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MINNEAPOLIS  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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# Community Partnership Schools:

Cohort Two Overview  
Fall 2015

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## Introduction

Out of a collaborative effort between the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers (MFT), and Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS), a Memorandum of Agreement was established to create a process for schools to become Community Partnership Schools. Community Partnership Schools will utilize increased autonomy, accountability and partnerships in order to accelerate student achievement. In the spring of 2014, the Memorandum was completed, and in the spring of 2015, the cohort one group of four Community Partnership Schools was approved by the Board of Directors.

The Community Partnership Schools Advisory Committee, in partnership with the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers (MFT) and the Office of New Schools (ONS) is pleased to announce the second Request for Proposal (RFP) process for sites to become designated Community Partnership Schools. In line with our theory of action that recognizes schools are at the center of change, Community Partnership Schools will have the opportunity to take advantage of additional autonomies in exchange for a greater degree of accountability, while also developing stronger and more aligned partnerships with the community.

***Vision:*** Empowering schools to be the center of the community to ensure all students are successful in school and life.

***Mission Statement:*** Community Partnership Schools build dynamic relationships with their stakeholders, based on a shared vision, equity, and collective accountability, to find innovative ways that continuously improve student learning.

The goal is to unleash schools to find the strategies that work for their students and schools, provide the necessary support, and hold schools accountable for the results. The CPS Advisory Committee is seeking innovative proposals for a second cohort of Community Partnership Schools that will drive equitable outcomes for all students.

## District Expectations

All existing school applicants interested in becoming Community Partnership Schools within MPS must be approved through the Request for Proposal process outlined in this document. Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated on the quality of the proposed program and the capacity to operate the school successfully. The following additional elements will also be considered.

### **Community engagement**

Engagement and buy-in of the community is critical in the Community Partnership School process. Design teams are expected to engage all stakeholders — students, families, parents, school staff and community members — in the development of the proposal. The depth and level of engagement will be considered in the review process.

### **Enrollment/student placement**

Community Partnership Schools shall follow district policies related to student assignment, the purpose of which are to assure fair and consistent procedures and organizing principles for assignment of students to schools. Schools may work with the student placement office to incorporate steps to the placement process that ensure mission aligned information is shared with prospective students and families.

### **Compliance**

Community Partnership Schools must comply with all federal and state guidelines such as state testing, number of instructional minutes, alignment to state content standards, etc. CP Schools have the opportunity to take advantage of flexibility from district policies that are stated in their full site plan or through a CPS policy variance resolution.

## Community Partnership School Values

- **Equity:** Patterns of achievement across race/ethnicity, gender, language, disabilities and socioeconomic status are examined in order to allow schools to become inclusive communities and identify practices that provide all students opportunities to reach high levels of achievement.
- **Autonomy:** Schools utilize increased decision-making authority over how the school operates daily, particularly in the areas of curriculum and assessment, staffing and governance, budget and time. This provides increased flexibility to meet the unique needs of students and will drive the central office to be more service-oriented.
- **Collaborative Leadership:** The people closest to the students make the school and policy decisions, including teachers, administrators, support staff, families, community partners and students themselves. Governing boards have increased decision-making power.
- **Shared Vision with Shared Accountability:** Each school has a unifying vision and/or mission that is reflected in all school practices and structures, aligning curriculum, policies, schedule, professional development and family engagement. School staff members are aligned behind common goals to which they hold themselves accountable. There are high expectations for every member of the school community.
- **Innovation:** Community Partnership Schools try new approaches to staffing, curriculum and time that MPS can learn from.
- **Student-Centered:** Student learning is purposeful. Teachers empower students to be responsible for their learning, thereby increasing student engagement. Instruction is differentiated. Students use creative problem solving and active use of knowledge.
- **Partnership:** Relationships are focused on respect, trust and collaboration. Families are expected to participate as partners in each school. Schools form partnerships with community organizations in order to expand learning opportunities and support services for students and their families.

## Overview of Autonomies

### **Curriculum and Assessment**

Community Partnership Schools have the autonomy to structure their curriculum and assessment practices to align with their model and best meet their students' learning needs. CP Schools will have autonomy over Davis Service Center requirements related to curriculum but are held accountable to state and federally required tests. CP Schools will also have flexibility over their professional development program in order to ensure alignment with and successful implementation of the academic model.

