

PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO MORRIS AND GWENDOLYN CAFRITZ FOUNDATION
July 1, 2007

Name: Higher Achievement Program, Inc.

Address: 317 8th Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002

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Organization's Website: www.higherachievement.org

Federal tax-exempt number: 52-1383374

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Amount of this funding request: \$50,000

Program Budget: \$1,868,372

Organizational Budget: \$2,405,349

Fiscal Year: September 1st, 2006- August 31st, 2007

Period this request will cover: June 2007 - June 2008

Purpose of request: Higher Achievement is requesting a \$50,000 investment from the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation to support our rigorous, year-round academic enrichment programs. Higher Achievement produces results that change the lives of young people. Grade point averages jumps over students' four years in Higher Achievement. The average GPA upon entering the program is 2.3, and the average GPA of this year's graduating eighth grade class was 3.8! To continue this level of impact with more students, we need your increased support.

About Higher Achievement: Higher Achievement's mission is to develop academic skills, behaviors, and attitudes in motivated and underserved middle school children, 'scholars', to improve their grades, standardized test scores, attendance, and opportunities: acceptance to top high school programs.

Higher Achievement invests in talent and hard work with year-round academies that deliver rigorous academic training and culture-setting to under-served children in the Washington, DC region. Through our programs, children from disadvantaged neighborhoods learn accelerated lessons through the lens of social justice curricula. After four years of hard work, Higher Achievement scholars are grounded in the principles of freedom, voice, solidarity, and justice, advancing to top high school programs, and prepared to be engaged citizens.

Geographic area: Higher Achievement establishes Achievement Centers in under-served communities in Washington, DC: Wards 7, 6, 4, and 1 and in the City of Alexandria.

Number and Description of Target Population: Higher Achievement participants ("scholars") are 400 motivated, yet economically disadvantaged, middle school students, ages 9-14. Of Higher Achievement's participants in the 2005-2006 school year 81% were African American, 10% Latino, and 9% represented other ethnicities. More than 80 % of Higher Achievement scholars' parents/guardians earn less than \$40,000 per household per year.

Brief organizational history: Founded in 1975 at Gonzaga High School by Greg Gannon, Higher Achievement evolved over the years and became its own incorporated 501(c) 3 in the early 1980's. In 1999, Higher Achievement launched a more robust program model, focused on evaluation and accountability. This new, scalable model demonstrated outstanding results for scholars and allowed the organization to grow and serve more and more scholars every year.

Brief description of previous year's accomplishments: The latest scholar outcomes demonstrate Higher Achievement's continued strong track record of impacting academic improvement and top high school placement.

- GPA jumps over four years in Higher Achievement. Average GPA upon entering the program: 2.3. Average GPA of 2007 graduating eighth grade class: 3.8.
- 83% of scholars were placed in top high schools, including Banneker Academic High Schools, Georgetown Day School, Sidwell Friends School, School Without Walls, and McKinley Tech. These high schools will continue the rigors of Higher Achievement and prepare our scholars for success in college and beyond.

Total support from the Cafritz Foundation:

FY 2007 \$35,000 general operating support
FY 2006 \$30,000 general operating support
FY 2005 \$95,000: \$25,000 general operating & \$70,000 Capital
FY 2004 \$35,000: general operating support
FY 2003 \$35,000: general operating support

Signature of Executive Director:

Richard Anthony Tagle _____

**Proposal to Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation
Submitted by Higher Achievement
July 1, 2007**

FOR ALL REQUESTS:

A. History and Mission: Founded in 1975 at Gonzaga High School by a young teacher named Greg Gannon, Higher Achievement evolved over the years and became its own incorporated 501(c) 3 in the early 1980's. In 1999, the organization reorganized as an outcome-based program to improve academic achievement for disadvantaged middle school children. For more than 30 years, Higher Achievement has impacted the lives of more than 10,000 motivated young people. Its rigorous academic programs have prepared and inspired Washington's youth to achieve their dreams.

