Independence High School
Design Proposal
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I. School Purpose and Philosophy

We propose to create Independence High School, an alternative small school, within the existing campus of the former George Washington High School in the Washington Heights neighborhood of Manhattan. The establishment of this school will enable the students to be more academically successful—to graduate and to be prepared for higher learning and/or careers.

School Mission

Our mission is to create a small learning environment where basic and critical thinking skills are addressed by the increased time on task provided by the extended school day. The curriculum will be aligned with the New York State Standards, emphasizing literacy and mathematical skills that will help our students to meet graduation requirements.

Rational for this School

Washington Heights is part of Community District 6 in New York City Public School system. A close look at District 6 reveals that only 5 high schools exist in the district, and of those, many of the programs are “ed-op.” Educational Option schools and programs were designed to ensure that both high and low performing students had an equal opportunity at admission to schools. A certain proportion of seats are reserved for high-achievers, a certain proportion for average students, and a certain proportion for the lowest-achievers. The school administration chooses half the students and half are assigned at random by Department of Education computers. Students who score in the top two percent on standardized tests are guaranteed a slot in an "ed-op" school if they list it as their first choice on their high school application. (Inside Schools, 2003)
High-performing students are more likely than low-performing students to apply, so a school may accept nearly all of the low-performers who apply but only a small proportion of the high performers. This means an average student has a far more difficult time being placed at a school of his or her choice. Students not placed in a school of their choice are often sent to their neighborhood “zone school.” However, with only five high schools in Washington Heights and over 20,000 students to serve, many students without high school placements are sent wherever there is space—most often, failing schools.

**Theory of Action**

Independence High School is creating an environment where students are challenged to become independent thinkers and active participants in their communities, as well as agents of change. Through the development of critical thinking skills, intrapersonal, and interpersonal skills, a student of Independence High School will graduate with the necessary tools and knowledge to work individually and collectively to identify, address, and implement change in their lives and their community.

**Beliefs/Assumptions**

- All students can think critically about themselves and their world
- Self awareness and reflection are vital to reaching goals
- Strong connections to community help to build strong learners
- Student learning can be assessed through a variety of methods
- Teachers are invested in student learning when they have had time to develop their own curriculum
-Aligning curriculum with standards will prime students for success
- Small schools create a safe community of learners where students can be encouraged to explore ideas and solutions by looking “outside of the box”
- Interdisciplinary thematic units of study provide students with the variety lenses for critical thought and exploration of complex matter

**Goals**

- Students will graduate ready to face college, or any other career goal
• Students will learn to collaborate with others to reach goals
• A community of learners that includes students, teachers, administrators, parents and community groups help build the confidence and security necessary for student achievement

Key Features

• The Inquiry and Action Lab that consists of planning for action plans, life skills, mentoring, working on school projects. Along with mini lessons in Time Management, Study Skills, Public Speaking, Essay Writing, Career Search, PSAT/SAT prep, Building Self-Esteem, and College Admissions Process.
• Graduation Portfolio- An extension of a students yearly portfolio representing works from a variety of disciplines and action plan projects
• Action Plans- a systematic approach towards addressing issues that can be applied in both situations of personal or community problems
• Block Scheduling and extended school day allows more time on task for students and gives teachers opportunities to do in depth study with students
• Extensive professional development planned both within and outside the regular school year
• Community service increase contact time with community based organizations

Potential Strategies

• Curriculum that is guided by New York State Standards
• Development of interdisciplinary curriculum theme based that provides variety of views on topics and encourages critical thinking
• Parent/Community coordinator who assists in connecting students to community groups
• Coaches to assist teachers in summer curriculum writing
• Quarterly meetings with representatives who are administrators, teachers, parents, students and community group members to assess schools’ direction
• Community service committee to assess and coordinate student service commitment
• Admit students who come from the Washington Heights area who have had varying degrees of academic success and need an alternative to their zoned school

Outcomes

• 90% graduation for students enrolled at Independence High through the 12th grade
• College or other post-secondary school acceptance rate of 85% of students enrolled at Independence High through the 12th grade
• A school that has working relationships with a variety of community organizations
• Development of a dedicated and invested staff
• Development of students who can think critically about personal and social issues
• Development of students who can work with others to explore, challenge, assess, and reform issues facing them and their respective communities

Theory of Action

Beliefs and Assumptions
All students can think critically about themselves and their community
Self awareness and reflection are vital to reaching goals
Strong connections to community helps to build strong learners
Student learning can be assessed with a variety of methods