### **Time**

Community Partnership Schools can take advantage of autonomy in terms of instructional time. They may set their own schedule and calendar, including bell times, summer school and after school. CP Schools are able to increase the length of the school day and the number of school days, not to exceed 211 duty days.

### **Staffing and Governance**

Community Partnership Schools can decide on the governance structure and staffing patterns that align to their vision and model and create the most optimal learning environment for students. As outlined in the MOA, CP schools can participate in an expanded year-round interview and selection process and will have no forced placements unless mutually agreed upon by the teacher and the school. Other autonomies around hiring, evaluating and supporting staff, leadership succession, etc., can be outlined in the full site plan.

Outside of flexibilities outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement, all other terms and conditions of employment will be governed by the collective bargaining agreement between the district and the union, unless specified by the full site plan. During the Community Partnership School term, additional modifications can be made and voted on by staff through a Site Agreement.

### **Budget**

The goal of autonomous school budgeting is for the schools to have more flexibility over resource allocation decisions. Community Partnership Schools receive their budget through a student-based allocation model where funds go directly to the site. Schools will have the opportunity to buy back or opt out of certain district services.

## Oversight

The accountability and support process for Community Partnership Schools will involve the following three components:

**Annual Formative School Review** – Annually, each Community Partnership School will engage in a self-reflection and site visit process.

**Renewal** – All Community Partnership Schools will be required to engage in a comprehensive review after three years. Based on this review and other considerations, the CPS Advisory Committee, in communication with the Board of Education and Superintendent, may renew the school’s autonomous status.

**Performance Agreements and Monitoring** – Each approved Community Partnership School will be required to develop a performance agreement in collaboration with the district. Performance agreements will be finalized following board approval.

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## RFP Development Process & Timeline

Schools completing the letter of interest will be invited to participate in the initial design phase of the process. Design teams will analyze and reflect on their current status, create a vision for their school in the future, and explore school models and autonomies. Schools successfully completing this phase will move into the planning phase to develop a comprehensive Community Partnership School plan by November 2016.

Support provided to teams will include a variety of workshops, visits to other autonomous schools, outside coaching and expertise, and other technical support. The Office of New Schools will develop and coordinate the details of the development process.



## RFP Review Process

The Community Partnership Schools Advisory Committee, a group established by the MOA, is charged with overseeing the CPS process. The Committee will review all applications and make recommendations to the Superintendent. Schools will present their plans to the Committee and respond to questions during the review and evaluation period. School visits and/or additional capacity interviews may be requested during this period.

School plans will be reviewed using a rubric with criteria in the following focus areas:

- Family and Community Engagement
- Collaborative Culture
- Innovating to Support Teaching and Learning
- Capacity for Change
- Equity

If there are a high number of quality applicants, additional criteria may be taken into consideration. This could include, but is not limited to, grade level span and geographic location of the school.

## Letter of Interest

Email your letter of interest to [Kendra.Kecker@mpls.k12.mn.us](mailto:Kendra.Kecker@mpls.k12.mn.us) no later than 5 p.m. Oct. 15, 2015. You will receive an email confirmation. Letters of interest must include a current design team roster.

This non-binding letter of interest is used to express interest in pursuing Community Partnership School status for the 2017-18 school year.

This letter also demonstrates your team's commitment to participate in the Community Partnership Schools design process, including:

- Ensuring a minimum of five people are able to attend each cohort session
- Completing a needs assessment

This letter is not meant to be evaluative but will be used to inform the design process and supports.

### Applicant Information

Name of Primary Contact	
Signature of Primary Contact	
School Name	
Address	
Phone Number	
Email Address	

In a 2-3 page narrative, please describe the following:

- **Who you are:** Describe your school community and current vision for your students. What are the current barriers to achieving your school vision and providing an equitable educational experience for all students?
- **Philosophy:** What excites you about becoming a Community Partnership School? What do you want to change for your students and community?
- **Capacity:** How do you know your school community has the capacity to implement a CPS plan? Are there any community partners you envision including in the process?