Higher Achievement's mission is to develop academic skills, behaviors, and attitudes in motivated and underserved middle school children, 'scholars', to improve their grades, standardized test scores, attendance, and opportunities: acceptance to top high school programs.

B. Program Activities and Accomplishments: Higher Achievement delivers year-round rigorous academic training through its Achievement Centers during the most critical period in a child's development: middle school. Scholars receive supplemental educational experiences through intense, multi-year after-school and summer programs in addition to top high school program placement services. Higher Achievement establishes Achievement Centers in under-resourced communities that serve as an out-of-school time academic magnet program, drawing youth from many neighborhood schools. There are currently five Centers operating in Wards 1, 4, 6 and 7 of the District of Columbia and in Alexandria, Virginia. Each Achievement Center delivers 650 hours of academic instruction, enrichment activities, and academic mentoring *annually* through the Summer Academy, After-School Academy, and High School Placement. In total, Higher Achievement serves approximately 400 students in the greater Washington, DC area.

Related Organizational Accomplishments: Recent years have welcomed extraordinary recognition for Higher Achievement. The organization was selected as the 2006 national winner of the Excellence in Summer Learning Award, given by John Hopkins University. Further, Higher Achievement is the 2005 winner of the Washington



Higher Achievement 1

Post Excellence in Nonprofit Management Award, the NPower/Accenture Award for Nonprofit Innovation in Technology, the Bank of America's Neighborhood Builders Award, and was highlighted by the White House. Further, Higher Achievement has been featured by numerous media outlets, including three articles in the Washington Post in the past year.

C. Impact of Request: Higher Achievement is requesting a \$50,000 investment from the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation to support the operation of its year-round academic program, consisting of After-School Academy, Summer Academy, and the High School Placement Program. This increased request will enable Higher Achievement to serve approximately 400 students at the five Achievement Centers and accomplish our two key organizational goals for the year: 1- leveraging partnerships to benefit our scholars, 2- integrating our high school placement strategies. This investment will allow Higher Achievement to also invest in efforts to connect with and collect data from alumni so that we can better understand our long-term impact.

D. Target Population's Involvement: Parents, alumni, and learning mentors all have seats on Higher Achievement's Board of Directors. Additionally, parents/guardians and Higher Achievement graduates volunteer at Center as mentors or supervisors during homework help or dinner hour. We require parents/guardians be part of the student interview, co-sign the student conduct agreement, complete enrollment forms, pay tuition or complete scholarship application, attend two parent's nights annually, chaperone field trips, provide transportation, and attend the after-school barbecue and closing ceremonies. Parents attend trainings and work with staff to secure enrollment and scholarship to private/parochial schools for their children. Furthermore, scholar ambassadors attend board functions, attend meetings with the Executive Director, and serve as the student representative of Higher Achievement at various functions in the community.

FOR GENERAL SUPPORT REQUESTS:

- 1. Issue to Address:** Young people in Washington, DC face substantial challenges in the school system: 118 of the 146 public schools in Washington, DC failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in 2006. These schools lead to unprepared students - only 9% of students in DCPS graduate from high school and college on time. The inadequacy of public education in our nation's capital has persisted for generations, demonstrated in its dismal adult literacy rate: 36 percent of DC adults

read only at or below a fourth grade level - the lowest rate in the nation. This condition of low performance has led to disinvestment from DC residents: the school system has lost 10,000 students in the past five years¹.

Higher Achievement fills critical gaps in services, as evidenced by:

1. Lack of top school opportunities for low-income middle school children.²
2. Under-representation of minority children in academically advanced programs.³

Higher Achievement's intervention during middle school is also based on research. As the U.S. Department of Education's Condition of Education 2001 report indicates: "Most high school students formalize their educational plans between the 8th and 10th grades, which suggests interventions to influence educational aspirations are most likely to succeed if they take place by the 8th or 9th grade." This conclusion was confirmed by the Philadelphia Education Fund and Johns Hopkins University, in a March 2005 report that found that:

- Students who enter high school *two or more years behind grade level* in math and literacy have only a 50/50 chance of on-time promotion to the 10th grade.
- Ninth grade retention is the biggest risk factor for dropping out of high school.

