

**INNOVATION SCHOOL**

**APPLICATION**

**Vista Academy**  
**December 2, 2016**

**Vista Academy –Multiple Pathway Center**  
**4800 Telluride Street**  
**Building #6**  
**Denver, Colorado 80249**  
**Direct # (720) 423-7612**  
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**Principal/School Leader under Innovation Status: Anthony L. Smith, Jr.**  
**Date Submitted: December 2, 2016**

Vista Academy was approved as a new school by the Denver Public School's Board of Education in June of 2010. Vista Academy is the second of four Multiple Pathway Centers that opened in Denver Public Schools in the fall of 2011. Located on the Evie Dennis Campus in Green Valley Ranch located in Far Northeast Denver the school currently in construction will be the only school in the area to provide a Culinary Arts program, Sports Medicine, a Certified Nursing Assistant Program and provide a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math STEM elective to all of its middle school students.

The Multiple Pathway Center model is an innovative concept that focuses on re-engaging high risk youth in the educational process by meeting their needs and providing a continuum of academic and social/emotional options that are not supported by a traditional educational model. Vista Academy is requesting innovative status to successfully implement the Multiple Pathway Center model, and the school's vision and mission to provide students with a rigorous, equitable educational program with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills that are necessary for students to access college and career opportunities and to succeed in a global market. In August of 2010 the founding principal began outlining the model for Vista Academy.

From September of 2010-November 2011 students at Montbello High School, Martin Luther King Jr. Early College, and Rachel B. Noel Middle School provided input on a variety of issues ranging from dress code, scheduling to the application process.

The enrollment application process for both the middle and high school began in January of 2011. Parents and students have overwhelmingly supported the programming and innovation development process. The following includes standard design elements of the MPC model that require innovation status:

- No time restrictions for course completion, with a "No-Fail" approach to grading. Students earn a diploma based upon demonstration of the State and National Standards through hands on projects, work study and blended learning. Students have to demonstrate that they have mastered CCSS to receive a passing grade.

- Extended day, and week that focuses on activities that emphasize academic catch-up/keep-up and acceleration, college/career readiness, service learning/civic engagement, and extra-curricular identification and development.
- An “all hands on deck” approach to staffing where teachers and staff are able to flex their hours and work outside their defined roles.
- Robust admission process that ensures students are committed to changing their behavior and successfully attaining their high school diploma through participating in a rigorous learning plan.

### **Innovation school plan development:**

Barbara Koenig, Lisa Wolford, Anthony Smith and teachers at Vista Academy provided input around pieces for the renewal of Vista Academy’s Innovation Plan.

#### **A. State the Vision of the School**

The vision of Vista Academy is to ensure that every student demonstrates **mastery of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills**, which will provide them a competitive edge grounded in a philosophy of academic excellence, leadership, global thinking, exploration, service learning, advanced technological skills, as well as culture and language acquisition.

Our actions are guided by our core values, which are to:

- (1): Build unparalleled mentoring relationships focused on meeting the needs of all students.
- (2): Ensure that all staff nurtures, cultivates, and assists students with maintaining their SWAGGER.
- (3): Create an academic learning environment where all teachers teach from the heart to be heard.

#### **B. State the Mission of the School**

The mission of Vista Academy is to foster a rigorous academic learning environment and school culture that embodies equity, diversity, and a sense of belonging for all students, parents/guardians, staff, and community. Our covenant is to identify, address, and move past performance barriers allowing students to regain their academic success SWAGGER (**S**cholars, **W**orld-class, **A**ctively engaged in our community, **G**o-getters, **G**lobal thinkers, **E**nterprising, and **R**elentless in our pursuit of an education) in ways that are holistic and intentional.

**C. Explain how the vision and mission support the mission of Denver Public Schools.**

All academic and social/emotional programming at Vista Academy is aligned with the mission and vision of Denver Public Schools and would attribute to the fulfillment of its promise to the students it serves. Vista Academy will contribute to this promise by re-engaging students and producing students who are showing increased student achievement and graduating students prepared to matriculate to college and careers. Vista Academy student's will master 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, be grounded in the principles of service learning, which align with Denver Public School's vision that states that students will be well-prepared for success in life, work, civic responsibility, and higher education.

**D. Identify specific barriers and/or school needs that impact student achievement. Explain how innovation status will help the school overcome the barriers and/or address the needs in order to achieve the mission.**

**Teaching from the Heart to Be Heard and Building Unparalleled Relationships with Students**

Vista Academy will serve students who have been failed by the traditional education system that did not adequately nurture their gifts, curiosity, intelligence, and power as learners. Our students have a diverse set of risk factors ranging from being over-aged and under-credited, students who are proficient in various subjects but their social/emotional skills create difficulty in a traditional high school setting. Our students are high risk and the diverse set of risk factors also include but are not limited to gang involvement, drug and alcohol use, adjudication, mental health needs, pregnancy/parenting, truancy, and behavioral issues. The one thing that our students have in common is their commitment, interest and determination in completing their secondary education.

Our teachers and staff will meet our students on a daily basis with an unwavering positive attitude. They will bring passion to their craft on a daily basis to stop the viscous cycles that many of our students are experiencing; for some students, this may be their final opportunity. We have the arduous task of re-engaging students within the educational process for the purpose of producing scholars, world class citizens, and global thinkers, who are relentless in their pursuit of an education.

In order to meet this arduous task of re-engaging, students gaining innovative status will allow Vista Academy to deliver a variety of intensive supports outside the localized

efforts of professionals in the building. This includes enrichment workshops/classes, tutoring, and other learning experiences that fall outside the academic core, but create a program that nurtures and develops the whole child. It will also allow the school to create a culture of excellence that embraces and builds upon our differences.

Finally, Innovation status will allow Vista Academy to truly become a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment by stepping outside the traditional classroom constraints to create an effective and rigorous, competency-based, blended learning/hands-on, project-based program.

### **III. Describe the research-based educational program the school will implement and how the program will produce gains in academic achievement.**

The first year that Vista Academy opened we utilized Diploma Plus that initially we considered to have the potential to provide the students at Vista Academy with the academic and social/emotional components that students needed to be successful and re-engage in school. There were several components that did not work for us and so during the 2012-2013 school year we phased out Diploma Plus to utilize some of the assessment and data tools available to us through Denver Public Schools moving towards a blended learning approach. To meet the changing demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner, the team extensively researched the benefits of one-to-one learning, blended learning, and digital blended models of instruction, in particular to addressing needs of the alternative learner. For the 2013-2014 school year, the students were introduced to their individual chromebooks to fulfill our one-to-one plan of instruction. A technology core team of instructors was also formed this year to complete training at state and national levels, and provided opportunities to turn-and-train these concepts to the remaining staff to increase the use and professional development of educational technology.