## Full Site Plan Template – Existing Schools

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Community Partnership School and for completing the initial steps in the process. The full site plan consists of:

- A school overview describing the vision and rationale for pursuing CPS status
- A description of stakeholder capacity, engagement and buy-in
- School goals
- An outline of the academic program, including specific details around autonomies the school plans to seek
- A description of community partnerships
- A year one implementation plan
- Required and optional attachments

Please respond thoroughly to all applicable prompts following the requirements below:

- Each major section should begin on a separate page. The total document, not including attachments, should be no more than 30 pages.
- In Section D, complete only the sections related to the autonomies you are seeking. I.e., if you are only seeking curricular autonomies, please respond only to those prompts.

## Part A: School Overview: Vision and Rationale

Provide an overview of your proposed Community Partnership School. This overview is a holistic description of the school, how it is different than your current model and structure. It will provide the context for how your specific plans around autonomies will impact school and student outcomes.

- **School Profile and Analysis** – This section should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant data, tell the story of the school community and provide a rationale for the proposed plan. A variety of data sources, including demographics, student performance, culture, etc., should be referenced.
  - What are areas of strength and areas of concern?
  - What are the trends observed over time? What do you believe to be the root causes of these trends?
  - What are the top 3-5 priorities that will be addressed through CPS status? These could be instructional, behavioral or operational.
  - What evidence do you have that these are the school’s highest priorities?
  
- **Vision** – What is your vision as a Community Partnership School? This statement should align with the school’s mission and provide readers with an image of the future the Design Team wishes to create.
  - How is this innovative for MPS?
  - What is new and different about the proposed model?
  - How does this plan address the key challenges and priorities described above?
  - How will this promote equitable student outcomes and transform the teaching and learning environment at your site?
  
- **Key Strategies** – This section should describe strategies tied to and/or supported by autonomies the school plans to seek. These should align to the challenges and priorities outlined above and demonstrate the ability to help the school community achieve its vision for student achievement.

## Part B: Capacity, Engagement and Buy-In

- **Team Capacity** – Please describe why the school team has the capacity to implement the proposed plan and operate autonomously. Include staff bios and community partner descriptions as needed.
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Buy-in** – Describe the process for meaningfully involving and investing stakeholders in plan development. Provide a list of stakeholder meetings and other opportunities to review and provide input on plan elements as well as results of the staff vote following review of the final draft. Further guidance on the vote may be provided by the Advisory Committee.

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## Part C: School Goals

Community Partnership Schools will be required to develop a Performance Agreement, outlining the long-term outcome goals that will be used to evaluate the success of their plan. Some goals related to student achievement and aligned to the district strategic plan will be determined by the district. Other mission specific goals will be developed by the school. As the first step in developing this Performance Agreement, complete a logic model to help demonstrate how the proposed strategies in your plan will support achieving your school goals. The template will be provided and a workshop to guide school teams will take place in the plan development phase of the process.

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## **Part D: Utilizing Autonomy for Strategic Change**

Respond to applicable prompts below around autonomy strategies that will support the proposed plan and school's desired outcomes described above. Attachments may be provided that will support the narrative in this plan.

### ***Curriculum and Assessment***

**What does the school plan to do differently in curriculum and assessment? The bullets below are meant to guide your response but you should only respond to those that apply to the specific autonomies you are seeking.**

#### **Curriculum and Instruction**

- Describe the proposed instructional program and strategies to be implemented that differ from the District's current requirements.
- Explain how the proposed model will meet the needs of all students served by the school
- Describe rationale for selecting this model; how it connects to current data analysis and aligns to school mission
- Provide any research to demonstrate the academic model's effectiveness with your student population.
- Identify any new materials and resources you will use to support the school's curriculum framework and programs

#### **Student Assessment**

- Identify any new academic assessments the school will use to assess student-learning needs and ensure progress
- Explain how these new assessments align with the school's mission, goals and curriculum
- Describe the school's approach to collecting and analyzing student assessment data
- If implementing different interim assessments, describe the goals and process for developing these assessments
- Describe any new grading, promotion, and/or graduation requirements the school plans to utilize