Goals:
Student will graduate with an in-depth knowledge core curricular areas
Students will become critical thinkers
Students will be well equipped with the knowledge needed in order to do well in institution of higher learning or be prepared to join the workforce

Outcomes
90% graduation for students enrolled through 12th grade
College or post-secondary school acceptance of 85% for students enrolled through 12th Grade
Development of dedicated and invested staff
Working relationships with community organizations

Potential Strategies
Interdisciplinary curriculum and projects
Curriculum that supports New York State standards
Interdisciplinary Theme based units of study
Class wide community service project
Community service committee
Parent/Community Coordinator

II. School Environment and Community

Setting and Population

Washington Heights has a largely Dominican population with a median household income of $27,916 (Infoshare, 2000a). Roughly 30% of Washington Heights residents are
living below the poverty line, and in 2000, over 31,000 residents were eligible for public assistance (Infoshare, 2000b,c).

According to the 2000 Census, of the 21,000 residents of District Six, ages 18 to 24, 36% did not earn a high school diploma, and 10% completed less than 9\textsuperscript{th} grade (Infoshare, 2000d).

But Washington Heights is a neighborhood on the rise, the number of residents on public assistance decreasing each year, and the crime rate decreasing by 77% over the last ten years (Infoshare, 2000c) (Compstat, 2004). Washington Heights has also seen an increase in the number of community based not-for-profit agencies established locally, including youth services, cultural events, educational services organizations, performing arts groups, and advocacy organizations (Infoshare, 2000e).

Admissions Policies and Procedures

As a New York City Public School, Independence High School will service the average student who is disenfranchised by the structure of the Educational Option. Independence will strive to be an alternative for the average student forced into a failing zone school, whilst still reserving 15% of slots for high-performing students and 15% low-performing students. The other 60% of students will be drawn from the targeted average-performing student category. Because of the limited slots students from all categories will be chosen by a representative lottery.

Tuition

As a part of the New York City Public School system, Independence will be funded by the city and state. There is no tuition for New York City residents.
School Facilities

Sample floor plans for both Instructional and Administrative floors are located in Appendix A.

III. Curriculum, Programming and Student Assessment

Pedagogical Philosophy

The key concepts in Independence High School’s curricular design are structured so as to achieve the goal of increased high school graduation rates and post-secondary school enrollments through development of three vital areas: the interpersonal, the intrapersonal and through critical thinking. Thus, toward these goals, curriculum and instruction will be guided by the following ideals:

- Students will demonstrate development in critical thinking skills, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills that will assist students in the exploration and understanding of the complex subject matter
- Students will demonstrate development in the skill sets needed to graduate and pursue any personal or professional goals
- Faculty will develop curriculum that is inquiry based to foster critical thinking and students centered to engage students in ways that require cognitive awareness through self-reflection
- Faculty will align that curriculum with state standards and through teacher collaboration create units of study that allow for higher order thinking skills and exploration of subject matter

The school’s emphasis on self-reflection and critical evaluation is an integral part for both teachers and students. Teachers will be setting professional goals and reflecting on their success or failure in curriculum design. Renegotiating their understanding of progress through reflection and problem solving, teachers will assess and remediate their planning. The ideals that are essential for student success are mirrored in the evaluation and revision of curriculum design and practice.
Rationale

Learning requires assessment for significant progress to occur. Practices that simply test students for information, that reveal only the facts, figures, and methods that a student has retained, do not integrate student learning to their own experience. Information is best retained when it is made valuable to students. Such methods give students the ability to build or expand on that knowledge in creative ways. An inquiry-based curriculum whose central focus is portfolio assessment, allows for students and teachers to measure progress through students’ grappling for understanding, connections and synthesis.

Curriculum Design

The key concepts in Independence High School’s curricular design are the graduation portfolio and the Action and Inquiry lab. All students in the incoming freshman class will design action plans within their Action and Inquiry Lab. These action plans can focus on two levels of student action: personal and academic goals, and social action goals. These goals incorporate the use of knowledge of self, knowledge of others, and critical thinking to further student achievement and to empower students to become agents of change within their community. The work required for these goals is interconnected to extend into the academic areas. There, teachers/facilitators work in interdisciplinary teams to develop challenging and inquiry based curricula that incorporate these two levels of student action.

Inquiry and Action Lab

The Inquiry and Action Lab Period is designed to teach students methods to successfully identify problems, both personal and community based, develop action
plans, carry-out the plan, and reflect upon the process. Thematic units within the Inquiry and Action Lab will begin with “Who am I?” “Our Community”, “Reaching Out”, and “The Future”.