During the 2012-2013 school year we added two advanced placement classes to our catalogue, which included AP Environmental Science and AP Statistics. During the 2013-2014 school year, we maintained AP Environmental Science, AP Statistics, and added AP Human Geography. In addition to AP courses, since the 2012-2013 school year, we have been working with the Denver Public Schools Post-Secondary Concurrent Enrollment office to offer our students the opportunity to take college courses through the Community College of Aurora to afford our students the opportunity to take college level courses and receive college and high school credit. Each year we planned on adding AP courses to our course catalogue, but through extensive analysis of the results of our students on AP testing compared to those students who successfully

completed concurrent enrollment courses, we decided to focus our efforts with college instructors and college classes to prepare our students to the post-secondary rigor that is expected of them in university and college settings. This does allow the option for the school to add in AP courses as needed and demanded by the student population. During the 2015-2016 school year, our English department added an adjunct instructor to the Community College of Aurora to join the Sports Medicine Instructor who was approved during the 2012-2013 school year. We added a math adjunct during the 2016-2017 school year allowing our school to offer remedial courses for both English and Mathematics, as well as complete in-house concurrent enrollment courses.

During the 2013-2014 school year the school has implemented the AVID class for 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students as well as use AVID WICOR strategies school wide. Vista Academy utilizes DPS Curriculum supplementing materials to meet the cultural, linguistic, academic needs of our students that we work with on a daily basis as well and utilize supplemental materials, speaker and technology that is engaging to our students.

### Effective Instructional Practices

At Vista Academy teachers and staff facilitate instruction and programming that is student centered and our philosophy is that teachers will teach from the heart to be heard. Our teachers and staff will build unparalleled relationships with our students. We will use data to inform our practice and are building blended learning, hands on project based learning environment that supplements the DPS curriculum with more culturally diverse materials such as books, articles, video clips and etc. to help our students determine relevancy, obtain mastery over content and make think globally.

### Authentic Assessment

Vista Academy students must create and maintain a portfolio during their tenure at the school. The students determine the artifacts for a body of evidence from their own class work to demonstrate their essential learning. All seniors must present the portfolio prior to graduation. A rubric of expected items is provided to each student. The portfolio includes service learning projects, assessments, surveys, and class evidence that best demonstrates their mastery of the CCSS and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills.

Vista teachers create authentic assessments that are delivered through different methods. Some of these assessments arise in the form short cycle assessment information, authentic presentations, verbal exams, online authentic assessments, and other creative methods of demonstration of mastery of standards. Vista staff monitors their skills, development, and self-evaluations from their Passport and other tools that will help provide students with advocacy, goal setting skills, and a personal voice to

ensure their success in school and life. Students will finally be able to tell anyone what they have learned in various subject areas because they have mastered CCSS and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

School administration plans effective professional development and teacher training to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century teacher as well. This includes cooperative training with other schools within district, central district personnel and departments, and exchanges with educational institutions outside of our district as well. Our teachers are prepared to create, deliver, and analyze assessments to help guide our students to the highest level possible.

#### Promotion and Graduation Structure

Vista Academy teachers and staff will use data and various tools, such as the passport, credit evaluation checklist, and students' profile, to help create the body of evidence that student use to inform if they are on track to graduate and/or are mastering various skill sets needed for post-secondary success in college or career options.

#### **School Culture**

Vista Academy works intentionally to develop a positive and supportive school culture. This culture is developed through specific relationship-building activities and deep-rooted school norms that nurture the strengths of diversity and inclusivity. We have been able to establish and build a supportive school community through the following:

#### Youth Leadership and Voice

Vista Academy will build leaders that are able to compete in a global market and have mastered various 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Students will engage in school governance, peer mediation, service learning, and have individual plans that will build leadership and give students a strong voice to advocate for their needs and ensure that the school has a culture that embraces, develops and nurture our students.

#### Cultural Responsiveness

Vista Academy values diversity of our school community and will promote school-wide exploration of issues related to personal and group identity and privilege, recruit faculty and staff that that are representative of our student population, and develop a commitment to learning that responding to the personal and group identities and cultures within our school community.

## Positive Relationships

Vista Academy will support positive relationships through school wide celebrations of success and cultural events, gatherings surrounding social opportunities and current events, and rituals and routines set forth by the SWAGGER council. Students will participate in service learning, and that are based on credits that will provide opportunities for students to develop relationships, build academic skills and develop and maintain 21<sup>st</sup> century skills; SWAGGER Enrichment, and Seminar students will develop positive peer and mentor- student relationships. Through service learning, job shadowing, internships and speakers students will build positive connections to the broader community.

## **Future Focus**

At Vista Academy we have intentionally focused on students' futures through awareness, exposure, and preparation opportunities, and by providing transitional experiences for all of our students. This involves a multi-year sequence of civic, career and college exploration activities and opportunities that are embedded in seminars, classroom activities, and out-of-school time. The following experiences and opportunities are provided at Vista Academy:

## Post-Secondary Readiness

A philosophy of Post-Secondary Readiness is embedded in everything that we do at Vista Academy. Students will be required to complete career readiness courses by completing a Career and Technical Education pathway offered at the school. They are also required to gain exposure to both community college and university settings through college visits; all students' grades 6-12 are required to go on at least one college visit once a year. All students are encouraged to complete college credits and certificate programs provided through extended learning opportunities. Students in grade 10 will take the PSAT and complete a year-long course for SAT preparation, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students complete a SAT preparation class while middle school students work on study and organization skills.

## Career Preparation

Students will be exposed to many careers and areas of interests. Vista Academy will offer a Culinary Arts, Certified Nursing Assistant, Sports Medicine, and Media Design programs where students will select per what they are most interested in and also be able to explore and make connections to other career interests. Since Vista Academy first opened we have approximately 30 students who have taken the State of Colorado CNA exam and are licensed as a Certified Nursing Assistants. Since we opened our

culinary students have participated in the National FCLA Competitions within Colorado, as well in National competitions as well. In addition to placing in competitions our culinary students have had the opportunity to obtain positions at restaurants that more experienced applicants would obtain because of the Safe Serve Certification and other skills our culinary students bring to the table. Our students have placed in these competitions. During the 2013 competition one of our students won first place for knife skills.

### Civic Engagement

Vista Academy students through their service learning projects, and various leadership opportunities will become responsible engaged participants in their communities. Students have presented helped elementary schools in the area, served food to the homeless, prepared food and taken to homeless shelters, held toy and food drives and much more to make sure that they are actively engaged in their community.

### ***The SWAGGER Journey***

What is Vista SWAGGER? Vista SWAGGER embodies the best of our students and expresses who our students are holistically. Our students have their own unique sense of style but are also academically astute, artistic, physically conditioned, diverse, caring individuals who together create a culture that is SWAGGER. Our students have:

**S**cholar(s): A person who attends a school or study under a teacher; a learned person; a person who has done advanced study in a special field.

