



The MET- Santa Monica

CHARTER APPLICATION



A Charter School Proposal to the
Santa Monica – Malibu Unified School District
Santa Monica, California
January 2005

INTRODUCTION

Jamaal's Journey: A Day in the Life of a MET – Santa Monica Freshman

...a true story that hasn't happened yet.

Note: The story that follows is based on composite experiences of students at Big Picture High Schools across the nation. It is provided as a glimpse of what is possible for the students of Santa Monica and Malibu Public Schools.

Santa Monica, California

May 15, 2006

7:45am

Jamaal, 15, straightens his shirt as he tucks it into his neatly pressed pants. He's excited about the day ahead and waits near the front door for his mother, Denise. He shouts to her, "Ma, come on! I want to be early today. My Advisory is putting on the Pick Me Up."

"Okay, baby, I'm coming," says Denise. She smiles at her son's eagerness, remembering the way it used to be, before Jamaal went to The MET –Santa Monica. Back then, she had to battle to get Jamaal out of bed, let alone dressed and out the door. Now, less than a year later, her son looks forward to going to school. He likes everything about being in 9th grade at The MET, from the friends he has made to the advisor who treats him like an adult, to the mentor who is helping him learn what it will take to succeed in the real world. Denise has to admit she likes the school, too, and feels like she is a true partner in her son's education. Helping to design his Learning Plan each quarter took some getting used to, but now she sees it as another way to get to know her son. It will all culminate tonight when Jamaal presents his Exhibition.

8:08am

Jamaal meets his friends Larry and Ignacio in the commons area. They go over the script they've put together for Pick Me Up, the kickoff to the day that is part community building activity, part school assembly, and part administrative business. The three boys will role-play a hazing incident, then the other students in their advisory will debrief with the rest of the school. When Pick Me Up ends, they hope the whole school community will have thought carefully about how to treat each other with respect.

10:10am

Jamaal and his advisor Chris sit together in the Advisory room. They are going over the last minute details for Jamaal's Exhibition tonight.

"Okay, so you're sure the computer simulation with the spreadsheet will work? You've had a chance to test it out?" Chris asks.

Jamaal nods. "Everything is cool. I worked it through two times yesterday, and will go do it again right after lunch. Diana and Rosalie have already said they'd help me. Don't worry, man."

For the past two quarters, Jamaal has had an internship with Dave Sanchez, vice president of commercial banking at a neighborhood bank. Every Tuesday and Thursday, Jamaal works closely with Dave to learn the ins and outs of the banking business. For the last two months, Jamaal has conducted a cost-benefit analysis of small businesses that use the bank's new line of credit. Tonight, he'll present the results of that study and tie it into the Learning Goals he set along with Chris, Dave, and his mother, Denise.

2:45pm

Diana and Rosalie, students from Jamaal's Advisory, sit at computers. They are helping Jamaal get ready for Exhibition by testing out his computer model, asking questions, and giving him feedback. He appreciates their willingness to help, and his confidence grows that his Exhibition will go well.

"Jamaal, man, this is really excellent. I can tell exactly how much these businesses have saved over the past year using the new payment system," says Diana.

"So what's the most important thing you learned?" asks Rosalie.

Jamaal smiles because he knows that Chris is likely to ask him this question later. He puts on a very sophisticated voice: "In response to your query, I'd have to conclude that my most important learning realization is that one should never be defeated by a problem simply because one can't yet see a solution. No, just messin' – really, I had this idea to help businesses figure out if they should use the line of credit system, but I didn't really know how. Once I saw all the data, I just knew that I could figure it out. If I had given up because I didn't have the skills or whatever, I never would have taken this on. But Dave saw it was a good idea and helped me get the training I needed, and the results are what you see. So I guess what I learned is, if you face a problem, you have to have patience to learn the skills you need if you really want to solve it."

6:45pm

Denise, Chris, Dave Sanchez, Rosalie, Diana, Larry, Ignacio, and three invited guests from the community are seated in the computer room. The computer terminals hum. Jamaal, at the front of the room, begins his Exhibition.

7:35pm

Relieved to be finished with Exhibition, Jamaal hugs his mother and shakes Chris's hand. One of the guests from the community, Emily Harper, the owner of the local drycleaners, approaches the happy trio.

"Jamaal, I'm Emily Harper." They shake hands. She continues, "I was very impressed by your presentation. I have to say that, based on your findings, I might have to switch banks!" She turns to Chris.

"And I understand that, as the advisor, you've overseen Jamaal's progress here. You should be proud of the work he has done. But let me ask you, how does this program – the internship and the self-directed academic study – really qualify as a high school education? I mean, when does Jamaal take the good, hard subjects like Algebra, Chemistry, history, or Literature, like I had to when I was in school?"

Chris nods at Ms. Harper, familiar with this line of questioning. "That is a great question– our system doesn't look much like a traditional school. I'm sure you'd have a hard time finding any other high schoolers around the state taking responsibility for their own learning like our kids do, let alone solving complex problems as Jamaal has done. You're right in that Jamaal won't ever attend the traditional classes you've mentioned, but he will be held accountable for demonstrating mastery in similar areas. Just think about the Algebra Jamaal had to know or learn just to set up the Excel spreadsheet he used in his analysis. This fits into his Learning Plan goals in Quantitative Analysis – where we've aligned our program to district math standards. When Jamaal was giving his presentation, he also talked about "Empirical Reasoning." That's the science component of his educational plan.