During Lab, students will meet with small groups and/or one-on-one with their teacher/mentors to: build a foundation for school community, develop a common vocabulary and conceptual view of issues affecting young people and the surrounding community, and finally, to develop the tools and skills necessary to implement their own action plans and to build on the skills and knowledge necessary for success. Weekly meetings with facilitators/mentors in the Inquiry and Action Lab will ensure that students are developing their portfolios and plans of action.

The Lab offer mini courses in topics such as: time management, study skills, test preparation, and vocational research, workplace readiness skills to improve student success in volunteer actions and academic success.

The Action Plan

Incoming freshmen will begin the year with Lab class action plan. This action plan will be developed to model for students the structure and dynamics involved in the creation and implementation action plans. The project will serve as a scaffold for students and will ensure successful implementation and execution of Action Plans. This is especially important to help reach reluctant students. Students will reflect upon the work they have done and evaluate their successes and failures. Careful reflection and discussion with mentors will refocus students who have been unsuccessful, and action plans can be revised to ensure students are invested in their projects.
Subsequent action plans will be based upon areas of interest to individual, and in keeping with the ninth grade theme, first student action plans will focus on the self. Depending on where they are in terms of skills, some students may be writing action plans based on personal goals while others may be focusing on organizing their own community service based projects.

Action plans can be as varied as students. Through self-evaluation and reflection students develop a realistic plan for their own success. There is a wide range of issues students can choose to address within an action plan: academic achievement- personal or community problems, school-wide or community-wide awareness campaigns, community outreach programs, partnerships and coalitions with community groups, and service learning.

The goal of the action plan is to give students a model for planning, self-reflection, and achievement. A sample action plan document is located in Appendix B.

The Purpose and Structure of Thematic Units

Thematic units allow students to immerse themselves in a topic and connect skills and knowledge to a broader base of ideas. Having this level of engagement encourages critical thinking and connectedness. As students move away from learning skills in an isolated way to connecting what goes on in the classroom to themselves and their world. Thematic units of study serve two purposes: to unite teachers, and to explore topics of study from a variety of viewpoints thus increasing the depth and breadth of each subject.

Collaborative teacher teams must align all units with state standards and incorporate elements that will address basic reading and writing skills, as well as math skills. Given the demands made on teachers, teacher preparation is used extensively in
Independence High’s scheduling. Through the use of block scheduling, extended school day, and tiered teacher schedules, teachers have extensive prep periods.

The thematic units of study in Lab are assigned for each cycle. In a full year, students will have gone through all the themes. See graphic below:

![Independence High Curriculum Structure](image)

**Figure 2**

In addition, these same themes are the framework from which teachers develop thematic interdisciplinary units. For example, the theme for ninth grade is “Who am I?” All ninth graders will learn through themes related to exploration of self. In humanities courses, teachers might relate back to the ninth grade theme by making one of their
themes “self-discovery”. Science/Math teachers might choose “The Human Body” as one their theme. See Figure 3

All thematic units developed by interdisciplinary teams fit under the umbrella theme for all freshmen students “Who am I?”

**Academic Disciplines**

Classes will be team taught by teachers grouped in the following disciplines: Social Studies and Language Arts, Mathematics and Science, Health and Physical

For example, an introductory thematic unit for ninth grade History and English could be immigration. As students begin examining the history of the different ethnic groups in America, they would be reading poetry, short stories, and plays about those same groups. As the students are debating topics like current US immigration policies, they might experience first hand accounts of the immigrant experience through readings of poems, memoirs, and/or conducting interviews. More importantly, students can work on projects that integrate all concepts and assess their overall understanding of the topic. These types of integrated projects can in tern be used in the student’s graduation portfolio.

The depth of knowledge that comes from such an integrative approach requires the higher order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation—all exemplary examples of critical thought which is a vital component of Independence High School’s vision.

All curriculum units developed by teachers will be aligned with New York State standards. Teachers must incorporate Regents testing preparation within each discipline by creating assignments within the Thematic Units that teach the specific skill sets required of Regents exams. In addition, support for Regents and other standardized tests
will be offered within the Inquiry and Action Lab’s mini-course on test preparation and test taking strategies.

IV. Assessment

Student Assessment

Portfolios

Portfolios will serve as assessment tools for both students and teachers. Student portfolios will be implemented in Lab Class, but expanded to include student work from all disciplines and community service. The portfolio guidelines will guide students to choose the types of objects and projects that would best represent them for the year. In the final phase – it must include examples from all years spent at Independence High. Teachers will discuss and evaluate appropriately cases where a student recently transferred to the school and might not have enough materials to create a substantial portfolio.