**W**orld-Class: We rank among the foremost/highest caliber in the world; of an international standard.

**A**ctively Engaged In Our Community: We are vigorously involved in service learning projects that uplift our community.

**G**o-Getters: We are ambitious enterprising people who take action and get things done; we are driven to accomplish goals and whose careers progress rapidly.

**G**lobal Thinkers: We think beyond our own existence and prosperity and examine how we are connected through technology with the world; we understand that what we do have global implications and we have the capacity to improve lives throughout the world.

**E**nterprising: We show initiative and willingness to undertake new projects.

**R**elentless In Our Pursuit of An Education: We are intense in our pace to obtain a quality education and career preparation and will achieve this end goal no matter what obstacles are put before us.

Our teachers and staff believe that all students have SWAGGER because it is our responsibility to ensure that students have the tools necessary to epitomize Vista SWAGGER. Part of this responsibility is to make sure that all students understand and make a connection to what each word in SWAGGER means and associate why it is relevant for them. Our scholars will be provided engaging and relevant supports and opportunities to build their SWAGGER until they GRADUATE.

### **SWAGGER Purpose**

The purpose of SWAGGER being at the heart of what we do at Vista Academy is to address the disconnect that students experience in today's society with regards to having to choose between being cool and stylish or intelligent. At Vista Academy our scholars will be comfortable showing that they are intelligent, articulate, informed, and caring individuals without feeling that they can't have a sense of style or be cool because the cool thing at Vista Academy is to be RELENTLESS in our pursuit of an education. At Vista Academy our scholars, teachers and staff core embrace the SWAGGER philosophy and this is shown daily by our actions.

### **Vista Academy Academic Programs and Culture**

The programming that we have at Vista Academy sets us apart from any other school in Denver Public Schools. VISTA Academy welcomes all students that would benefit from the programming. We offer four Career and Technology Education CTE programs as well as a middle school STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) program. Students further along in their SWAGGER Journey will participate in internships and job shadowing opportunities. From the beginning of their SWAGGER Journey scholars participate in various enrichment workshops/classes, retreats and are assigned to their seminars as well as receive a Vista Academy Passport. Scholars will also participate in service learning projects to meet the authentic needs of the far northeast community.

Vista Academy will provide educational programming opportunities to our scholars Monday through Friday from 7:30am-5:04pm, on designated Saturdays from 8am-12pm, and extended learning opportunities as assigned/or needed. The Culinary Arts will provide students with hands-on real life learning experiences as they prepare dishes that will dazzle patrons visually and bring the taste palette to life with international flavors for lunch, catering events, as well as at our concessions during sporting events. The Sports Medicine program will provide hands on experience for students by allowing them to assist with athletic trainers and other personnel with caring for athletes participating in athletic events at the Evie Garret Dennis Campus.

## **Academic Offerings**

Our scholars participate in hands on blended learning that will culminate in the development of a portfolio and presentation of their essential learning. Vista Academy offers online learning options, which are standards-based and approved classes to meet the requirements of graduation. The online academic program also allows scholars to recover credits that they need for either original credit or credit recovery. For many students, the need to recover only one or two course credits is all that stands between them and graduation from high school. These students may have already satisfied seat time requirements for a course in which they were unsuccessful in receiving a passing grade overall and may have learned a significant amount of what was expected of them. These students are seeking an opportunity to accelerate through the required course material to earn those final credits. Our online classes have highly qualified Vista Academy instructors to support and tutor them on a daily basis and are also available via email when school is not in session. We recommend that all of our students enroll in and complete at least one online course in preparation for the higher education settings where many freshman classes are in online form.

Other students are not prepared for high school coursework and have failed several classes. For these students, the challenge of making up the required credits is daunting. If the only option is to repeat the same course in the same traditional format as the first time, the chance of success is low. Not wanting to repeat a course only to fail again, these students are at increased risk of dropping out or may have already dropped out. At Vista Academy, students can participate in our rigorous blended learning program where students receive diverse instructional modalities through on-line, 1-to-1, and small group instruction. This will allow all students' to demonstrate of CCSS and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

Vista Academy transitioned from using APEX to Edgenuity digital curriculum as its credit recovery program following Denver Public Schools adoption and because it makes it possible to offer a credit recovery program that can address the diverse needs of all these credit-recovery students in a more engaging manner. We now can offer our students the opportunity for unit recovery to aid in the students demonstrating standard mastery to raise failing grades. Vista Academy has continued to look for cutting-edge improvements and have been piloting a second online program. Edgenuity, formerly E20/20, is a standards-based instructional platform loaded with interactive tools that support our students' creative minds. The engaging multimedia and real-word applications help ensure students build content knowledge and essential skills to complete the coursework. This learning management system is grounded in research and is based in principles of educational psychology, neuroscience, and instructional design. Edgenuity

also allows teachers to monitor student engagement, progress, and achievement in real time. Each student has adaptive interactions between direct instruction periods by highly qualified, certified teachers. This program helps our students move from pedagogical principals to andragogical learning.

Through partnerships with the Community College of Aurora, University of Colorado at Denver and other institutions of higher education, scholars will be able to obtain college credit via concurrent enrollment. Vista also offers certifications connected to our Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in addition to their diplomas.

The CTE programs ensure that our students are prepared for college or career options. We offer our scholars a state of the art Culinary Arts program, Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Sports Medicine, and Computer Aided Design/STEM programs. The Culinary Arts Program falls within the Hospitality and Tourism Career Cluster and prepares students for careers that encompass the management, marketing and operations of restaurants and other food services, lodging, attractions, recreation events and travel related services. The Certified Nursing Assistant and Sports Medicine programs fall within the Health Science Career Cluster and prepares students for careers in planning, managing, and providing therapeutic services diagnostic services, health informatics, support services, and biotechnology research and development. We continue to explore CTE programs that meet the needs and interests of our students as we adapt and improve or program.

Middle School scholars will participate in the Project Lead the Way, Gateway to Technology program that will engage them in project based CTE exploration in Design and Modeling, Automation and Robotics, Energy and the Environment as well as Flight and Space.

Vista is proud to offer traditional core classes in mathematics, Language Arts, social studies, and science as well as our four CTE pathways. In the 2016-2017 school year and beyond, we anticipate opting in to District curriculum and related professional development in order to support that work. In addition to this rich assortment of classes, we have added physical education, art, and foreign language to our offering to ensure our students have a well-rounded educational experience.

### **Program Description**

**SWAGGER Enrichment:** Students are provided with enrichment activities to prepare them to embrace their SWAGGER to exceed the expectations Vista places upon them. SWAGGER Enrichment begins upon our student's admission into Vista Academy and continues until they earn a diploma or GED. Vista SWAGGER is at the heart of who we are and what we do to prepare our students to compete in a global market.