“ But there are three other areas he has to address,” Chris continues. “Communication – basically Language Arts; Social Reasoning, or social sciences, and Personal Qualities – the skills and tools for self-discipline, time management, and organization. Plus, as a 9th grader, Jamaal has eighteen other grade-level goals to address, things like coming to school everyday and on time, showing respect for self and others, and preparing for state exams. When he takes the tests in math, science, reading, and writing, he’ll have had an excellent foundation in the skills he needs to do well. Tomorrow morning, Jamaal and I will sit down and reflect on his Exhibition, and then he’ll write a five-page narrative over the next few days that ties his learning through his LTI to the Learning Plan. Pretty rigorous stuff.

“One other thing to point out is that our graduation requirements match the district’s. Did you realize that all of our seniors are required to apply to college, that more than 90% of them are accepted, and they have to write a 100-page autobiography as part of their graduation Exhibition? When our kids go to college interviews, along with a transcript and test scores, they bring narratives that describe them as a learner and a resume that reflects the real world experiences they’ve had. Find another high school around that can say that! So, even though it feels different at The MET –Santa Monica , our kids learn real world skills and develop a broad academic base that sets them up for succeed in college or whatever else they choose after graduation.”

Satisfied, Ms. Harper shakes Chris’s hands. “It’s wonderful to know that kids have such a relevant way to learn. I’d very much be interested in becoming a Mentor for your students. How can I learn more?”

With that, Chris leaves Jamaal and his mother and escorts Ms. Harper toward the office.

Jamaal turns to Denise. “I’m going to see Ignacio’s Exhibition now. You want to come?”

“No, I think I’m going to go home. You be home by 9:30, please.”

9:25pm

After stopping for celebratory ice cream sundaes with his friends, Jamaal makes his way home. Denise, hearing him enter, comes out of the kitchen and greets him in the hallway.

“Tired?” she asks.

“Yup. Exhausted. I’m going to bed right now. See you in the morning.” Jamaal heads to his room.

“Jamaal?” says Denise. He stops and turns toward her. “You make me proud.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Imagine Jamaal's school as a reality in Santa Monica and Malibu. It is a public high school where each student has a comprehensive and unique education plan that proactively addresses his or her strengths, interests, and needs. A school where no child has the same curriculum or assignments – it's all individualized learning. Impossible for a public school to accomplish? Hardly. Since 1995, the Big Picture School design has effectively demonstrated that a school can succeed and run effectively with an entirely personalized course of learning. This charter application outlines plans to bring the Big Picture High School design to the children of SMMUSD.

The mission of the MET – Santa Monica is to develop a small, personalized learning community in which no child is anonymous. Using the city as our classroom, we will follow the Big Picture Company's philosophy of educating one student at a time. We are committed to nurturing the development of competent, compassionate, and responsible citizens.

In accordance with California Charter School Law and in pursuit of the above mission statement, we petition the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) to grant a 9-12 charter to The Metropolitan Regional Center – Santa Monica (The MET). The MET agrees to operate the school in accordance with the terms of the Charter Schools Act of 1992 and the provisions of the school's charter.

The petitioners listed below certify that they will be residents with 9th grade aged students of Santa Monica or Malibu who are meaningfully interested in enrolling their children in the inaugural class during the 2005-2006 school year. The list below represents 50% of the families necessary to enroll a freshman class at full capacity. The petitioners authorize the Lead Petitioners to negotiate any amendments to the attached charter necessary to secure approval by the SMMUSD governing board.

Summary

The Lead Petitioners are proposing a charter high school located on the campus of Santa Monica College (SMC).

It is our belief that The MET will serve the community well because of the following characteristics:

- A commitment to educating “One Student at a Time.”
- A highly personalized learning plan for each student.
- Smaller class sizes, providing an 18:1 student-teacher ratio.
- Real-world learning experiences through Learning Through Internship.
- Academic rigor leading to college acceptance.
- An emphasis on Family Engagement.

The MET – Santa Monica is submitting a charter for a five-year period beginning in the 2005-06 school year. At full capacity, The MET will enroll up to 288 students in grades nine through twelve, or no more than seventy-two students per grade level. The MET will initially open with seventy-two ninth-graders, increasing to capacity by the beginning of the 2008-09 school year.

Relationship between The MET – Santa Monica and Big Picture Company

The Big Picture Company (BPC), a non-profit agency in Providence, Rhode Island, and the innovator of the BPHS design, will provide assistance including professional development for the school’s principals and staff and technical assistance in school start-up. Once The MET is operational, BPC will continue to provide technical assistance, professional development, and membership in the Big Picture Schools Network.. Membership in this network includes access to BPC-sponsored events, and rights to purchase BPC materials.

The petitioners wish to open The MET – Santa Monica in order to provide a progressive opportunity for secondary education to the residents of Santa Monica and Malibu. The MET staff will work in partnership with a national organization, The Big Picture Company, whose mission and philosophy is to educate “one student at a time” within the context of community participation. This partnership with the Big Picture Company would allow for educational innovation and a school of choice for families in Santa Monica and Malibu that is supported by a network of like-minded educators. The Big Picture Company has developed a nationally evaluated and highly successful high school design.

The MET wishes to negotiate a relationship with SMMUSD as an independent charter school in order to operate with limited independence from the California Education Code in the following areas:

1. Funding Flexibility. As a school concerned with providing choice in education to the families of Santa Monica and Malibu, The MET will develop a process of self-evaluation in order to encourage innovation. In order to be rigorously innovative in the classroom, school site administration needs the flexibility to reorganize funds in a manner consistent with the needs of our teachers and students. Charter status will allow The MET to apply for funds available only to charter schools from both private and public sources to help support our efforts as a leader in progressive education.

