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Experts agree that the single most important attribute of the successful ... school is a clear sense of purpose or mission shared by parents, students, staff, and the school's board of trustees. A common vision of what it means to be educated and how one becomes educated forms the basis of a coherent school design. It guides the school's decision-makers in every aspect of planning and operations. It gives potential employees, prospective students, and their parents clear indications of how they will be treated and what will be expected of them. It explains to chartering agencies and the community at large how this charter school is distinctive from other public schools. It provides a basis for decisions by foundations to support the school.

Parents, school employees, and students will scrutinize, reference, and utilize the mission statement, especially in the school's first year. Indeed, most ... schools include a mission statement in their marketing materials and web site. It explains to the rest of the world the intended purpose and standards for the school. And since a [school's] purpose is likely to change, the process of re-writing a mission or vision statement may help the school regain clarity about where it is headed or help to build consensus among new members of the community. Regardless, Premack and Diamond (1994) warn, "Those lacking this guiding educational vision will fail to take full advantage ... struggle unnecessarily with the challenges presented by the ... implementation process."

Establishing a clear and compelling sense of purpose can be accomplished several ways. For some groups it emerges through the process of working together and discussing what is valued or important for the particular school. Other groups form around an existing mission, like the Montessori model or Coalition of Essential Schools' Common Principles. Some groups involve the entire school community in writing the mission statement, while others assign the task to a committee, site council, or board.

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Five main approaches:

Values

Neighborhood House Charter School

"The Neighborhood House Charter School of Boston believes that the underpinning of change relies on the creation of a learning community, where everyone has something to learn and something to teach. The mission of the school is to develop in each child the love of learning, and ability to nurture family members, friends, and self, the ability to engage in critical thinking and to demonstrate complete mastery of the academic building blocks necessary for a successful future."

Educational Approach

Public School 2005

"The mission of Public School 2005 (PS 2005) is to recognize and nurture all human intelligence so that students and staff of varied cultural and social backgrounds will achieve their full intellectual and social potential. The founders envision a school that creates an inclusive community working together to support student achievement and a strong sense of self-worth. The school will offer a comprehensive educational program by placing a strong emphasis on K-6 curriculum while infusing second language and the arts. PS 2005 will foster an environment where students, parents, staff, and the community are partners in the educational process and achievement of all children."

Curriculum Focus

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### Horizons Community High School

"We believe that people are empowered by their independent use of information technologies and that they are united by opportunities to share resources and communicate in our local and global communities. In this Information Age, it is essential that Horizon commit to preparing its students to work in an evolving, information-centered, global community. Given the rapid pace of technological change and the growth of information technologies in all aspects of our lives, it is critical that students become familiar with the tools of information technology. All students and staff must be competent in using these tools to obtain information, communicate, and to solve problems."

### Customer Focus

#### EduPreneurship Student Center

"EdPreneurship is dedicated to providing children with an education that will enable them to be successful in today's complex society. Creating a learning environment that is relevant, active, and product-oriented to ensure our children stay turned on and tuned in is essential to the education process. We believe in practicing the precepts of a Democratic society by students holding themselves accountable for their own actions, thus preparing them to be good citizens."

### Outcomes and Goals

#### Lowell Middlesex Academy

"The mission of Lowell Middlesex Academy is to enable students to achieve academic, social, and career success by providing a supportive community that identifies, encourages, and develops each student's interests and abilities. The college campus environment enables students to discover the wide variety of opportunities open to them and foster a sense of responsibility for their own education. Upon graduating from the Academy, each student will have:

- \* A high school diploma
- \* A clearly demonstrated set of academic skills
- \* Experience in the workplace and in community service
- \* A clear awareness of their rights and responsibilities as citizens
- \* A personal development plan for the three years beyond high school"

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### Tapestry Charter High School

#### Mission Statement

Tapestry Charter School provides a challenging and rigorous education in an environment that emphasizes diversity, compassion, collaboration, community, creativity, and leadership, so that students are academically and socially prepared to meet the demands of further education while maturing into productive and caring adults with a lifelong passion for learning.

#### Philosophy

1. Buffalo needs a high school that has High Expectations for all students and believes all students can excel. Tapestry Charter High School will emphasize:

- \* Rigorous Academics
- \* Teamwork and Social Justice

- \* Physical and Emotional Fitness
- \* Appreciation for the Arts
- \* Family and Community Engagement

2. Buffalo needs a high school where students experience Real-World Learning. At Tapestry Charter High School, academic expeditions will grab their interest, motivate them to work hard, and help them to use the information they learn. Real-world expeditions will spur students to achieve more than they ever imagined they could.

