

The Hudson Valley Charter School

Proposed Concept and Key Design Elements for Consideration

"Children grow into the intellectual life that surrounds them." - Vygotsky

Our Vision

We see hope and success for all public education institutions in meaningful collaboration and fierce competition to educate all students at maximum proficiency in a competitive charter school choice environment.

Our Mission

To successfully inform public education through courageous professional leadership within an exceptional charter school; to measurably and sustainably nurture, stimulate and support all children in a safe, progressive and inquiry-based learning environment to become contributing global citizens no matter their ability or educational needs.

What We Value: Our Students

We value the development of critical thinking and observation skills, the acquisition and in-depth understanding of civic skills and knowledge, social and emotional learning, and demonstrated proficiency in all academic competencies.

What We Want For Our Educators:

- We believe that our most proficient disposition as educators is our sustained positive symbiotic relationships with all stakeholders.
- We believe in respectful, honest, ethical and responsible professional engagement.
- We believe in productive and proactive professional participation in the pursuit of our educational goals and objectives.
- We believe that our resiliency and interdependency are absolutely necessary to meaningfully achieve and sustain our planned goals and objectives.

Our Approach to Charter Schools

At HVCS, we understand that there are different conceptions of the fundamental purpose of charter schools. We believe that our prospective charter school has the potential to serve our community as a laboratory of innovative practices and pedagogies that can meaningfully inform public education.

What We Want to Achieve

The school's design will be divided into three major areas:

- **Innovative Teaching and Learning** through curriculum and instruction.

- **Progressive, Inclusive and Civic-minded School Culture** through school-wide practices and policies.
- **Participatory Family and Community Partnerships** through family and community engagement.

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The school will establish **10 key design elements** that we believe will galvanize educators, elevate student performance, and increase family and community engagement:

Innovative Teaching and Learning	Progressive, Inclusive and Civic-minded School Culture	Participatory Family and Community Partnerships
Interdisciplinary Inquiry-based Learning	Student-driven Civic Agency	Integrated Multi-Dimensional Cradle-to-Career Collaborations
Individualized Student Supports	Restorative Justice Practices	Family and Community Engagement
Multi-layered Assessments	Expanded Learning Opportunities	Inter-school Partnerships
Educator-centered Professional Development		

Innovative Teaching and Learning Strategies

1- Interdisciplinary Inquiry-based Learning: At HVCS, we will provide comprehensive supports that allow students to become confident, self-directed and passionate learners. We believe in methods that incorporate inquiry-based learning through sensitivity for special needs, culturally relevant pedagogy and project-based learning. HVCS will incorporate interdisciplinary learning throughout our curriculum in order to “nurture individuals’ capacity to knit together knowledge from vast and disparate sources into coherent wholes in order to address pressing issues of cultural and natural survival.”

HVCS will harness best practices from proven pedagogical models that promote constructivist student learning and growth mindsets, drawing inspiration from Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and other approaches that have been lauded worldwide. In addition, we believe in incorporating a

strong emphasis in Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM), as well as the humanities in all grades and subject areas to cultivate inquiry, dialogue and critical thinking. We will align our curriculum with the New York State Next Generation English Language Arts and Mathematics Learning Standards.

2. Individualized Student Supports: Each student at HVCS will have an individualized student success plan that directly address many of the out-of-school factors that inhibit student learning and growth in high poverty urban school districts. We are exploring a partnership with the Boston College Lynch School of Education City Connects program, one of the nation's most rigorously evaluated models for wraparound prevention, intervention and enrichment services through a comprehensive, cost-effective and data driven model.

Through the HVCS pre-in-take process, we will identify student and family strengths and needs across dimensions that include poverty, health, social and emotional development and special academic needs among others. Upon identifying student challenges across these dimensions, we will develop both individualized and group interventions for our students in partnership with their families, local social service providers and civil society organizations. Numerous studies and research have demonstrated that the City Connects model can increase standardized test outcomes, reduces grade repetition, school dropout rates, chronic absenteeism and significantly improves numerous non-cognitive measures.