Higher Achievement intervenes during this critical time and builds the skills and the attitudes that affect all future academic achievement.

Theory of Change: Higher Achievement's theory of change is based upon lessons from the historic under-achievement in urban public schools and has informed the program model. Research shows that lack of academic opportunity causes a lack of interest and effort, leading to systematic underachievement. Higher Achievement addresses this reality by dramatically increasing the educational and enrichment opportunities available to scholars. By offering four years of sustained, intensive academic intervention for motivated children during early adolescence, a time when many disengage from school and learning, Higher Achievement

¹ The Washington Post, 9.14.06

² According to College Board 1999-2003 SAT results by School only two DC public high schools scored above the national average: Banneker and School without Walls. Collectively, these two schools enroll less than 200 freshmen annually.

³ Findings from the National Educational Study (NELS) show under representation of minority racial and ethnic groups (except Asian) and economically disadvantaged students in gifted and talented programs. Disparities originate from narrow selection criteria, mainly based on: testing and teacher referral, English language ability, and in many cases low academic expectations for culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged students.

reverses scholars' declining test scores, secures top school placement and ultimately changes the life outcomes for vulnerable children.

2. N/A

3. **Measurable Outcomes:** For more than 30 years, Higher Achievement has had a major impact on the lives of more than 10,000 motivated young people.

Performance Indicators: The latest scholar outcomes demonstrate Higher Achievement's continued strong track record of impacting academic improvement. When the 2005-2006 report card grades are compared with the 2004-2005 grades, substantive improvements are found in reading and mathematics⁴.

Report Cards:

- 66% of all "C" (or below) scholars increased a full letter grade or more in math (59% in reading).
- 77% of scholars improved or maintained As and Bs in reading (65% in math)

Standardized Tests:

- 61% of Higher Achievement scholars improved their standardized reading score substantively (3% or higher) with the average increase calculated at 4.7 NCE⁵ (55% - math with 2.3 NCE average increase).⁶

Attendance/Tardiness:

- 56% of scholars improved attendance by an average of 7 days.
- 42% of scholars improved tardiness by an averaged of 9 days.

High School Placement:

83% of scholars were placed in top high schools, including Banneker Academic High Schools, Georgetown Day School, School Without Walls, Madeira, and McKinley Tech.

4. **Best Practices:** Higher Achievement produces measurable academic gains that set it apart from other after-school and summer programs. These results have caught the attention of national foundations and research firms, which led to the creation of a longitudinal, randomized study, currently being conducted by Public/Private Ventures and funded by Atlantic Philanthropies and the William T. Grant Foundation.

⁴ It is important to note that these results do not recognize those scholars who improved less than a full letter grade, for example from a B to a B+.

⁵ Normal curve equivalent scores were originally developed to analyze and report gains in compensatory programs for educationally disadvantaged students. These scores have a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of approximately 21. This results in a scale with 99 equal interval units. Normal curve equivalent scores are similar in their range to percentile scores, but they have statistical properties that allow them to be used to compute summary statistics and gain scores. Normal curve equivalent intervals are of equal size and these scores can be used to compute group statistics.

⁶ 2005 result - In 2006, DC Public Schools changed the standardized test.

Curricula Aligned with Public Schools: Further, Higher Achievement's curriculum is aligned with DCPS and ACPS standards. The curricula consist of advanced, rigorous, engaging lessons that are centered on critical skills for 5th through 8th graders. Students experience lessons before being exposed in school. Teachers and mentors deliver skill-based instruction through a variety of engaging literature selections, writing activities, technology projects, mathematics review, and other activities to ensure comprehension and mastery by students at all skill levels.