2. Curriculum Flexibility. In partnership with the Big Picture Company, The MET will work to deliver a student-driven curricular program founded on the Big Picture Company's model of *Learning Through Internships*. In this model, MET students will work with community mentors, family members, and MET advisors (teachers) to develop *Individual Learning Plans* comprised of goals driven by student interest and consistent with the California State Standards (see table 1). Furthermore, MET students will work with community mentors in a project-based curriculum designed to achieve the goals outlined in each student's Individual Learning Plan. Because of the unique nature of this curricular design, the MET must have the flexibility to select and purchase instructional materials and technology appropriate to our students' educational needs.

3. Enrollment Flexibility. In order to truly implement a curriculum designed to educate "one student at a time" the MET needs a lower student-to-teacher ratio than is currently outlined by state and district policies. The MET needs the flexibility to organize its funds in order to ensure a lower student-to-teacher ratio in the classroom.

The MET wishes to serve students and staff in the entire district through educational innovation within the context of the SMMUSD and California state educational system. We are committed to being involved in ongoing dialogue and professional development opportunities with other schools in SMMUSD and beyond, so the learning about learning that happens at the MET may both benefit and be considerate of the students and staff throughout SMMUSD.

The Charter Schools Act of 1992 states that:

It is the intent of the Legislature...to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, pupils, and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently from the existing school district structure, as a method to accomplish the following;

- (a) Improve pupil learning.*
- (b) Increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low achieving.*
- (c) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.*
- (d) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.*
- (e) Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system.*

(f) Hold the schools established under this part accountable for meeting measurable pupil outcomes, and provide the schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems.

(g) Provide vigorous competition within the public school system to stimulate continual improvements in all public schools.

-California Education Code Section 47601 (a)-(g)

The MET requests charter status in accordance with the Legislative goals outlined above. By granting this charter school petition, SMMUSD helps fulfill the intent of the Charter Schools Act of 1992.

School Location

The MET – Santa Monica will open in the Fall of 2005 on campus at SMC. The MET will open with four 9th grade classes and add four 9th grade classes each successive year until the school reaches its full capacity.

II. Educational Program - California Educational Code 47605 (b)(5)(A)

A description of the educational program of the school, designed, among other things, to identify those whom the school is attempting to educate, what it means to be an “educated person” in the 21st century, and how learning best occurs. The goals identified in that program include the objective of enabling pupils to become self-motivated, competent, and life-long learners.

Core Philosophy

Our philosophy is grounded in a commitment to educate “One Student at a Time.” Every child has different interests, needs, and abilities, so “one size fits all” curriculum does not exist at The MET. We believe that a child’s interests and passions are the key to his or her high school education and life-long learning, and that learning best takes place when each student is an active participant in his or her education. Our focus is less on *knowledge acquisition* and more on *knowledge utilization*. We strive to develop life-long learners with the ability to apply knowledge to real life experiences and challenges; this is why we believe that school-based learning is most effective when blended with outside experiences that broaden and deepen students’ interests.

Since 1996, The Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center (known as The Met) of Providence, Rhode Island, has successfully implemented the Big Picture High School design. The MET – Santa Monica will replicate this successful design. The following tables offer evidence of the success of The Met.

Demographic Profile

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01
Total Students	98*	157**	200	220
Anglo	36%	41%	38%	43%
Hispanic	34%	38%	32%	38%
African. American	26%	18%	22%	17%

Asian	4%	3%	2%	2%
Other	N/a	N/a	6%	N/a
Languages	5	6	6	4
Qualified for free/reduced lunch	54%	48%	52%	54%
Daily Attendance	94%	96%	94%	95%

*Grades 9&10 only

**Grades 9,10&11

Participation of Met Students in College Courses

Description	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01
Number of students completing college courses	11	49	86	50
% of student body	11%	31%	43%	23%
Number of schools attended	3	5	3	2
#Students completing College Readiness at Univ. R.I.	N/a	N/a	6	10

Graduation and College Acceptance

	1999-2000	2000-2001
Number of seniors eligible for graduation	46	46
Graduation rate	100%	100%
Percentage of seniors applying to college	100%	92%
Percentage of those applying accepted to college	100%	100%
Percentage of those applying who are first generation in their families to be college-bound.	74%	N/a
Number of colleges applied to/acceptances	63/90	85/91
Scholarships/financial aid awarded (approx.)	\$400,000	\$500,000

Note: This information was provided by The Big Picture Company.

Population Served by The MET – Santa Monica

The MET intends to serve students in grades 9-12 from SMMUSD and the state of California. The MET is configured in advisory groups with, ideally, no higher than 18:1 average student:teacher ratio in any given advisory group.

The MET – Santa Monica is committed to enrolling a diverse population of students reflective of SMMUSD. 12.8% of the students district wide are classified as English Language Learners. The student population is 8.1% African-American, 03% American Indian, 14.9% 5.9% Asian, 27.2% Hispanic, and 58% White or Non-Hispanic in SMMUSD.

The MET seeks to enroll a diverse population of students representative of Santa Monica and Malibu in terms of socio-economic status, student designation (e.g., ELL, special ed), and ethnicity as near as possible through lottery. We are committed to employing a

recruitment strategy that reaches out to all populations, especially those who are not traditionally represented in progressive educational institutions.

The 21st Century Educated Person

The MET – Santa Monica believes that in order to be successful, our students must become active citizens in a democracy that is still being shaped. The 21st century is characterized by an exponential and ever-accelerating growth of knowledge. Therefore, the ability to learn, question, process, and use resources has become paramount to the acquisition of a specific body of knowledge. At the MET we recognize that “knowledge” when defined as specific information related to academic disciplines is useful as it provides lenses through which to see and know the world. Knowledge then becomes one of three components critical to the development of an educated person in the 21st century. The second critical component is the development of skills needed to function in a rapidly changing and increasingly connected global environment. The third critical component is one’s character and sense of community. As we seek to educate the whole child at The MET, we herald his or her character development and sense of place and role in the community as equally important to the development of knowledge and skills.