Each discipline will keep a smaller version of the portfolio into which completed projects will go. Towards the end of the school year, students will begin to compile each smaller portfolio into a large one that is representative of what each student has achieved and learned. They include reflective journals, and are formally presented to a panel of Lab teachers representing each discipline for evaluation. These yearly portfolios and their presentations take the place of major exams like finals.

The graduation portfolio will showcase one work from each discipline and representing each year a student was enrolled at Independence High school. Students must choose to continue to revise and expand these works. The graduation portfolio will represent both knowledge learned through the class that year and a student’s independent
work (guided by Lab teachers) since project was first presented. A panel of Lab teachers will assess the portfolio before students can graduate.

Students may choose to use their portfolios as a presentation tool for the college application process as they will serve to highlight students’ skills and community involvement.

Additional Student Assessments

Students will be assessed in a variety of ways including rubrics, reports, projects, presentations, performance and traditional tests.

Dealing with the Disaffected Student

Assessing the Problem

There will be times when students may face difficulties in carrying out academic work and/or action plans. To address these students, the Independence school team is requiring that an intervention be implemented that approaches the students in a variety of ways.

- There will be a team meeting called to evaluate sources of student’s difficulties. Team members will include teachers, counselors, and assistant principal.
- Student will be called in to explain difficulties and/or assess needs.
- A program will be designed requiring the input of parent and student to address needs.
- Student may be assigned a student partner to assist in the mapping, and implementation of action plan.
- If there are additional resources needed, school will provide contacts and follow up for students and their families.

Although there are times when student cannot or will not cooperate, these systems are in place to provide support to students and their families in times of crisis.

Teacher Assessment

Teachers will be assessed monthly through formal observations, weekly through informal principal walk throughs, and evaluation of weekly lesson plans. Teachers will
also be asked to compile an individual portfolio as part of their professional development that will include a sample unit plan, a teacher’s action plan, peer observation reports, and a reflection piece.

Community Assessment

A quarterly meeting will be held, facilitated by the Parent/Community Coordinator and the Action/Inquiry Lab Coach, to allow Community Organizations the opportunity to report back to the school on how the partnership between Independence High School students and the organizations is progressing. This information will be gathered, delivered to the principal, and a plan of intervention will be created to address any needs for change or improvement.

School-Wide Assessment

At the end of each year, the principal and assistant principals will compile all of the information gathered throughout the year through student, teacher, and community assessments. The data will be analyzed and its implications, discussed among administrators and faculty. Cooperatively, an action plan will be written for the upcoming year.

V. Teaching: Hiring, Professional Development, and Teacher Support

Hiring of Teachers

Independence High School is dedicated to hiring teachers that show a strong commitment to providing high quality instruction to children and who share the philosophies of Independence High School. Teachers must be prepared to work collaboratively with others and be prepared to spend the time necessary to develop, implement, and continuously revise new curriculum. Teachers will be asked to be
introspective and reflective in their practice as well as flexible and willing to listen to the constructive criticism of their colleagues.

Because Independence High School is so community centered, hiring teachers who live in the surrounding neighborhood would be preferable, however, it is essential that the teachers be familiar with and/or have experience in dealing with social issues confronting urban youth such as poverty, drug use, teenage pregnancy, etc.

Teachers will be offered the standard New York City Public School Teacher’s salary, and additionally, per session supplemental pay would be available for teachers providing after-school services and for the Independence High School Summer Planning Session.

Hiring of Support Staff

Parent/Community Coordinator

Independence High School will hire a Parent/ Community Coordinator whose year round responsibilities will include:

- Making initial contact and establishing relationships with community organizations
- Increasing parent involvement by working closely with all school, parent, and community organizations
- Acting as facilitator for parent and school community concerns or issues
- Conducting outreach to engage parents in their children’s education
- Convening regular parent meetings
- Attending parent meetings with the Principal or teachers where appropriate
- Maintaining ongoing contact with community organizations involved in the Inquiry/Action Lab through quarterly meetings.
- Organizing back-to-school and other events to increase parental and community involvement and creating a welcoming school environment for parents.
Action/Inquiry Coach

An Action/Inquiry Coach will be hired to work in conjunction with the Parent/Community Coordinator to:

- Assist in curriculum program design and implementation.
- Help gather resources and provide teachers with support.
- Coordinate Friday Action/Inquiry Lab Professional Development Sessions
- Mediate between the faculty and Parent/Community Coordinator
- Oversee the assessment and continuous revision of the Action/Inquiry Lab

Partnership with Columbia University

Columbia University’s proximity to Independence High School provides a unique opportunity for teacher training and support. Independence teachers will participate in the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. After attending a week-long summer mini-course, teachers will have the opportunity to attend monthly calendar days at Teachers College, and additionally, a representative from the Reading and Writing Project will come to Independence High School to provide on-site professional development for literacy teachers.

