

***A PROPOSAL***

**THE (yet to be named) ACADEMY at DOHERTY MEMORIAL HIGH  
SCHOOL**

**A Pilot Innovation Academy for Worcester Public Schools**

**PRESENTED BY**

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**Superintendent**

**Worcester Public Schools**

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## **BACKGROUND**

In January 2012, during his inaugural speech, Mayor Joseph M. Petty announced a goal of establishing an exam school in Worcester as part of his educational platform. Subsequent to that speech, Mayor Petty appointed an Ad-Hoc Committee, chaired by School Committee member Tracy O’Connell Novick, and comprised of other school committee members, higher education partners, community partners and parents. This Ad-Hoc Committee was charged with studying “the feasibility of establishing an exam school for students in grades 9 to 12 which would develop and promote academic excellence relevant to success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (Ad-Hoc Committee Report, February 2013). They spent several months researching, studying and visiting exam schools, as well as the International Baccalaureate Program, as it formulated recommendations to be presented to Mayor Petty and the Worcester School Committee. Several public hearings were held throughout the time also.

In June 2013, the Ad-Hoc Committee recommendations were forwarded by the Worcester School Committee to the Superintendent for consideration in creation of a proposal to establish a high school option for high achieving students. Since that time, the Worcester Public Schools Superintendent and Senior Leadership Team members have reviewed those recommendations and conducted additional research resulting in a proposal for “A Pilot Innovation Academy for Worcester Public Schools.”

While Massachusetts leads the nation in most educational indicators, it is virtually silent on the identification and education of gifted and high achieving students. Worcester Public Schools has been on the forefront of academic programming for these students. Specifically, the Goddard Scholars Program serving gifted and high achieving students from across the district at Sullivan Middle School and South High Community School. Graduates of South High Community School have been accepted in very prestigious colleges and universities in this state and the nation. The Goddard Scholars Program at Sullivan Middle School is one of the district’s first innovation academies. The teachers in that program have expanded their knowledge of and implementation of pedagogy and best practices in gifted education. The Arts Magnet Pathway from Worcester Arts Magnet School to Burncoat Middle School to Burncoat High School has developed students with gifts, talents and interests in the visual and performing arts for many years with state and national recognition of their performances, productions and artistic creations. Across the district for gifted and high achieving students, Worcester Public Schools offers 23 Advanced Placement Courses at no charge to students. Additionally, our students are able to gain college credit through dual enrollment opportunities with local colleges and universities.

**It should be clearly noted and understood that this “Pilot Innovation Academy” is not designed to replace or supplant any of the existing programs serving gifted and high achieving students. Rather, the “Pilot Innovation Academy” will be an additional option within the**

**Worcester Public Schools portfolio of school and program options. The district will continue strong support for and enhancement of those existing programs.**

Key recommendations from the Ad-Hoc Committee report that are incorporated in this proposal are highlighted below:

- Concerned with admitting students who have a good chance of success at the school
- Concerned with creating admissions requirements that align with institutional mission and standards
- Consideration for the past academic record of the student
- Inclusion of a portfolio of work, including an essay, which demonstrates the breadth of a student's ability "to read, speak, think, and write"
- Consideration that no single item be weighed so as to prevent or promote admission of a student
- Consideration that admission should be considered by a committee removed from political and administrative pressures
- Consideration that any Worcester selective admission school be a liberal arts focused educational institution with a focus on languages, literature, history and the social sciences with a pedagogy that depends on discussion, writing and research
- Consideration that the International Baccalaureate program be established by at least one high school, open to all district students interested, space available, with expansion to all high school campuses if warranted by community interest and available funding.

## **TARGET STUDENT POPULATION**

Students who have demonstrated exceptional interest in and ability to be successful in a rigorous high school program of studies leading to advanced college readiness. The “Pilot Innovation Academy” will attract students from throughout the City of Worcester.

## **ENROLLMENT**

Maximum of 250 students grades 9-12

Enrollment would begin with an entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade class and possibly 10<sup>th</sup> grade class in the initial year. Over 3-4 years the Academy would have its first graduating cohort.

No grade level would exceed 62 students

## **PROGRAM OF STUDIES**

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Program is recommended as the rigorous program of studies for the “Pilot Innovation Academy”. The IB Program is recognized as a “comprehensive and challenging curriculum, and its mission emphasizes the importance of educating students to become knowledgeable, curious and compassionate young people, who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. The IB program contains four elements: curriculum, assessment, professional development and school evaluation” (Ad-Hoc Committee Report, February 2013).

The IB course of study is directed to students in grades 11 and 12, with grades 9 and 10 often referred to as the pre-IB grades. The IB course of study includes English and literature; languages and culture; individuals and society, including history, geography, world religions, global politics; experimental sciences, including chemistry, physics, biology, chemistry, environmental science; mathematics (Ad-Hoc Committee Report, February 2013).

Students enrolled in an IB Program have both a certificate or diploma option. The final examinations associated with the diploma option “prepares students for success at university and beyond” (ibo.org).

### **ADMISSIONS CRITERIA/PROCESS**

- Application
- Grades from prior school year and current school year
- MCAS and/or other state assessment scores
- Transcript/grade report showing courses enrolled in and completed in middle school
- Student essay
- Teacher recommendation from one core academic teacher
- Attendance history
- Discipline history

The application process will be coordinated by the district and “Pilot Innovation Academy” Assistant Principal.

All applications will be reviewed and scored by a select panel drawn from local higher education institutions.

Each application will receive an overall score based on an admissions rubric to be developed. Weighted scores will be granted for completion of and/or enrollment in the following pre-requisites: Honors classes, Pre-Algebra, Algebra, Foreign Language.