The MET’s beliefs around what it means to be an educated individual in the 21st century will be supported by the Big Picture Company’s model of education as this model allows for the development of integrated subject area knowledge and skills related specifically to fields in which a student is particularly interested and expanded upon by the inclusion of community mentors as experts in these fields. This model also provides structure for The MET’s emphasis on learning in a real-world, contextualized environment. Developing knowledge and skills through guided interactions with community mentors allows students to explore their role and sense of place in the community. This is the environment in which we believe learning as self-motivated, competent, and lifelong learners best occurs.

Transferability and Eligibility of High School Courses

As a Big Picture Company school, The MET benefits from the network of resources across the country. In California a team of Big Picture Company schools, including The MET – Sacramento, The MET – West in Oakland, El Dorado High School in Shandandoah, and The MET –San Diego is collaborating with the University of California Board of Admissions offices to develop a transcript of student work that documents coverage of the state content standards and fulfills the A-G requirements. These efforts have resulted in ground-breaking strides for alternative educational institutions throughout the state as the UC-BOARS has already agreed to pilot an alternative transcript for Big Picture schools in California (see attached letter). The MET – Santa Monica has already begun to work in collaboration with these efforts in order to provide its students and parents of its students with a written description of how the student’s instructional experience at The MET will meet the credit transfer and college entrance requirements at the end of each school year. All seniors at the MET are required, as a condition of graduation, to apply to college. Although all might not choose to attend, this end goal will further ensure that the MET works to help students gain access to the public universities in California.

Instructional Elements

The MET mission to base curriculum on students’ interests and backgrounds in a collaborative, multi-aged environment and to nurture competent, compassionate, and responsible citizens is supported by the Big Picture Company’s emphasis on educating “one student at a time.” Students meet regularly with a learning team to develop an Individual Learning Plan based on individual interests and designed to meet the academic and social needs of each student.

Advisory: Advisory is the core of each student’s educational experience at The MET. Advisories range in size with an ideal advisory having between 15 and 18 students. Advisory is designed to foster deep relationships between advisors (teachers), students, and families by providing sufficient time throughout the course of each school year for these parties to interact in meaningful activities. These interactions are critical to developing individual student projects based on individual student interests. Additionally, advisory serves as the last stop in accountability for students. Assessment experiences including portfolios and public exhibitions are facilitated by a student’s advisor.

Advisors: Teachers at The MET are called advisors, and each advisor is responsible for managing each student’s personal schedule, learning plan, and acting as a direct link to the family and internship mentors. Advisors conduct advisory meetings, work individually with each student, and may teach workshops or specific classes to students interested in a particular topic or to enhance all student understanding of a particular area. Advisors are responsible for teaching students how to develop their interests and learn, gather, and apply information related to each student’s learning plan. Advisors set up and oversee student internships. Advisors facilitate learning plan meetings, collaboratively design individual and group projects, and provide guidance through student exhibitions. Advisors document student progress toward the learning goals through narrative assessments. All advisors are California certified teachers and may work in affiliation with the SMMCTA.

Learning Plans: Each student works together with his or her academic support team, made up of a parent(s) or guardian(s), an advisor, and an internship mentor, to develop his or her personalized Learning Plan. Learning Plans are updated every 8-10 weeks and provide the blueprint from which curriculum is designed for each student. Learning Plan goals are aligned to the Big Picture Company’s five learning domains: empirical reasoning, quantitative reasoning, communication, social reasoning, and personal qualities. Students must demonstrate proficiency in each area. Each Learning Goal incorporates components of traditional subject areas and aligns to state and district standards. The table below highlights examples of that mapping.

Table 1.

Learning Domain	Traditional Subject Area	Sample California Content Standards
Empirical Reasoning: to use empirical	Science, Math, Computer Science	- Science: Grades 9-12: Investigation and Experimentation: Analyze situations and

evidence and logical process to make decisions and to evaluate hypothesis		<p>solve problems that require combining and applying concepts from more than one area of science.</p> <p>- Math: Grades 8-12: Geometry: Students construct and judge the validity of a logical argument and give counterexamples to disprove a statement.</p>
Quantitative Reasoning: to understand numbers, to analyze uncertainty, to comprehend the properties of shapes, and to study how things change over time.	Math, Computer Science	<p>- Math: Grade 2: Number Sense: Students understand the relationship between numbers, quantities, and place value in whole numbers up to 1,000.</p> <p>- Math: Grades 8-12: Algebra I: Students use properties of numbers to construct simple, valid arguments (direct and indirect) for, or formulate counterexamples to, claimed assertions.</p>

Communication: to understand your audience, to write, read, speak and listen well, to use technology and artistic expression to communicate, and to be exposed to another language.	Reading, Writing, Visual and Performing Arts, Foreign Languages	- English-Language Arts: Grades 11 and 12: Writing: Demonstrate an understanding of the elements of discourse (e.g., purpose, speaker, audience, form) when completing narrative, expository, persuasive, or descriptive writing assignments.
Social Reasoning: to see diverse perspectives, to understand social issues, to explore ethics, and to look at issues historically.	Social Studies	- History/Social Science: Grades 9-12: Chronology and Spatial Thinking: Students compare the past with the present, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.
Personal Qualities: to demonstrate respect, leadership, responsibility, organization, time management, and to reflect on one's own abilities to strive and improve	Physical Education, Health, Character Education	No state standard addresses this Learning Goal

Internships and Community Mentors: Connecting learning to real-world application and participation in our local and global community is a central goal at The MET. By connecting students with community mentors who share their passions and interests, students may explore these areas at a deeper level than would ever be possible in a classroom with the teacher as the only adult resource. MET students will spend two full school days working with a mentor in the community who shares their interests. In these internships, students are supervised regularly by their advisors. At these sites, students will be responsible for completing individually designed projects that target the school's learning goals as well as the student's area of interest. All community mentors will be screened for TB and fingerprinted according to district safety requirements for working with students.