3. Multi-layered Assessments: HVCS will deploy a compilation of formative, summative, diagnostic and portfolio assessment tools focused on both cognitive and non-cognitive student outcomes, growth, achievement and proficiency over time with established annual targets disaggregated by student demographic group. By systematically deploying a variety of assessment strategies, we will support the holistic nature of our educational programs and allow for the development of the whole student and multiple intelligences. This ensures more balanced insight into the achievements and needs of each individual student. HVCS assessments will also be aligned and incorporate all accountability provisions required by the New York State Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Our students will also participate in New York State Common Core standardized testing, where we will aim to achieve proficiency scores at grade level and above. We will also utilize civic knowledge assessments and develop surveys and portfolio approaches to study attitudes, satisfaction, processes, beliefs and aspirations. With our continuous and varied assessment process, we will have ongoing collection and analysis of data linked to student learning that will provide powerful insight into students' skills, knowledge and understanding, as well as inform instruction and best practices for professional development.

Progressive, Inclusive and Civic-minded School Culture

4. Student-Driven Civic Agency: HVCS believes that perhaps the greatest issue of our time is educating students to be the stewards of our democracy and advance social justice issues to benefit all. To do so, we must reinvigorate the civic mission of our schools, an emerging trend in

leading charter networks nationwide. We strive to integrate comprehensive civic learning across all disciplines and grade levels with a strong focus on addressing what leading scholars have identified as the “civic empowerment gap.” It is fundamental that students are educated for cross-cultural understanding, global citizenship and equipped with the tools to dismantle the very inequities that have created a nationwide “opportunity gap” and “educational debt.” More specifically, we will introduce pedagogical frameworks like action civics and service-learning to develop project-based modules that connect students, teachers and families with real community challenges and foster opportunities for civic exploration and rites of passage. We will approach this work through a lens of *New Civics* that incorporates perspectives of gender equity, antiracism and other areas of social inclusion being pioneered in charter schools like Democracy Prep Public Schools and César Chavez Public Charter Schools for Public Policy.

5. Restorative Justice Practices: At HVCS, we believe that to successfully transform educational realities in our community, we must dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline and generate restorative justice approaches to school discipline and culture that empower students starting in the early years to resolve conflicts, promote mutual understanding and reduce systems-wide tendencies to criminalize our students.

6. Expanded Learning Opportunities: Leading research has identified a national deficit for low-income students’ access to extracurricular activities compared to their higher-income peers. Studies show that by the time underprivileged students reach middle school, they are about 6,000 hours behind their affluent classmates in terms of academic enrichment opportunities outside of the classroom. HVCS will partner with community-based organizations to enroll students in engaging and high-impact weekend, after-school and summer enrichment programs in the arts, sciences, and other areas of interest.

Participatory Family and Community Partnerships

7. Integrated Multi-dimensional Cradle-to-Career Collaborations: We understand that successfully educating our students demands addressing the systemic and structural phenomena that are associated with multidimensional poverty, discrimination, racism, inequity and other forms of oppression in our community. To achieve success, HVCS will need to support students, families and our community through a collective impact focused cradle-to-career pipeline that partners with government, civil society, the private sector, community-based organizations and higher education institutions to roll out programming related to public health, economic development, social inclusion and civic participation. Our programming will be shaped by our student and family needs that are identified through our individualized student support plans.

At HVCS, we will work collaboratively with the Poughkeepsie City School District, the Mayor’s office, County Legislators, and the City Common Council to engage leading thinkers on our community’s greatest challenges and opportunities. Together, we can integrate health and human services programming, personalized learning and child development systems using models that have been pioneered at centers like Harvard’s Education Redesign Lab.

8. Family and Community Engagement: It will be a HVCS building-wide expectation that our teachers, administrators and staff immerse themselves in our community to ensure relationships with our parents and understand the unique cultural realities of our local context. We will require that all members of our staff regularly visit student homes and participate in community-building activities. In addition, we will use technology to improve two-way communication between parents and teachers. We understand that one of the most overlooked opportunities in educational development is harnessing the inherent knowledge, wisdom and experience that our families, community leaders and educators already possess. We strive to bridge this social capital through models of mentorship that allow us to grow together in evidence-based instruction, pedagogy, school leadership and community empowerment.

