

# Letter of Intent: Applicant and Media Contact Form

Created Monday, June 25, 2012

Updated Friday, February 01, 2013

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## Page 1

**All applicants seeking to establish a charter school authorized by the Board of Regents to open in 2014 must submit a Letter of Intent to Apply, which requires completion of this applicant and media contact form, and an upload of your 5 page Letter of Intent to Apply as outlined on pages 14 of the 2013 RFP and Application Kit. Please submit these tasks by 5:00 PM on February 1, 2013. Applicants who do not submit a complete Letter of Intent to Apply by this deadline will not be permitted to submit a Full Application.**

### a. Proposed Charter School Name

(Please write out the formal and full name for the school you proposed, and include the words "charter" and "school" in the proposed name).

*Rockland Academy of Excellence Charter School*

**Whether submitting an application in Round 1 or Round 2, all new charter school applicants seeking public space in New York City must fill out a "Request for DOE Space" by January 31, 2013. The Request Form can be found at <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dHNTYVFueWd4RWhmLW5CNHBqV>**

### b. Preferred school location.

Select the preferred geographical area on the left and then select the preferred school district or community school district on the right.

*Upstate School Districts: East Ramapo Central School District*

Select a second geographical area on left and then select the school district or community school district on right.

*None*

If necessary, select a third geographical area on left and then select the school district or community school district on right.

*None*

### c. Applicant(s) information, including mailing address, phone number, and email address, and information establishing that the applicant(s) is a parent, teacher, school administrator or community resident.

(The entire chart may not be visible on your screen. Use the "tab" key to move from column to column. The first column will remain static as you do so).

	First and Last Name	Best Phone Number (###-###-####)	Email Address	Street Address, City, State, Zip
Lead Applicant	Dionne Olamiju	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Co-Applicant

As the Lead Applicant(s), I (we) can best be described as a:

(Multiple responses permitted)

- Current or former School Administrator

d. Media Contact: please provide a phone number and/or email address to which public inquires about the proposed charter school may be addressed.

	First and Last Name	Best Phone Number (###-###-####)	Email Address	URL (type web address or the word "none")
Media Contact	Grant Valentine	845-596-1838	gvalentinejd@gmail.com	none

e. Planned grades and enrollment in each year of the proposed charter term.

	Ages (or age ranges)	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
K	0	0	0	0	0	0
1st	0	0	0	0	0	0
2nd	0	0	0	0	0	0
3rd	0	0	0	0	0	0
4th	0	0	0	0	0	0
5th	0	0	0	0	0	0
6th	11-12	120	120	120	120	120
7th	12-13	0	120	120	120	120
8th	13-14	0	0	120	120	120
9th	0	0	0	0	0	0
10th	0	0	0	0	0	0
11th	0	0	0	0	0	0
12th	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ungraded	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		120	240	360	360	360

f. Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s), such as a charter or educational management company or a university, academic program partner, or whole school change partner.

(See pages 36-39 of the application kit for definitions and guidance as only "significant" partnerships should be listed here).

f. Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s), such as a charter or educational management company or a university, academic program partner, or whole school change partner.   Proposed Management Company	N/A
f. Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s), such as a charter or educational management company or a university, academic program partner, or whole school change partner.   Partner Organization 1	Victory Education Partners
f. Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s), such as a charter or educational management company or a university, academic program partner, or whole school change partner.   Partner Organization 2	(No response)

Thank you for completing the Applicant and Media Contact Form which will be duplicative of some information contained in your letter of intent. Having information in this form allows the Department to merge applicant contact information into our existing data system. Please proceed to upload your signed and dated 5 page Letter of Intent to Apply.

