanding that the District shall represent the Charter School at all SELPA meetings and report to the Charter School of SELPA activities in the same manner as is reported to all schools within the District.

Funding

The Charter School understands that it will enter into a MOU with the District regarding Special Education funding, and cannot at this time unilaterally dictate the funding relationship between the District and the Charter School. The Charter School anticipates, based upon State and Federal law that the fiscal relationship could be summarized as follows

Retention of Special Education Funds by the District

The District shall retain all state and federal special education funding allocated for Charter School students though the SELPA Annual Budget Plan, and shall be entitled to count Charter School students as its own for all such purposes.

Retention of ADA Funds by the District for Non-Public Placements

The Parties acknowledge that the District may be required to pay for or provide Charter School students with placements at locations other than at the Charter School's school site in order to provide them with a free appropriate public education. Such placements could include, without limitation, programs or services in other District schools, in other public school districts within the SELPA, in a County Office of Education program, in a non-public school, at home, at a hospital, or in a residential program. When such programs or services are provided at District expense, the District shall be entitled to receive from the Charter School the pro rata share of all funding received for such student, including, without limitation, all ADA funds, based on the number of instructional days or minutes per day that the student is not at the Charter School site.

Contribution to Encroachment

The Charter School shall contribute its fair share to offset special education's encroachment upon the District's general fund. Accordingly, the Charter School shall pay to the District a pro-rata share of the District's unfunded special education costs ("Encroachment"). At the end of each fiscal year, the District shall invoice the Charter School for the Charter School's pro-rata share of the District-wide Encroachment for that year as calculated by the total unfunded special education costs of the District (including those costs attributable to Charter School) divided by the total number of District ADA (including Charter School students), and multiplied by the total number of Charter School ADA. The Charter School ADA shall include all Charter School students, regardless of home district.

Please refer to **Appendix H** for ***Section 504 Sample Documents***, which serve as models of the Charter School policies and procedures related to Section 504 compliance.

Calendar/Schedule

The Paramount Bard Academy will operate on a 190-day calendar year, providing an additional two weeks of instructional time compared to the typical school calendar. The school day will be constituted in longer instructional blocks of 80 minutes duration (with some shorter 40 minutes blocks to allow for scheduling flexibility) in an extended school day of 540 minutes in length. Excluding the 40-minute period set aside for lunch and 5-minute passing time between periods, this academic calendar yields a maximum total of 90,250 annual instructional minutes for all students. The annual calendar, including holidays, will be adapted from the local school district calendars so that, as much as possible, the school year will begin on the same date as the Delano Union School District and finish on the same date as the Delano Joint Union High School District with school holidays as indicated on the model calendar for 2009-2010 provided below. A typical student school day schedule is also provided.

2009-2010 Proposed Calendar (This calendar year totals 192 days of instruction, which allows for two days that can be scheduled for non-instructional school-wide events and/or professional development days.)

Academic Calendar

First Day of School	August 3, 2009
Mid-year Student Exhibition Week	December 7-11, 2009
1st Semester Ends	December 11, 2009
End-of-year Student Exhibition Week	May 24-28, 2010
2nd Semester Ends/Last Day of School	June 4, 2010

Holidays

September 7, 2009	Labor Day
October 12, 2009	Columbus Day
November 25-27	Thanksgiving Break
December 14, 2009 – January 1, 2010	Winter Break (Christmas and New Year's Day)
January 18, 2010	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
February 15, 2010	President's Day
April 2, 5-9, 2010	Good Friday, Spring Break
May 31, 2010	Memorial Day

Proposed Daily Schedule for 2009-2010

Advisory Group	8:00-8:40AM
1st Academic Block	8:45-10:05AM
2nd Academic Block	10:10-11:30AM
Lunch	11:30AM-12:10PM
3rd Academic Block	12:15-1:35PM
4th Academic/Recreational Block	1:40-2:20PM
5th Academic/Recreational Block	2:20-3:05PM
6th Academic/Recreational Block	3:05-3:45PM
7th Academic Block	3:45-5:00PM