Recruitment Efforts
Initially
The Charter School Director and Project Manager conducted 14+ evening and weekend parent meetings to recruit students to the Charter School. Sixty-five students had enrolled by the end of November. Knowing there was a need for 100 students to meet the budget, the two individuals were invited by Weeks Middle School to meet with the 7th grade students for 15 minutes and the 8th grade students for 15 minutes. Eighty-five applications were handed out and the enrollment goal was met.

Now
Meetings were conducted with students at the middle schools in Des Moines. Building administrators scheduled the times and the audience. In some instances, administrators chose all students to attend the recruitment meetings. In other instances, administrators selected only students that fit the profile of students the Charter School serves. This was not information administrators passed along to their families prior to the meetings, giving parents the opportunity for their students to opt out of attending the meeting. Along with those meetings, evening meetings were scheduled for parents to learn more about the school.

Student Enrollment and Reasons for Leaving
2011 Enrollment
The Des Moines Public Charter School opened its doors to 104 students Tuesday, January 18, 2011. February 15, there were 97 students. Seven students were returned to their comprehensive middle schools due to their disruptive and inappropriate behaviors that interfered with student learning and school climate. These seven students were special education students with behavior disorders. The Charter School was never designed, nor will its mission change, to serve behavior disordered students.

Today, there are currently 63 students in attendance. Thirty-four students left the Charter School since our February 15. The reasons are as follows:
- 5 Attendance issues which families refused to address
- 8 Behavioral issues
- 4 Moved out of the Des Moines School District
- 8 Preferred traditional school setting
- 3 Sports in their home schools
- 2 Unaddressed mental health issues
- 4 Wanted to return to home school

01-11 Demographics: Free and Reduced 79.38 % (Free – 63.92% and Reduced – 15.46%)
05-11 Demographics: Free and Reduced 77% (Free – 56% and Reduced – 21%)

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Among this population of 63 students, we continue to have enrolled high-risk students as noted by the current demographics (see above). These students also embody the characteristics of the early warning indicators associated with not completing high school: excessive absences, three or more course failures, and ITBS scores below the 41st percentile.

Students who have been recruited for next year meet the criteria as well. Additional students have been identified through the Early Indicator System and letters have been mailed to 150+ students for possible enrollment. Although we have communicated our mission and goals for the Charter School, it has been found that parents of at-risk students often do not have access to that information.

2012 Enrollment
- 7th – 43 applications have been accepted
- 8th – 7 applications have been accepted
- 9th – 9 applications have been accepted

Staffing 2011
Five teachers – Humanities included Language Arts and Social Studies, STEM included Math and Science, and Special Education. Two half-time associates were hired to help with supervision. One full-time special education associate was added as well.

Staffing 2012
Teachers – Original five with Social Studies and Math teachers being replaced
New additions – PE, Reading, and Spanish, one full-time associate

Professional Development
A variety of professional development activities were conducted in the fall when teachers were hired. Many articles, books and studies were read to help the faculty and administration to prepare for the year. In addition to this, the staff worked to perfect a lesson design plan for them to use.

The Prairie Meadows Legacy Grant will help fund additional professional development. Two teachers are scheduled to attend the High Tech High Summer Institute. The faculty will visit other Charter Schools in the Midwest. Teachers will be able to attend state and national conferences in their content area.

Facilities
2011 – 620 8th Street
2012 – 1421 Walker Street until facility is remodeled
The current location at 620 8th Street is a temporary home for the Charter School. There is not adequate space for our growing population, which will total 150 students beginning July 18, 2011. Thus, we will relocate to a temporary facility to house the Charter School, while we finalize acquisition and tenant fit-out of a permanent location.
Programming 2011
The Middle School consisted of 7th and 8th grade students combined in their courses. The curriculum consisted of integrated units in the STEM and Humanities classes. A reading class was developed and began after spring break, as well as a health/wellness class.

The grading for the Charter students is “A”, “B”, or “not yet”. Students are required to complete their work at a satisfactory level. The results of school-based interventions to improve instruction and access to support students are being noted. In addition, data from performance indicators are being included – credits earned, attendance, disciplinary actions, reading/math proficiency, etc. We are working towards standards based outcomes.

Time
There are 200 student days in our calendar. Students attend school from approximately 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM. Students are not released on Wednesday afternoons for early dismissals, but stay in school for additional programming.