**SWAGGER Retreat:** Students will be scheduled at the end of each summer to participate in a one week SWAGGER Retreat where they are placed in their seminars

and begin to build a sense of team with their peers. Students will continue to build a sense of team by participating in a weekend retreat at the beginning of each trimester.

**Seminar Model:** all students are placed in seminars that will meet consistently throughout the year. Once assigned to their seminars students will participate in a weekly Seminar to ensure that their Vista Passports are in order. In ensuring that their seminar's Vista Passports are in order they will study together, support one another and build a strong cohesive unit. Seminars will provide our teachers and staff with the opportunity to continue to provide Vista Academy students with SWAGGER Enrichment that will build and provide practice with technology, building their portfolios, public speaking and various 21<sup>st</sup> century skills necessary to be successful at Vista and in life.

**Vista Passport:** all students will receive a passport that will provide them with an advocacy tool they will utilize as a guide that outlines academic requirements, service learning expectations, career expectations, their personal education plan, overall SWAGGER progress and much more. Anyone who asks a student at Vista Academy "Is your passport in order" will experience students who understand where they are at and be able to articulate where they are going.

**Service Learning:** the method of teaching, learning and reflecting that combines academic classroom curriculum through active participation in organized service experiences that meet authentic community needs. Service learning values student's personal, social, career and ethical growth. Our students as part of their SWAGGER are actively engaged in their community. When they apply for colleges and universities these institutions will see that civic responsibility is something that is at the heart of what our students believe and they show it through their years of service learning.

**AVID:** Advancement Via Individual Determination, is a college readiness system for elementary through higher education that is designed to increase school-wide learning and performance. The AVID College Readiness System (ACRS) accelerates student learning, uses research based methods of effective instruction, provides meaningful and motivational professional learning, and acts as a catalyst for systemic reform and change.

**Learning Landscapes:** Vista Academy Teachers and Staff will work diligently with the community to provide learning landscapes in the Far Northeast Community to connect what students are learning in the classroom to what happens outside of the classroom in their everyday lives.

## **Our Middle School**

Vista Academy will have a middle school that will consist of approximately seventy-five students. Our dynamic middle school program will allow students to participate in a project based learning environment that will encompass seminars, utilizing a passport

to monitor their progress and assist students with being accountable for their learning and provide them with a voice to appropriately advocate for their learning. The passport will also provide teachers and staff with an instructional accountability tool that will assist them in implementing quality instructional programming and a gauge to which to build unparalleled mentoring relationships. Students will have the opportunity to accelerate their learning by taking high school courses and obtaining high school credits for those courses while they are still in middle school if they are assessed and it is determined that the student needs to be accelerated. Students will have the opportunity to acquire a foreign language as well as develop a plan that will clearly outline their post-secondary pathway that is student centered and addresses the student's interests.

On a daily basis our scholars participate in seminar (monitoring their Vista Academy Passport, goal setting and attainment, One Book One Student, and Post-Secondary Readiness Activities) with their Seminar Advisor and work with their peers to support academics, and social/emotional needs. Seminars develop service learning projects as a group and on an individual basis. Scholars will have access to technology and resources to build skills in subjects that they are not proficient in on a daily basis. It is an expectation that by making sure that scholar's passports are in order that they build various academic skills that will be offered outside of the school day in the evenings and Saturday mornings.

All students will also have access to a Special Education Interventionist that will collaborate with staff, team teach, implement interventions for students who have Individual Education Plans, and assist our staff with implementing best practices.

Vista provides mild moderate programming and has SPED teachers that will coordinate the program for the school and make sure that IEP's are being met and students are receiving the services that they need. All students are completing the MAP Assessment to provide a clear picture of where they are at and what supports they need academically and social/emotionally.

The Vista program is an inclusion program so all students will be in the general education classroom with support from teachers, paraprofessional, and tutors. Students who need reading and math interventions will be placed in intervention classes. Students will have access to enrichment classes and workshops that are geared towards meeting gaps. Some will be required to participate and others will have the option to sign up for these workshops/enrichment classes. Note that the school's model is geared towards addressing the needs of high risk youth so the class

sizes, seminars, hands on project based, service learning and other programming is meant to ensure that students who are falling through the cracks academic and social/emotional needs are being met.

## **Our High School**

Vista Academy High School is a dynamic school that will provide students with a vast amount of educational opportunities including, career and technical education pathways, concurrent enrollment options, internships, and flexible scheduling options. Students through a blended learning approach and trimesters can accelerate their credit attainment while ensuring that they have mastered the CCSS. All students will be placed in seminars where they will interact with yearly according to their credits. Students will have the opportunity to participate in one of four career technology education programs but will also have the opportunity to explore many careers as well as make connections to colleges that offer programs that will meet our students' post-secondary interests and needs. Students who need to recover credits will have the opportunity to participate in Edgenuity online learning that will allow students to master content from classes that they have not experienced success with previously and at their own pace. Our classes will have no more than 25 students in them and all classes are project based, blended learning infused with opportunities to practice 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Twice a month teachers will have PLC's, Enrichment and Planning Time to add tools so that they can meet the needs of our students.

High School Students will have traditional supports such as a school social worker, psychologist, nurse, and counselors. They will also have an interventionist who will help students overcome obstacles or fill in gaps that are preventing students from being successful in school. Scholars will have access to technology and resources to build skills in subjects that they are not proficient in on a daily basis. It is an expectation that by making sure that scholar's passports are in order that they identify their needs and connect to needed resources that build various academic skills and social skills.

High school students will have 60 minute classes Monday through Friday minus two PLC days a month, where students are not in school, but students who have less than a C in a class or missing assignments will have mandatory interventions assigned. All teachers will obtain their ELL Certification and will implement appropriate ELA interventions. We will utilize 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology to provide skill building in Language Arts, Math, and Science for high school students. A variety of workshops and classes will be offered to our students during various times so that they have the opportunity to participate in various skill and knowledge building activities. These activities will be required by some and optional for other students.

All students will also have access to a Special Education Interventionist that will collaborate with staff, team teach, and implement interventions for students who have Individual Education Plans, and assist our staff with implementing best practices. Vista provides mild moderate programming and has SPED teachers that will coordinate the program for the school and make sure that IEP's are being met and students are receiving the services that they need. All students are completing the MAP Assessment to provide a clear picture of where they are at and what supports they need academically.

The Vista program is an inclusion program so all students will be in the general education classroom with support from teachers, paraprofessional, and tutors. Students who need reading and math interventions will be placed in intervention classes. Students will have access to enrichment classes and workshops that are geared towards meeting gaps. Some will be required to participate and others will have the option to sign up for these workshops/enrichment classes. Note that the school's model is geared towards addressing the needs of high risk youth so the class sizes, seminars, hands on project based, blended learning, service learning and other programming is meant to ensure that students who are falling through the cracks, academic and social/emotional needs are being met.