Students with Special Needs: Because each child's plan is unique to his or her own strengths, interests, and challenges, the issues of how to deliver services to remedial, accelerated, special education, or English language learners are less cumbersome than at a traditionally organized school. We will collaborate with the district and use their expertise to ensure that our Learning Plans account for each need of all our students with special needs.

Sample Student Schedule

MET students enjoy an unparalleled level of personalized education. Through Advisory and LTI, students develop close, personal relationships with caring adults, both experienced educators and seasoned professionals. Because of this, each student will spend his or her time in a different way. The following table summarizes a typical MET student learning experience:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00am-8:30am	Pick Me Up	Advisory	Pick Me Up	Advisory	Pick Me Up
8:30am – 9:15am	Advisory	Travel to LTI	Advisory	Travel to LTI	Advisory
9:15am – 12:00pm	Advisory (cont'd)	LTI	Advisory (cont'd)	LTI	Advisory (cont'd)
12:00pm – 12:30pm	Lunch	Lunch at LTI	Lunch	Lunch at LTI	Lunch
12:30pm – 1:30pm	Academic Skills Workshop	LTI	Academic Skills Workshop	LTI	Academic Skills Workshop
1:30pm – 2:15pm	Advisory	Return to BPHS	Advisory	Return to BPHS	Advisory
2:15pm – 3:00pm	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory

III. Measurable Pupil Outcomes - California Education Code 47605 (b)(5)(B)

The measurable pupil outcomes identified for use by the charter school. "Pupil outcomes," for purposes of this part, means the extent to which all pupils of the school demonstrate that they have attained the skills, knowledge, and attitudes specified as goals in the school's education program.

The MET seeks to ensure that all students who graduate from the school achieve depth of understanding and skill within the five learning domains outlined below and in relation to the state standards.

- **Empirical Reasoning: "How do I prove it?"**
 - Develop strategies to test ideas
 - Scientific research
 - Logic
- **Quantitative Reasoning: "How do I measure or represent it?"**
 - Problem solving
 - Basic operations
 - Tables and graphs
 - Algebra, geometry, and statistics
 - Estimating and number sense
- **Communication: "How do I take in and express information?"**
 - Listening and speaking
 - Writing and reading
 - Foreign language
 - Computers and multimedia
 - Creative expression
- **Social Reasoning: "What do other people have to say about this?"**
 - Past experience/history
 - Understanding diverse perspectives
 - Citizenship, cooperation, and conflict resolution
- **Personal Qualities: "What do I bring to this process?"**
 - Respect, responsibility, perseverance, organization, and self-awareness
 - Leadership
 - Physical fitness

MET students will design Learning Plans with their learning team that directly address their individual progress in each of the above learning domains and in relation to the state standards. Additionally, The MET will continue to administer all state-mandated assessments as is dictated by law.

In order to best serve our students and community, The MET will examine and refine its list of student outcomes over time to reflect the school's mission and any changes to state or local standards that support such mission. The MET will submit to the district board at any time prior to expiration a description of any changes to the above student outcomes as an amendment of the charter. This district board agrees to hear and render an amendment decisions pursuant to the timelines and processes as specified in the Education Code Section 47605 (b).

IV. Measurement of Pupil Progress - California Education Code 47605 (b)(5)(C)
The method by which pupil progress in meeting those pupil outcomes is to be measured.

At The MET, we believe that assessment is integrally tied to curriculum. One of our *Across the Curriculum* standards is “students will reflect on their own understanding,” and we believe that it is only through guided and structured self-evaluation and the consideration of outside evaluation (e.g., teacher narratives, parent conferencing, peer critique) that directed progress can be made. Through rigorous guided self-evaluation, students identify areas of strength and areas in which they need to improve, and these areas guide the development of relevant and personalized learning plans.

At The MET, we believe that the most well-rounded and telling evaluation happens when students are assessed in many contexts and using a variety of methods. Through public exhibitions, portfolios, conferencing, and the daily interactions of students with their advisors and peers, students are held accountable for making progress toward their learning plan goals.

Exhibitions: An exhibition can take on many different forms for students of various age levels, but, in essence, an exhibition is a public presentation of achievements tied to a student’s learning plan. In this way, students are held accountable by the general community, including their advisors, peers, parents, and mentors, for making progress and the quality of their work. Students are also given the opportunity to develop and demonstrate their ability to articulate their ideas for various audiences in this assessment format. All MET students will present an exhibition of their learning at least three times during the course of the year. Parents, advisors, and community mentors are expected to attend all of their student’s exhibitions, and accommodations of time and place may be made individually between advisors and other pertinent parties outside of school hours so that all necessary parties may attend.

Portfolios: All MET students are required to demonstrate their progress in relation to their learning plans through self-generated portfolios. In these portfolios, students match examples of their work that prove they have made progress in relation to their learning plan goals. Students are also responsible for reflections that articulate how a specific piece of work demonstrates progress toward a goal or multiple goals. Portfolios are reviewed by a student’s learning team at least three times a year in various settings including conferences and guided individual review.

