

THE ROBERT LOUIS JOHNSON  
ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY  
A PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

*Washington, D.C.*

CHARTER APPLICATION

September 15, 1997

Submitted to:

District of Columbia Public Charter School Board  
1717 K Street, NW  
Suite 802  
Washington, DC 20006

# THE ROBERT LOUIS JOHNSON ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY

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# Application to Become a Public Charter School in the District of Columbia

## Applicant Information Sheet

Submitted to: District of Columbia Public Charter School Board  
1717 K Street, N.W.  
Suite 802  
Washington, DC 20006

1. **Intent:** It is the intent of the person(s) and/or parties identified below to establish a Public Charter School as provided in the District of Columbia School Reform Act of 1995.

2. **Request for Approval:** This constitutes a formal request for approval of a charter to create and operate the Public Charter School described in this application.

### 3. Applicant Information:

Name of Proposed Public Charter School Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy  
Name of Entity Applying for Charter Status Robert Louis Johnson Arts & Technology Bd of Trustees  
Address 4701 Blagden Terrace, NW  
Washington, DC 20011

Contact Person Michelle L. Harvey  
Daytime Telephone (202) 269-6554 FAX (202) 269-6554  
Email Address (if available) \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Person Authorized to Negotiate \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature Michelle L. Harvey Date 9-15-97

*A proposed Public Charter School must have non-profit status before final approval of its Charter is granted.*

### 4. Type of Application (Check One):

- Conversion of an Existing Public School If conversion, name the school being converted.  
 Conversion of an Existing Private School Do you wish to retain the existing school site?  
 New Public Charter School  Yes  No

### 5. Projected Age Range and Number of Students Expected to Enroll:

- a. In 1998-1999 From age/grade pre-K to age/grade 5 Number of students 540  
b. At Full Capacity From age/grade pre-K to age/grade 6 Number of students 615

6. Proposed 1998-1999 Budget Total: \$3,249,476

7. LEA Status: Will the school elect to be treated as a Local Education Agency (LEA) for purposes of Part B of IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973?

- Yes  No

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy: A Public Charter School, using honed curricula proven through research and state-of-the-art intranet technology, will provide its students with a free, world-class education and a solid foundation in the performing and communicative arts. From its conception, the Academy will demonstrate that a socially and economically diverse student population can excel academically.

The Robert Johnson Academy was conceived by a group of parents and local community members in response to the closure of the Richardson Elementary School. Serving children in the far Northeast section of the city, Richardson was a vital part of the community and was in the midst of significant improvements when the announcement of its scheduled closing was made. In fact, Richardson boasted test scores far higher than those of surrounding schools, which have remained open and which displaced students have now had to attend. Fortunately, Richardson parents, teachers, and community members found in the District's public charter school law a means not only to preserve their neighborhood school, but to create the kind of school they had always envisioned for their children. The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy grew out of the tireless efforts of this group of individuals, who are working to turn a potential tragedy into triumph for the District's children and the community at large.

Beginning in September 1998, the Academy will enroll 540 students in grades pre-K through 5, and will expand to include grade 6 for the second year of operation. Prior to the third year and once the elementary program is established, the Board of Trustees will consider expanding the Academy to include a comprehensive pre-K through 12 program, which would involve the acquisition of one or more additional sites.

For children entering the Academy in grades pre-K or K, a solid academic grounding in the early grades will lead to mastery of a normal high school curriculum by the end of the tenth grade, provided that the Board of Trustees chooses to expand the Academy to include grades 7-12. In this case, at the end of the tenth grade, students will select one of two career paths for the last two years of high school:

- Students planning to pursue a traditional college education leading to a bachelor's degree will enroll in the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, the internationally recognized standard of excellence that prepares students for the most competitive universities in the world
- Students intending to enter the workforce or pursue a skilled vocation following high school graduation will choose a career path that integrates further academic work with intensive technical and work-based training, culminating in receipt of a certificate equivalent to a postsecondary associate degree.

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For students entering the Academy in grades 1-5, realistic benchmarks—i.e., expectations—for academic progress will be established following the administration of placement tests to determine each student's current level of proficiency. At minimum, students in grades 1-5 will annually increase their reading, language, and math scores by at least one grade level, as measured by standard assessments administered by the District of Columbia.

The Academy's founders in partnership with Advantage Schools, Inc., a national charter school management organization, aim to set the standard and the pace for school reform in the District. Housed in the newly renovated former Richardson Elementary School facility, the Academy will be a beacon to the community—proof that, for the very same resources expended in Washington's regular public schools, every child in the District can be afforded today a public education equal to the very best in the world.

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## A. EDUCATIONAL PLAN

### 1. MISSION AND PURPOSES OF THE PROPOSED PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

#### *Educational Needs of the Target Student Population*

The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will open as a pre-K through 5 school next fall and will expand to include grade 6 the following year. Prior to the third year and once the elementary program is established, the Board of Trustees will consider expanding the Academy through grades 7-12, which would involve the acquisition of one or more additional sites. In its first year of operation, the Academy will serve 540 students. This projected enrollment level is based on: (1) a June 1997 survey of area families indicating the number of students intending to enroll; (2) a preliminary analysis of the classroom capacity and space for ancillary services, e.g. health unit and parent center in the proposed building; and (3) the experience of Advantage Schools, Inc., the Academy's education management provider, in successfully recruiting students to other urban charter schools based on the same model as that proposed by the founders.

While the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will be a school "of scale"—so that many families can benefit from the new educational opportunities it provides—it will benefit from smaller student groupings, where each teacher can reasonably be expected to know each child and his or her family. The Academy will be divided into three "neighborhoods," or communities; the first will include grades pre-K through 2, the second grades 3-5, and the third, grade 6, beginning in the Academy's second year of operation. Each will evolve its own identity and culture, ensuring a "small school" climate, even as the enrollment peaks at approximately 615 students in grades pre-K through 6.

The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will be open to all children, on a space-available basis within each grade. The Academy will not discriminate on the basis of intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, disability, proficiency in English, or any other basis. The founders are dedicated to attracting a diverse student body that is broadly representative of the community's school-age population by race, ethnicity, and income. Based on the current demographics of the community's public schools, the founders anticipate a student population that is predominantly African-American. Well over half of the Academy's students will come from economically disadvantaged homes.

Located in the far Northeast section of the city, the Academy will likely serve children primarily from nearby neighborhoods. Research indicates that this region has been far from immune to the problems plaguing cities nationwide and the District at large. A great number of children in the far Northeast section of D.C. come from single-parent, low-income, and environmentally deprived homes. Many will likely exhibit anti-social behavior and suffer from

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poor health and nutrition, low self-esteem, and learning delays. The founders anticipate that some will have been born to chemically dependent mothers and will therefore be at risk for developmental problems due to environmental and possibly biological factors.

The Robert Louis Johnson Academy will offer early intervention as a major part of its academic program. Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), which assess a student's performance levels, learning styles, learning delays, and nutritional/health deficiencies, will be developed for students within 30 days of admission; they will be used to identify areas of need and to monitor the timely delivery of necessary corrective services. Further, a student services team, led by the Academy's Special Education Director, will work with the classroom teachers to develop and implement ILPs for each special education student. A comprehensive discussion of the founders' plans regarding students with special needs is provided on pages 22-27.

The Academy's Code of Civility, described in detail on page 35, will ensure an orderly and disciplined atmosphere conducive to learning. It will also help engender in students those personal attributes—a strong moral foundation and good character—that are vital to function in a civil society.

The founders strongly believe that parental involvement is crucial to ensuring the success of the Academy's students. Parents will thus be expected to play a major role in their children's lives at the Robert Louis Johnson Academy. Parent involvement is described in detail on pages 32-33.

The *Third Annual Factbook* produced by the D.C. Every Kid Counts Collaborative for Children and Families presents a sobering view of the urgent needs of the District's schoolchildren. Using 1994 and 1995 data, the Collaborative reports:

- Over 50,000 children in D.C.—about half of the child population—derive their sole support from Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).
- The unemployment rate for young African-American adults—parents of young children—in D.C. is over 28 percent
- Six in ten D.C. children are in families where the father is absent.
- 15.6 percent of children born in D.C. are born to teenage mothers.
- Fewer than half of D.C. mothers receive adequate prenatal care.
- Murder is the leading cause of violent death for D.C. teens, claiming the lives of 76 teenagers in 1994.

Countering the dysfunction in students' homes and communities is an entirely appropriate goal for the public schools and one that is attainable. Indeed, despite the difficult socioeconomic challenges facing the District's children, studies indicate that their innate ability and potential are

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comparable to those of students from more privileged backgrounds. Analysis by the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) confirms the findings of the Every Kid Counts Collaborative that in both math and reading, D.C. students are at or above the national norm in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The longer students stay in the traditional public schools, however, the further they fall behind. In 1995, on average, the District's 11<sup>th</sup> grade students scored in the 36<sup>th</sup> percentile in reading and the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile in math, a grave indictment of so-called tradition.

Moreover, the Education and Libraries Committee of the Council of the District of Columbia has calculated the drop-out rate for the DCPS at 40-45 percent in recent years. As reported in the *Every Kid Counts Factbook*, the DCPS graduation rate in 1995 was a mere 53 percent.

In too many of the District's schools, the vacuum created by the absence of learning has been filled by chaos and a general culture of violence. A recent article in *The Washington Post* introduces six-year-old Conelius, a D.C. resident whose family has chosen to send him to one of the District's parochial schools—a choice it can ill afford financially—to avoid the violence, intimidation, and drug trafficking that characterize the local public school. Conelius's grandmother describes the public school's playground in terms sadly familiar to residents across the city, as “a hangout for preteen drug dealers who try to lure the younger children into their drug-dealing schemes.”

The good news for D.C. families is that in the District's robust charter school law there exists a mechanism to turn the tide and extend the promise of a world-class education to every child in the District of Columbia. The educational needs of the District's student body are the same as those of students across the nation and around the world. In short, D.C. students need to master the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic, which will enable them to develop the higher-order skills necessary to succeed in the next century. They need teachers who are focused exclusively on helping them achieve, and they need a school setting that is safe, orderly, and conducive to learning.

The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will allow all its students, regardless of their backgrounds, to achieve the highest academic standards in an atmosphere of discipline, respect, and tolerance. The Academy's unique, results-oriented design will offer:

- a world-class curriculum based on demanding content and proven pedagogies
- exposure to and training in the performing and communicative arts
- vibrant and experienced school leadership that drives students, parents, and staff to exceptional results
- an outstanding faculty, aggressively recruited and compensated, and promoted on the basis of performance, not seniority

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- an extended school day and year offering time-on-task comparable to that of the best systems in the world
- a powerful school culture of pride and excellence that mitigates the influences of social dysfunction in students' home communities
- extensive use of educational technology, including both commercial titles and Advantage's proprietary intranet technology to leverage instruction and Academy management.

## *Mission and Philosophy*

The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will provide an academically challenging, technologically rich, child-centered environment, where each student develops a strong intellectual, moral, environmentally conscious, and artistic foundation.

The Academy is dedicated to the memory of Metropolitan Police Officer Robert Louis Johnson, Jr., who was killed in the line of duty at the young age of 32, after seven years of dedicated service to the far Northeast section of the District. Officer Johnson grew up in the neighborhood he later patrolled, attending Richardson Elementary School and the local junior and senior highs, and going on to Morgan State University. Officer Johnson held a special place in the community and indelibly touched the lives of many. He stood as proof that socio-economic challenges can be overcome—that one's level of achievement is not pre-determined by race, ethnicity, or income level. It is the founders' hope that in naming the Academy after this exemplary young man, they will not only honor his memory but inspire other children to emulate his perseverance, courage, and integrity.

The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will be founded on the conviction that every child has a right to an excellent education, that all students should be held to high standards, and that all children can succeed in school—if afforded the right opportunities. The founders propose to create a new school, using building blocks that have been drawn from the best programs across the country. Striving continuously for excellence, the Academy will create a vibrant, purposeful community alive with learning—a special identity that inspires both loyalty and common commitment among parents, students, teachers, and staff.

## *Educational Focus*

The design of the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy's educational program has two major components: strong academics and a performing/communicative arts concentration. Students will develop strong skills in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, history, foreign language, and technology. The Academy will:

- use the Direct Instruction curriculum in its elementary English and mathematics programs

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- use the Performance-Based Education frameworks advanced by the District of Columbia Public School's Center for Systemic Educational Change, as well as other standardized tests and customized, curriculum-aligned assessments
- incorporate bi-monthly field trips, cultural activities, hands-on experiences, programs/assemblies, and special exhibits and events
- emphasize technology as a vehicle for learning in every classroom
- incorporate a library media program that encourages recreational reading and facilitates online and in-house research.

Students of the Robert Louis Johnson Academy will also develop a strong foundation in the performing and communicative arts. The following disciplines will be included in the performing arts component of the curriculum:

- acting
- vocal music
- instrumental music
- dance
- visual arts

The following disciplines will be included in the communicative arts component of the curriculum:

- video production
- oratorical speech
- graphic arts
- journalism
- newscasting

The performing/communicative arts component will be integrated into the academic program in grades pre-K through 2. For students in grades 3-6, this component will be implemented as an afternoon program.

## *Goals*

The overarching goals of the Academy are to:

- Demonstrate the heights of academic achievement that urban students can routinely attain when the advantages of charter school governance are coupled with ambitious new academic standards
- Offer D.C. families rich new choices in public education within the city

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assessments, currently in the planning phase, and will implement the assessments as soon as they are available—including at the pilot stage, if possible.

The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy is committed to attaining, at minimum, the following achievement benchmarks with students enrolled since kindergarten:

- Average scores at or above the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile in reading, language, and mathematics on national standardized tests (such as the Stanford 9)
- 90% of students performing at or above the NAEP "Basic" level in reading, writing, mathematics, science, history, and geography, and at least 35% performing at or above the NAEP's "Proficient" level
- Mathematics and science performance comparable with top-scoring nations in Asia and Europe
- Average School scores significantly above the District average on planned new District assessments aligned with new DCPS content standards.