A partnership with Barnard College’s Education Program provides a wonderful opportunity for reciprocal support. Barnard shares a similar educational philosophy to that of Independence High and a dedication to serving a population in need. Barnard will provide student teachers to provide meaningful assistance to teachers. This will give teachers direct assistance in the classroom and allow students more access to a teacher during class time. Furthermore, student teachers trained at Independence High School would be better prepared to fill positions at Independence High as the school grows in size.
Finally, Columbia work-study students employed by the America Reads program could be placed at Independence High School to provide supplementary reading help to low-scoring students in need of additional academic support. These tutors can both push in to classrooms to assist teachers during lessons or pull small groups of students out of the classroom to provide services.

Professional Development Plan

*Summer*

Professional Development for teachers at Independence High School will begin in the summer. Literacy teachers will attend the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project’s Summer Institute. Two will attend the Reading mini-session, and two, the writing session.

All teachers will begin reporting the Independence High School two weeks before the start of the school year in August to begin writing the year’s curriculum. They will be paid per session for this time. Week one will begin with training from the consulting group Understanding by Design. Teachers will learn, or enrich their understanding of the “backwards planning” method for two days followed by collaborative planning sessions for the following three days of the Action/Inquiry Lab curriculum. The consultant will be present to help teachers with problem areas and to assist in gathering materials.

Week Two will focus on the content area. Teachers will begin the week by meeting across content areas to discuss goals for the year. Teachers will then pair off by grade level to plan an outline of curriculum for the year and detailed plans for the first two units.

*Bi-weekly Grade and Content Development*
On the first and third Monday of every month, teachers will spend the 100 minutes required of them by New York City teacher contract in two ways. The first 50 minutes will be spent in a grade meeting, giving teachers an opportunity to discuss issues specific to their individual students. The second 50 minutes will be spent with teachers planning upcoming units in the content areas. Teachers who attended the summer sessions will use this time to present the information they gathered to their colleagues.

*Friday Action/Inquiry Lab Development*

Each Friday afternoon, students will be dismissed early and teachers will attend in-house professional development sessions dedicated to the Action/Inquiry Lab. These sessions will be facilitated by the Action/Inquiry Coach. Initial sessions will focus on launching the lab successfully, creating small learning communities, and implementing the first lab class action plan. As the year progresses, topics for professional development will include subjects such as: making contact with community organizations, effective mentoring techniques, implementing mini-courses, assisting students with action plans, and portfolio development.

*Peer Support Review Network*

Collaborative planning time is built into the schedules of teachers at Independence High School. During the day, teachers will have two periods—one for interdisciplinary teams, and the other for Inquiry/Action Lab. Teachers can use this time to develop curriculum as well as discuss individual student issues.

Every other month, teachers will also be required to visit another content teacher’s classroom. During this time, teachers will be observing teaching practices and
learning going on in the classroom. Collaborative prep time will allow for a debriefing of this observation in which observations and feedback can be discussed.

Finally, an informal, voluntary book club will take place weekly during the lunch hour for teachers interested in professional discussion. The teachers involved will decide the books to discuss.

VI. Governance and Administration

A principal and an assistant principal will govern Independence High School. The duties of the principal include but are not limited to: providing a safe environment for faculty, staff, and students.

Role of Principal

*Function:* The principal serves as an advisor between the school and the community and is the final decision maker within the school

*Structure:* The principal will attend regular Department of Education meetings as well as faculty/staff meetings

- Attends Principal training workshops
- Hires teachers and teacher assistants
- Performs formal monthly teacher observations and weekly informal walk-throughs
- Oversees custodial staff
- Appropriates funds
- Administers fire drills
- Oversees staff development and monthly team meetings
- Writes grant proposals
- Coordinates professional development
- Oversees annual assessment of the school

Role of Assistant Principals

*Function:* An assistant principal will be assigned to help the principal with supervising and administering school affairs.