3. Buffalo needs a high school where each student has an Individual Learning Plan that documents his or her strengths, needs, and goals. At Tapestry Charter High School, each student will have guidance from trusted adults throughout the school year to ensure he or she has the enrichment and the remedial support needed to excel. Each student will be known and valued. Each student will learn resilience, perseverance, and self-discipline, as well as facts.

4. Buffalo needs a high school with a School Culture of Caring, where students, staff, and families practice cooperation, compassion, tolerance, and patience with each other. At Tapestry Charter High School, productive, respectful relationships will be at the heart of the team effort. Students and staff will learn to be mindful of their feelings and their actions toward themselves and others.

5. Buffalo needs a high school with an emphasis on High Quality Professional Development. At Tapestry Charter High School, each staff member will benefit from a professional development plan, so that his or her own learning never stops. Teachers will have the tools they need to meet the challenges of every school day.

6. Buffalo needs a high school with Opportunities for Family and Community Involvement. At Tapestry Charter High School, adults from all areas of students' lives and communities will support each other, so that students can build their best futures. Students will design and provide authentic service projects for the community. Active collaboration with Canisius College will widen community connections and support the foundations of the school.

#### Goals

- \* All students will graduate with a Regents diploma.
- \* All students will be ready for college when they graduate.
- \* All students will develop maturity, self-knowledge, and confidence.
- \* All students will be known well and valued as individuals.
- \* All staff will be driven by the goal of student learning, with no excuses for student failure.

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Early College High Schools:

Southwest Early College High School:

Our Mission Statement:

Southeastern Early College High School is a community of students, teachers, staff, and parents working together with other stakeholders to instill in each student the academic and social skills essential for responsible and productive citizenship in a global society.

Our Vision Statement:

Southeastern Early College High School is a safe, secure and stimulating environment that is conducive to learning. Students will be engaged in a rigorous and relevant curriculum that is fostered by deep and lasting relationships leading to personal responsibility. They will leave Southeastern Early College High School well prepared for future endeavors and the demands of a complex society.

At Southeastern Early College High School,

we believe:

- All of our students must be college-ready, critical thinkers to compete in a global economy.
- All of our curriculum and instruction must be purposeful, research based, and of the highest quality.
- Each student has individual needs and can make unique contributions.
- High expectations of respect, honesty, and responsibility promote student achievement.
- A safe, supportive, and orderly school environment supports learning.
- Character education is paramount to student development.
- Diversity must be recognized and respected.
- Well-rounded students participate in academic and extracurricular activities.
- Schools are interdependent with parents and the community.
- Educators are valued professionals.

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Mission Early College High School:

Mission Statement

Mission Early College High School will promote a highly rigorous academic environment to ensure that students earn a high school diploma as well as an Associates of Arts degree from El Paso Community College.

Goals

Mission Early College High School will...

- \*Establish a sense of pride that is developed from being part of a new endeavor.
- \*Place students at the forefront academically.
- \*Promote high standards expected of a college student attaining a college degree.
- \*Ensure that students graduate with a Distinguished Achievement Plan diploma as well as an Associates of Arts degree.
- \*Encourage students to become participating members of the MECHS school community.
- \*Ensure that students enroll and complete a 4 year college/university bachelor's degree.

Bard Early College High School:

Bard High School Early College ("BHSEC"), founded in 2001, is a collaboration between the New York City Department of Education and Bard College. It offers motivated New York City public school students a rigorous intellectual challenge. BHSEC admits ninth graders and prepares them to enter the early college program at the end of tenth grade.

This unique institution is based on Bard's recognition that many bright, highly motivated young people are ready to begin serious college work after Grade 10. Since the mid-1960s, Simon's Rock College of Bard, the nation's only four-year college specifically designed for younger scholars, has provided such students the opportunity to prove themselves in a rigorous and supportive learning environment. Bard College, with the support of the New York City Department of Education, has adapted this model to the urban public school setting.

Based on the premise that the College should transmit in living form an intellectual and artistic heritage, the student should:

- \*develop a genuine interest in things intellectual and artistic sufficient to motivate continuing self-education in several diverse fields

\*make a substantial start in formulating ethical standards as well as intellectual or artistic standards in his or her fields of concentration and have some understanding of the crucial role of standards in intellectual or artistic work

\*show ability, in more than one field, to attack an intellectual or artistic problem, translate it into workable terms, organize procedures, locate and use relevant material, synthesize findings, and produce a creditable result

\*whatever his or her major, be able to read English accurately and intelligently and write it intelligently and clearly

\*master the materials, techniques, and methods necessary for beginning to do independent work and make independent judgments

\*develop the knowledge and confidence necessary to acquire new materials, techniques, and methods and have a reasonable grasp of the extent of his or her field, its history, its relations to other fields, and its place in the culture

\*have some grasp of the history of mankind and of the broad lines of intellectual and artistic development and achievement"