Non-academic goals that each student will develop are:

- Work-force related, cross-cutting skills, including identifying and acquiring needed information; working with others to accomplish tasks; managing limited resources; developing and using complex systems; employing a variety of tools and technologies; sharing products and skills with others
- The basic moral virtues, including kindness, integrity; courage, self respect, and true friendship
- An ability to communicate through the arts, and an appreciation of beauty
- A good sense of humor
- Respect for the rights and duties of citizenship
- Creativity in addressing challenges and opportunities
- Physical fitness
- Self-discipline and perseverance
- High attendance and respect for learning and the school community.

These goals will contribute to high academic achievement by promoting an environment that is conducive to serious scholarship and instilling in each student an appreciation and passion for learning.

In addition, the founders aspire to the following benchmarks:

- By graduation from the Academy, at least 90% of all students will be able to design

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and produce products that relate to their curriculum using computers, visual, audio, and/or print means.

- All students will participate in at least two performing/communicative arts projects annually.
- At least 70% of students in grades 4-5 will use their performing/communicative arts skills outside the school community.
- By the end of the sixth grade students will have a working knowledge of the technologies in our world and how these technologies affect their lives.
- Each class will incorporate bi-monthly field trips, cultural activities, hands-on experiences, and/or special exhibits.
- 95% of parents who enroll their children at the Academy will re-enroll the following year.
- A large number of parents will take an active role in their children's education by participating in Academy volunteer activities.
- The Academy will develop mutually beneficial partnerships with community groups, which will enhance the resources and services available to students.

### *Curriculum*

The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will provide a rigorous and supportive academic program designed to prepare students from all backgrounds for success. The following description of the curriculum includes subjects in grades 7-12; whether these grades will be included in an expanded Academy will be decided by the Board of Trustees after the second year of operation and once the elementary program is established. The Academy will use the Direct Instruction approach in its elementary mathematics and English curricula to ensure that students master the fundamental skills necessary for success in later grades. In addition to providing a strong academic foundation, the Academy's curriculum will focus upon the communicative and performing arts and emphasize the development of environmental consciousness and artistic sensibilities.

The Academy will provide a challenging core curriculum for all students, based on practices proven through the best available research to be effective in attaining student outcomes. Clear, crafted lessons that engage the whole class will constitute the most efficient method for all students to learn important concepts. While most learning will follow a discipline-based instructional approach, students will also have opportunities to develop cross-cutting, workforce-related skills through such instructional activities as identifying and acquiring needed information, working as part of a team, managing limited resources, and using technology and other tools. Periodic inter-disciplinary activities and projects will provide students with further opportunities

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to integrate knowledge and skills acquired from different subjects.

Clear and specific academic objectives will delineate targeted learning, with students proceeding to subsequent material after attaining mastery. New students will be placed on the basis of competency rather than age, ensuring that all students are challenged at an optimal level. Students' mistakes will be corrected so that they may learn from them and advance. Explicit academic standards at each grade level will serve as the basis for promotion and graduation. Structured interventions, including additional opportunities for practice or tutoring, will ensure that students having trouble with the material are helped in a timely manner.

After completing a thorough evaluation of research-proven curricula, the founders have selected Direct Instruction as the core component of its curriculum. The Direct Instruction curriculum consists of polished lesson plans that have been implemented successfully and refined for over thirty years. Direct Instruction uses a mastery-based approach that ensures competence before students proceed to new material, but without delaying students that are ready to advance more quickly. The curriculum teaches basic skills, as well as more complex analytic strategies and competencies, *explicitly*, instead of assuming students can develop such capacities with only limited adult guidance.

To encourage student engagement and to enable teachers to monitor student progress efficiently, the primary method of instruction involves a brisk pace and choral student responses, punctuated by individual student responses. The amount of productive interaction between the teacher and students is maximized. Student motivation and self-confidence is enhanced dramatically in comparison to other approaches, even when contrasted with methods that place a higher value on student motivation than on academic achievement.

The Direct Instruction approach that will be used in the Academy's elementary English and mathematics curricula is supported by an impressive body of evaluative research which documents a high level of effectiveness with all levels of students, particularly with students from underprivileged backgrounds. The largest federally funded study of instructional effectiveness ever conducted, Project Follow Through, found that Direct Instruction had the greatest impact among various comparison models on all three measures used: basic skills, cognitive, and self-confidence. A recent metaanalysis by researcher Gary Adams analyzing 44 evaluations of the reading program found a large average effect size of .68 standard deviations compared to control groups.

As Bonnie Groseen, Ph.D, University of Oregon, concludes in her exhaustive summary of comparative research on reading instruction and the Direct Instruction program overall:

Educational reformers search for programs that produce superior outcomes with at-risk children, that are replicable and can therefore be implemented reliably in given

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settings, and that can be used as a basis for a whole school implementation that involves all students in a single program sequence, and that result in students feeling good about themselves. The Follow Through [study] data confirm that Direct Instruction has these features. The program works across various sites and types of children (urban blacks, rural populations, and non-English speaking students). It produces positive achievement benefits in all subject areas—reading, language, math, and spelling. It produces superior results for basic skills and for higher-order cognitive skills in reading and math. It produces the strongest positive self-esteem of the [nine different] Follow Through [study] programs.

Moreover, an extensive study by Paul Weisberg, a renowned education researcher at the University of Alabama and a consultant for Advantage Schools, Inc., underscores the effectiveness of the Direct Instruction approach in promoting achievement among pre-kindergarten age children from low-income families. The nine-year study shows not only the efficacy of the DI approach when compared to traditional instructional models, but the extent to which children benefit from early exposure to the DI curriculum:

Two-year [DI] trained children (pre-kindergarten and kindergarten age) achieved at substantially higher normative levels than one-year [DI] trained children in all content areas evaluated during preschool. This training advantage continued in first and second grade, as evidenced by a larger percentage of the Two-Year Group reading above grade level than the One-Year Group. Each DI group surpassed the performances of same-aged children from Non-DI comparison preschool programs during the preschool and elementary school evaluations.

A discussion of the Academy's curriculum vis-à-vis language minority youngsters and students with disabilities is provided in pages 22-27.

## *English*

English instruction in the early elementary grades will focus on teaching students to listen and read with comprehension, to write and speak clearly, and to spell correctly. Problem-solving, reasoning, and literary analysis will receive greater emphasis beginning in the later elementary years. Reading Mastery, Reasoning and Writing, and Spelling Mastery, all Direct Instruction curriculum published by Science Research Associates, will form the backbone of English and language arts instruction. Basic skills will be taught to automaticity so students can focus on higher order analytic and creative skills. A distinctive approach to phonics will be used which minimizes the number of rules students are expected to remember while maximizing the texts that students are able to read. In addition, the curriculum's emphasis on classic stories and poems, including those from other eras and other countries, will engage students in the pleasures of reading while serving as a springboard for character education. Story plots with engaging characters are a natural catalyst for discussions of basic virtues, from such relatively straightforward topics as physical courage and perseverance in the early grades, to more complex

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concepts such as integrity, true friendship, and self-respect, in the later elementary and middle school years.

### *Mathematics*

Students will develop math skills through a carefully structured and sequenced math curriculum. At the elementary level, Connecting Math Concepts, also a Direct Instruction program developed by Science Research Associates, will be used for mathematics instruction. Unlike traditional curricula, where a topic such as fractions is the focus for a few lessons and then is assumed to have been learned, multiple topics will be developed gradually, practiced for an extended period of time, and then integrated into later topics for review. Beginning in year three, students will use calculators in some activities, and extended projects will begin in year four. Similar to English instruction, basic math skills and algorithms will be learned to automaticity so students can concentrate on complex applications and problem-solving. In the middle and early high school years (if added), students build on this powerful foundation to attain mastery over an advanced mathematics curriculum that includes the content traditionally covered in such courses as Algebra 1 and 2, geometry, and probability and statistics.

### *Science*

Science will receive unusually heavy emphasis in the elementary years. Children's natural curiosity about the world around them will be encouraged and satisfied, while gradually being disciplined through the study of formal scientific methods and modes of analysis. Students will learn such skills as effective procedures for recording observations and for formulating and testing hypotheses through "hands-on" investigations and experiments (such as those contained in Scholastic's Science Place units). Students will develop an understanding of important science concepts and basic science facts in the physical, life, and earth and space sciences. Building on the elementary program, students will complete the content covered in the typical high school science courses of physics, chemistry, and biology by the end of tenth grade. A special strand in the curriculum will focus on the scientific design, implementation, evaluation, and refinement of technological solutions to problems. Key instructional emphases include connecting new science content with previously learned content as well as the integration of skills learned in the math curriculum.

### *History and Social Sciences*

History and social sciences—including civics, economics, and geography—will be taught to all students. In the early elementary grades, history will be taught using a literature-centered curriculum that includes myths and folk tales from around the world. Students will study District and local history and economics in the fourth grade. Students will focus on developing an intuitive understanding of such basic economic concepts as prices, supply and demand, and trade between individuals. In geography, students will learn to make and use maps, and to identify the

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borders and capitals of the U.S., other nations, and the American states. In fifth grade, students will take a formal history course in U.S. history, using Joy Hakim's exceptionally well-written series, *A History of Us*. The study of the lives and actions of individuals, especially through biography, will also provide lessons in character. Civics, focusing on the founding documents and the individuals who played key roles in shaping our government, will be taught in the context of history. Sixth-graders will focus on the dawn of human society and the oldest civilizations, including the Mesopotamians, Chinese, and Egyptians. Seventh-graders will focus on Greece and Rome. Eighth-graders will study Europe through the 19th century, including its interactions with non-Western nations in Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Ninth- and tenth-grade history will consist of an in-depth history of the U.S. through the present.

### *Foreign Language*

All students will start instruction in a second language beginning in the second grade. Such studies will emphasize communication in the elementary grades and culture in the later grades. Students will attain a high level of performance in both of these areas.

### *Physical Fitness*

Students will be engaged in activities designed to perfect their coordination, increase their strength and stamina, and help them become team players and good sports. If the Academy is expanded, they will also participate on intramural and School teams, and in training activities and tests recommended by the President's Council on Physical Fitness.

The chart on the following pages lists the broad academic goals described above, with *samples* of matching objectives that students will be expected to attain. There is not enough space to provide the detail necessary to include every learning objective, as our curriculum contains hundreds of precise objectives. For example, there are 129 objectives for writing at the fifth-grade level. The samples, therefore, far from being a complete list, are meant simply to *exemplify* the kinds of activities that students will be performing. The thousands of detailed objectives are available upon request.

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GOALS	SAMPLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Reading in English with comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read novels, short stories (including myth and folklore), poems, factual articles, biographies, and plays, including literature by Twain, Homer, London, O. Henry, Wordsworth, Whitman, Virginia Hamilton, and Ezra Jack Keats.</li> <li>• Interpret complex forms, figurative language, and irony.</li> </ul>
Clear, elegant, and effective communication in the English language, written and spoken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Author poems and short stories.</li> <li>• Edit passages containing passive-voice sentences.</li> <li>• Spell over 5,000 words; know phonemic and morphemic strategies for spelling new words.</li> <li>• Take notes and reconstruct a dictated passage.</li> </ul>
The ability to use basic and more advanced mathematics to conceptualize and to solve problems in an academic environment, in the workplace, and in other everyday settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rewrite and solve four-value equations that have the unknown on the right.</li> <li>• Find area of a figure with more than one hole.</li> <li>• Develop strategy for determining sum of odd or even numbers in a series.</li> </ul>
An understanding of the natural world and its workings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find the amount of work required to move a weight to specified points along an incline.</li> <li>• Investigate materials, light, heat, electricity, magnetism, characteristics of organisms, lifecycles, solar system, causes of weather.</li> </ul>
Knowledge of the lives and accomplishments of important individuals from American, other Western, and non-Western civilizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read biographies of such famous Americans as Benjamin Franklin, Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, and Thomas Jefferson.</li> <li>• Compare differing accounts of historical figures and their accomplishments.</li> </ul>

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regarding students with special needs is not an impediment but a strength of the charter school statute. The playing field would be tilted—and any success the Academy demonstrated would be rightly questioned—if the Academy did not welcome students who might be more difficult and expensive to educate. The Academy will meet all requirements for serving students with disabilities. The Academy Director will make every effort to include those with particularly challenging Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), and will consult regularly with the Special Education Division of the DCPS to determine how students with severe disabilities can be best served. ~~It is expected that the Academy will be able to accommodate nearly all students, and no~~ decision to the contrary will be made without serious consultation with the Special Education Division. A Special Education Director on the Academy's staff will be responsible for individual case management of all SPED students.

Currently, 6.3 percent of the District's public school students have special needs. The founders believe that many students today are poorly served by SPED programs in regular public schools. Many of these students' needs could be met in the regular classroom, with appropriate supports.

The founders believe that most parents of special needs children simply want their children's needs met. Many would prefer that their children remain in regular classrooms if they could be assured that the children's needs will be promptly evaluated and appropriate modifications to the classroom completed in a timely fashion. The Academy will be well positioned to establish this trust and will devote substantial resources to pre-referral evaluation services, parent communication, and early intervention.

A full-time Special Education Director will oversee all special education programming at the Academy. The Academy's policy of "reasonable inclusion" will be grounded in reality, by having the efforts of classroom teachers supported by para-professionals to mainstream children who would otherwise be pulled-out of the regular classroom. The Special Education Director will be responsible for all case management, including scheduling evaluations and re-evaluations, holding Individual Learning Plan (ILP) meetings, and providing notices to parents as required by law. The Academy's budget will include a general fund for special education to be used for itinerant specialists, psychologists, resource room ("pull-out") teachers, and other services required in the Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) of enrolled SPED students.

Research has found that, for all practical purposes, the "learning disability" category accounts for many states' high enrollment in special education. This suggests that, rather than addressing the needs of these students in the classroom, many educators too quickly label many children "special needs," taking them out of the classroom and away from their peers. Subsequently educated in segregated settings with low expectations, these students almost never return to regular classrooms.