Should the number of eligible students oversubscribe the number of available student slots, a lottery will be held.

### **BUDGET/STAFFING**

The attached chart reflects the projected budget for the “Pilot Innovation Academy”, including a planning year and costs associated with the first four years of operation and through the first graduating class.

Planning year costs include the appointment of the Assistant Principal/Program Director, the IB Coordinator and a clerical position. These staff will work with district staff to initiate the process for application to and implementation of the IB Program; develop the Innovation Proposal; finalize the admissions process and criteria; support development of marketing and recruitment process and materials; select staff and coordinate schedule of professional development for the first cohort of teachers for grades 9 and 10.

The budget assumes the hiring/staffing of dedicated teachers in the core academic areas. Students will benefit from shared enrollment in general education courses at Doherty Memorial High School such as PE, health, arts and certain Advanced Placement courses in order to maximize enrollments in AP courses.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

An Advisory Council will be established, comprised of community members, higher education partners, Ex-Officio Student Representative to the School Committee and parents. This Advisory Council will serve to advise the district on the startup of the “Pilot Innovation Academy” including support for the innovation proposal to be submitted for School Committee action.

### **PROGRAM EVALUATION**

As a “pilot” initiative, evaluating its progress, fidelity of implementation and success of the program is a critical feature in this proposal. A program evaluation for the “Pilot Innovation Academy” will be designed by the district’s Research and Accountability Office in partnership with higher education.

**TIMELINE**

December 2014	Initial presentation or proposal to School Committee
December 2014	Proposal appears on the School Committee agenda for discussion (12/18/14)
January/February 2015	School Committee will schedule and hold at least one public hearing on the "Proposal for a Pilot Innovation Academy at Doherty Memorial High School" to receive written and/or oral comments regarding the proposal
January/March 2015	WPS staff will work with the Doherty administration on a site survey to identify location for proposed "Pilot Innovation Academy", along with identifying any minor facility improvements that may be needed
January/March 2015	Explore state regulations for establishing new innovation schools/academies for relevance to "Pilot Innovation Academy"
April 2015	School Committee votes on the establishment of the "Pilot Innovation Academy"
May 2015	Superintendent includes budget recommendation in Proposed FY16 Budget submittal to School Committee and City Council
May 2015	Positions of Assistant Principal for the "Pilot Innovation Academy" and International Baccalaureate (IB) Coordinator are posted
June 2015	Interviews and selection of Assistant Principal and IB Coordinator
July 2015	Staff positions begin the work of final development moving toward a targeted program opening at the beginning of the 2016-17 School Year
August 2015	Advisory Council Appointed

**Pilot Innovation Academy at Doherty Memorial High School (Cost Per School with 250 Students)**

Line		Qty	Planning Year	Qty	Year 1	Qty	Year 2	Qty	Year 3	Qty	Year 4
1	Assistant Principal	1	\$110,000	1	\$112,200	1	\$114,444	1	\$116,733	1	\$119,068
2	I.B. Program Coordinator	1	\$73,500	1	\$75,000	1	\$77,250	1	\$79,568	1	\$81,955
3	Classroom Content Teachers	0	\$0	7	\$525,000	7	\$540,750	14	\$1,113,945	14	\$1,147,363
4	Special Education	0	\$0	0.3	\$18,750	0.3	\$19,313	0.5	\$39,784	0.5	\$40,977
5	ESL Teachers	0	\$0	0.1	\$7,500	0.1	\$7,725	0.1	\$7,957	0.1	\$8,195
6	Guidance Counselors	0	\$0	1	\$75,000	1	\$77,250	1	\$79,568	1	\$81,955
7	School Year Clerical - Full Year	1	\$49,000	1	\$50,000	1	\$51,500	1	\$53,045	1	\$54,636
8	Employee Health Insurance	3	\$29,400	11	\$113,500	11	\$122,013	19	\$214,946	19	\$231,067
9	I.B. Program Fees		\$4,500		\$9,500		\$9,500		\$10,400		\$10,400
10	Instructional Materials	0	\$0	125	\$16,250	125	\$16,250	190	\$24,700	250	\$32,500
11	Science Lab and Technology	0	\$0	125	\$50,000	125	\$50,000	190	\$76,000	250	\$100,000
12	Professional Development	0	\$80,000		\$82,500		\$85,000		\$87,500		\$90,000
13	I.B. Exam Costs	0	\$0		\$0	125	\$62,500	125	\$62,500	125	\$62,500
14	Summer School Bridge Program	0	\$0		\$27,500		\$27,500		\$27,500		\$27,500
15	<b>Total Estimated Costs</b>		<b>\$236,400</b>		<b>\$1,050,500</b>		<b>\$1,146,550</b>		<b>\$1,877,412</b>		<b>\$1,969,049</b>

Line Notes:

- 2 Budget assumes full-time I.B. Coordinator based on recommendation of I.B. staff for projected student enrollment\*
- 3 Number of teachers assumes class size of 25 students for a seven period day.
- 9 I.B. Program fees based on fee schedule provided by the I.B. Program
- 10 Instructional Materials budget is based on \$130 per pupil to purchase textbooks. The district budget has paid for textbooks in recent years.
- 11 Science Lab and Technology is based on \$400 per student; estimated for all science and school technology needs.
- 12 Professional Development is based on per faculty estimate from I.B. recommendation\*
- 13 I.B. Exam costs based \$500 per student exam cost in accordance with I.B. exam fee schedule\*
- 14 Summer School Bridge program is estimated for jump start program for incoming 11th grade students into program  
 Budget assumes IB school to be located in existing WPS school building with no additional facilities operating costs  
 Model assumes first year of 125 students and 250 students for all years thereafter