Narratives: Following each public exhibition and in correlation with portfolio reviews, advisors will write narrative evaluations of each student’s progress in relation to his or her learning plan. Additionally, students will reflect on their own progress at the same time. These documents serve two purposes: first, they become entries in the student’s portfolio, and second, they become evidence of academic progress from two perspectives. Narratives take the place of letter grades, providing a much deeper analyses of the student’s work, personal and academic accomplishments, areas of strength, and areas that need improvement.

Gateway Requirements: To prove that they are ready to enter the second half of their high school education, called senior institute, MET students at the end of their second year must fulfill the Gateway Requirements. This includes giving a preliminary in-depth exhibition during which students present a special portfolio to a select panel, revising the work in the portfolio based on questions and suggestions from the panel, and presenting letters of recommendation, a completed final presentation portfolio of work from the initial exhibition, a final reflective essay explaining why the student is ready for senior institute, and an interview with the same select panel. Students who produce excellent work in the preliminary Gateway Exhibition are still required to improve on the depth of their work for the final presentation of the portfolio in the spring.

Mandated Testing: As required by the Charter Schools Act section 47605 (c), The MET will administer “the pupil assessments required pursuant to section 60605...applicable to pupils in noncharter public schools.”

V. Governance Structure - California Education Code 47605 (b)(5)(D)

The governance structure of the school, including, but not limited to, the process to be followed by the school to ensure parent involvement.

The MET governing board will initially be selected from among stakeholder groups by Big Picture Company representatives and in collaboration with the school’s principal. Policy around board tenure and selection will be developed before the onset of the first school year. The governing board will model a collaborative process that ensures a quality program that prepares all students for high academic achievement. In relation to school-level policies and in conformity with applicable laws, the governing board the MET will control a list that includes but is not limited to the following key element of the school’s operations:

- The power to hire the principal, to evaluate the performance of that principal, and to dismiss a principal in the event that the performance evaluation determines that that principal is not meeting the school’s needs or expectations.
- The power to approve the school’s budget in a manner consistent with the school’s mission and philosophy.

Furthermore, the governing board of The MET will delegate to the school’s principals control over the following key elements of the school’s operations:

- The power to hire and fire the staff in accordance with union and district contracts.
- The power to implement curricular policy and assessment practice beyond what is mandated by the state and federal government in a manner consistent with the school’s mission, philosophy, and operational realities.
- The power to recommend a site level budget to the MET governing board.

In a manner consistent with state laws, The MET will continue to have a Site Advisory Council and a PTSA. Generally, the Site Advisory Council will be responsible for allocating Site Improvement Funds.

The MET governing board will act as the governing body of The MET. A comprehensive set of bylaws including the specific make-up of this governing board will be developed before the onset of the 2005-2006 school year. The MET governing board will operate in accordance with the Brown Act.

The MET will negotiate with SMMUSD to contract for certain current operational services including, but not limited to:

- Maintenance and insurance of school facilities;
- Changes, additions, or alterations to the school facilities;
- Insurance of school personnel against liability claims;
- The opportunity to negotiate other services including but not limited to transportation, child care, CREST, food services, school nurse, custodial services, payroll/fiscal services, personnel services, student services, and student and family support services at the same cost as other schools in SMMUSD;
- Possible inclusion in all current and future contracts agreed upon between SMMUSD, SMMCTA, and California School Employees' Association Local Chapter (SEIU 660).

The MET will be non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, shall not charge tuition, and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability.

VI. Employee Qualifications - California Education Code 47605 (b)(5)(E)

The qualifications to be met by individuals to be employed by the school.

The design of The MET calls for 1 teacher for every 15-18 students. The MET will employ teaching staff, called "advisors," who hold appropriate California teaching certificates, permits or other documents issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. These teachers will be responsible for overseeing the students' academic progress, skill development and matriculation decisions as specified in the school's operational policies.

The MET may also employ or retain non-certified support staff in any case where a prospective staff member has an appropriate mix of subject matter expertise, professional experience, and the demonstrated capacity to work successfully in an instructional capacity.

The school will seek administrative and operational staff who have demonstrated experience or expertise related to the issues and work tasks required of them in this school design and will be provided professional development opportunities to ensure that they remain abreast of all relevant changes in laws of other operational requirements. All

non-instructional staff will possess experience and expertise appropriate for their position within the school. All requirements of employment under the law will be met through the school's collaboration with the SMMUSD personnel office.

VII. Health and Safety - California Education Code 47605 (b)(5)(F)

The procedures that the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff. These procedures shall include the requirement that each employee of the school furnish the school with a criminal record summary as described in Section 44237.

The MET shall comply with all the provisions and procedures of Education Code 44237. The MET's health and safety policy will also include the following procedures:

- A requirement that all enrolling students and staff provide records documenting immunizations to the extent required for enrollment in non-charter public schools.
- Policies and procedures providing for school-wide training in response to natural disasters and other emergencies, including civil unrest, fires, and earthquakes.
- Training for staff and students relating to preventing contact with blood-borne pathogens.
- A requirement that instructional and administrative staff receive training in emergency response, including appropriate "first responder" training or its equivalent.
- Identification of specific staff who will be trained in the administration of prescription drugs and other medicines.
- A policy that the school will be housed in facilities that have received state Fire Marshall approval and that have either met Field Act standards or have been evaluated by a qualified structural engineer who has determined that the facilities present no substantial seismic safety hazard.
- A policy establishing that the school functions as a drug, alcohol, and tobacco free workplace.
- A requirement that each employee of the school submit to a criminal background check and furnish a criminal record summary as required by Education Code Section 44237.
- The MET will admit only students who have been immunized. The charter will require that faculty and staff be tested for tuberculosis as required by the district for employment. Students will be screened for vision, hearing, and Scoliosis.