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In many public schools, regular and special education are locked in a vicious cycle of funding. As increasing numbers of children are referred to special education, more and more dollars are consumed by the mandate. Resources dwindle for regular education, class sizes expand, and remedial programs are cut. Too often, teachers have found that they had no alternative but to refer students—whether in need of extra help, smaller classes, or personal attention—to special education. For every additional child enrolled in special education, the school incurs higher costs, but receives no additional revenues; still fewer resources are available for regular education, and the cycle continues. Special education becomes, in many urban systems, a dumping ground for students who, alienated from the schools and embittered by the schools' failure to teach them, become disruptive and even violent. Once enrolled in special education, they are unlikely to return to the regular classroom. They exist in a separate system, deprived of the normal academic and extracurricular activities of their peers.

The Academy's founders believe that, while serving the same student population as regular public schools, special education enrollment can be lower in a charter school. Research has found that the majority of students enrolled in special education classes do not suffer from neurologically based learning problems or physical handicaps. Rather, their difficulties are "the by-products of conflicts and rigidities in regular programs," as one researcher put it. The ways in which large urban schools are organized lead to the continuing failure of some children who in time are perceived as discipline problems, removed from regular education programs, and assigned to individualized special education programs that are of little value to them. High enrollment in special education occurs most frequently in "administratively disrupted schools" where "teachers and principals come to mistrust each other, as they begin to doubt their efficacy in the schools. The teachers may be reluctant to admit that they cannot teach particular children, and a cycle of frustration, anger, and failure forms between teachers and children; children may be damaged psychologically, and instruction may genuinely break down."

Excessive SPED enrollment, in other words, may be a result of a school's dysfunction, not the students'. The absence of an effective curriculum and pedagogy, especially in the critical early grades, may result in SPED referrals by teachers and parents. The proven Direct Instruction curriculum, phonics-based reading instruction, orderly environment, and inspiring culture of the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will result in more students succeeding in regular education and fewer being referred to SPED programs than in regular public schools.

Advantage Schools has extensive experience with public policy and practice relating to special needs students. Advantage President Steven Wilson has written about addressing the needs of urban special education students in his book *Reinventing the Schools: A Radical Plan for Boston*, and in the Pioneer Institute's recent *Agenda for Leadership*. In 1995, Wilson also drafted Governor Weld's legislation to reform Massachusetts's special education law, Chapter 766. Moreover, Advantage Vice President for Education Theodor Rebarber is an expert on curriculum development and pedagogy for urban students, and Kathleen Madigan, Director of

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Curriculum and Instruction for Advantage Schools, is a nationally recognized expert in special education.

Like students with disabilities, those with limited or no English proficiency (LEP/NEP) will find in the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy a rigorous and supportive academic program that allows them to achieve their full potential. While the percentage of LEP/NEP students in the far Northeast area of the city are negligible, 6.5 percent of the District's public schools have been determined to have limited or no proficiency in English, which translates into an alarming number of young people who are unable to perform ordinary classwork in the language used in nearly every facet of American life. The Academy will be prepared to address the needs of LEP/NEP students who wish to enroll. The founders are committed to eliminating the language barriers that have prevented so many young people from achieving success in the classroom and the workplace.

Research shows that the majority of LEP parents charge their schools first and foremost with teaching their children English. They know that their children must master English to succeed in our mainstream English-speaking economy. Despite this, regular public schools often rely on what is in effect transitional bilingual education (TBE), a pedagogy that the founders believe is demonstrably less effective than other pedagogies for LEP students, such as structured immersion and two-way bilingual programs.

According to a recent federal study of transitional bilingual education (TBE) programs, 41 percent of parents whose children were enrolled in these programs wanted their children to be taught only in English.

In some cases, LEP students are automatically enrolled in TBE programs, separated from their classmates, and provided as little as 45 minutes of English instruction per day. Children can remain enrolled in these programs for years, and sometimes for their entire school careers. Their English instruction is at times so inadequate that, even when they are returned to regular education classrooms, these students are diagnosed as "special needs" and shunted off to special education (SPED) programs from which they rarely return. By contrast, most European nations successfully mainstream non-native speaking children after just one year or less in special "reception" classes.

A vast literature exists on the efficacy of TBE programs nationally. The consistent finding is that TBE has not fulfilled its promise. Native language instruction for LEP students consistently shows equivocal results in student achievement and high school dropout rates for Latino students, and no evidence for the superiority of these programs over those using intensive English instruction.

In October 1995, New York City's Board of Education compared two similar groups of

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LEP students in a four-year study. One group was enrolled in ESL classes that provided English instruction from the first day of school through a special curriculum. The other group received native language instruction for the entire school day, except for a short lesson in English. At all grade levels, students enrolled in ESL classes exited their programs faster than those in the bilingual programs.

One of the most promising alternative practices is "structured immersion," whereby LEP children learn English by immersing themselves in the spoken and written language rather than receiving just a few minutes of English instruction a day. Under this proven practice, the immersion is "structured" because the complexity of the English is tailored by the teacher to the student's increasing comprehension; simple English is used at the very beginning, and more complex English is used over time as the student gains fluency. The native language is used principally to clarify instruction and provide a reassuring and affirming connection to the child's home language and culture. Where this practice has been tried in Texas, Washington, Virginia, and Florida, students not only learned English better and faster, but also scored higher on exams measuring subject matter learning than did students in Spanish bilingual programs. On average, the English immersion students were mainstreamed into regular classrooms in 3 to 4 years, compared to 6 to 7 years for the bilingual students.

Studies have shown that students with only a very basic English vocabulary—such as that which may be gained from 4-5 months of preliminary language instruction—can make remarkable achievement gains with the Reading Mastery curriculum (see: Grossen, B. & Kelly, B.F. [1992], Direct Instruction in a Third World Context, *International Review of Education*, 38(1), pp. 81-85; and Grossen, B., & Kelly, B.F. [1992], Using Direct Instruction to Improve the Effectiveness of Teachers in South Africa, *South African Journal of Education*, 12(3), pp. 143-148).

As part of its commitment to accommodating *all* students, the Academy will fully comply with all statutes and regulations regarding bilingual education. The founders expect to identify students who may need English language assistance using the Academy's Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), which will provide a comprehensive assessment of each child's performance level and learning style and will identify any learning delays and nutritional/health deficiencies, as well as the Home Language Survey (HLS) form currently used by the DCPS. The School will then assess every student identified through this survey to determine the type and extent of services required, if any, using the assessments used by the DCPS. Qualifying students will be provided English as a Second Language (ESL) assistance. The specific approach will be a structured immersion program modeled on the successful ESL program implemented in the Seattle public schools (see Baker, Scott K., Getting It Right: The Seattle School District Program For Limited-English Proficient Students. *Read Perspectives*, Vol. III, No. 2, pp. 43-76.). If needed, the Academy will seek to recruit at least one of its regular classroom teachers with ESL certification. Exit of students from the ESL program will be determined through qualifying scores on standardized tests used by the DCPS, whether the Stanford 9 or the new assessments. Students

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whose scores match the average reading performance of all students in the DCPS (to be determined by the results of the Stanford 9 administered in May 1997) will automatically exit the ESL program. Students whose scores approach the norm in reading may exit ESL program for a one-year "trial" period if the ESL Director and the student's general education teacher agree that such a change is warranted.

Further, it has been demonstrated that students with limited English proficiency make remarkable gains using the competency-based Direct Instruction (DI) program. Students with limited English proficiency will also benefit from being in an environment where the ability to speak multiple languages is valued: all students at the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will learn a second language, expected to be Spanish, beginning in the second grade. Thus, students whose native tongue is Spanish but who have successfully exited the ESL program, will be able to maintain, in fact improve, their Spanish proficiency.

The Academy's education management organization, Advantage Schools, Inc., has knowledge of and experience addressing issues related to overcoming limited English proficiency. Advantage President Steven Wilson has written about bilingual education issues in his 1992 book, *Reinventing the Schools*, and in academic journals on bilingual instruction. He is the author of Governor William Weld's 1995 legislation to reform Massachusetts bilingual education laws and provide parents and educators greater pedagogical choice in LEP instruction. As Executive Director of the Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research, he also commissioned the Institute's study by Dr. Christine Rossell on the efficacy of Massachusetts's bilingual education programs.

Complementing the Academy's proven methods of instruction will be state-of-the-art technology designed to improve teacher performance and student learning, implemented by Advantage Schools. As in the private sector, technology will be viewed as a valuable tool, not an end unto itself. A modern intranet communication system integrated with the Academy's curriculum and pedagogy will be accessible to every teacher through his or her own laptop computer. Instructional methods and interventions will be available at any time through the system. Structured around the curriculum for ease of use, the communication system will permit teachers to discuss issues through on-line "chats" with teachers at other campuses or to post questions to consultants or the Advantage central office. In subject areas of the curriculum having less structure, teachers will be able to construct on-line model lessons, which could be posted for use by their peers, or for soliciting recommendations and improvements. Teachers will also be able to call up samples of student work from different teachers that exemplify different levels of performance on the skills or knowledge in the lesson. Over time, such a library will encourage clarity of purpose, self-monitoring, and thus higher standards of achievement.

When it first opens, the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will seek a transfer of its students' records from their former schools, including any ILPs and data on students' eligibility for participation in Title I and other entitlement programs. Advantage will

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establish and maintain a central, automated database for the creation and maintenance of all Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy records. Strict confidentiality of student information will be maintained as required by federal and state laws.

With fire wall provisions for security and student confidentiality, appropriate files in the Academy's database will be accessible to each teacher through her or his notebook computer. From the database, Advantage and School staff members will be able to generate a variety of summary statistics and standard reports on School and student activities and performances. The Academy will be able to respond quickly to special requests for information under public school law, and to produce required public reports efficiently and accurately.

Teachers and aides will also benefit from the Academy's unique library media program, through which they will receive professional development training in creating instructional materials, and utilization of the library media center and its automated information delivery systems. The library media program will also include a professional collection of current educational resources, relevant periodicals, and a materials development area. The Academy's Technology and Media Specialist will consult regularly with teachers to determine materials necessary to enhance their instructional programs.

Serving as the Academy's information hub, the library media center will also enhance student learning. The center's fully flexible, open-access environment allows for use by whole classes, small groups, and individual students. Students will learn to locate, access, analyze, use, and create information and information products. Automated information delivery via the internet, CD-ROM-based reference materials, and laser discs, along with cable access and an automated circulation system, will help students develop vital researching skills.

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## 3. STUDENT PERFORMANCE

### *Student Assessment*

The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will implement a comprehensive assessment system. The system will:

- Accurately monitor student and Academy progress over time
- Provide information that is useful for guiding and improving instruction
- Certify that students are meeting academic standards for promotion
- Express clearly the quality of student work that is expected.

A variety of assessment instruments will be used including district-wide assessments conducted by the District of Columbia and other standardized tests, as well as customized, curriculum-aligned assessments.

Because of their ease of use, reliability, and unquestioned independence, the Academy will use norm-referenced standardized tests, such as the Stanford Achievement Tests, Ninth Edition, as one component in its assessment. Pre- and post-testing of all students beginning in the second grade will provide data on improvement in student performance. However, the limitations of their short-answer format and their oblique relationship at best to the Academy's specific curriculum require that standardized tests be supplemented by other assessment measures. To provide a basis of comparison with other schools in the District, the Academy will also use district-wide assessments conducted by the District of Columbia, including the new District assessments, as these are developed to reflect planned new academic standards for students. While it is not possible to project specific levels of performance on such tests (since they have yet to be developed), the founders expect that our students will perform on a level that surpasses other DCPS students by a significant margin.

In addition, the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will conduct a fourth grade assessment of its students, which will include released items from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). In mathematics and science, this assessment will permit the Academy to report results in the context of the performance of students in top-scoring countries, as well as in other states and the nation as a whole. In other subject areas, including reading, writing, history, and geography, use of released NAEP items will permit reporting in the context of national performance and student performance in other states.

The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will also implement customized assessments closely aligned with its own curriculum. The Academy will implement formal assessments—which will include a combination of short-answer questions and items that require

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lengthier, more sophisticated responses—at the end of each subject unit. Moreover, assessments for each student will be based upon a carefully structured collection of student work including student papers, projects, and other assignments embedded in the curriculum. The Advanced Placement (AP) portfolio assessment in studio art demonstrates that such an assessment can meet technical standards of validity, reliability, and freedom from bias, while preserving the integrity of the discipline. Over time, the Advantage Schools assessment system, as implemented in the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy, will similarly meet technical standards.

The fullest measure of student performance will only be captured by the full assessment system. In addition to clear, precise descriptions of the type and quality of student performance expected, a bank of examples of student works that demonstrate progressive levels of attainment will be available for the customized assessments. The selection and moderation process will provide an important activity for teachers; eventually this activity will link faculty at the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy with faculty at other schools served by Advantage Schools in different cities through a state-of-the-art intranet computer network.

Once the assessment process is established, members of the community will periodically be invited to participate in the ongoing process of maintaining and refining the performance expectations by serving on judging panels. This process will serve to communicate the efforts of the Academy to the broader Washington community, while also soliciting community input in setting expectations for student performance.

Performance benchmarks specifying the goals for student achievement on the assessments are described in the Academic Design Section.

### *Basis for Promotion and Graduation*

Explicit academic standards at each grade level, as discussed in the Academic Design Section, will serve as the basis for promotion. Similarly, should the Academy expand to include a senior high school, graduation standards will be based on clearly defined academic standards. To offset retention, students who fail to meet the standards necessary for promotion to the next grade will attend a summer instructional program.

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## *Student Intervention*

As noted above, based on the local demographics, the founders expect to enroll a great number of children from single-family, low-income and environmentally deprived homes. Such children will likely suffer from poor health and nutrition and exhibit low self-esteem, learning delays, and anti-social behavior. In addition, the founders anticipate that some may have been born to chemically dependent mothers and will be at risk for developmental problems due to environmental and possibly biological factors.