Assessment
Baseline Assessments/Data have been gathered this year to include:
  District’s Early Indicator System
  Authentic Reading Inventory (ARI)
  8th Grade Math Assessment
  Iowa Test of Basic Skills (first year for baseline data use)
  Data from performance indicators
  Course completion

Assessment of student skill development has continued throughout the semester to determine growth and areas for improvement in academic skills/knowledge, attitude, behavior and circumstances of students. These assessments have been both formative and summative.

Programming 2012
Middle School for 7th and 8th grade students will remain the same. Schedules and curriculum are in the process of being updated to include improvements for next year.

Early High School (9th Grade) will begin this year. In addition to the integrated core curriculum, one to three week internships will be included. Schedules have been rearranged to allow 9th grade students to participate in extra-curricular activities at their home school.

Advanced coursework at Central Academy will be available for all grade levels at the Charter School.

The possibility of adding extra-curricular activities at the Charter School is being explored, such as a drill team/drum line, a choir and intramurals.
Parent/Community Involvement
Parents are required to serve 20-hours to the school. Hours have been tabulated to make sure all parents of returning students have met that commitment. A partnership has been formed with United Way to coordinate community volunteers for the school. Several people have donated time and a luncheon was provided on Monday, June 20th to show the school’s appreciation.

Partnerships
The Project Manager has developed and continues to develop partnerships with a number of businesses, agencies and entities to provide supportive resources that have and will continue to enhance the academic, social and emotional development and growth of Charter School students and their families. Some of these partnerships include: Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines; 24/7 Toolset, After School Arts Program; Bank of the West; Bankers Trust; Department of Cultural Affairs; Central College Educational Talent Search; Des Moines Public Library; Des Moines Symphony Academy; CRM system developed by DoExtra; Drake University Practicum Students; Gateway Dance Theatre; Girls Circle facilitated by Young Women’s Resource Center; Grand View University Practicum Students; The Greater Men’s Foundation; Life Line Resources, Inc.; Male Responsibility facilitated by Willkie House, Inc.; Music in the Metro; Opera Iowa; Orchard Place Addictive Services; Orchard Place Mental Health; Polk County Crisis and Advocacy Services; Power2Achieve through Character Counts in Iowa; Sequel Care Community Based Services; State Historical Society of Iowa; the Principal; and United Way of Central Iowa Volunteer Program.

Communication
The school has communicated with others in a variety of ways. Weekly Communication Logs are emailed and sent to families to update them on classroom activities and important information/dates that might interest them. An article is written weekly for the Des Moines Register in their Every School Every Thursday section.

Advisory Council
The Charter School Advisory Council is in the process of being finalized. Two parents and one community person have been elected to the board. Two additional people, a business representative and a member of the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, appointed by the superintendent, will join the others to complete the five-person board. A facilitator has been contracted to work with the board over a two-year period.

Des Moines Public Charter School Foundation Board
The Des Moines Public Charter School Foundation Board was established as a 501(c)(3) organization for the benefit of the Des Moines Public Charter School. The purpose and objectives of the Foundation is to (1) receive, administer, and distribute funds, property and gifts of any kind for the Des Moines Public Charter School teachers, administrators support staff and volunteers; (2) develop and administer programs to enhance classroom instruction by providing professional development opportunities, materials and resources Charter School teachers, administrators, support staff and volunteers; and (3) take any other action deemed necessary or desirable to enhance or develop educational programs or facilities.
The funds have been used as a one-time investment in building the capacity of the Charter School to include staff salaries benefits, professional development, curriculum development, instructional technology, curriculum materials, classroom equipment, community learning site development, and home visits. Funds were used for start-up costs in the fall of 2010 to prepare for 7th and 8th grades. Additional funds are being used in the spring and summer of 2011 to prepare for grades 9 and 10 and spring and summer 2012 to prepare for grades 11 and 12.

Budget and Funding Sources

Funding Sources – A variety of resources have been provided to help pay for start-up costs for the school as well as on-going expenses for the first semester. Per pupil state aid was paid for 100 students. Drop-out prevention money was used to help pay the equivalent of one FTE. Grants from the Community Foundation, Leadership Circle of the Community Foundation, William C. Knapp Foundation (used for student technology) and the Prairie Meadows Legacy Grant have been used for a variety of things such as furniture, professional development, etc.

Questions?