*Structure:* The assistant principal will handle disciplinary problems

- Make sure the computers are in working condition
• Provide teachers and students with all the necessary school supplies
• Attend regularly scheduled staff meetings
• Plans students and teachers schedules
• Handles teachers absences
• Coordinates placement of student teachers
• Assists in the annual assessment of the school

Role of Faculty

The role of the school faculty is to provide students with the necessary tools needed in order to progress at Independence High School. Teachers will be required to attend regularly scheduled staff meetings as well as staff development workshops. Teachers will be decision makers within their own classroom. Teachers may provide inputs and suggestions in the decision making process, however, final decisions will ultimately be made by the principal. See Figure 4 below.
Community Involvement

The parent community coordinator will organize a Community Walk in which all staff members will go door-to-door, in the area immediately surrounding the school surveying community members about their specific needs and concerns regarding the school system. The staff will also take this time to introduce Independence High School’s vision for the upcoming school year and announce an upcoming Back to School night in which teachers, administrators, and community leaders will be available to discuss and address the issues presented during the community walk.

Community leaders will be invited to visit the school to discuss their concerns for community development. Students, parents and community leaders will create a partnership to ensure that their needs are met individually, as well as collaboratively.

During parent teacher conference week, there will be a community service fair, in which participating community organizations can make their services available to parents and our students can browse for potential volunteer opportunities. Family Night will be established during the end of the year and be scheduled just before a PTA meeting, in which participating community organizations will come in to the school to inform parents about the status of the students volunteer efforts.

School Schedule

The school day begins at 7:30 am for all students and ends at 3:00 pm. This extended day, along with the elimination of all non-required courses (excluding the Inquiry and Action Lab), will assist in the exploration of thematic units of study that explore concepts and ideas along with developing and strengthening specific skills needed for academic success.
Class size will be kept at a maximum of 20 students per class. In its first year, Independence High School will have an enrollment of 100 freshmen students. Future plans see Independence High expanding at the rate of one grade level per year.

**Student Schedule - Section A**

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</table>

*Early Dismissal

Several key elements built into a teacher’s schedule at Independence High School not only provide worthwhile professional development opportunities, but also ensure that faculty is given adequate time to meet in their various teams for planning.

**Sample Teacher Schedule A**

**History or Language Arts**
<table>
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<td>7</td>
<td>12:28-1:13</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Lang/Tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1:17-2:02</td>
<td>Individual Prep</td>
<td>Individual Prep</td>
<td>Individual Prep</td>
<td>Individual Prep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2:08-2:53</td>
<td>Off</td>
<td>Off</td>
<td>Off</td>
<td>Off</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Early Dismissal for students Teachers are to continue to meet as a whole school planning for Lab period, and creating their own professional Action Plans.

** School will maintain a professional library with copies for all staff. Once a week, teachers may choose to bring their lunch to their book club. Teachers will discuss books about teaching, curriculum, pedagogy, etc… This will provide yet another opportunity for professional development.

Additional samples of teacher and student schedules are located in Appendix C
VII. Financial Outlook

Annual Operating Budget

The following is an estimated budget for Independence High School once it reaches its final capacity of 400 students. The numbers are based on sample budgets for schools of similar size and organizational structure.

Additional funding for after-school programs and professional development will be sought through grant writing efforts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REVENUE</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Student Revenue</td>
<td></td>
<td>$8,500*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenue</td>
<td></td>
<td>$3,400,000</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COSTS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$85,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principals</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head teachers/Co-directors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deans</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Coordinator</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$38,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$55,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarians</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Heads (FTEs)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom teachers</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>$1,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$48,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraprofessionals/Aides</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Asst./Clerks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Guards</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td>$370,750**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books and supplies</td>
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<td>$130,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services &amp; other expenses</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$330,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Costs</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,496,750</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This number based on figures obtained from the New York City Department of Education’s Start Up and Five Year Budget Plan **Figure based on 25% of all salaries
VIII. Reflection on Challenges Yet to be Resolved

The Independence High School creation team understands that we have not addressed every facet of this design proposal. In the following years we wish to address the following issues:

- Independence will need a School Based Support Team including a school psychologist, social worker, educational evaluator and several speech and hearing therapists in order to address the special needs of our students.
- Working within an immigrant population requires that we include English as a Second Language instruction to assist our students in language acquisition.
- We will need to expand after school programs through grant funding, as they are important for crime prevention, gang prevention, additional academic support including test preparation, and enrichment.
- The challenges that will present themselves through the Action/Inquiry Lab experience may require an outside consulting group to help with community organizational plan.
- Professional development for math, science, and technology must be expanded.
- Additional academic support will be needed to improve student performance on state-wide exams.
- We wish to establish working relationships with various colleges and universities to expose students to college life.
- In order to make it easier on parents to come to evening school functions, we would like to offer transportation and child care.
- Translation services will need to be available for parent-teacher conferences and for correspondence with Spanish speaking families.
- We will also need a home visit support staff to address the various needs of students that may arise: attendance, educational neglect, lack of phone, etc.
- We also wish to create a grant writing team made up of faculty members and PTA members.
Appendix A

Independence High School will be located inside the George Washington High School Building. George Washington currently houses several smaller redesigned high schools. Independence will be unique in its layout and organization in that the school is designed so that students in the same grade level will have adjoining classrooms. This will facilitate both students and teachers in teaming for larger projects and/or demonstrations of learning.