The Robert Louis Johnson Academy will therefore offer early intervention as a major part of its academic program. Individual Learning Plans will be used to assess students in need, gauging their performance levels, learning delays, and nutritional/health deficiencies. To ensure successful outcomes for all students, the founders plan to develop working partnerships with various health organizations and educational institutions. Such alliances will ensure quality health services for Academy students and their families.

At a more fundamental level, the founders postulate that the heavy reliance in many regular urban public schools on both remediation and referral to special education results from fundamental inadequacies in the regular education program. When students are not taught how to read in the early grades, schools may later excuse their own failures by labeling children as deficient (a "learning disability"). Or students, trapped seemingly interminably in a classroom where both textbooks and blackboard are incomprehensible, may understandably "act out" in class (an "emotional disability"). In both cases, it is not the children who are deficient, but the children's schooling.

The use of the Academy's Direct Instruction curriculum in the early grades will reliably reduce the requirement for remediation and sharply lessen inappropriate referrals of students to special education. This highly structured curriculum, built on proven lessons coupled with bi-weekly formal assessments, also includes detailed intervention procedures for assisting students who are not making adequate progress.

At the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy, clear and specific academic objectives will delineate targeted learning, with students proceeding to subsequent material after attaining mastery. New students will be placed on the basis of competency rather than age, ensuring that all students are challenged at an optimal level. Students' mistakes will be corrected so that they may learn from them and advance. Structured interventions, including additional opportunities for practice or tutoring, will ensure that students having trouble with the material are helped in a timely manner.

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## 4. SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

### *Parent Involvement*

Parents will play a valued role in ensuring the success of the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy in the following ways:

- Parents will be expected to support the academic learning of their children by maintaining high expectations for both the children and the Academy. Quarterly parent conferences and annual reports on the Academy will facilitate this process. Contracts between parents, teachers, and students will also be used for this purpose, but will by no means be used to exclude students whose parents are unable to volunteer.
- Parents will participate in such structured academic activities as assisting their children in preparing regular written compositions. Monthly workshops involving "Mega Skills" will instruct parents in such areas as helping with homework and setting up work sessions at home.
- Parents will be strongly encouraged to volunteer for Academy activities through an organized parent volunteer program.
- Through the Parent Team (PT), parents will provide ongoing input on the operation of the Academy, playing an especially critical role in shaping the Code of Civility (described below) and assisting the Academy's efforts to reinforce sound character traits.
- Parents will be encouraged to participate in seminars and training sponsored by the Washington Parent Group Fund, Parents United, National P.T.A., Head Start, the Chartered Health Association, "Museum as a Resource," "The Telling Stories Project" with Howard University and various other community organizations dedicated to helping parents develop strong parenting skills.
- In addition to regularly scheduled P.T.A. meetings, the Academy will schedule a Back-to-School Night, a Father Figure Breakfast, a Grandparents Breakfast, and various other programs designed to involve parents in their children's learning.
- The Academy will include a Parent Center, which will provide a welcoming environment where parents can assemble during school hours to talk with each other and Academy staff, watch educational videos, or care for younger siblings. Parent volunteers will maintain a bulletin board at the Academy for posting items of common interest and will assist in the publication of a monthly newsletter for parents and the community.
- All meetings of the Academy's Board of Directors will be open to the public, with participation from parents welcomed and desired.

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Many regular public schools have equated "parental involvement" in schools either with an active role in governance—in running the Academy—or with providing volunteer services to the school. However, research on "school-based management" and similar mechanisms for promoting parental involvement in governance has consistently found that parents become disillusioned with their roles after discovering that parent councils have little authority to influence school budgeting, staffing, or programs. While promoting such involvement, traditional schools have generally strongly opposed fundamental parental involvement—the right of parents to decide whether or not their children will attend the regular public school, or take the money allocated by the community for their children's education to schools of their choice in which they have greater confidence. Charter schools, of course, provide this authority to parents by design.

Few of us have time to sit on the boards of the organizations on which we rely for products and services. For example, if we are dissatisfied with the quality of our children's health care, we do not first think of devoting countless hours to its improvement by gaining a seat on the board; rather, we express our dissatisfaction, and if our concerns are not resolved, we switch providers.

While many urban parents have little time in their busy days to help run their children's schools, they are more than capable of discriminating between a good school and a poor one. Accordingly, the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will foster parental involvement by treating parents, in its every action, as its customers—customers who must be satisfied and treated with respect and courtesy. In the Academy's professional development programs, staff will be urged to see parents in this light. The Academy will routinely gauge, both formally and informally, the reactions and concerns of parents, and use this information to improve the Academy's programs and operations.

The Academy Director and managers will consult regularly with parents to ensure that they are pleased with the progress their children are making and to act if they are not. In addition, all teachers will have scheduled appointments to meet with parents before or after school and periodically throughout the year.

### *Community Participation*

The founders firmly believe that meaningful community participation is another essential component of a successful school. A conscious effort will be made to identify all those who may be able to extend the opportunities for learning and enrich the educational experiences of Academy students and their families. Toward that end, the founders have contacted various local businesses, which might provide donated materials, equipment, and tutoring and mentoring services. Local churches have already expressed their support for the proposed charter school. The Academy will develop strong partnerships with grassroots organizations that offer training for parents and families to help empower them and strengthen the community at large. In

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addition, as noted above, the Academy will seek assistance from local educational institutions and health and social service agencies to ensure quality services for students in need.

The founders have already established partnerships with local companies and organizations, formerly affiliated with the Richardson Elementary School. A list of these groups is provided in Appendix D.

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## *School Organization and Culture*

As important as the Academy's relationships with the outside community are student and staff relations *within* the Academy community. As charter schools are chosen by both their customers and their employees, a great strength of the charter school vehicle is the opportunity to forge a vital and distinctive community. This community can be of special importance in an urban setting, where students may come from weak or broken families. A school's community, as James Coleman has noted, can substantially reinforce what is provided by the family. The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will create a community that is both loving and demanding. It will provide a focused, disciplined environment conducive to the Academy's primary mission: student learning.

Consistent with this philosophy, all students will be asked to wear simple uniforms. Far from diminishing their individuality, uniforms permit students to focus their attentions on academics and on those aspects of their personalities that are truly important. And just as important for a school of choice, parents want uniforms and believe in them.

In addition, the division of the Academy into small "neighborhoods" will contribute to the creation of tight-knit communities, where each student is easily recognized and valued as an individual. Without the option of getting lost in the crowd afforded students in overcrowded classrooms and warehouse-style schools, students at the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will be held accountable for their actions and will be expected to contribute to the enrichment of their "neighborhoods" and the Academy at large.

The Academy will be organized to allow for the empowerment and participation of parents, staff, and community members, who will be organized in three advisory teams: the School Planning and Management Team (SPMT), the Parent Team (PT), and the Student and Staff Support Team (SSST). The SPMT will help plan and coordinate school activities; the PT will involve parents at every level of school activity in an advisory capacity; and the SSST will address school-wide issues and offer recommendations concerning individual student cases. The efforts of each team will be guided by three principles: consensus, collaboration, and no-fault. These concepts, when put into practice, will nurture a positive school climate. Dr. James Comer summarizes the reasoning behind this approach to decision-making and problem-solving:

Consensus allows for brainstorming, in-depth discussion, cross fertilization of ideas, and a plan

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for trying different solutions in some sequence. Decision by consensus discourages voting on issues because voting results in losers who may feel that they have no stake in the decision that is made. Collaboration without paralyzing the principal or any other individual requires respect for other points of view and willingness to work cooperatively as part of a team. In the no-fault approach to problem solving, 'fingers of blame' are not pointed at others, but everyone accepts equal responsibility for change.

In addition, parent volunteers will be recruited to work in the classrooms and a mentoring program will be developed in cooperation with the Marshal Heights Development Corporation and other community groups to enhance the concept of a "learning community."

## *Safety, Order, and Discipline*

Another crucial component of the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will be the Academy's Code of Civility, stating clearly all School-wide rules governing student behavior, including any infractions that may result in suspension or expulsion. The title of the code indicates an important distinction between this code and others that focus exclusively on physical behavior. The founders believe that clear, unambiguous rules, along with predetermined consequences for breaking the rules, are essential to a well-functioning code. The founders reject, however, the notion that such a code should be, or even can be, a purely behavior-oriented document. Students are moral and ethical agents, acting in a moral and ethical environment at School. Any rules governing student behavior can only be fully grasped, and are certainly best followed, when they are widely understood in their moral context.

Furthermore, the code must support and reinforce the primary mission of the Academy: rigorous academic learning by its students. Therefore, the Academy will disallow behavior that threatens that mission, such as plagiarism or disrespectful comments toward a teacher—even if such behavior might be judged differently if performed in a different context or directed toward a different individual. Finally, the Code of Civility connotes a higher standard than the avoidance of physical harm or disruption among students. Students must be civil toward one another at all times, and in so doing establish the habits that characterize a civil society.

The code—the text of which will be finalized in consultation with the Academy Director, once he or she is appointed—will also include the overarching academic and non-academic goals of the Academy. While there will not be defined consequences for violating these ideals, they will serve as a clear reminder of the higher standards toward which all members of the Academy community should aim. Furthermore, next to each explicit prohibition in the code, there will be a succinct rationale, including any moral or ethical dimensions.

The small-school climate created by the Academy's "neighborhood" structure will allow teachers to know their students on an individual basis, and to serve as advisors and mentors for those who may be lacking such role models at home. The Academy's structure will also facilitate

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the monitoring of student behavior, ensuring that violations of the code are addressed promptly and appropriately. As noted above, parents will play a key role in shaping the Code of Civility and assisting the Academy's efforts to reinforce sound character traits. Toward this end, the Academy Director and managers will consult regularly with parents.

Academy staff and management will maintain constant vigilance in the observance of possible safety and fire code violations and will ensure full compliance with all health and safety laws.

### *Professional Development for Teachers, Administrators, and Other School Staff*

Two weeks of intensive professional development will be provided in July and August for all School teaching staff. Sessions will be held on the Academy philosophy and culture, the curriculum, student assessments and student portfolios, lesson delivery, classroom management, the Academy's Code of Civility and discipline practices, diversity and parent outreach, and the Academy's technology system. Leading specialists will be engaged to conduct workshops and to address the staff; recreational activities and social periods will provide opportunities for the Academy's new staff to get acquainted and to establish a tight-knit community devoted to the Academy's success. These activities will be organized by a permanent, full-time professional development coordinator, who will be on-site throughout the year to assist faculty with the new curriculum and to address issues that will inevitably arise with the new curriculum and School design.

In addition, Advantage Schools' proprietary intranet technology will enable teachers and other staff to "chat" online with their colleagues at other Advantage locations to solve problems, discuss new challenges, or share ideas. Teachers will have adequate professional development time each day, their own laptop personal computers and telephone/voice mail/facsimile machines, and their own private workspaces among other teachers.

All staff will also have the opportunity to continue their education with partial tuition reimbursement.

### *Structure of the School Day and Year*

The Academy's hours of operation during regular school days will be from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for students in grades pre-K through 2, and from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for students in grades 3 through 5. The Academy will be open from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for students and families who desire such access. An after-school program, operated on a tuition basis, with scholarships for families of limited means, will be available within the Academy.

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## B. BUSINESS PLAN

### 1. PLANNING AND ESTABLISHMENT

#### *Profile of Founding Group*

The local founding committee is composed of parents, teachers, and community members from the far Northeast section of D.C., who united in response to the closure of the Richardson Elementary School. From the beginning, they have been bound by their commitment to serve displaced Richardson students and extend the promise of a world-class education to local families. All members of the local founding committee have been involved in the school governance model established by Dr. James P. Comer of the Yale Child Study Center. Each member played a role in attracting the attention of Yale University, which honored the Richardson School community in 1994 with the Patrick T. Daley Award. The founders were also involved in 1996, when the National Association of Elementary School Principals designated the school community as a demonstration site during its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. The same year, Congress designated the Richardson School as one of the six National Safe Schools.

During the application process, the local founding committee has attempted to restructure the group by downsizing its original members and enlisting additional expertise. This effort is reflected in the selection of an attorney (the sister-in-law of the slain policeman for whom the Academy is named) and a business manager with accounting experience.

The local committee has developed a founding partnership with Advantage Schools, Inc., which will serve as the Academy's education management provider. Advantage Schools, Inc. opened two new charter schools this fall, based on the same model, enrollment, and partnership structure; together, they will serve over 1,000 children. Both schools were sited, enrolled, staffed, and built in nine months. In addition, Advantage Schools is under contract to manage the Jersey City Golden Door Charter School in Jersey City, New Jersey, which will open in September 1998.

The District's public charter school law has opened up public education to new ideas and new providers, allowing Advantage Schools the opportunity to demonstrate the heights of academic achievement that urban students can routinely attain when the advantages of charter school governance are coupled with ambitious new academic standards; to offer the District's families rich new choices in public education; and to create new professional settings for teachers, which permit them to succeed, free from debilitating work rules, financial constraints, and excess regulation.

Advantage Schools also brings to the partnership its Academic Advisory Council, composed of nationally renowned education and education reform experts. The Council's

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membership includes:

- *Francie Alexander*, Vice President of Scholastic, Inc., an innovative curriculum developer and publisher, former Director of Curriculum for The Edison Project, and former Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for California
- *Jeanne Allen*, President of the Center for Education Reform, a national education clearinghouse, advocacy organization, and grassroots support group
- *Chester E. Finn, Jr.*, fellow at the Hudson Institute, Co-Chair of the Educational Excellence Network, Director of the "Charter Schools in Action" Project, Professor of Education at Vanderbilt University, and one of the founding partners of The Edison Project
- *Howard Fuller*, Distinguished Professor of Education at Marquette University and Founder of the Institute for the Transformation of Learning at Marquette University, and former Superintendent of the Milwaukee Public Schools
- *Diane Ravitch*, senior fellow at New York University, former US Assistant Secretary for Education, and before that, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution
- *Abigail Thernstrom*, senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, adjunct Professor of Education at Boston University, member of the Massachusetts Board of Education, and member of the Board of Directors of the Center for Equal Opportunity

The principals of Advantage and the Academy's founders share an abiding commitment to excellence in education, as well as the belief that all students can rise to the challenge of a rigorous curriculum and high academic standards. Together, they possess the expertise and deep roots in the community necessary to ensure the long-term success of the Robert Johnson Academy.