#### **IV. Describe the school's assessment plan and how it is critical for the school to produce gains in academic achievement.**

##### **A. Provide an over view of the school's proposed assessment plan . Describe any assessments that will supplement assessments required by DPS and the state.**

It is important to regularly assess students because learning happens on a continuum. Continuous assessment is crucial in providing feedback to the teacher on the effectiveness of classroom instruction, and for teachers and students to know how students are developing academically. Frequent Assessment also allows students to have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning.

At Vista Academy our students, teachers, staff and parents, work together to create assessments that are student-centered. Student-centered instruction at Vista Academy will mean that teachers act as a guide and shares control of the learning environment. We have an assessment culture where students are involved in deciding how to best demonstrate their learning.

#### **Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Assessment**

One Size Doesn't Fit All! Each child learns differently. NWEA has developed computerized adaptive assessments that test differently, allowing teachers to see their students as individuals – each with their own base of knowledge. NWEA Measures of Academic Progress tests present students with engaging, age- appropriate content. As a student respond to questions, the test responds to the student, adjusting up or down in difficulty. The result is a rewarding experience for the student, and a wealth of detailed information for teachers, parents, and administrators. The underlying data driving the assessment ensures remarkable accuracy, based on over 24 million assessments given over 30+ years. The equal-interval RIT scale increases the stability, providing grade-independent analysis of a child's learning. For educators, it means at last having timely information that, used well can change the course of a student's school year- and life. MAP assessments will be used at the beginning of each trimester to review the progress of our students.

## **Portfolios**

At Vista Academy every student is required to have a Portfolio that contains his or her accumulation of significant work for each content area. The Portfolio is a living document designed to engage the student in reflection on his or her learning, to demonstrate his or her progress, as a body of work to show academic growth. Portfolios also serve as a formative assessment for teachers to track and assess student progress in meeting CCSS. Students at Vista Academy are also required to create and present culminating Portfolios to prior to graduation that is comprised of the student's best work from each content area, relevant standardized test scores, and future focus and seminar experiences. All of these artifacts will demonstrate our student's understanding of CCSS and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. Teacher assessments, seminar book projects, portfolios and summative assessments of the student's learning.

## **Partnership for Assessment of Transition of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)/ Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS).**

CMAS/PARCC will be given per DPS/State requirements until Denver Public Schools transition to the CMAS and PARCC Assessments. However, Vista Academy is requesting that any scholars with sophomore credit who have taken the CSAP/TCAP twice in high school be exempt from taking the test a third time based on the following exemptions and waivers from the CDE (Definitions of Tiers I, II, and III- Alternative High Schools and At-Risk programs.

## **SAT and PSAT**

The SAT is one of two standardized tests accepted by most colleges and universities for admissions purposes. The SAT practice test and actual test will be given in accordance to district and test guidelines.

### **Accuplacer**

The Accuplacer is a suite of computer-adaptive placement tests that quickly, accurately, and efficiently assess reading, writing, and math skills to determine if developmental classes would be beneficial before the students take college-level work.

### **B. Explain how the school will measure and evaluate academic progress of individual students, student seminars, and the school as a whole throughout the school year and at the end of each academic year.**

Teachers will provide daily formative assessments. Vista Academy will use MAP to give a real time analysis of student academic performance. This along with CMAS/PARCC data, transcripts/report cards and intake data, Infinite Campus attendance, and behavior will inform class selection, interventions, enrichment workshops, and seminar placement.

Students will receive and must maintain a Vista Passport that includes multiple academic, service learning, post-secondary readiness, and social/emotional metrics. Teachers will maintain Student Snapshots for each of the student's various performance data points to help them develop and cultivate unparalleled mentoring relationships.

### **C. Explain how and how frequently the school will collect and analyze diagnostic, formative, predictive, and summative student academic achievement data, use the data to refine and improve instruction, and report the data to the school community.**

- MAP's Assessment will be proctored to all students and 3 times a year, fall, winter, and spring. The data obtained from the MAP's Assessment will be used by teachers to guide their instructional practices in the classroom to differentiate and scaffold instruction to meet the individual needs of students in the classroom.
- Students work on their portfolios consistently throughout each trimester. Teachers and students will work together to determine the appropriate bodies of work that will best demonstrate student learning.

- Teachers will administer formative assessments in their classes approximately every three weeks (pre- test, mid-term, teacher made assessments, MAP assessments and finals). Data will be analyzed and strategies to address student needs will be implemented during a 3 week data inquiry cycle.
- Students are required to build a portfolio based on the authentic assessments where they have demonstrated the success in meeting the CCSS. The portfolio will serve as a record for students to show mastery of learned information.
- CMAS/PARCC, PSAT, SAT, and Accuplacer are all summative data points that will be used and reported on a yearly basis.

**V. Describe the school's proposed graduation and promotion policies.**

Vista Academy will meet and exceed the district's minimum promotion and graduation standards.

**Portfolios:**

Every scholar prior to graduation is required to present a Portfolio that contains his or her accumulation of significant work for each content area. The Portfolio is a living document designed to engage the scholar in reflection on his or her learning, to demonstrate his or her progress, and as a complete body of work to show academic growth.

Senior Scholars will present their Portfolio to a panel of staff, including the principal and assistant principals, parents, DPS staff, and community members. Once the presentation is complete, the panel decides if the scholar has met the academic rigor necessary to graduate or whether the portfolio should be presented again with additional information, improvements, etc. Currently, all senior seminar teachers are charged with the responsibility of portfolio progression. Seminar teachers will monitor portfolio progression over the course of the year so that students are building a body of work each school year. In January 2017, Vista academy will work with Denver Public Schools, colleges/universities, College Board and other needed parties to transition so that the portfolio will be aligned with CCSS and the new DPS graduation requirements.

**Individualized Student Pace and Progress:**

Vista Academy scholars will progress at the pace that is appropriate for them as individual learners. All students are expected to meet the same Standards, yet the length of time it takes each student to meet them can be extended with approval from an administrator.

### **Class Scheduling**

Scholars will be assessed in MAP's upon enrollment or prior to classes beginning. Students are placed in the appropriate classes depending on their skill levels, rather than age, prior credit accumulation, or previous classes taken. Once the MAP Assessment data and transcripts are reviewed, and a meeting (s) with students occurs it is determined which courses the scholar will need to complete.

### **Vista Seminar:**

During Seminar scholars will work together to ensure they are maintaining their SWAGGER. This is a time when scholars to set goals, determine interventions and additional assistance in various academic, post-secondary and social emotional area.

