

Democracy Prep Public Schools

Will Packer
207 W 133rd Street
New York, NY 10035
917-886-3013
wpacker@democracyprep.org

Abstract

Democracy Prep Public Schools, founded in 2005, is a growing network of free, open-enrollment, high-performing no excuses public charter schools in Harlem committed to preparing students for success in college and active citizenship. Democracy Prep's DREAM Team of teachers and staff currently educates over 1,100 scholars in grades K-12 in four schools across New York City's Harlem neighborhood. A pioneer in authentic civic education and charter school turnaround, Democracy Prep achieves remarkable academic growth for all students, especially those with special needs. By proving that all students, regardless of where they are born or their initial academic performance, can achieve at extremely high academic levels, Democracy Prep seeks to transform not only the lives of our students, but also raise the expectations for public schools across the nation and beyond.

Project Description

Democracy Prep respectfully requests \$9,109,457 over five years to expand two successful Democracy Prep schools in Harlem, further replicate the Democracy Prep school model in Harlem, and, replicate the model in educationally disadvantaged urban regions of New Jersey and, given appropriate conditions, one additional geographic region. In meeting the purpose of this competition, 15 new schools over five years will be replicated or expanded that, utilizing DPPS' high-quality and financially-sustainable core elements, will educate an additional 3,944 new students. In addition to funding the planning and initial implementation of these schools, Democracy Prep will utilize grant funds to overcome the greatest barrier to such accelerated growth, the lack of quality human capital to run schools, through the significant expansion of its *LEADER U* training program.

Project Goals

Utilizing Grant funds DPPS will: (1) continue clustered growth in New York City to ensure that every child in Harlem has the choice of an excellent school and begin clustered growth in at least one new region, educating a total of 4,997 students over five years from low-performing communities for success in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship, and (2) demonstrate that charter school networks can increase the accountability of charter schools nationally and be an integral part of comprehensive district reform.

Expected Outcomes

Goal #1

- i) 3,944 new students attend schools that meet or exceed the academic performance of existing schools and meet academic benchmarks aligned with college readiness.
- ii) 3,944 new students attend schools that meet specific mission-advancement benchmarks.
- iii) 3,944 new students attend schools that are operationally sound and financially stable during and beyond the grant period.

Goal #2

- i) Charter schools replicated using the acquisition and turnaround strategy will meet high standards of academic, organizational, and financial excellence within three years.
- ii) The waitlist for DPPS schools in Harlem, NY will contain no more than 100 families from Community School District 5 within five years.
- iii) Commission the publication and dissemination of an external evaluation by the end of the grant period.

Contribution to Research, Policy, or Practice

DPPS is committed to evaluating its impact and sharing the processes, practices, and strategies employed to achieve the goals set out in this application with the broader education community.