Following is a list of the founders' names and addresses. Full resumes of the founders are included in Appendix A. Resumes for Sherry Dailey and Lucy Williams, parents of former Richardson students who were active throughout the charter school planning process, are not available at the time of this application; they will be provided at a later date upon request. Resumes for the principals of Advantage Schools are provided in Appendix C.

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Sherry Dailey  
5826 East Capitol Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20019

Pamela (Lipscomb) Davis-Gardner  
807 Tuckerman Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20011

Michelle L. Harvey  
223 Adams Street, NE, Suite 3  
Washington, DC 20002-1100

Marilyn Jean Lanier  
1704 Tioga Road  
Fort Washington, Maryland 20744

Gwendolyn Roberts Majette  
8750 Georgia Avenue #1231A  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Michelle T. Moore-Alston  
251 V Street, NW, Apartment 21  
Washington, DC 20001

Adrienne Stoddard  
Post Office Box 64175  
Washington, DC 20029

Phyllis Ware  
7417 Walker Mill Drive  
Capitol Heights, Maryland 20743

Gail Whitaker  
123 South Courthouse Road #7  
Arlington, Virginia 22204

Lucy William  
304 54<sup>th</sup> Street, NE #32  
Washington, DC 20019

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## *Planning Process*

Prior to the closure of Richardson Elementary School, parents and teachers met often to formulate the new school's mission, philosophy, focus, goals, and design. They polled parents, teachers, and community members who shared their interest in creating an exemplary public charter school to serve displaced Richardson students and other D.C. children who are dissatisfied with their schools. The planning process continued after the Richardson School's closing with weekly and bi-weekly meetings at the neighborhood library and a local church.

Advantage Schools, Inc. engaged in extensive discussions with members of the local founding committee during the planning process, offering its experience and expertise in education and charter school management. Advantage's proven curriculum and unique school design matched the vision of the local founders; a founding partnership was established between the two entities, with Advantage Schools being retained as the Academy's education management provider.

Built on the innovation and hard work of parents, teachers, and other members of the community, the Robert Johnson Academy will continue to welcome community input throughout the development phase and in the daily operation of the school. For more information about how parents and community members will play a role in the Academy, see the Support for Learning Section.

## *Corporate Structure and Nonprofit Status of the School*

The Robert Louis Johnson Academy Board of Trustees will file for status as a nonprofit corporation in the District of Columbia prior to the Public Charter School Board's approval of charter school applications.

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## 2. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

### *Board of Trustees*

At the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy, the Board of Trustees will:

- Exercise final legal responsibility for the Academy and its performance
- Provide leadership for the project in the community
- Promote awareness of the Academy's new educational opportunities among the District's families, local civic and political leaders, and the media
- Define the Academy's mission and set broad policy
- Adopt the Academy's strategic plan
- Oversee the contracts held by the Academy
- Participate in Academy development activities.

The Board will contract out in their entirety the business operations and the academic program of the Academy to Advantage Schools, Inc. Advantage Schools will, therefore, be responsible for the daily operations of the Academy, leaving the Board free to focus on the broader issues mentioned above. The Board will be free to terminate Advantage's contract—and contract with a different provider—if Advantage fails to perform.

It is the experience of the founders that small boards create a more effective body for managing an emerging organization such as the Robert Johnson Academy. Accordingly, the Board will be composed of just nine members. Throughout the Academy's development, the Board will remain diverse.

The Board will function under standard bylaws established in accordance with federal and District statutes pertaining to the governance of charter schools. All meetings of the Academy's Board of Directors will be open to the public, with participation from parents, students, and staff welcomed and desired.

The Board will initially be composed of nine individuals, as follows:

- *Michelle L. Harvey*, Director, Harvey & Associates  
223 Adams Street, NE, Suite 3, Washington, DC 20002-1100
- *Marilyn Jean Lanier*, Headstart Teacher, Richardson Elementary School  
1704 Tioga Road, Fort Washington, Maryland 20744

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- *Pamela (Davis) Lipscomb-Gardner*, Library Media Specialist, Richardson Elementary School, 807 Tuckerman Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011
- *Gwendolyn Roberts Majette*, Legal Writing Instructor, Howard Univ. School of Law 8750 Georgia Avenue #1231A, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
- *Adrienne Stoddard*, Former Volunteer, Richardson Elementary School  
Post Office Box 64175, Washington, DC 20029
- *Gail Whitaker*, Manager, Member Services, American Pharmaceutical Association  
123 S. Courthouse Road #7, Arlington, Virginia 22204
- *Michele T. Moore-Alston*, Former Educational Aide, Richardson Elementary School  
251 V Street, NW, Apartment 21, Washington, DC 20001
- Designee of the Marshall Heights Development Corporation
- A *parent* of a child enrolled in the Academy, to be selected by parents at an annual School-wide parent meeting.

These members were all invited to serve because they offer representation of the community that will be served, a strong commitment to education reform, and experience in the classroom and as parents in the District's public schools. The Academy is being created first and foremost for the benefit of students in Northeast Washington, many of whom were displaced by the closure of the Richardson Elementary School; representation from the Richardson School community, therefore, is crucial to the governance structure of the school. Other individuals who, through their roles in the community, have an interest in and provide unique perspectives on public education will also enhance the Board's composition.

Resumes of the aforementioned members of the Board are included in Appendix A; evidence of their commitment to serve is provided in Appendix B.

## *Rules and Policies*

The school's Board of Trustees will establish all rules and policies governing the Academy, either through the founding corporation's bylaws or individual resolutions. These policies will cover all aspects of the school's operation, from board composition to committee structure; from teacher and student conduct policies to staff hiring practices; and from student recruitment procedures to community outreach programs. The general philosophies upon which the Board will make its decisions on various policies are outlined throughout this application in the relevant sections. For example, the Human Resource Information Section outlines the notions that will underlie the hiring practices of the school.

Ultimate authority for the adoption of broad rules and policies rests with the Board of Trustees. As the Academy's education management provider, Advantage Schools will use its

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experience in charter school operations to make recommendations and propose policies for the Board's action. In addition, student and staff handbooks will be developed and approved by the Board.

## *Administrative Structure*

The founding coalition believes that the roles of board, management, and staff in any well managed organization are distinct:

- The board reviews and sets overarching policies, approves an annual budget, and hires and fires management
- Management negotiates and manages contracts, supervises staff, and runs daily operations
- Staff are responsible for directly carrying out the mission of the organization.

Advantage Schools, Inc., a Massachusetts company with considerable expertise in charter schools, will function as staff to the Board. The academic program and business operations of the Academy will be contracted in their entirety to Advantage Schools. Advantage will be responsible for obtaining financing and overseeing the renovation of the Academy building; recruiting and managing the Academy staff; developing the academic curriculum; and contracting for food services, transportation, and building management; and managing the Academy's academic, business, and financial operations on an ongoing basis.

Teachers, parents, and students will have ample opportunities to shape decisions that affect the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy, first and foremost by attending meetings of the Board of Trustees. In addition, the Academy's lead teachers will comprise a Leadership Team that will identify and attempt to resolve School-wide instructional issues in conjunction with the Academy Director and professional development coordinator. As noted above, parents will provide ongoing input on the operation of the Academy through the Parent Team.

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## 3. FINANCE

### *Anticipated Sources of Funds*

Consistent with the heart of the charter school initiative, the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will meet its goals with the *same* financial resources as the surrounding regular public schools (in fact, because capital costs must be drawn from per student operating revenues, actual resources will be fewer). The base-level per pupil allocation provided the Academy in its first year of operation will be between \$4,437 and \$6,211. In addition, like other public schools, the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will pursue aggressively all available competitive grants, and will solicit private gifts (from individuals, corporations, and foundations) to underwrite such *supplemental* offerings as the Academy's after-school program. Advantage Schools will invest up to \$3.5 million in collateral for securing private financing for site renovation. In addition, Advantage will invest roughly \$250,000 in start-up costs, staff and student recruitment, curriculum development, and professional development, and may also provide certain capital contributions or credit enhancements as required. This sum represents a firm commitment.

Advantage Schools has at its disposal for the School project, the extensive backing of its equity investors, which include:

- *Fidelity Capital*. Venture capital fund of one of the country's leading financial services companies, Fidelity Investments.
- *Bessemer Venture Partners*, one of the most successful and long-standing venture capital firms.
- *Bright Horizons Children's Centers*, the nation's leading provider of worksite day care.

### *Planned Fundraising Efforts*

In advance of receiving its first payment of regular public school funds, the Academy will seek start-up funds from several sources. First, the Academy will apply for federal start-up funds to be made available through the District of Columbia Public Schools, which has requested at least \$1 million to be disbursed. Second, the founders and Advantage Schools will pursue charter school start-up funds available through private nonprofit organizations (which Advantage has successfully obtained for other schools it operates). Third, a fundraising drive will be conducted to solicit funds and materials to support the Academy's communicative and performing arts program (for example, the installation of television monitors and the creation of a small broadcasting studio and another studio for artistic activities within the Academy). The founders have considerable experience in this regard, having successfully conducted such drives in association with the former Richardson School.

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## *Financial Management*

In addition to recruiting and managing School staff and developing the Academy's academic curriculum, Advantage Schools, Inc. will be responsible for obtaining financing and overseeing the renovation of the Academy building and contracting for food services, any necessary transportation, and building management.

As staff to the Board, Advantage will submit regular budget variance and other fiscal reports to the Board of Directors for review and approval. These reports will be generated from an automated financial management system, a software package called Solomon IV, that Advantage will maintain and set up for the Academy and that will be integrated with Advantage's own corporate systems. In addition to identifying issues related to the use of School resources, Advantage's fiscal reports will describe both progress on and the results of corrective actions.

Central business and administrative services will include:

- Financial planning
- Accounting
- Financial reporting
- Facility management
- Procurement
- Payroll and benefits management.

Within 90 days of the end of each school year, a comprehensive audit of the revenues and expenditures of the proposed charter school will be conducted in accordance with GAAP principles by a certified public accounting firm selected by the Academy's Board of Directors. The results of each annual audit will then be forwarded to the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board and other interested oversight agencies and outside observers.

As the school's education management provider, Advantage Schools will ensure the timely launch of the Robert Louis Johnson Academy and meet all expenses associated with the school's operation. Any cash flow problems will be addressed through non-interest loans—effectively a line of credit—from Advantage Schools. A detailed cash flow analysis for the Academy's first year is provided in the Budget Section.

## *Civil Liability and Insurance*

The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will purchase readily available trustee liability insurance with \$5 million limits to protect its Board members. Commercial General Liability with \$5 million limits will protect the Academy and the Board against bodily injury, property damage, personal injury, and advertising injury claims. In addition, an Umbrella

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(Excess Liability) policy with \$5 million limits will be purchased to increase the insurance limits and to provide excess professional and general liability coverage. An appropriate property insurance package, with \$1 million limits, will be purchased as well. In addition to the standard coverage, the Academy will include boiler and machinery coverage with \$1 million limits.

Any vehicles used by the school will be properly insured against claims for bodily injury and property damage, with \$1 million limits, against liability claims.

School staff will be provided a benefits package, including a health, dental, and vision coverage, life insurance, and retirement benefits.

### *Provision for Audit*

Charter Schools, like other instruments of government, may not only be held accountable to Generally Accepted Accounting Principals (GAAP), but also to Generally Accepted Government Accounting Standards (GAGAS). Under the more extensive provisions of a GAGAS audit, the School would demonstrate not only that financial statements accurately depict the organization's revenues and expenses, but that spending achieved the organization's *programmatic* goals. Such a review would focus not simply on whether public funds were used to purchase certain "outputs" (for example, the number of hours of classroom instruction), but rather whether or not key "outcomes" were achieved (for example, the percentage of students achieving at a stated percentile on standardized tests).

The first step would be to establish the Academy's programmatic outcomes. These are composed of goals for student learning, student attendance, drop-out rates, and other objectives described in this application, which, were the Academy to receive a charter, would become part of the charter agreement. Annually, the Academy would report in detail its performance against these programmatic objectives, describe deficiencies in performance, and set forth corrective actions for remediating these deficiencies. Additionally, the Academy will comply with any other requirements that the District might specify at a later point.

Within 90 days of the end of each school year, a comprehensive audit of the revenues and expenditures of the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will be conducted in accordance with GAAP principles by a certified public accounting firm selected by the Academy's Board of Trustees. The results of each annual audit will be reported to the District of Columbia Charter School Board and other interested oversight agencies and outside observers.

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## 4. FACILITIES

### *Identification of a Site*

The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will be housed in the building that housed the G.H. Richardson Elementary School. The address is Square 5241, Lot 800, 53<sup>rd</sup> and Blaine Street, NE, Washington, DC. This site is in the far Northeast, Deanwood section of Washington, DC, near the Prince George's County, Maryland boundary line. The Richardson School was built in three stages: the original, three-story sector was constructed circa 1948; the central sector in 1953, and the last addition was built in 1959. The facility contains, approximately, 62,862 square feet of floor area gross, and is situated on a lot containing total land area of 206,201 square feet, zoned R-5-A.

### *Site Renovation*

The selected facility is in an area zoned for school use. A former district school, this facility would provide all spaces required for the Academy's educational program, including separate cafeteria and physical education space. Advantage's renovation program includes upgrades or installation of new fire and life safety systems to meet all applicable current codes, including handicapped accessibility; the refinishing of existing interior surfaces, removal or abatement of hazardous materials in accordance with applicable codes; upgrades to, replacement of, or new heating, ventilation, air conditioning, plumbing, electrical systems including telecommunication and internet-based data network. Advantage's implementation program includes locally based architectural and engineering services for preparing documents and monitoring construction under the direction of the company's Boston-based national program including Real Estate, Architectural, and Engineering services.