As you walk onto the Independence High floor, what becomes most noticeable about the design of the school is the brightness of the walls both in the halls and in the classroom. Bright colors will help to create an atmosphere that allows students step outside of their usual environment and makes independence a unique place for learning. The school’s hallways are unified in the color combinations—yet each individual classroom is distinguished by its unique color scheme.
Appendix B

Independence High School

Student Action Plan Worksheet

Name: 

Date: 

Project Topic:

1. What issue in your life, school, or neighborhood do you wish to act on?

2. What do you need to know more about in order to participate fully and/or to take action?

3. How will you go about learning these things?

4. Who or what do you think will benefit from your participation/action?

5. Who or what do you think might be inadvertently disadvantaged by your participation/action?

6. How does your project relate one or more of the four curricular themes? ("Who am I?", "Our Community", "Reaching Out", and "The Future")

7. How long do you estimate it will take to complete this action plan?
## Appendix C

### Student Schedule - Section B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1HR</td>
<td>7:30-8:15</td>
<td>Sci/Math</td>
<td>Sci/Math</td>
<td>Sci/Math</td>
<td>Sci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9:08-9:53</td>
<td>Hist/LA</td>
<td>Hist/LA</td>
<td>Hist/LA</td>
<td>Hist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9:57-10:42</td>
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<td>Hist/La</td>
<td>Hist/La</td>
<td>LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10:48-11:33</td>
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<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>11:39-12:24</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>LangTech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>12:28-1:13</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Phys/Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1:17-2:02</td>
<td>Lang/Tech</td>
<td>Lang/Tech</td>
<td>Lang/Tech</td>
<td>E.D.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2:08-2:53</td>
<td>Phys/Art</td>
<td>Phys/Art</td>
<td>Phys/Art</td>
<td>E.D.*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Early Dismissal

### Sample Teacher Schedule B

**Phys Ed/Art**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1HR</td>
<td>Off</td>
<td>Off</td>
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<td>Off</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Individual Prep</td>
<td>Individual Prep</td>
<td>Individual Prep</td>
<td>Individual Prep</td>
<td>Individual Prep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Team Prep for Lab</td>
<td>Team Prep for Lab</td>
<td>Team Prep for Lab</td>
<td>Team Prep for Lab</td>
<td>Team Prep for Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch Prof. Book Club</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Phys/Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Lang/Tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Phys/Art</td>
<td>Phys/Art</td>
<td>Phys/Art</td>
<td>Phys/Art</td>
<td>E.D.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Phys/Art</td>
<td>Phys/Art</td>
<td>Phys/Art</td>
<td>Phys/Art</td>
<td>E.D.*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D
Learning Standards for New York State

Health, Physical Education, and Family and Consumer Sciences

Standard 1: Personal Health and Fitness
Students will have the necessary knowledge and skills to establish and maintain physical fitness, participate in physical activity, and maintain personal health.

Standard 2: A Safe and Healthy Environment
Students will acquire the knowledge and ability necessary to create and maintain a safe and healthy environment.

Standard 3: Resource Management
Students will understand and be able to manage their personal and community resources.

Mathematics, Science, and Technology

Standard 1: Analysis, Inquiry, and Design
Students will use mathematical analysis, scientific inquiry, and engineering design, as appropriate, to pose questions, seek answers, and develop solutions.

Standard 2: Information Systems
Students will access, generate, process, and transfer information using appropriate technologies.

Standard 3: Mathematics
Students will understand mathematics and become mathematically confident by communicating and reasoning mathematically, by applying mathematics in real-world settings, and by solving problems through the integrated study of number systems, geometry, algebra, data analysis, probability, and trigonometry.

Standard 4: Science
Students will understand and apply scientific concepts, principles, and theories pertaining to the physical setting and living environment and recognize the historical development of ideas in science.

Standard 5: Technology
Students will apply technological knowledge and skills to design, construct, use, and evaluate products and systems to satisfy human and environmental needs.

