



# PARAMOUNT BARD

A C A D E M Y

## Executive Summary

### Overview

The Paramount Bard Academy is a collaborative effort of the Resnick Foundation, the Paramount Agricultural Companies, Bard College, and community members of Delano, California. The Academy is a unique initiative that raises expectations for students while providing a model that can contribute to significant growth in student achievement in the region. This charter school reaches out to the same range of students as the local school districts and benefits from the active presence and participation of the Bard College Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program. Creating a school in which the students and faculty of a graduate teacher education program are participating members of the teaching and learning community contributes to the development of innovative curriculum and pedagogy while effectively increasing the capacity of the school to deliver forms of instruction that are responsive to the individual needs of public school students. The Academy builds on the model of early college high schools, a major initiative of the Gates Foundation that is demonstrating success in increasing the college-going rate of historically underserved students.

### Mission

*The Paramount Bard Academy is committed to providing a full range of students with an academically challenging curriculum, individually responsive and fully inclusive in its approach to teaching and learning, and dedicated to the idea that all children should complete high school prepared for thoughtful citizenship and ready to complete a college degree.*

### Basic Facts

The Academy will open its doors on August 3, 2009 to 100 sixth and ninth graders, growing each year by 200 students until it reaches an initial capacity of 700 students in grades 6-12 in the 2012-13 school year. During the 2013-2014 school year, the Academy will develop its curriculum and facilities to begin enrolling kindergarten students in August 2104, building to a final capacity of 1300 students in a comprehensive K-12 program by 2019-20. The educational program is defined by a few key elements:

- Class sizes of 16-22 students with student-centered, individualized instruction.
- All teaching faculty trained as associates of the Bard College Institute for Writing and Thinking and National Board Certified by second year of employment.
- College courses taught on site and open to all eligible students.
- Teachers meet daily with advisory groups of 10-15 students – providing support, remaining accountable, and connecting to home and family.
- Community connections to school through committees and monthly activities.
- Onsite integration of Bard's MAT Program – graduate students as teaching assistants, graduate faculty as curriculum and teaching consultants/partners.
- Emphasis on a college-going culture and multiple post-graduation options.

## **Achievement Goals**

The Paramount Bard Academy has set initial goals for its first five years of operation and will reset to higher standards at the time of charter renewal.

- 95% of entering 9<sup>th</sup> graders will graduate from high school on time.
- 75% of all Academy graduates will complete a college degree.
- 100% of all students will complete 30 credit hours of college course work by the time they graduate from the Academy.
- The Academy will achieve a minimum API of 800 prior to charter renewal.
- The Academy will rank at least 10 on the similar school Academic Performance Index and at least 6 on the statewide API in the year prior to renewal.

## **Impact on Local Districts**

There will be no negative impacts on local school budgets and many advantages to the local districts.

- The average annual growth rates of each of the Delano School Districts exceed the annual enrollment rates of the Paramount Bard Academy. ADA should continue to rise in both districts.
- Though districts will continue to grow, the Academy will slow growth and postpone the need for new school construction, keeping tax rates down.
- The continued growth of both districts and the low student: teacher ratio of the Academy means increased demand for teachers and increases in hiring.
- The Academy provides a working model of educational innovation and the basis for dialogue with local districts about continued school improvement.
- The local presence of the Bard College teacher education program means increased opportunities for affordable and sustained professional development.
- Increased opportunities for local schools based on federal, state, and private foundation grants that target college/public school partnerships.
- The Academy will graduate master's level certified teachers to fill available positions in local schools.

## **Charter Petition Compliance**

The Paramount Bard Academy proposal meets all the criteria of California Education Code and exceeds many of the standard requirements.

- Necessary Signatures include 240% of required teacher signatures, 150% of required parent signatures, and 789 signatures from local citizens who support the Academy.
- 34 letters of support from elected officials, business owners, state and national level educational leaders, and local citizens.
- Financial commitment of the Resnick Foundation to cover startup costs and the maintenance of program standards.
- Commitment of Bard College to provide professional support to teachers and graduate students as teaching assistants.
- Partnership with Bakersfield College, guaranteeing that college credits earned at the Academy are readily transferable to California colleges and universities.