Mentoring: The program model is based on research about the value of intentional, long-term mentoring relationships. According to Public/Private Ventures, mentoring interactions of less than 6 months can cause declines in behavior, but the longer the duration, the better the outcome⁷. The number of referrals to the principal's office reduced from 38% to 14% over the course of one year. Further, school-based mentoring has been shown to increase attachment to school and decrease fighting in school.⁸ Higher Achievement mentors commit for at least one year, and many have committed for multiple years, some dedicated volunteers have been teaching with Higher Achievement for more than fifteen years.

5. Major Program Activities:

July 2007-September 2007: Operate and Evaluate Summer Academy

- Operate five Summer Academies for 6 weeks in Wards 7, 6, 4, and 1 and the city of Alexandria. 400 scholars will attend four academic classes per day along with quiet reading and electives, including , including the Princeton Review SAT and SSAT preparatory courses. Additionally, scholars will attend weekly field trips and a 3-day university visit.
- Kick off summer academy with the first-ever regional parent orientation, where incoming parents and scholars learn about the breadth of the program and pledge their commitment to four years of Higher Achievement.
- Coordinate summer term events: Spirit Day (new!), Olympics of the Mind,



⁷ Carla Herrera, Public/Private Ventures, *School-Based Mentoring, a Closer Look* 2004.

⁸ See above – Public/Private Ventures.

science fair, mock trial, assessments, etc.

- Evaluate Summer Academy accomplishments, curriculum, teachers, and electives.
- Prepare for Fall Semester: interview, hire and train any new staff for the Center Teams; coordinate fall recruitment of scholars and mentors; confirm all partners with memoranda of understanding, update After-School curricula.

October 2007- December 2007: Open and Operate After-School Academy and High School Placement Program.

- Recruit, train, and steward volunteer academic learning mentors and art studios.
- Test all scholars, determine learning groups for each subject, and match mentors with learning groups.
- Operate After-School Academies at the five Achievement Centers.
- Coordinate parent activities including parent's night, parent's orientation, introduction to placement, parent application, financial aid workshops, etc.
- Coordinate fall term events (high school fair, Spelling Bee, thanksgiving potluck dinner).
- Calculate our annual performance outcomes and report progress.

January 2008-June 2008: Operate After-School Academy and Prepare for Summer Academy

- Recruit, interview, and select freshman class of Higher Achievement participants and control group participants for the Public/Private Ventures study.
- Operate five Achievement Centers in Alexandria and DC Wards 7, 6, 4, and 1. Coordinate student academic plans, weekly progress reports, evaluations, events, semi-monthly mentor trainings, and parent workshops.
- Conduct scholar and Center evaluation.
- Coordinate spring term events: Literary Love Poem contest, Ambassador Debate.
- Coordinate Green Apple Awards graduation event.
- Prepare for five Summer Academies: update curricula, plan weekly trips, schedule college trips and recruit and train a full-time teaching staff of 40 teachers.

Existing Community Resources: Higher Achievement builds on existing facilities, academic partners, and people to leverage greater services to support youth.

Facilities: The five Achievement Centers operate in partnership with a host school and the partnership is managed with a memorandum of understanding. Schools include: Kelly Miller Middle School, Lincoln Middle School, ABC Bilingual Charter School, Stuart Hobson Middle School, Hammond Middle School (Alexandria).

People: Higher Achievement leverages approximately 300 volunteer mentors who commit to teach Higher Achievement's challenging math, literature, or technology curricula for 24 weeks.

Partners: Each Center leverages partners to secure volunteer mentors. Current mentor partners include DC READS at George Washington, Catholic, Georgetown, and American Universities, Project Change at Howard University, and corporate partners like Academy for Educational Development, Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP, the Junior League, and Service Corps. Higher Achievement also collaborates with organizations to provide testing (Princeton Review for SAT and SSAT preparation), artistic studios, and scholarship opportunities.