Standard 6: Interconnectedness: Common Themes
Students will understand the relationships and common themes that connect mathematics, science, and technology and apply the themes to these and other areas of learning.

Standard 7: Interdisciplinary Problem Solving
Students will apply the knowledge and thinking skills of mathematics, science, and technology to address real-life problems and make informed decisions.
English Language Arts

Standard 1: Language for Information and Understanding
Students will listen, speak, read, and write for information and understanding. As listeners and readers, students will collect data, facts, and ideas; discover relationships, concepts, and generalizations; and use knowledge generated from oral, written, and electronically produced texts. As speakers and writers, they will use oral and written language that follows the accepted conventions of the English language to acquire, interpret, apply, and transmit information.

Standard 2: Language for Literary Response and Expression
Students will read and listen to oral, written, and electronically produced texts and performances from American and world literature; relate texts and performances to their own lives; and develop an understanding of the diverse social, historical, and cultural dimensions the texts and performances represent. As speakers and writers, students will use oral and written language that follows the accepted conventions of the English language for self-expression and artistic creation.

Standard 3: Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation
Students will listen, speak, read, and write for critical analysis and evaluation. As listeners and readers, students will analyze experiences, ideas, information, and issues presented by others using a variety of established criteria. As speakers and writers, they will use oral and written language that follows the accepted conventions of the English language to present, from a variety of perspectives, their opinions and judgments on experiences, ideas, information and issues.

Standard 4: Language for Social Interaction
Students will listen, speak, read, and write for social interaction. Students will use oral and written language that follows the accepted conventions of the English language for effective social communication with a wide variety of people. As readers and listeners, they will use the social communications of others to enrich their understanding of people and their views.

Languages Other Than English

Standard 1: Communication Skills
Students will be able to use a language other than English for communication.

Standard 2: Cultural Understanding
Students will develop cross-cultural skills and understandings.
The Arts

Standard 1: Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts
Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts.

Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources
Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles.

Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art
Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought.

Standard 4: Understanding the Cultural Contributions of the Arts
Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society.

Career Development and Occupational Studies

Standard 1: Career Development
Students will be knowledgeable about the world of work, explore career options, and relate personal skills, aptitudes, and abilities to future career decisions.

Standard 2: Integrated Learning
Students will demonstrate how academic knowledge and skills are applied in the workplace and other settings.

Standard 3a: Universal Foundation Skills
Students will demonstrate mastery of the foundation skills and competencies essential for success in the workplace.

Standard 3b: Career Majors
Students who choose a career major will acquire the career-specific technical knowledge/skills necessary to progress toward gainful employment, career advancement, and success in postsecondary programs.
Social Studies

Standard 1: History of the United States and New York
Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

Standard 2: World History
Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

Standard 3: Geography
Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national, and global—including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth’s surface.

Standard 4: Economics
Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of how the United States and other societies develop economic systems and associated institutions to allocate scarce resources, how major decision-making units function in the United States and other national economies, and how an economy solves the scarcity problem through market and nonmarket mechanisms.

Standard 5: Civics, Citizenship, and Government
Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the necessity for establishing governments; the governmental system of the United States and other nations; the United States Constitution; the basic civic values of American constitutional democracy; and the roles, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship, including avenues of participation.
Appendix E

High School Graduation Requirements

**Regents Diploma**

If you started 9th grade in September 2001 or later, to graduate with a Regents diploma, you need to complete: a minimum of 31 core credits (15.5 units).

*Students receive 1 credit for each term (semester) of successfully completed course work. 1 unit = 1 year of a course, so 1 unit = 2 credits*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Credits (Units)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>8 credits (4 units)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>6 credits (3 units)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>1 credit (1/2 unit)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts (dance, music, theater or visual arts)</td>
<td>2 credits (1 unit)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Languages (other than English)</td>
<td>2 credits (1 unit)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>4 credits (2 units)</td>
<td>Generally, 1/2 credit per semester – students who finish all other diploma requirements in fewer than 8 semesters may have this requirement reduced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence courses/electives</td>
<td>7 credits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Plus these 13 additional credits:
Appendix F

Projected Growth of Independence High

Appendix G

Washington Heights and New York City Community Groups that may work with Independence High School

Alianza Dominicana

Citizens for NYC

Community Association of Progressive Dominicans
3940 Broadway, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10032

Community League of The Heights
500 West 159th Street, New York, NY 10032

Cornerstone Center
178 Bennett Avenue, New York, NY 10040

Dominican Women's Development Center
519 West 189th Street, Ground Floor, New York, NY 10040
References