## **VI. Describe the goals and specific gains in academic achievement the school will commit to as a result of securing innovation status.**

As a multiple pathway center our ultimate goal is to re-engage students who have dropped out of a DPS school, who are chronic non-attenders, and who are considered high risk, and put them on the road to obtain their SWAGGER so that they are proficient and/or advance in all subject areas at the appropriate grade level. Data shows that many of the students who would fall within the high risk category are reading and writing far below a 6<sup>th</sup> grade level.

There are three changes that Vista Academy implemented this year based on academic performance are as follows:

Due to the fact that our school is so small and there is only one teacher in the building teaching a particular class, we implemented a common planning period for all teachers. This scheduling allow for weekly data team meetings so that teachers and staff to work together to look at student data and drive our instructional and programming practices.

Vista Academy has implemented AVID for the 2013-2014 school year. AVID is a research based program that addressed our need to have a common academic language and instructional practices that help us close our student's academic gaps as well as build our instructional toolkit that embrace rigor for all students. The AVID Elective class for the 2016-2017 school year is offered to 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. Our

school as a whole is implemented Cornell Notes and WICOR strategies in all classrooms. WICOR is an AVID term which stands for Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading.

Highlights in areas other than academics pertaining to our attendance, positive mentoring relationships, student advocacy and behavior are major highlights for our school. Our students want to be at school and that is reflected in our attendance. People associate our student population with low attendance but Vista Academy students have not contributed to this perception of intensive pathway students. It is communicated from the interview and consistently throughout the year the importance of students demonstrating their SWAGGER and representing themselves and the school well at all times. Students have embraced working through their issues by trying to solve issues themselves and if that does not work they pull an administrator to help facilitate a conversation with involved parties to resolve issues and move forward. Students beginning to record assessment scores, work with counselors to understand their transcript and where they are at credit wise, and showing them how to appropriately advocate for their learning has empowered our students to learn skills to advocate for their learning and begin to experience some success. For some students this is the first time that they have experienced any success within an educational setting.

Maintaining practices consistently will assist us with continuing to show improvement in non-academic areas. A club/activity schedule based on what our students want to have at our school is available to all students. Our Parent University will provide parents, guardians and community members the opportunity to take Computer, English, Spanish, Citizenship, Culinary and Parent Enrichment classes.

Success will look like Vista Academy being a Green or Blue school. We will close the achievement gap for each student each year they attend Vista Academy. Students who attend Vista Academy for 3 consecutive years will be at grade level or advanced. Students will develop and maintain a rigorous portfolio to present to a panel that demonstrates master of CCSS, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and their SWAGGER.

**VII. Describe how the school will use time strategically to support the vision, mission and education program so as to produce gains in academic achievement.**

Vista Academy will provide educational programming opportunities for our scholars Monday through Friday from 7:30am and can extend up to 6pm as well as have programming on designated Saturdays from 8am-12pm. Vista Academy operates on a trimester system that aligns with primarily aligns with DPS Trimesters and will

follow the DPS Calendar year with some minor adjustments in scheduling to meet the needs of our scholars.

**VIII. Describe the enrollment procedures and practices of the school with innovation status.**

Vista Academy is located in the Far Northeast but is not a part of the Far Northeast enrollment zone. Vista Academy enrolls approximately 60 middle school students and 225-250 high school students during a given trimester/year.

Vista Academy requires an application from students. The application is intended to help staff determine if the student is committed to beginning their SWAGGER journey. It is also intended to help faculty develop a clear understanding of the student so that the appropriate enrichment is provided when entering the school. The application has a rubric that is geared toward providing points to the student population that Vista is meant to target.

**IX. Describe the proposed plan for staffing, recruiting, selecting, and developing employees, the school's personnel policies, and the school's leadership structure. Explain how they will be changed by innovation status, and how these changes will lead to increased student achievement.**

Vista Academy believes that all students can achieve academically to their maximum potential and successfully move on to appropriate post-secondary options and careers of their choice. It is our position that we are relentless and passionate about teaching and helping students excel academically, socially, and physically. Our teachers and staff are a part of a team that has mastered competency and standards based instruction, think out of the box, and builds unparalleled mentoring relationships with students. Our teaching and staff core are lifelong learners and exemplifies high levels of professional growth.

Our Vista community believes in the vision that we must "teach from the heart to be heard." This means that we have high expectations and give students the tools to meet those expectations, as well as to give them the time to learn and practice what we expect from them. The Vista Academy teaching and staff core are a critical part of our student's academic puzzle. Since many of our students are trying to put together their lives, and to get back on track after they have given up, our focus on student success is the basis for everything that we do, every day.

Our teachers and staff will meet our students with an unwavering, positive attitude; with passion that we bring to our craft on a daily basis and with a commitment to stop the vicious cycles that many of our students are experiencing. This is particularly important because for some of our students this may be their final opportunity to achieve academic and social success. We have the arduous task of re-engaging students within the educational process for the purpose of producing scholars, world-class citizens, global thinkers, who are relentless in their pursuit of an education. For the reasons listed above, we are committed to seeking and hiring both full time and part time candidates who understand the nuances of working within a culturally- diverse community; who understand the challenges and best practices of supporting students in a Multiple Pathway Atmosphere, and who have the skills to utilize a competency based, accelerated diploma program.

Within the current DPS hiring framework, Vista Academy will have the flexibility to hire either full time or part-time individuals as the need arises. Further, the current system does not provide the flexibility to hire part time and/or temporary professionals who have the appropriate background and experience in a given area.

Having immediate and on-going access to the open employment market will give Vista Academy a tremendous advantage in assembling and maintaining the “world class” set of educators necessary to meet the needs of our students.

To meet the needs of all students and to achieve the academic performance goals outlined in Section XI and in **Appendix D**, Vista Academy requires a maximum flexibility to design and implement human resource policies and procedures that align with the vision, mission and education plan of the school.

Vista is committed to hiring outstanding individuals who understand and are prepared to meet the demands of creating a school that produces significant gains in academic achievement for all students.

The innovation plan includes waivers from state statute and the DPS/DCTA collective bargaining agreement, including but not limited to, waiver of the Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act of 1990.

**Employment Status.** Teachers’ employment with Vista Academy and the Denver Public Schools will be “at- will” and will not be subject to the Teacher Employment Compensation and Dismissal Act of 1990, § 22-63- 101, et seq. The teacher will have a right to end his/her work relationship with Vista Academy and the Denver Public

Schools will have the right to end the work relationship with the teacher at any time in accordance with DPS Policy GDQD and Regulation GDQD-R, and personnel policies in the Employee Handbook.

