

THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM TERMS

The Educational Program Terms identify the characteristics of the essential components of the educational program that you consider critical to the school’s success *and* for which you are prepared to be held accountable to the Commission and the public. The Commission’s oversight and evaluation of your school’s educational program will focus on successful implementation of the program’s design elements and educational program terms. **You should identify no fewer than three and no more than five Essential Terms.**

The Educational Program Terms should be *minimum* expectations. You need not – and should not – include all of the things that you want the school to be. Rather, you should include a set of minimum programmatic components that will enable the Commission to validate your program objectively and to communicate about it accurately to the public. The Commission will use the Educational Program Terms to validate that the program you are offering is fundamentally consistent with what you advertise the school to be.

Review of the Educational Program Terms will be reflected in the Organizational Performance Framework. It will not replace the Commission’s ultimate focus on performance standards set out in the Academic Performance Framework. The Commission’s judgments about how successful the program is will continue to focus on achievement of the outcomes set forth in the academic framework. As part of the Organizational Framework, the Educational Program Terms must be measurable. They will be the elements of the educational program for which the Commission will hold you accountable and should be verifiable by someone who is experienced in public education, but not necessarily expert in the particular program that you are offering.

Articulate the terms in a way that indicates the objective evidence that can be used to determine whether you have met the expectation. Avoid general statements about the school culture or learning environment. Instead **focus on specific, measurable components** that will establish that culture or learning environment.

Note: The Educational Program Terms are different from *school-specific measures* that you may develop as a part of your Academic Performance Framework because they focus on *process* rather than student *outcomes*. In other words, the school-specific academic performance measures focus on what students will *achieve*. By contrast, the Educational Program Terms should capture the essentials of what students will *experience*. See the Commission’s website for examples of Educational Program Terms.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM TERMS: EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE: Midtown Community Charter School (No Excuses)¹

Vision: Midtown Community Charter School will implement a “no excuses” educational program for middle school students based on core operating principles that include high standards for student conduct, more time devoted to learning, and an unwavering focus on preparing all children to pursue post-secondary education. We recognize that students need more time in the classroom to acquire the academic knowledge and skills that will prepare them for competitive high schools and colleges, as well as more opportunities to engage in diverse extracurricular experiences.

Midtown Community Essential Terms

The Midtown Community philosophy will be reflected in the following observable, verifiable characteristics to which the Commission should hold the school accountable:

1. Student Conduct: Teachers will implement a uniform and consistent system of formal and informal rewards and consequences for academic performance and behavior.
2. More Time: Midtown will provide an extended school day, week and year to foster both academic achievement and participation in extracurricular activities.
3. College Preparatory Academics: Every student at Midtown will be expected to take at least three years of mathematics, four years of English, three years of laboratory science, and three years of social science.

EXAMPLE: Big Island Montessori Charter School

Vision: Big Island Montessori Charter School subscribes to the principles of education articulated by Maria Montessori as characterized by an emphasis on independence, freedom within limits, and respect for a child’s natural psychological development, as well as technological advancements in society.

Big Island Essential Terms

The Big Island Montessori philosophy will be reflected in the following observable, verifiable characteristics to which the Commission should hold the school accountable:

1. Mixed age classrooms
2. Uninterrupted blocks of work time
3. A constructivist or “discovery” model, where students learn concepts from working with materials in a prepared learning environment, rather than by direct instruction.
4. All lead teachers will have either AMS (American Montessori Society) or AMI (Association Montessori Internationale) certification

¹ Adapted from materials of the Knowledge is Power Program, Democracy Prep and other “no excuses” models.

EXAMPLE: The New Urban High School (Project-based, 21st Century Learning)²

Vision: New Urban High School (NUHS) will help students develop the academic, workplace and citizenship skills needed for the 21st century through implementation of four design principles for preparing children for success in the adult world including *personalization, adult world connection, performance-based assessment, and integrated instruction*. Responding directly to the needs of students, all four principles connect to the broad mission of preparation for the adult world. Moreover, all four call for structures and practices that schools do not now routinely employ. The design principles permeate every aspect of life at NUHS: the small size of the school, the openness of the facilities, the personalization through advisory, the emphasis on integrated, project-based learning and student exhibitions, the requirement that all students complete internships in the community, and the provision of ample planning time for teacher teams during the work day. We discuss each design principle below.

New Urban High School Essential Terms

This NUHS philosophy will be reflected in the following observable, verifiable characteristics to which the Commission should hold the school accountable:

1. Personalization: Each student will have a faculty advisor and an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) that will guide his or her instructional program.
2. Adult World Connection: All students will engage in adult world connections including substantial internships in the world of work, community service projects, and at least one field study of a professional work environment.
3. Performance-based assessment: All students will develop projects, at least annually, that require them to solve problems and present findings to community panels. In addition, before graduation all students will complete an academic internship, a substantial senior project, and a personal digital portfolio.
4. Integrated instruction: The daily schedule and annual calendar will support team-teaching as well as development and implementation of project-based instruction.

² Adapted from materials of the High Tech High network of schools