9. Inter-School Partnerships: HVCS believes that a key facet of our success will be contributing to the creation of an ecosystem of sustained collaboration, knowledge sharing and cooperation between traditional public, charter and private schools in the Dutchess County region, the state of New York, and the world. We aspire to build upon promising practices in district charter collaborations through programs that include the national District Charter Collaboration Compact, Showcase Schools, New York City Collaborates, and new hybrid approaches that have been developed in small cities like Lawrence, Massachusetts, with comparable demographics to the City of Poughkeepsie. As the HVCS grows over time, we also aim to institutionalize a promising practices institute that works to cultivate knowledge sharing and establish meaningful partnerships with innovative educational thought leaders and institutions.

In addition, the HVCS will incorporate comprehensive strategies to engage the Poughkeepsie City School District through our proposed governance bylaws and policy. In alignment with the SUNY Charter Institute RFP full proposal documents R-13ac, R-13d and R-14, we will require our proposed Board of Trustees and leadership team to organize bi-monthly public meetings and special workshop events with the Poughkeepsie City School District's Board of Education and central office to share best practices, exchange performance reviews and monitor the effectiveness of efforts to increase student performance in each entity. Through these efforts, we will create an institutionalized "governance bridge" between PCSD and HVCS. The HVCS Board of Trustees will also direct our leadership team to develop a collaboration plan with PCSD and other potential school and district partners across the three domains that guide our key design elements (i. Innovative Teaching and Learning ii. Progressive, Inclusive and Civic-minded School Culture and iii. Participatory Family and Community Partnerships).

10. Educator-Centered Professional Development: Comprehensive professional development will be at the core of our design and integrated across the three major domains of our school programming. Every Friday we will spend half of the school day working with our staff, teachers and administrators to introduce new innovative pedagogy and build upon their collective knowledge and expertise. HVCS will partner with leading nonprofits, think tanks and universities to bring state of the art learning opportunities to our team that promote their personal and professional growth. Our educators will have the opportunity to enroll in online

courses with cutting-edge educational centers of research and practice like Project Zero. We will also develop a system of incentives for our professionals to continuously immerse themselves in new learning communities and bring their findings back to our school.

A key facet of our ongoing professional development programming will be centered on teacher reflection and inquiry that directly responds to the unique and evolving racial, cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic demographics that define urban education in the City of Poughkeepsie. Our city has witnessed a significant rise in immigrant populations over the last decade largely hailing from Latin America. Our professional development will take into account these new realities and focus on equipping urban educators with the tools needed to deliver instruction to our diverse student population, optimize student learning and significantly increase academic achievement. Our team will develop approaches to student learning rooted in the principles of culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching as catalysts for igniting our students' passion for learning. HVCS will also create learning opportunities and home support for our families and community partners to grow both personally and professionally.

Additional information about our proposed public charter school:

Projected Opening Date: September, 2019

Projected Location: City of Poughkeepsie

Hometown School District: Poughkeepsie City School District

Enrollment Year One (Tentative): Grades K-4, 204 students

Enrollment Year 5 (Tentative): Grades K-8, 428 students

Buildings in Consideration:

1. Former YMCA Building; 35 Montgomery Street, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
2. Former St. Mary's School Building; 26 South Hamilton Street, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
3. Dutchess County Office Building; 27 High Street, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
4. 37-39 Academy Street, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
5. 14 Catharine Street, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

SUNY Charter Institute Request for Proposals Timeline

- Second Round Updated Letter of Intent due May 31, 2018
- Second Round SUNY Charter Institute Full Application due June 25, 2018
- Second Round Charter Applicant Approval Notification during August 2018

To facilitate an appropriate and authentic process in response to the (2018) SUNY Trustees' according to the New York State Charter Schools Act of 1998, The proposed Hudson Valley Charter School MUST solicit and respond to public outreach. We enthusiastically request your feedback about our proposal on this website.

****Please Note that the proposed Hudson Valley Charter School is NOT affiliated with any Charter Management Organization in New York State**

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