Teachers employed by the Denver Public Schools prior to their employment at Vista Academy will be at-will as described in the preceding paragraph. Such teachers will have the right to participate in the DPS staffing cycles available to all DPS teachers, but will not be guaranteed placement in any other school or further employment beyond their employment at Vista Academy if they do not secure a position through mutual consent. If the teacher accepts a mutual consent position at a non-innovation DPS school, the teacher's probationary or non-probationary status will be governed by the District's guidelines at that time. The District's guidelines are described in an FAQ on Probationary and Non-Probationary Status on the DPS Employee Associations website (under DCTA).

The employment of custodians and facilities managers with Vista Academy will be "at will." Vista Academy can release custodians and facilities managers from the school for any reason at any time, provided school leadership proposes, and the District approves, an alternative custodial and facilities management solution. The employment rights of custodians and facilities managers with the District that have been released from Vista Academy will be determined by District policy and the applicable collective bargaining agreement or memorandum of understanding.

As described in this document, including in **Appendix E**, Vista Academy is requesting maximum flexibility to:

- Recruit and hire all staff, including teachers, administrators, and other support personnel, using practices that will ensure employee fit with the school's Innovation Plan.
- Post all vacant positions and recruit and hire all staff as the need arises, even if such need falls outside the District's standard hiring cycle.
- Right to refuse or accept placements from the District.
- Create non-traditional job descriptions, which may include adding roles and responsibilities to any job.
- Establish the calendar, work year, work week, work day, job assignments, class size and teaching loads to align with the Innovation Plan.
- Create a governance and leadership structure that aligns with the Innovation Plan.
- Create a professional development program that supports the Innovation Plan. The school will have the option to participate in District-provided professional development.
- Create a process to address under-performing employees.

- Establish compensation rates and other methods of rewarding performance and extra work time, including additional bonuses and/or incentives.
- Implement other programs and policies, such as dress code and employee and student conduct expectations, that will support the school's culture as described in the Innovation Plan.

Such flexibility will be limited only by federal law, and state statutes, and Collective Bargaining Agreement provisions and District Board policies not waived in this application.

**Professional Development Autonomy.** Vista Academy will make decisions regarding professional development that promote the growth of all staff members. This may include implementing peer assistance programs and hiring professionals and coaches on contract or on a short-term basis to meet the School's and faculty's unique professional development needs. The professional growth programs will support practices vital to improve the achievement of all scholars at Vista Academy and ensure teachers the professional latitude necessary to realize the mission of Vista Academy. Vista Academy staff will also continue to participate in the District professional development.

By converting to Innovation status, professional development can be tailored to the strengths and needs of our staff so that they can better support our scholars.

### **Performance Management System**

#### **Teacher Coaching:**

Every teacher will receive weekly observations and feedback on their instruction, instructional planning, and use of student data. The principal, assistant principal, Dean of Instruction and Teacher Leaders will supervise and evaluate all of the teachers on the instructional team. Each teacher will be observed and receive feedback and coaching at least twice a month from their supervisor. Administrative instructional staff will provide additional informal feedback and instructional coaching to teachers based on individual professional growth plans. The leadership team will conduct monthly learning walks at various times of the day. Teachers will participate in learning walks individually or as a team during their planning time.

#### **Teacher Evaluation:**

Vista teachers will be evaluated using the DPS LEAP framework for effective teaching with modifications to ensure that the observation and evaluation rubrics align to the blended learning and multiple pathways models and that peer observers have corresponding expertise. The school principal, assistant principals, and team leads will have the primary responsibilities for evaluating teachers. School leaders will conduct a minimum of one full observation as well as frequent partial observations and walk-throughs each year, providing teachers with ongoing feedback on performance throughout the year. Additionally, internal or external peer observers can conduct two full observations for each teacher each year. As part of the LEAP evaluation system, teachers will set performance goals in collaboration with their supervisor at the start of the year. Individual teacher professional development will be aligned with individual goals and observations and coaching will be used to monitor progress and make recommendations for improvement throughout the year. The LEAP evaluation system is aligned with Colorado SB-191. Student growth outcomes will comprise 50% of a teacher's evaluation. When the school leader determines that a teacher is not meeting performance expectations, the Principal may choose to place the teacher on a Plan of Improvement. The duration of the plan of improvement will typically be thirty (30) days, but may be extended beyond the (30) days as determined by the Principal and/or Assistant Principal. The teacher will be required to show improvement under the Principal and/or Assistant Principal's supervision within the designated period of time. The plan of improvement may list the areas for improvement that the teacher will be required to improve on to the satisfaction of the Principal and/or Assistant Principal. Resources and supports may be made available to the teacher in an effort to assist the teacher in correcting the performance concerns by the Principal and/or Assistant principal. If, at the end of the plan, the principal deems, in his/her sole discretion, that the teacher has failed to make sufficient improvement, then the teacher may be dismissed from employment. An improvement plan is not an entitlement or employment right. Annual contract status may be maintained as long as the teacher continues to receive effective or distinguished ratings.

***School Staffing and Compensation.*** The compensation package will have, as its foundation, the salary system established in the DPS/DCTA Pro Comp Agreement. In instances that staff, take on additional classes or duties that will extend their day or week, SWAGGER Retreats, enrichment activities, and other summer and holiday programming. All staff is expected to participate in SWAGGER retreats, and enrichment activities, which is a three trimester commitment. Flexibility will be provided as needed.

A supplemental compensation structure will be developed in collaboration with Vista Academy Stakeholders. The compensation philosophy will be developed in consultation with human resources annually. The compensation philosophy states that the

appropriate stipend will be agreed upon by the school and teacher/staff person based upon the scope of the work utilizing the DPS Hourly/Daily Teacher Rate Scale as a guide. Supplemental compensation is dependent on available funding and could vary from year-to-year. All employees at Vista Academy will participate in PERA. Should any staff or faculty member transfer from Vista Academy to another DPS assignment, all pension benefits will be portable and there shall be no loss of benefit.

### **Schedule and length of the school day**

By having Innovation status, Vista Academy will be able to tailor and personalize their academic program to re-engage students in the educational process, build student academic skills, and prepare them for college and careers, based on student data.

***Extended School Calendar and Schedule.*** Vista Academy will provide educational programming to our scholars Monday through Friday from 7:37am-4:00pm and beyond based on the needs of our students and on designated Saturdays from 8am-12pm. Teachers may have staggered start time to meet the diverse scheduling needs of our students. Teachers will receive extra duty pay/stipends accordingly for their work outside of our school day. High school students have scheduling options that will fit their needs. VISTA has the opportunity to add additional professional development at the beginning of the school year. In 2016-2017, teachers reported back August a week prior to the traditional DPS Calendar to accommodate the SWAGGER Retreat and necessary Professional Development and Planning necessary to successfully work with Vista Academy Students. Annually the SWAGGER council will review the PD needs of the teachers in order to assess time required.