These policies and procedures will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in the school's staff development efforts.

VIII. Mean to Achieve Racial and Ethnic Balance - California Education Code 47605 (b)(5)(G)

The means by which the school will achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district to which the charter petition is submitted.

The MET will be an independent charter school extending first attendance preferences to pupils graduating from any Big Picture Company middle school. Preference shall next be extended to pupils residing within SMMUSD at large. Finally, preference will be extended to pupils residing within the state of California.

The MET seeks to enroll a diverse population of students that reflects the community's demographics. The MET will implement a student recruitment strategy that includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following elements or strategies to ensure a demographic balance among students that is reflective of the district:

- An enrollment process that is scheduled and adopted to include a timeline that allows for a broad based recruiting and application process.
- The appropriate development of promotional and informational materials in languages other than English to appeal to limited English proficient populations.
- The distribution of promotional and informational materials to a broad variety of community groups and agencies that serve the various racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and interest groups represented in our district.
- Outreach meetings in several areas in the district to reach prospective students and parents.

IX. Admission Requirements - California Education Code 47605 (b)(5)(H)

Admission requirement, if applicable.

The MET shall be non-sectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations, shall not charge tuition or require donations of time, money, resources or services of any kind to the school, and shall not discriminate against any pupil on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability. Should interest in The MET be greater than capacity, incoming students will be selected using a random lottery process with preference in the drawing granted to students who reside within the district. The only exception to this lottery process for incoming students if interest exceeds capacity is in the case of an incoming student who has a sibling attending The MET during the year he or she applies for enrollment. Students with a sibling enrolled at The MET during the year of application will be granted automatic entry providing that the family and student meet the admission requirements.

The MET educational program is centered around curriculum developed by a student's learning team. Included on that learning team are the parents or guardians of each student. Because the MET educational program includes parental participation, it is critical for the parents or guardians of each student enrolling in The MET to understand the MET philosophy and program and their role in their child's educational experience. Parents will be required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.) after attending a mandatory informational meeting prior to enrolling at The MET. This M.O.U. will indicate each family's understanding of the MET philosophy and educational program and that family's commitment to participate to the greatest extent possible in their child's experience in that program. These documents will be related only to a

parent's participation in their child's educational program and will not require parents to volunteer time, money, services, or resources to The MET. M.O.U.s will be reviewed annually. All families intending to enroll students at The MET 2005-2006 school year will attend a mandatory informational meeting and be required to sign an M.O.U. indicating their understanding of the MET charter school philosophy and educational program. All new families intending to enroll a child at The MET will attend a mandatory informational meeting and be required to sign an M.O.U. prior to their child's enrollment at The MET. Special circumstances for families who are unable to attend mandatory meetings will always be considered on a case-by-case basis by the school's principal.

X. Financial Audit - California Education Code 47605 (b)(5)(I)

The manner in which annual, independent, financial audits shall be conducted, which shall employ generally accepted accounting principles, and the manner in which audit exceptions and deficiencies shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the chartering authority.

The MET will initially negotiate participation in the district's annual audit and may choose to develop its own process for financial audit over time. Exceptions and deficiencies so noted will be addressed promptly, as per policies and procedures established by the SMMUSD Board of Education.

XI. Pupil Suspension and Expulsion - California Education Code 47605 (b)(5)(J)

The procedures by which pupils can be suspended or expelled.

The MET will follow the student suspension and expulsion policies of SMMUSD initially. The school's governance team may develop its own school-specific student discipline policies and follow such policies provided they shall be in alignment with all applicable laws and shall ensure that students are accorded due process. These policies, drafted by the governing team, shall be brought before the District Board for approval. Students shall not be suspended or expelled for academic failure.

XII. Retirement System - California Education Code 47605 (b)(5)(K)

The manner by which staff members of the charter school will be covered by the State Teacher's Retirement System, the Public Employees' Retirement System, or federal social security.

The MET staff may negotiate participation in the STRS, PERS, and Social Security system in the same fashion as SMMUSD district staff. Furthermore, The MET proposes to negotiate a relationship with the SMMCTA and SEIU, Local #660 for the purposes of determining salaries and benefits for employees. SMMCTA and SEIU Local #660 may become through negotiation the exclusive bargaining agents for certificated and classified employees at The MET.

XIII. Attendance Alternatives - California Education Code 47605 (b)(5)(L)

The public school attendance alternatives for pupils residing within the school district who choose not to attend charter schools.

Students choosing not to attend The MET may attend their district of residence schools in accordance with existing enrollment and transfer policies of their district or county of residence. No student shall be required to attend The MET.

XIV. Employee Rights - California Education Code 47605 (b)(5)(M)

A description of the rights of any employee of the school district upon leaving the employment of the school district to work in a charter school, and of any rights of return to the school district after employment at a charter.

All employees at The MET will be employees of The MET. All rights of permanent status and transfers may be negotiated to be in line with those used by the district and outlined in the SMMCTA collective bargaining agreements. No employee of SMMUSD shall be required to work at The MET.

XV. Dispute Resolution - California Education Code 47605 (b)(5)(N)

The procedures to be followed by the charter school and the entity granting the charter to resolve disputes relating to provisions of the charter.

Intent: The intent of this dispute resolution process is to (1) resolve disputes within The MET pursuant to the school's policies, (2) minimize the oversight burden of the district, (3) ensure a fair and timely resolution to disputes, and (4) frame a charter oversight and renewal process and timeline so as to avoid disputes regarding oversight and renewal matters.