#### **Interventions**

- Describe the school's new approach to identifying and meeting the learning needs of students who are performing below grade level
- Describe any changes to the school's approach to serving students with special needs
- Describe any changes to the school's approach to serving English Language Learners
- Describe the research/rationale for the chosen methods

## ***Time***

**What does the school plan on doing differently when it comes to time? The bullets below are meant to guide your response but you should only respond to those that apply to the specific autonomies you are seeking.**

### **Instructional Time**

- Describe proposed changes to instructional time
- Describe changes to the annual academic calendar for the school. Explain how the calendar reflects the needs of the educational program. Attach draft
- Describe the new schedule and structure of the school day and week. Explain why the school's daily and weekly schedule will be optimal for the school model and for student learning

### **Teacher Collaboration and Preparation Time**

- Describe new plans and schedules for teacher collaboration
- Describe any new plans for collaboration between general education teachers and specialists, such as special education, interventionists and ELL teachers
- Describe any new plans for collaboration between licensed staff and support staff
- Describe the rationale for the new approach

### **Professional Development**

- Describe any new professional development goals and how they are aligned to the implementation of your plan
- Describe any new professional development strategies

## ***Staffing and Governance***

**What does the school plan on doing differently when it comes to staffing and governance? The bullets below are meant to guide your response but you should only respond to those that apply to the specific autonomies you are seeking.**

**Organizational Structure: Governance, Leadership, and Staffing**

- Describe changes to the organizational model of the school. Attach org chart
- Provide an overview of changes to the management structure, explaining the lines of accountability and systems for oversight. These changes could develop over time.
- Describe any changes to the governance structure of the school (including any changes to the MPS site council structure and policies)

**Recruitment and Hiring**

- Explain if the school will utilize the ability for a Community Partnership School to be exempt from forced placement and participate in year-round interview and select
- Describe your new strategy, plans and timeline for recruiting and hiring teachers. Explain key selection criteria and any special considerations relevant to your CPS design
- Explain how teachers will be supported and developed
- Describe the school’s process for teacher evaluation
- Explain plans for leadership succession
- Describe any alternate forms of compensation the school plans to implement related to any extra duties or time
- Describe any new ways the school plans to utilize Q Comp funds to promote teacher effectiveness

**Budget**

- Provide a summary of anticipated costs related to autonomies you are seeking. Consider the following:
  - Start-up costs: initial purchases, additional staffing, training, etc.
  - Implementation costs: ongoing training, staffing, etc.
  - Sustainability: show how the costs are sustainable on the per pupil allocation over time
- Describe ways, outside of estimated costs related to autonomy implementation, the school plans to utilize flexibility with budgetary resources.

**STRATEGIC CHANGE CHART**

Practice	Current School / District Practice	Proposed Change in School Practice	Expected Impact on Student Achievement
School operational hours	8:15 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday.	8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.	Increased learning time will allow for deeper investigation of curricular



## Part E: Community Partnerships

- Describe the school’s approach to community partnerships and how they will support this plan, including:
  - Proposed partners or partner needs
  - How they were or will be selected
  - What services they will provide
  - How the services will be overseen, coordinated and aligned with and support the school’s mission/vision
  - How the school will determine each partner’s effectiveness
- Describe proposed systems for collaboration and communication with community partners that include all school’s stakeholders (i.e., governance, leadership, staff, students, families).
- Explain the role community partners will have in decision-making.

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## Part F: Implementation Plan – Year One

It is important that Design Teams have a thorough plan for implementation of the proposal. Use the following table to develop the beginning of an implementation plan for your CPS design.

Completing the table below will serve as an opportunity for the school to demonstrate its capacity to launch its plan by describing the steps needed during the start-up phase, will assist schools in their ongoing planning, and will inform the support process for ONS and other district departments. Provide additional rows and columns as needed.

### Implementation Template

Proposal Elements	Tasks	Ownership	Resources Needed	Timeframe	Status
Curriculum					
Assessment Plan					
Professional Development					
Schedule and Calendar					
Staffing					
Governance					
Community Engagement					
Budget					

\*Other documents related to implementation may be required from each school to be included in the full site plan depending on need for Board approval.