### **Leadership Succession**

Vista Academy's leadership succession plan assures that the continuity of the new instructional system is maintained when school leadership changes. The leadership succession plan will begin by thoroughly orienting all staff and families to the mission, vision, values and instructional and intentional culture systems in place at Vista Academy. This orientation will, in part, be intended to obtain formal and direct commitment from the community to the school's plan for student success. As a result, all subsequent hiring and promotions at Vista Academy will be tied to the strategic goals developed to support the mission, vision, and instructional and intentional school culture systems.

Vista Academy's leadership succession plan will include a process for both internal succession first, i.e. the promotion of the assistant principal to the instructional leader. If this does not produce the instructional leader that the school needs then we proceed with the recruitment, and hiring of a new instructional leader from outside of the school community. Over the course of year one of the Innovation plan, a Vista Academy Leadership Profile will be developed that specifies the attributes necessary to ensure that there is a leadership in place to support the school's mission, vision, values, and goals. The Leadership Profile will describe attributes, roles, and expectations for the Principal, and Assistant Principal.

When a leadership position is vacated, the school's leadership team will convene to review the Leadership Profile to determine if any changes are necessary. Using the profile as a guide, a position description will be drafted and shared with existing school staff and the immediate supervisor of the position. Recruitment using both DPS and external media will commence.

Once qualified candidates are identified, a screening committee will be created to select candidates to be interviewed. Interviews will be conducted by a team determined by the school leadership team. The interview team will include stakeholders in the Vista Academy community, including parents, teachers, community members, colleges, and members of the school's leadership team. It is the intent of Vista Academy to ensure this process is transparent and collaborative. Feedback from interviews will be used to select at least two qualified candidates but not more than four. Candidates will participate in a meet and greet that will allow students, parents and community members to interact with the candidates and fill out and submit Leadership Feedback Forms. The team that completed the interviews will then review the Leadership Feedback Forms and recommend two qualified candidates to the Superintendent.

Strong and consistent leadership is critical to the success of Vista Academy. Therefore, it is essential that the leadership succession plan ensures that the vision, mission, and core values of the school will be sustained through changes in personnel.

**X. Describe proposed changes to the school's governance structure and parent engagement strategy.**

**How will these changes produce gains in academic achievement?**

Vista Academy will institute a leadership team structure called the SWAGGER Leadership Council that will consist of the principal, two assistant principals, teacher leader, one person from the support staff, ELA or Special needs support, two teacher

representatives from the middle school, two teacher representatives from the high school, one middle school parent, two high school parents, one student representative from the middle school, one student from the high school, and a community representative. This is a body is meant to help the school community reach consensus and provide critical information so that the Principal can reach a decision that is aligned with the vision, mission, and core values of the school.

As part of the culture at Vista Academy student voice, and advocacy, and having parents being actively engaged in the school is key to our model. Considering this model Vista Academy will not have a CSC or SLT because these often do not provide an accurate representation of the schools that they seek to serve and therefore only a small percentage of parents are represented in the decisions and the student voice is often not heard at all. There will be three required parent meetings that occur during each trimester that will provide the SWAGGER Leadership Council the opportunity to present information to not less than 95% of our parents and allow them to weigh in on critical issues through a clicker response system. This information will be collected and analyzed by the leadership team and recommendations made to the principal. There will be a similar process in place to obtain student feedback as well.

As part of the Vista Academy Parent Network, the school will facilitate two parent retreats. The parent retreats provide parents with critical information and allow us to collect critical information from parents to inform decisions that are made by the leadership team.

Vista Academy is committed to moving parent engagement to a new level by implementing our Parent

Network that will focus on the following:

- Parents being actively engaged in the learning environment
- Leadership
- Volunteering/Fundraising
- Adult learning

**XI. Provide a budget and an estimate of potential cost savings and increased efficiencies as a result of innovation status. Explain how the school's allocation of resources, as reflected in the budget, supports the vision, mission and education plan.**

Vista Academy utilizes budgeting on actuals. We review the budget menu and determine what items we need to opt out of or continue to utilize in DPS to meet the needs of our students.

Like “traditional” district schools, Vista Academy is allocated a per pupil funding base (SBB) and mill levy dollars. Additionally, and similar to DC-21 and Summit Academy, two other Multiple Pathway Schools in DPS, Vista Academy receives a subsidy from the District for serving higher-risk students (SBB+ funding model). Vista Academy qualifies to receive federal Title I dollars, which we use to supplement core academic programs. The school does not project receiving any revenue from other outside sources.

As a Multiple Pathway Center, Vista Academy projects operating costs that exceed those of a “traditional” district school. These costs are covered through the Districts SBB+ funding model. The school does not project generating any material cost savings as a result of securing innovation status.

**XII. Describe any other innovations not yet explained in the application and how such innovations will lead to increased student achievement.**

As Vista Academy builds out its programs it is a goal to incorporate the following programming:

- An internship component will allow students to explore their interest per their CTE program to gain work experience in their area of interest. This is in progress. The CTE department covered the cost of a .5 CTE resource specialist where the school contributes \$2,500 towards the overall salary of the position. This position is starting to work towards setting up field trip, employment and internship opportunities for our students.
- Expand CTE program offerings considering space and budget.
- Incorporate a Leadership Institute where students/teachers are writing about their experiences and pulling together bodies of work that can be presented to schools, school districts, organizations and companies. It is our goal to eventually work with DPS Leadership Development Department to make Vista a training resource for school leaders and teachers.

**Request Alternative Graduation & Promotion Standards**

1. Explain the school’s policies and standards for promoting students from one grade to the next.

Describe how and when promotion and graduation criteria will be communicated to parents and students.

The scholars at Vista Academy will have a blended learning project based approach to learning. Parents during our SWAGGER Enrichment will go through a series of sessions that will give them the resources needed to hold the principal, teachers, their student and themselves accountable for the mission and vision of the school.

2. Provide the school's exit standards for graduating students. Exit standards should clearly set forth what students in the last grade you anticipate serving will know and be able to do.

Scholars must have met all state and district high school graduation requirements and a total of 240 credits. Seniors will present a portfolio to a panel of staff, peers and parents to demonstrate their mastery of the CCCS, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and their SWAGGER.

3. Explain how graduation and/or promotion requirements will ensure student readiness for college and other postsecondary opportunities.

Through the Multiple Pathways model, all scholars must incorporate and master personal, college and career-ready competencies. These would include:

- Internships
- Service learning projects
- ACT/SAT Prep classes
- Concurrent enrollment in college level elective classes through College Partners
- CTE courses

4. If it differs from DPS, explain how students will earn credit hours, how grade-point averages will be calculated, what information will be on transcripts, and what elective courses will be offered. If graduation requirements for the school will exceed those required by DPS Policy IKF, explain any additional requirements.