### *Financing Plans for Facilities*

It is the understanding of the founders that key staff of the Emergency Board of Trustees for the District of Columbia have set forth an innovative proposal being considered by the D.C. Board of Education, which involves the transfers of titles of city-owned property to charter schools for a token price or, alternately, the long-term leasing of such property at low or no cost to charter schools.

Today, the District incurs substantial annual mothballing expenses (i.e. maintenance, security, and utilities) stemming from the city's surplus property—property which the District cannot afford to renovate and which has little or no market value given the limits imposed on potential developers by local zoning ordinances, the location of the buildings, and the unique characteristics of the properties themselves. The proposal before the Board of Education would relieve the District of this financial burden and allow for the renovation of these properties by charter schools with private capital.

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Assuming that this proposal is approved, Advantage Schools will purchase for a token price the former Richardson Elementary School property from the District, or it will enter into a low or no-cost long-term lease of the property. It will convert the facility into a state-of-the-art school, obtaining a 15-year mortgage to cover the costs of renovation, with a 30-year amortization schedule.

~~If the property cannot be made available as proposed, making it necessary either to lease the facility at a substantial price or to buy it at "fair market value," the Board of Trustees and Advantage Schools would adjust the school's expense structure downward to accommodate the costs.~~

### *Building Maintenance*

An on-site school business manager will be responsible for overseeing the Academy's maintenance programs. Advantage Schools will hire a custodian to handle basic maintenance of the facility, and will contract out for other services beyond the scope of a single individual.

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## 5. RECRUITING AND MARKETING

### *Outreach to the Community*

The Academy's local founders have deep roots in the community and have already begun extensive outreach efforts. After the closure of the Richardson Elementary School and the decision to pursue charter school status, the local founders polled area residents to solicit input about the design of the new school. They have since spread the word about the Academy's development, receiving firm commitments of support from local churches, business, community organizations, and the Marshall Heights Community Development Corporation.

During the Academy's start-up period, the founders will intensify such efforts, visiting churches and other community organizations across the city to speak to these groups' members about the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy and encourage local children to apply for admission. The Academy's founders and Advantage will also provide local African-American, Hispanic, and other ethnic news outlets with regular, detailed reports on the progress of the Academy's development plans, and will announce the Academy's public information nights and other public events through these media.

As much as possible, the Academy's outreach efforts to the District's ethnic and minority communities will be conducted through direct personal contact with these communities' leaders and representatives, in an effort to build lasting relationships with their constituents.

Finally, the Academy will work to forge collaborative relationships with many local businesses, and arts and community organizations in an effort to enhance its programs and create ties to the surrounding community.

As an enclave of serious scholarship and conspicuous achievement, the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will strengthen the community, serving as a beacon of hope and promise for local residents and businesses.

### *Recruitment of Students*

As noted above, to attract a sufficient pool of students reflective of the District's school-age population, the founders and the Board of Trustees will initiate an aggressive public information campaign. Information packages will be produced and provided to local news and information media, including local cable access television stations, and to D.C. community groups, associations, employers, and social service agencies. These packages will include a mission statement; summaries of the curriculum, faculty, facility, and transportation services; and other pertinent information. In addition, at least three public information nights will be held in the spring of 1998, during which potential students and their parents will be able to meet School leaders and have their questions about the Academy answered. Informational phone numbers will

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be established in Spanish and other languages commonly spoken by the District's schoolchildren and their families at home.

The founders and Advantage Schools have proven experience with such outreach efforts. The founders have already enlisted the signatures of 200 parents who intend to enroll their children in the Academy. In Advantage's North Carolina and Arizona Schools, targeted recruitment campaigns resulted in student bodies that look like the surrounding community in ethnic and economic measures. Similarly, a campaign to attract a diverse student body to Boston's Renaissance School, conducted by Advantage Schools, resulted in an applicant pool of 2,000 students, which mirrored the ethnic makeup of the city's population, without the use of quotas. In Washington, these techniques will be employed to attract a student body that will closely match the demographic composition of the city's schoolchildren.

The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will conduct a lottery if the number of students wishing to enroll exceeds the number of available spaces. The lottery will be open to all, will not rely on computers, and will be easily understood and followed by all observers. All students whose applications were filed by the application deadline will be separated by grade and entered into the lottery. A drawing of names by grade will then be held until all spaces are filled, with preference given to siblings of current students. Once all spaces are filled, the drawing of names will continue to establish a waiting list. Students will be placed on the waiting list in the order their names are drawn. Students whose applications are received after the deadline will be placed on the waiting list in the order that their applications are received.

Based on Advantage's successful enrollment of the other schools it manages, the founders are confident that the number of applications will far exceed the number of available spaces, ensuring that the projected level of enrollment is met.

### *Future Expansion and Improvements*

During its first year, the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will enroll 540 students in grades pre-K through 5. The Academy will expand to include grade 6 the following year. Prior to the third year and once the elementary program is established, the Board of Trustees will consider expanding the Academy to include a comprehensive pre-K through 12 program, which would involve the acquisition of one or more additional sites. The founders expect that the Academy's success in its first year will generate considerable interest among teachers, and that attracting additional staff as the Academy expands will be achieved primarily through word-of-mouth.

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## C. PLAN OF OPERATION

### 1. STUDENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### *Timetable for Registering and Admitting*

The recruitment and application period for all students will be January 15 through April 30, 1998. The application for admission will be due on April 30, 1998. A lottery, if necessary, will be held on May 10, 1998. Parents will be notified of student acceptance from May 11 through May 18, 1998. This will be done by mail and by a personal phone call to each family.

#### *Policies and Procedures for Selection, Admission, Enrollment, Withdrawal, Suspension, and Expulsion of Students*

The Academy will be open to all children, on a space-available basis within each grade. The Academy will not discriminate on the basis of intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, disability, proficiency in English, or any other basis prohibited by law.

There will be no admission requirements. Preference will be given to applicants who live in the District; if there are more eligible applicants than available slots, the Academy will conduct a lottery to determine who will be admitted, as described above. Given the high demand for top-quality education options among District residents, the founders do not anticipate the need to recruit students from outside Washington. Preference will always be given to residents, and non-residents who wish to attend the Academy will only be admitted in the unlikely event that there are unfilled seats. In such cases, in accordance with section 2206(e) of the District of Columbia School Reform Act, tuition will be charged at the rate established by the District of Columbia public schools. In each successive school year, students who were enrolled in the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy the previous year will keep their spaces in the Academy until they graduate.

Possession or use of any weapon, explosive, alcohol, or illegal drug, any assault on School staff members, or any other offenses incorporated into the Academy's Code of Civility will constitute just cause for expulsion. The Academy will comply with all applicable District and federal laws regarding such offenses (federal law provides for immediate expulsion for the possession of weapons barring any extenuating circumstances). Any assault on other students, swearing, or other displays of disrespect toward School staff members will result in automatic suspension, possibly leading to expulsion.

Such infractions will be reported to the Academy Director. The Director will decide on the appropriate action, in consultation with the Academy's leadership team, and the student's family will have the ability to request an appeal hearing to the Board of Trustees. The Board will decide whether there is adequate merit to hold an appeals hearing on any such decision.

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## 2. HUMAN RESOURCE INFORMATION

### *Key Leadership Roles*

Once chartered, Advantage Schools will oversee the recruitment of all on-site staff, including the Academy Director and business manager. In the meantime, under the Board's supervision, Advantage's senior management will carry out all administration functions of the proposed school. ~~Kathleen A. Madigan, Ed.D., Director of Curriculum and Instruction for all~~ Advantage Schools, will oversee the Academy's curriculum development. Dr. Madigan has over 20 years experience in general and special education environments. She is also a nationally recognized expert in Direct Instruction and school-wide implementation using research-based practices. One hundred percent of Dr. Madigan's time on the job will be devoted to implementing and constantly improving Advantage's curriculum and instructional methods. Dr. Madigan's resume is included in Appendix C. Advantage attorney Joel Carpenter of Sullivan & Worcester will provide legal services for the Academy as necessary until local counsel is appointed.

### *Qualifications of School Staff*

Vital to ensuring the success of the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy is the selection of a strong and vibrant School Director. In filling this position, Advantage will seek an individual who possesses the following:

- A strong academic record
- A record of leadership and sound management in an urban educational setting
- Public relations and interpersonal skills and experience in team-building
- An understanding of the diversity and unique character of the school community
- A passion for helping students attain high standards
- Consistently exceptional professional evaluations
- Outstanding references from peers, former colleagues, parents, and members of the school community.

The Academy Director will join Advantage Schools in shaping an exceptional teaching staff, seeking individuals with the following qualities:

- A strong undergraduate education
- High native intelligence
- A passion for helping students attain high standards
- High scores on standardized teachers' exams
- High grade point averages from high school and college
- Consistently exceptional professional evaluations

## THE ROBERT LOUIS JOHNSON ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY

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- Teaching awards and other professional honors from parent groups, local businesses, and educational partnerships
- Outstanding references from peers, former students, and parents.

Each successful applicant for a junior teaching position at the Academy will be assigned to a senior mentor teacher and a support team that includes other teachers, administrators, and curriculum specialists. In addition to the attributes listed above, standards for senior mentor teachers will include a distinguished record of demonstrable teaching success in an urban setting and a solid reputation for mentoring and overseeing less experienced teachers.

Most importantly, Advantage will look for faculty who share the founders'

- Belief in a rigorous academic curriculum
- Convictions that the best gift the school can bestow on its students are the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in today's economy and society, and that real self-worth comes from tangible accomplishment and from knowing things
- Entrepreneurial approach and desire to innovate in close collaboration with the entire school and national team.

Candidates for other positions in the Academy will also be required to demonstrate expertise and considerable experience in their fields. Before final offers are made, Advantage's Human Resources Director will conduct thorough background checks on all final candidates, including volunteers.

### *Staffing Plan*

In the academic year 1998-1999, with a planned enrollment of 540 students, the Academy's teaching staff will consist of 45 full-time regular and supplemental teachers, other faculty, and teaching assistants. Additional School staff will include a School Director, business manager, secretary, technology and media specialist, technology aide, library aide, professional development coordinator and parent liaison, nurse, and custodian. As required by the Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) of enrolled students, special education faculty and itinerant specialists (including speech therapists, psychologists, and physical therapists) will be provided under contract with Advantage Schools. Advantage's information technology director will develop and implement the Academy's technology program.

While the average teacher/student ratio at the Academy will be about 1:22, smaller study groups will be established for reading and mathematics to ensure that students receive individualized attention in these subjects.

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## *Employment Policies*

Once chartered, Advantage Schools will oversee a teacher recruitment process. The founders will focus their initial efforts on former faculty and staff of the Richardson Elementary School, but will also recruit exceptional faculty and staff from the greater Washington metropolitan area and elsewhere. The Academy will advertise in newspapers throughout the Washington metro region and other media to attract a top-quality teaching staff. In addition, the founders believe that due to the scope of the proposed project, word-of-mouth will generate a substantial number of interested teacher applicants.

The founders expect a high level of interest in the Academy on the part of teacher candidates, as has been the case in charter schools across the country. As documented in *Teachers at Work*, Susan Moore Johnson's study of teachers and their preferences, many teachers will be drawn to an opportunity to strive for excellence in urban education provided that the organizational culture in which they will work permits them to be successful.

For example, at the Boston Renaissance Charter School, where Advantage Schools provided executive management services during its startup period, over 2,000 teachers applied for the first 40 positions when the School first opened. Likewise, in the three other states where Advantage Schools manages charter schools and has conducted staff recruitment—North Carolina, Arizona, and New Jersey—teachers flocked to the opportunities presented them, and Advantage received many more applications than available positions. Similarly, at the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy, teacher recruitment will be facilitated by the Academy's design and by the tools for success provided to its teachers. Great teachers will want to work in an environment where they are treated as professionals; where they are provided with such opportunities as ongoing professional development and such tools as laptop computers; and where they will be charged with implementing a proven curriculum.

While recruiting, Advantage Schools will clearly articulate the Academy's teacher compensation system, which will include opportunities for significant performance-based remuneration and a benefits package equal to or better than that of the surrounding public schools. Staff will be offered an insurance package, which includes health plans, dental and vision coverage, life insurance, and retirement benefits. In its teacher recruitment efforts, the Academy will affirmatively recruit minority teachers.

As with most other professionals, Advantage teachers will not be hired on a term contract, but rather on an at-will basis. At the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy, the Academy's Director will have chief responsibility for tailoring job descriptions and qualifications and hiring the Academy's faculty from among the most qualified applicants.

Job descriptions will be tailored for every School position, establishing clear performance

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standards. Since the Academy's curriculum will establish specific, measurable goals for student learning in each grade, teacher performance standards will include specific expectations for student progress during the school year as measured through periodic assessments. School-based administrators will be evaluated by the Academy Director, and by Advantage Vice President for Education Theodor Rebarber.

~~A poorly performing teacher will be provided every opportunity to improve her or his efficacy in the classroom, in conjunction with mentor teachers and the Academy's professional development coordinator. But if the failure is not addressed, the teacher will be dismissed. This approach will stand in welcome contrast to the regular system, in which a teacher is never let go, but rather moved to another school and another group of children. The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will run an education system, not an employment system. The Academy will not conflate its responsibility to its customers—to uphold the right of all its students to a quality education—with a false sense of obligation to every employee, regardless of employee performance.~~

The ability of the Academy's leader to hire and fire and to shape the very best teaching staff possible for the Academy's children is expected to contribute to staff morale, not undermine it. Capable, hard-working teachers will no longer resent colleagues who perform poorly, cannot be dismissed, and yet are compensated equally. As in any organization, professionals respect a leader who acknowledges and rewards excellence, and takes prompt action when performance consistently falls short of standards. This will be the guiding ethic of continued employment for any teacher at the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy.

Two weeks of intensive professional development will be provided in July and August for all School teaching staff. Sessions will be held on the Academy philosophy and culture, the curriculum, student assessments and student portfolios, lesson delivery, classroom management, the Academy's Code of Civility and discipline practices, diversity and parent outreach, and the Academy's technology system. Leading specialists will be engaged to conduct workshops and to address the staff; recreational activities and social periods will provide opportunities for the Academy's new staff to get acquainted and to establish a tight-knit community devoted to the Academy's success. These activities will be organized by a permanent, full-time professional development coordinator, who will be on-site throughout the year to assist faculty with the new curriculum and to address issues that will inevitably arise with the new curriculum and School design.