6. Outcomes and Evaluation

Outcomes: Utilizing individual mentoring relationships that combine core skill acquisition with the development of academic habits and behaviors required for success in top area high schools, the *short-term changes* that Higher Achievement expects are:

- 50% of students will increase a full letter grade or more in math and language arts.
- 50% of students will demonstrate substantive improvement on standardized exams in math and language arts.
- 75% of Higher Achievement graduates advance to top private, parochial, and public magnet high schools.
- 40% reduction in school absenteeism and tardiness by more than half of our scholars.

The measurable *long-term change* that we expect is at least 80% of our graduates advancing to and graduating from college. Higher Achievement is beginning to develop systems to measure the college acceptance rate for graduates by bolstering alumni relations and data collection. Less measurable long-term changes include building the pool of local talent for professional work in the Washington, DC region, lasting confidence

and academic challenge, and graduate's commitment to social justice and helping their community.

Data Collection and Use: Higher Achievement conducts two types of program evaluation: an outcomes evaluation on participating scholars and a long-term research study. In a time when most out-of-school time programs are not measuring academic outcomes, Higher Achievement is nationally recognized for the measurable impact it has on participants' performance.

Outcome Evaluation: In evaluating the overall quality of its program, Higher Achievement internally rates success by tracking improvements on five quantitative performance indicators: 1) school grades, 2) standardized test scores, 3) attendance, 4) tardiness, and 5) high school choice. In addition, qualitative performance indicators will be tracked by mentors, staff, parents, and scholars regarding student attitudes and behaviors. To manage this data, Higher Achievement maintains a Management Information System (MIS) that manages student applications, test results, grades, weekly progress reports, highly detailed 360-degree scholar survey evaluations, etc. Each December, annual results are calculated to document Higher Achievement's impact over the past year.

Long-term Evaluation: In 2002, Higher Achievement piloted a randomized evaluation, which showed promise and led to the development of a more robust and credentialed impact evaluation, the total cost of which is \$3.2 million over six years. Higher Achievement and Public/Private Ventures have partnered to conduct this high level evaluation. Renowned scholar Dr. Jean Grossman, Professor at Princeton University and Senior Vice President of Public/Private Ventures, is principal investigator. This project will study the potential of high quality supplemental academic instruction and support provided during out-of-school time (OST) to affect the lives of economically disadvantaged young people. The study will examine results from 1000 students (treatment and control groups) from May 1, 2006 through May 1, 2011.

7. Links with Related Organizations: Higher Achievement invests in strategic partnerships that benefit our scholars and the overall quality of education in Washington, DC.

Program: Higher Achievement leverages existing resources and partners

with existing community groups to achieve its mission. During Summer Academy, each Achievement Center operates in partnership with its host school and neighborhood feeder schools. Higher Achievement also collaborates with organizations that can advance services for children for overnight university trips (Washington College, Penn State University, University of Virginia), field trips (U.S. Congress, Smithsonian Institution), artistic studios (Capitol Hill Arts Workshop, Critical Exposure), continued mentoring in high school (College Bound, Mentors, Inc.), and test preparation (Princeton Review). Finally, Higher Achievement has established partnerships with college preparatory high schools and scholarship agencies⁹ in order to secure acceptance, tuition (when necessary), and on-going academic support for our scholars as they advance through high school.

Community: Higher Achievement staff and board purposefully connects with the communities we serve. In fact, this year, one of just two major organizational goals is to leverage partnerships to benefit our scholars. These partnerships range from City Council hearings (Higher Achievement testified on June 22, 2007) and meetings with the State Superintendent, DCPS Chancellor, and Eleanor Holmes Norton to regular communication with school principals, counselors, teachers, and parents. Higher Achievement participates in four of the Nonprofit Roundtable's Tables of Ten: Board Presidents, Communications Directors, Chief Operating Officers and Executive Directors.