Public Comments: The staff and governing board members of The MET and SMMUSD agree to attempt to resolve all disputes regarding this charter pursuant to the terms of this section. Both shall refrain from public commentary regarding any disputes until the matter has progressed through the dispute resolution process.

Disputes Arising from within the School: Disputes arising from within The MET, including all disputes among and between students, staff, parents, volunteers, advisors, partner organizations, and governing board members of the school, shall be resolved pursuant to policies and processes developed by the school.

The district shall not intervene in any such internal disputes without the consent of the governing board of The MET and shall refer any complaints or reports regarding such disputes to the governing board or to the principal of The MET for resolution pursuant to the school's policies. The district agrees not to intervene or become involved in the dispute unless the dispute has given the district reasonable cause to believe that a violation of this charter or related laws or agreements has occurred, or unless the governing board of the school has requested the district intervene in the dispute.

Disputes between the School and the District: In the event that the school or district have disputes regarding the terms of this charter or any other issue regarding the school and district's relationship, both parties agree to follow the process outlined below.

In the event of a dispute between the school and the district, the staff and governance team members of the school and district agree to first frame the issue in written format and refer the issue to the superintendent of the district (or his or her designee) and principal of The MET. In the event that the district believes that the dispute related to an issue that could lead to revocation of the charter, this shall be specifically noted in the written dispute statement.

The principal and the superintendent (or his or her designee) shall informally meet and confer in a timely fashion to attempt to resolve the dispute. In the event that this informal meeting fails to resolve the dispute, both parties shall identify two governing board members on their respective boards who shall jointly meet with the superintendent of the district and principal of The MET and attempt to resolve the dispute. If this joint meeting fails to resolve the dispute, the superintendent and principal shall meet jointly to identify a neutral, third party mediator. The format of the mediation session shall be developed jointly by the superintendent and principal, and shall incorporate informal rules of evidence and procedure unless both parties agree otherwise. The findings or recommendations of the mediator shall be non-binding, unless the governing boards of The MET and SMMUSD jointly agree to bind themselves.

Oversight, Reporting, Revocation, and Renewal: The district may inspect or observe any part of the school at any time, but shall provide reasonable notice to the principal of the school prior to any observation or inspection unless such notice would prevent the performance of reasonable oversight functions. Inspection, observation, monitoring, and oversight activities may not be assigned or subcontracted to a third party by SMMUSD without the mutual consent of the governance team of The MET.

If the governing board of SMMUSD believes it has cause to revoke this charter, the board agrees to notify the governance team of the school in writing, noting the specific reasons for which the charter may be revoked, and grant the school reasonable time to respond to the notice and take appropriate action, unless the alleged violation presents an immediate threat to health or safety.

The MET governance team may request from the SMMUSD governing board a renewal or amendment of the charter at any time prior to expiration. The school should present renewal requests no later than 120 days prior to the expiration of the charter. The district governing board agrees to hear and render a renewal decision pursuant to the initial charter petition review timelines and processes as specified in Education Code Section 47605.

XVI. Labor Relations - California Education Code 47605 (b)(5)(O)

A declaration whether or not the charter school shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the charter school for the purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act.

The MET shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act. The MET staff may negotiate to participate in all current and future contracts agreed upon between SMMUSD, SMMCTA, and the California School Employees' Association Local Chapter (SEIU 660).

XVII. School Closure Procedures - California Education Code 47605 (b)(5)(P)

A description of the procedures to be used if the charter school closes. The procedures shall ensure a final audit of the school to determine the disposition of all assets and liabilities of the charter school, including plans for disposing of any net assets and for the maintenance and transfer of pupil records.

As an independent charter school, the assets and liabilities of the charter school shall remain those of The MET. In the event of closure of the school, the assets and liabilities of the school shall remain those of The MET and shall be audited through the district's usual and customary audit and property inventory processes.

XVIII. Miscellaneous Provisions

Term: The term of this charter shall begin on the date that the school is opened and will expire 5 years later.

Amendments: Any amendments to this charter may be brought before the SMMUSD governing board by the MET governance team. Material revisions and amendments shall be made pursuant to the standards, criteria, and timelines in Education Code 47605.

Severability: The terms of this charter are severable. In the event that any of the provisions are determined to be unenforceable or invalid for any reason, the remainder of the charter shall remain in effect, unless mutually agreed otherwise by the district and governance team of The MET. SMMUSD and The MET agree to meet to discuss and resolve any issues or differences relating to invalidated provisions in a timely, good faith fashion.

Special Education: The MET will work with students and parents to create Individual Learning Plans, which meet the needs of its students on Individual Education Plans. The school will contract with SMMUSD to provide services through the districts existing special education program to students enrolled at The MET with current IEPs or those who develop new IEPs while enrolled at the school. The MET will leave the state master plan dollars for qualified special education students with the district as compensation for these services. In the future, The MET may also seek to increase its in house capacity to deliver services. The MET will utilize the Individual Education Plan format to determine if students designated as needing special education services can be served well, with modifications, by our design. All teachers will receive professional development in differentiated instructional techniques.

English Language Development: All learning at The MET is contextualized and designed to suit individual student needs. The MET's certified teachers will work with students

and parents individually to create Individual Learning Plans that reflect the English Language development needs of English as a second language learners. The MET may negotiate to work with SMMUSD personnel to ensure that these plans are appropriate for the individual student and accessible (through translation if needed) to the parents. The MET will implement all procedures and testing to identify students with limited English language proficiency. In the future, The MET may seek to continue utilizing the district services but may also seek to increase its own in house capacity to deliver these services.

Food Services: The MET may negotiate participation in the SMMUSD food services program. The school may work in partnership with SMMUSD to ensure full compliance with applicable state and federal mandates.