The Academy's faculty will also benefit from a faculty evaluation system that includes self-evaluation, peer and parent evaluation, and evaluation by supervisors, whether senior mentor teachers or the Academy Director. As in most for-profit and non-profit corporations, evaluations will be guided by a detailed evaluation instrument. This document will guide managers in assessing each teacher's performance, as measured by progress in attaining established

# THE ROBERT LOUIS JOHNSON ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY

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performance goals. In addition, each teacher will be asked to critique his or her supervisor's performance and to comment on how the supervisor could be a more effective manager.

These evaluations may also factor into a teacher's level of compensation, which will be determined by two components: first, *base compensation* will be set according to a teacher's level of experience; and second, *performance compensation*, in the form of bonuses, may be awarded to teachers when merited.

As noted in Finance Section, School staff will be provided a benefits package including health services, dental and vision coverage, life insurance, and retirement benefits.

While protecting the civil liberties of students and staff members, the Academy will institute a zero-tolerance policy with regard to the use of illegal substances on school property. Concerning the provision of equal employment opportunities, as noted above, the founders plan to recruit a diverse faculty that reflects the racial and ethnic profile of the school community. The founders are confident that given such affirmative efforts, the Academy will be in full compliance with all laws regarding equal employment opportunities.

### *Use of Volunteers*

An organized parent volunteer program will help engage parents in School activities, allowing them to play active roles in their children's education and contributing to the vitality of the Academy community. For a more detailed description of the Academy's use of volunteers, see the Parent Involvement Section on pages 32-33.

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## 3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEETING DISTRICT AND FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

*Health and Safety/Safety and Fire Codes for Buildings/ Subchapter B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1411 et seq.) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794)*

As part of any renovation project, first consideration will be given to meeting the requirements of the life safety and handicapped accessibility codes, including the Americans with Disabilities Act. These include upgrades to installation of new fire detection and alarm systems, new or improved fire protection (sprinkler) systems, remodeling or replacement of stairways, corridors, and egress doors to comply with current applicable codes.

### *Transportation*

Transportation will be provided for students with special needs. Also, in accordance with §2208 of the D.C. School Reform Act, students will be eligible for reduced fare on the District's public transportation system

### *Average Daily Attendance*

In accordance with §2204(c)(12) of the D.C. School Reform Act, the Academy will provide to enrollment data to the District of Columbia Public Schools, allowing the DCPS to comply with Section 3 of Article 2 of the Act of February 4, 1925.

### *Maintenance and Dissemination of Student Records/Compulsory Attendance Laws*

When it first opens, the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will seek a transfer of its students' records from their former schools, including any ILPs and data on students' eligibility for participation in Title I and other entitlement programs. Advantage will establish and maintain a central, automated database for the creation and maintenance of all Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy records. Strict confidentiality of student information will be maintained as required by federal and state laws.

With fire wall provisions for security and student confidentiality, appropriate files in the Academy's database will be accessible to each teacher through her or his notebook computer. From the database, Advantage and School staff members will be able to generate a variety of summary statistics and standard reports on School and student activities and performances. The Academy will be able to respond quickly to special requests for information under public school law, and to produce required public reports efficiently and accurately.

In accordance with D.C. code §31-401 *et seq.*, accurate student records will be kept and will be opened for inspection by the DCPS. Also in accordance with the law, the Academy will report all transfers, withdrawals, and enrollments to DCPS. In accordance with D.C. Code §31-501 *et seq.*, the Academy will require certifications of immunization and will also follow the

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protocol outlined in D.C. Code §31-504 (a)(1-4).

Regarding §31-601 et seq., preference will always be given to residents, and non-residents who wish to attend the Academy will only be admitted in the unlikely event that there are unfilled seats. In such cases, in accordance with §2206(e) of the District of Columbia School Reform Act, tuition will be charged at the rate established by the DCPS.

Finally, the nonprofit applying for a charter to open the Academy will abide by all provisions of D.C. Code §29-501 et seq., including maintaining all corporate records and producing a two-year report as required by §29-526 and §29-584, respectively.

### *Title I of the Improving America's Schools Act*

The Academy expects to receive Title I funds. As the Academy's education management provider, Advantage Schools will use the sophisticated software package Solomon IV to maintain all financial records. Using this measure, Advantage will be able to track Title I funds to ensure that they are used appropriately and in accordance with District and federal laws.

### *Compliance with Civil Rights Statutes and Regulations of the Federal Government and the District of Columbia*

In keeping with its commitment to embrace diversity and promote tolerance and respect within the school community, the Academy will fully comply with all federal and District civil rights statutes and regulations.

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## 4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHARTER

### *Timetable and Tasks for Implementation of Charter*

The following table summarizes the major charter implementation activities and the corresponding time frames for each milestone.

MILESTONE	DATE(S)
1. Commencement of School Design and Operations Planning	Already Begun
2. Award of Charter	November 1997 or April 1, 1998
3. Completion of Financing Arrangements	March 15, 1998
4. Recruitment of School Director	February 1-April 30, 1998
5. Commencement of Parent Information and Outreach Program	January 15, 1998
6. Recruitment of Students	January 15-April 30, 1998
7. Commencement of Building Renovation	April 15, 1998
8. Deadline for Applications for Admission	April 30, 1998
9. Recruitment of Faculty	May 1-June 30, 1998
10. Student Lottery	May 10, 1998
11. Completion of School Design and Operations Planning	May 15, 1998
12. Recruitment of Administrative Staff Members	June 1-June 30, 1998
13. Appointment of School Director	June 1, 1998
14. Appointment of Faculty Members	June 1-June 30, 1998
15. Appointment of Administrative Staff Members	July 1, 1998
16. Pre-Service Faculty and Staff Training Program	July 16-August 31, 1998
17. Completion of Building Renovation	August 31, 1998
18. Orientation Night for Students and Parents	August 31, 1998
19. Opening of School	September 8, 1998

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## *Major Contracts Planned*

The Academy's major contract—for education management—has been granted to Advantage Schools, Inc. Advantage will either sub-contract with other vendors for specific services or the Academy will contract directly with other vendors. Among the larger such contracts will be food service, special education services, facility renovation, payroll administration, and insurance.

## *Orientation of Parents, Teachers, and Other Community Members*

Two weeks of intensive professional development will be provided in July and August for all Academy teaching staff. Sessions will be held on the Academy philosophy and culture, the curriculum, student assessments and student portfolios, lesson delivery, classroom management, the Academy's Code of Civility and discipline practices, diversity and parent outreach, and the Academy's technology system. Leading specialists will be engaged to conduct workshops and to address the staff; recreational activities and social periods will provide opportunities for the Academy's new staff to get acquainted and to establish a tight-knit community devoted to the Academy's success. These activities will be organized by a permanent, full-time professional development coordinator, who will be on-site throughout the year to assist faculty with the new curriculum and to address issues that will inevitably arise with the new curriculum and School design.

An Orientation Night will be held on August 31, 1998, to provide students and parents an opportunity to meet School leaders and have any last-minute questions about the Academy answered prior to the start of classes. At this time, families will also be able to pick up the Academy handbook and purchase school uniforms.

## *Services Sought from the District of Columbia Public Schools*

Included in Advantage's search for food services, will be the District of Columbia Public Schools. If the prices and quality of the DCPS services are superior to those of other prospective contractors, the Academy will enter into one or more contracts with the District.

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## D. PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN

### 1. GOALS AGAINST WHICH THE SCHOOL'S SUCCESS WILL BE JUDGED

The ambitious goals articulated throughout this application are sufficiently well defined to provide a sound basis for measuring the Academy's performance and progress. The clear and specific academic objectives and explicit non-academic goals established by the founders allow no room for interpretation. Either the Academy will achieve its stated goals and be judged a success by students, parents, and other members of the community, or it will not. In the latter case, the Academy will rightly be deemed a failure and suffer the consequences of decreased enrollment and possible closure.

A prevailing sense of responsibility to its customers—D.C.'s families—and clear lines of accountability present a marked contrast to the District's traditional public schools, which have fallen short of even the modest academic achievement, attendance, and graduation goals they set for themselves eight years ago. Indeed, in some areas, DCPS performance has decreased since the announcement of the District's goals.

The founders realize that eight years is far too long to hold the District's children hostage. They have established lofty goals for the Academy and a well developed plan for achieving them.

### 2. STANDARDS FOR PERFORMANCE

For details regarding performance objectives for students and for the Academy, please refer to the Mission and Purposes and Academic Design Sections of this application.

### 3. BASELINE PERFORMANCE

A variety of standardized tests will be used to establish a baseline for measuring performance and progress, including District assessments and the NAEP reading, writing, mathematics, science, history, and geography tests. Mathematics and science performance of students in other G-7 nations will also be used to provide an assessment baseline. For more information about the Academy's planned use of various assessments, see the Student Assessment Section.

### 4. MEASUREMENT

The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will undergo ongoing, continuous quality assessment by the Board of Trustees, Advantage Schools, parents, and community members. Through Advantage's system of comprehensive school assessment, the

# **THE ROBERT LOUIS JOHNSON ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY**

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quality of the Academy's most important outcome—student performance—will be evaluated regularly.

The Academy is committed to attaining, at minimum, the standards described in the Academic Design Section, as measured by the assessments discussed in Student Assessment Section. In addition, the Academy will conduct a longitudinal study of student performance. The performance of a sample of students in each grade (selected to be representative of the D.C. public schools) will be tracked over the full course of its enrollment in the Academy. The performance of each cohort will be publicly reported. The Academy's Professional Development Coordinator will design and conduct the evaluation process in conjunction with Advantage Vice President Theodor Rebarber and Kathleen Madigan, Director of Curriculum and Instruction for Advantage Schools

## **5. REPORTING PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS TO PARENTS, THE COMMUNITY, AND THE CHARTERING AUTHORITY**

Results of all of the aforementioned assessments and studies will be reported regularly to the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board.

The Academy will establish and maintain close communication with parents through:

- Quarterly parent conferences
- A Parent Advisory Council responsible for addressing issues of concern to School families
- A parent volunteer program
- Annual School "report cards."

All meetings of the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy Board of Trustees will be public and, as mentioned above, there will be a parent representative serving on the Board of Trustees who will report to the Board at each meeting, thereby keeping the Board apprised of the degree of parental involvement.

The Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will organize activities that promote ongoing communication with the broader community and are beneficial to the educational and cultural life of the District. Such activities will include:

- Development of community service programs for students and their families
- Fundraising for School events and special activities or needs
- Sponsorship of guest speakers and field trips open to the public
- Sponsorship of student production, open to the public
- Annual media performing arts festival.

## **THE ROBERT LOUIS JOHNSON ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY**

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Further, to promote a broad involvement by the Washington community in the affairs of the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy, the Academy will invite members of the city's diverse minority organizations, businesses, and educational institutions to serve on School evaluation panels. Input from these panels will help managers remain aware of the public's impressions and concerns regarding the Academy.

To keep the District informed of its performance, the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy will report regularly to the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board. To demonstrate the efficacy of its curricula and teaching methods, the Academy will cooperate in every way with the District's educational assessment approaches.

The Academy's ultimate accountability is to parents through choice. If the Robert Louis Johnson Arts and Technology Academy does not maintain the confidence of its customers, the Academy's viability will be threatened—as it should. The Academy's Directors and staff will consult constantly with School parents to ensure that they are happy with the progress their children are making and to act if they are not. Surveys of parents and of students will provide additional information on customer satisfaction.

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## E. CERTIFICATIONS

### 1. ASSURANCES

A signed and duly authorized assurances form is provided in Appendix E.

### 2. CONVERSION ENDORSEMENT

Not applicable.

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## F. BUDGET

### 1. STARTUP BUDGET

As the school's education management provider, Advantage Schools will ensure the timely launch of the Robert Louis Johnson Academy and meet all expenses associated with the school's operation. Any cash flow problems will be addressed through non-interest loans—effectively a line of credit—from Advantage Schools. Advantage Schools will invest up to \$3.5 million in collateral for securing private financing for site renovation. In addition, Advantage will invest roughly \$250,000 in start-up costs, staff and student recruitment, curriculum development, and professional development. These sums represent firm commitments.

### 2. TWO-YEAR OPERATING BUDGET

The form outlining the Academy's two-year operating budget is included in the following pages.

### 3. ESTIMATED FIVE-YEAR BUDGET PROJECTION

The form outlining the Academy's five-year budget projection is included in the following pages.

### 4. CASH FLOW ANALYSIS FOR YEAR 1

The founders' cash flow analysis for Budget Year One is included in the following pages.