Sector: Higher Achievement has convened and presented at regional and national meetings including Gallup, New York University, Judiciary Conference of the District of Columbia, the Leadership Council for Civil Rights, the National Center for Gifted and Talented Education, DC Board of Trade, Johns Hopkins University, American University, and the Re-imagining After-School Summit. Presentations have highlighted Higher Achievement's data-driven expansion, nonprofit leadership best practices, outcome measurement, rigorous education model, web-based student tracking and management information system (MIS).

8. Sustainability: Higher Achievement is currently focusing on developing diverse, sustaining, and where possible, earned sources of revenue. The organization recently completed a business planning process with

⁹ There are 40 high-level college preparatory high school partners. Scholarship partners include Capital Partners for Education, Washington Scholarship Fund, A Better Chance, Vinco, Jack Kent Cooke Scholars Program, and the financial aid offices of various schools.

guidance from Bridgespan to explore the replicability and cost of the model.

Furthermore, Higher Achievement's development efforts are directed to sustain long-term operation, expansion, and systems development. This plan comprises three primary efforts:

1. Identify and pursue diverse, multi-year government, foundation, and national partners.
2. Expand the number of President's Council members and increase the size and number of individual donations.
3. Increase visibility of Higher Achievement in community-at-large and in key giving circles. Specifically, we plan to leverage the exposure from the CharityWorks gala in 2006 with our first-ever Higher Achievement-run gala in 2008.

Conclusion



Thank you for considering continued support of the Higher Achievement Program and for your commitment to improving the lives of young people in the Washington, DC region.

Before I go, I have some advice for you scholars - so HEY, LISTEN UP! First, be yourself. To the fullest extent possible. Next: Don't say "what if" and don't just be a lifelong dreamer, be a doer. I don't want to see you somewhere saying what if: what if I did my homework, what if I had gone to college, what if I had listened. Do your homework, Go to college, listen -be a doer...it makes a dream real.

- Kelvin Sherman, 2006 graduate speaker

IV. ATTACHMENTS

- 501(c)3 letter
- Staff biographies
- Board of Directors
- Letters of Support
- *Washington Post* article
 - 2006 Audit
- FY 2007, FY 2008 (DRAFT!) Budgets

**Higher Achievement
FY2008 Budget
September 1, 2007 - August 31, 2008**

Personnel Costs	1,807,081
Bonus Pool	18,071
FICA (7.65% of salary)	138,242
State Unemployment Tax	10,427
Health Insurance	87,580
Retirement Expense	37,998
Workers Compensation (.78%)	4,563
Professional Development	23,608
Disability & life Insurance	17,581
Bank Service Charges	1,000
Depreciation	50,905
Dues & Subscriptions	3,390
Center Educational Supplies	20,176
Center Supplemental Budget	7,900
Information Systems Management	34,334
Technical Consultant Fees	42,000
Web/Email Hosting	4,500
Equipment - Less than \$1000	6,750
Equipment Leasing & Repairs	1,204
Insurance - D&O	2,000
Insurance - Property & Liability	11,209
Licences & fees	795
Miscellaneous Expense	750
Office Supplies	8,510
Postage & Delivery	10,116
Printing & Reproduction	16,200
Copier Equip Leasing & Inhouse printing	11,868
Legal Fees	25,000
Accounting	9,300
Consultants	253,425
Audit Fees	7,000
Studio Leaders	69,000
Security & Maintenance	20,060
Coaches	2,400
Promotional Materials	8,750
Advertising	14,000
Recognition	15,630
Admissions Test Preparation	42,000
Center Space	30,000
Special Events	152,760
Student Meals	81,000
Student Housing	38,000
Telephone & center mobile	13,668
Temporary Help	2,500
Training, Orientation & Instruction	3,951
Transportation - Students	36,190
Staff Travel	17,177
Occupancy Expenses (incl depreciation)	60,429
Consultant Pass Through	580,000
Total Expenses	3,891,189