## Public Charter School Two-Year Operating Budget Worksheet

DESCRIPTION	Year One: FY	Year Two: FY
<b>REVENUES</b>		
Per Pupil Charter Payments	2,812,870	3,145,645
Federal Entitlements	361,606	410,671
Grants and Donations	50,000	75,000
Loans	0	0
Other Revenues	25,000	0
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>3,249,476</b>	<b>3,631,316</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<i>Personnel Salaries and Benefits</i>		
Principal/Executive	75,000	75,000
Teachers	849,000	949,000
Teacher Aides/Assistants	272,000	289,000
Other Education Professionals	155,000	155,000
Clerical	25,000	25,000
Custodian	25,000	25,000
Other Staff	160,000	160,000
Employee Benefits	292,790	318,820
Staff Development	60,115	119,333
<b>Subtotal: Personnel</b>	<b>1,913,905</b>	<b>2,116,153</b>
<i>Direct Student Costs</i>		
Textbooks	35,793	40,237
Supplies and Materials	40,000	42,719
Library and Media Center Materials	50,000	50,000
Computers and Materials	66,042	74,243
Other Instructional Equipment		
Classroom Furnishings	72,754	81,788
Student Assessment Materials		
Contracted Instructional/Student Services	108,000	135,800
Other	97,484	137,996
<b>Subtotal: Direct Student Costs</b>	<b>470,073</b>	<b>562,783</b>

DESCRIPTION	Year One: FY	Year Two: FY
<i>Occupancy</i>		
Rent	365,534	365,534
Mortgage		
Maintenance and Repairs		
Renovation (Including Reserves)		
Utilities	43,000	48,339
Janitorial Supplies	10,000	10,000
Equipment Rental and Maintenance		
Contracted Services	58,941	72,626
<b>Subtotal: Occupancy</b>	<b>477,475</b>	<b>496,499</b>
<i>Office Expenses</i>		
Supplies and Materials	25,000	28,104
Furnishings		
Equipment Rental and Maintenance	25,000	28,104
Telephone/Telecommunications	21,000	23,608
Accounting and Payroll		
Printing and Copying		
Postage and Shipping	12,000	13,490
Other		
<b>Subtotal: Office</b>	<b>83,000</b>	<b>93,306</b>
<i>General Expenses</i>		
Insurance	22,000	24,732
Debt Service		
Transportation	10,000	11,242
Food Service		
Administration Fee	74,179	108,619
Other	194,969	217,879
<b>Subtotal: General</b>	<b>301,148</b>	<b>362,472</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>3,245,151</b>	<b>3,631,213</b>
<b>EXCESS (OR DEFICIENCY)</b>	<b>4,325</b>	<b>104</b>

## Public Charter School Five-Year Estimated Budget Worksheet

DESCRIPTION	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
<b>REVENUES</b>					
Per Pupil Charter Payments	2,812,870	3,145,645	3,145,645	3,145,645	3,145,645
Federal Entitlements	361,606	410,671	410,671	410,671	410,671
Grants and Donations	50,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
Loans					
Other Revenues	25,000				
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>3,249,476</b>	<b>3,631,316</b>	<b>3,631,316</b>	<b>3,631,316</b>	<b>3,631,316</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
Personnel Salaries and Benefits	1,913,905	2,116,153	2,116,153	2,116,153	2,116,153
Direct Student Costs	470,073	562,783	562,783	562,783	562,783
Occupancy	477,475	496,499	496,499	496,499	496,499
Office Expenses	83,000	93,306	93,306	93,306	93,306
General Expenses	301,148	362,472	362,472	362,472	362,472
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>3,245,151</b>	<b>3,631,213</b>	<b>3,631,213</b>	<b>3,631,213</b>	<b>3,631,213</b>

cash flow yr 1

**Robert Louis Johnson Academy**  
**Projected Cash Flow Statement, July 1998-June 1999**

	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	Total
<b>Revenues</b>														
Base Capitation	-	-	-	-	2,109,653	-	-	-	-	703,218	-	-	-	2,812,870
Federal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60,268	60,268	60,268	60,268	60,268	60,268	381,606
Other	25,000	12,500	12,500	-	25,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	76,000
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,134,653</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>60,268</b>	<b>60,268</b>	<b>763,485</b>	<b>60,268</b>	<b>60,268</b>	<b>60,268</b>	<b>3,249,478</b>
<b>Expenses</b>														
<b>Faculty Salaries</b>			(166,022)	(308,913)	(308,913)	(308,913)	(308,913)	(308,913)	(308,913)	(308,913)	(308,913)	(308,913)	(308,913)	(3,245,151)
Regular Faculty Salary:	-	-	(37,048)	(74,095)	(74,095)	(74,095)	(74,095)	(74,095)	(74,095)	(74,095)	(74,095)	(74,095)	(74,095)	(778,000)
Supplemental Faculty Salary:	-	-	(5,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)	(105,000)
SPED Faculty Salary:	-	-	(2,143)	(4,286)	(4,286)	(4,286)	(4,286)	(4,286)	(4,286)	(4,286)	(4,286)	(4,286)	(4,286)	(45,000)
Substituted/Relieving Teacher Salary:	-	-	(1,238)	(2,476)	(2,476)	(2,476)	(2,476)	(2,476)	(2,476)	(2,476)	(2,476)	(2,476)	(2,476)	(28,000)
Instructional Assistant Salary:	-	-	(12,952)	(25,905)	(25,905)	(25,905)	(25,905)	(25,905)	(25,905)	(25,905)	(25,905)	(25,905)	(25,905)	(272,000)
<b>Total Faculty Salaries</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(58,387)</b>	<b>(116,762)</b>	<b>(1,228,000)</b>									
<b>Other Staff Salaries</b>														
School Director Salary:	-	-	(3,571)	(7,143)	(7,143)	(7,143)	(7,143)	(7,143)	(7,143)	(7,143)	(7,143)	(7,143)	(7,143)	(75,000)
School Secretary Salary:	-	-	(1,190)	(2,381)	(2,381)	(2,381)	(2,381)	(2,381)	(2,381)	(2,381)	(2,381)	(2,381)	(2,381)	(25,000)
School Professional Development Coordinator/Parent Liaison:	-	-	(2,381)	(4,762)	(4,762)	(4,762)	(4,762)	(4,762)	(4,762)	(4,762)	(4,762)	(4,762)	(4,762)	(50,000)
School Business and Facility Manager Salary:	-	-	(2,381)	(4,762)	(4,762)	(4,762)	(4,762)	(4,762)	(4,762)	(4,762)	(4,762)	(4,762)	(4,762)	(50,000)
Technology & Media Specialist:	-	-	(2,857)	(5,714)	(5,714)	(5,714)	(5,714)	(5,714)	(5,714)	(5,714)	(5,714)	(5,714)	(5,714)	(60,000)
Technology Assistant:	-	-	(714)	(1,429)	(1,429)	(1,429)	(1,429)	(1,429)	(1,429)	(1,429)	(1,429)	(1,429)	(1,429)	(15,000)
Library Assistant:	-	-	(714)	(1,429)	(1,429)	(1,429)	(1,429)	(1,429)	(1,429)	(1,429)	(1,429)	(1,429)	(1,429)	(15,000)
School Nurse Salary:	-	-	-	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(20,000)
Custodians' Salary:	-	-	-	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(25,000)
<b>Total Other Staff Salaries</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(13,810)</b>	<b>(32,119)</b>	<b>(335,000)</b>									
<b>Total Staff Salaries</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(72,197)</b>	<b>(148,881)</b>	<b>(1,563,000)</b>									
<b>Staff Benefit Costs</b>														
<b>Total Staff Benefit Costs</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(13,716)</b>	<b>(27,907)</b>	<b>(292,700)</b>									
<b>Total Staff Expenses</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(85,913)</b>	<b>(176,788)</b>	<b>(1,855,700)</b>									
<b>Special Education Service Costs</b>														
<b>Total Special Education Service Costs</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(10,800)</b>	<b>(108,000)</b>									
<b>Other Contract School Service Costs</b>														
Curriculum Development:	-	-	(8,662)	(8,662)	(8,662)	(8,662)	(8,662)	(8,662)	(8,662)	(8,662)	(8,662)	(8,662)	(8,662)	(97,464)
Faculty Training and Professional Development:	-	-	(5,465)	(5,465)	(5,465)	(5,465)	(5,465)	(5,465)	(5,465)	(5,465)	(5,465)	(5,465)	(5,465)	(60,115)
Transportation Services:	-	-	(909)	(909)	(909)	(909)	(909)	(909)	(909)	(909)	(909)	(909)	(909)	(10,000)
Charter Board Administrative Fee:	-	-	-	(1,406)	(1,406)	(1,406)	(1,406)	(1,406)	(1,406)	(1,406)	(1,406)	(1,406)	(1,406)	(14,064)
Food Services:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
School Management Fee:	-	-	(17,724)	(17,724)	(17,724)	(17,724)	(17,724)	(17,724)	(17,724)	(17,724)	(17,724)	(17,724)	(17,724)	(184,969)
General and Administrative Services:	-	-	(5,465)	(5,465)	(5,465)	(5,465)	(5,465)	(5,465)	(5,465)	(5,465)	(5,465)	(5,465)	(5,465)	(60,115)
<b>Total Other Contract School Service Costs</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(39,420)</b>	<b>(39,832)</b>	<b>(436,747)</b>									
<b>Instructional Supply Costs</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(10,000)</b>	<b>(3,000)</b>	<b>(40,000)</b>									
<b>Financed Expenses</b>														
Durable Instructional Equipment Cost:	-	-	(3,254)	(3,254)	(3,254)	(3,254)	(3,254)	(3,254)	(3,254)	(3,254)	(3,254)	(3,254)	(3,254)	(35,793)
Computer Equipment and Software Cost:	-	-	(6,004)	(6,004)	(6,004)	(6,004)	(6,004)	(6,004)	(6,004)	(6,004)	(6,004)	(6,004)	(6,004)	(66,042)
School Classroom Furniture Cost:	-	-	(6,814)	(6,814)	(6,814)	(6,814)	(6,814)	(6,814)	(6,814)	(6,814)	(6,814)	(6,814)	(6,814)	(72,754)
<b>Total Financed Expenses</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(15,872)</b>	<b>(174,589)</b>										
<b>School Building Expenses</b>														
Occupancy:	-	-	-	(36,553)	(36,553)	(36,553)	(36,553)	(36,553)	(36,553)	(36,553)	(36,553)	(36,553)	(36,553)	(385,534)
Utilities (e.g., heat, electricity, water and sewer):	-	-	-	(4,300)	(4,300)	(4,300)	(4,300)	(4,300)	(4,300)	(4,300)	(4,300)	(4,300)	(4,300)	(43,000)
Insurance:	-	-	-	(2,200)	(2,200)	(2,200)	(2,200)	(2,200)	(2,200)	(2,200)	(2,200)	(2,200)	(2,200)	(22,000)
<b>Total School Building Expenses</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(43,053)</b>	<b>(430,534)</b>									
<b>School Office Expenses</b>														
Postage and Shipping:	-	-	-	(1,200)	(1,200)	(1,200)	(1,200)	(1,200)	(1,200)	(1,200)	(1,200)	(1,200)	(1,200)	(12,000)
Legal Expenses:	-	-	-	(5,849)	(5,849)	(5,849)	(5,849)	(5,849)	(5,849)	(5,849)	(5,849)	(5,849)	(5,849)	(58,491)
Telephone:	-	-	(1,909)	(1,909)	(1,909)	(1,909)	(1,909)	(1,909)	(1,909)	(1,909)	(1,909)	(1,909)	(1,909)	(21,000)
Maintenance Supplies:	-	-	(909)	(909)	(909)	(909)	(909)	(909)	(909)	(909)	(909)	(909)	(909)	(10,000)
Office Equipment:	-	-	-	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(25,000)
Media Equipment:	-	-	-	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(50,000)
Office Supplies:	-	-	(3,000)	(2,200)	(2,200)	(2,200)	(2,200)	(2,200)	(2,200)	(2,200)	(2,200)	(2,200)	(2,200)	(25,000)
<b>Total School Office Expenses</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(5,818)</b>	<b>(19,567)</b>	<b>(201,491)</b>									
<b>Total Non-Staff Expenses</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(70,116)</b>	<b>(132,125)</b>	<b>(1,391,391)</b>									
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(158,029)</b>	<b>(308,913)</b>	<b>(3,245,151)</b>									
<b>Site Operating Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>(143,529)</b>	<b>(308,913)</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>(308,913)</b>	<b>(308,913)</b>	<b>(248,645)</b>	<b>(248,645)</b>	<b>454,572</b>	<b>(248,645)</b>	<b>(248,645)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4,326</b>

# THE ROBERT LOUIS JOHNSON ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY

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## NOTES TO BUDGET WORKSHEETS

*Revenues—per pupil capitation.* For each student served by the Academy, the Academy is paid a capitation rate according to the student's grade. In the Academy's first year, the number of students in each grade, and the capitation rate for each student in the given grades are as follows:

80 students in pre-k at a rate of \$6,211 each; 80 students in kindergarten at a rate of \$5,324 each; 80 students in first grade at a rate of \$5,324 each; 75 students in second grade at a rate of \$5,324 each; 75 students in third grade at a rate of \$5,342 each; 75 students in fourth grade at a rate of \$4,437 each; and 75 students in fifth grade at a rate of \$4,437 each. In the second year, these enrollments and capitations remain the same, except that a sixth grade is added, containing 75 students at a rate of \$4,437 each. Years three through five are the same as year two.

*Revenues—grants and other funds.* In all five years, Title One funds are assumed at a rate of \$700 per eligible student. The worksheets assume that 80.7% of students will be eligible for Title One. \$25,000 in federal grants, and \$50,000 in fundraising are also assumed in all five years. The worksheets also assume Special Education funds at a rate of 2% of the total capitation.

*Expenses—teachers.* The worksheets assume a total of 24 regular classroom teachers in the first year, and 27 in years two through five. Starting salaries range from \$26,000 to \$43,000. In each year, the following teachers are also assumed: one special education teacher, one music teacher, one Spanish teacher, one physical education teacher, one roving teacher, and 16 instructional assistants.

*Expenses—other staff.* In each year, the worksheets assume a school director, a secretary, a professional development coordinator, a business manager, a custodian, a half-time nurse, a technology and media specialist, a technology aid, and a library aid. Benefits and employer paid taxes are calculated at a rate of 19% of salaries.

*Expenses—occupancy.* As discussed in the facilities section of the application, no rent is assumed, as it is believed that the school will be able to lease the old Richardson school building for zero rent or obtain title to the building for a nominal fee. In exchange, the Academy plans to renovate the building at a cost of \$3.5 million. That cost will be over 15 years with a balloon payment at the end, resulting in a 30-year amortization schedule.

*Expenses—non-staff.* Special education costs ("contracted instructional/student services") are estimated to be, on average, \$200 per pupil. As in many other charter schools, food service should result in no net cost to the school. It is estimated that 75% or more of the school's students will be provided with free or reduced price meals, for which the Academy will be reimbursed. The remaining students will pay the cost of the meal to the school. \$10,000 has been budgeted for transportation to accommodate for the transportation needs of special education students. No other transportation will be provided.