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I. Applicant Information

Lead Applicant: Dionne Olamiju, School Administrator



1/30/13

Address: [REDACTED]

Telephone number: [REDACTED]

Email address [REDACTED]

b. Media Contact: Grant Valentine

Telephone number: (845) 596-1838

Email address: gvalentineejd@gmail.com

c. **The members of our founding team are:**

- **Lydia Lestrade** is an educator who is very well versed in teaching the ELL population.
- **Patricia Dancy** is a retired guidance counselor from New York City Public Schools. She is a parent and grandparent of students in the East Ramapo community. She has over 30 years of experience providing counseling to at risk students in the public schools and in community organizations.
- **Segun Olamiju** is an ESL teacher who understands the needs of the ELL population in the district.
- **Mae Davis** is a well-respected community activist who had worked for the East Ramapo Central School District for over 30 years. She is very knowledgeable about the needs of the community and plays a significant role in our community outreach campaign.

d. **Our Prospective Board members are:**

- **Grant Valentine**, a New York State senatorial candidate, who has had 29 years of experience in law enforcement. As the prospective President of our Board of Trustees, he demonstrates effective leadership in the coordination and guidance of our team.
- **Dionne Olamiju** is an Assistant Principal who holds significant educational leadership capacity and insight into the academic, emotional and social needs of the students in the district.
- **Dennis McGloster** is a corporate tax accountant who is also a parent in the East Ramapo Central School District. As a prospective board member, Dennis will provide fiscal acumen over the charter school's financial records.

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- **Doris Ulman** is a village attorney for numerous villages in the county. She brings her keen and insightful legal capacity as a prospective board member.
- **Dr. Carol Bonilla-Bowman**, an Assistant Professor of Education at Ramapo College is an author of many publications. She is a significant contributor to the key elements in our academic design.
- **Peter Obe** is a mechanical engineer, software developer and an entrepreneur in the East Ramapo Community. As a prospective Board member he brings strong advocacy for the infusion of technology into the curriculum.
- **Dr. Arlene W. Clinkscale**, the first African American woman in New York State to lead a school district. As a current member of the Rockland Community College Board of Trustees, she advocates ardently for college preparedness for the students of East Ramapo.
- **Paul Weiner**, a prospective board member who is employed as an IT charter school consultant offers technological data reporting support. He will provide guidance over our data reporting system.
- **Beverly Paige** is a public relations executive who is crucial in providing and implementing community outreach strategies as well as fundraising initiatives.
- **Philomena Nortey** is a parent and an administrator in the New York City public school. As a prospective board member, she shares the awareness of the needs of students in urban school settings.
- **Morgan B. Freeman** is currently a teacher in a charter school and plays a vital role in our curriculum development as well as our intensive literacy design.
- **Bill Baker**, Professor of Science and VP of Academic Affairs at Rockland Community College is an innovative educator who has made significant contributions to the success of at risk students.
- **Steven Edwards**, a Certified Public Accountant will also be responsible for providing fiscal oversight over our school's financial records.

e. Replication or Network Information: N/A

f. Application History:

Winter 2010 to Charter School Institute; Spring 2010 to Charter School Institute; Spring 2011 to New York State Education Department; Winter 2012 to New York State Education Department – Each time the application was subsequently withdrawn.

## II. Proposed Charter School Information

- a. Proposed school name: The proposed name of our school is Rockland Academy of Excellence Charter School.
- b. Proposed school location: The proposed location of the school is in the East Ramapo Central School District.
- c. Planned grades and enrollment in each of the years of the proposed charter term.

Projected Enrollment Table Over the Charter Term <sup>1</sup>						
Grades	Ages	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
6 <sup>th</sup>	11-12	120	120	120	120	120
7 <sup>th</sup>	12-13	n/a	120	120	120	120
8 <sup>th</sup>	13-14	n/a	n/a	120	120	120
<b>Totals</b>		120	240	360	360	360

- d. Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s): Victory Education Partners
- e. Proposed school mission: The mission of the Rockland Academy of Excellence Charter School (“Rockland Academy”) is to develop and nurture all students by providing them with the academic, emotional, and social skills essential for college and career readiness.
- f. School overview: The key design elements of Rockland Academy of Excellence Charter School are:

### **Inclusive Academic Program:**

Consistent with our mission of adhering to a standard of academic excellence for all of our students, we will support our special education students and ELLs through a full inclusion, collaborative team-teaching (CTT) model. In this model, each content area teacher will work in conjunction with either a certified special education teacher or a certified ESL teacher to implement instruction that is differentiated to meet the needs of each student.

### **Structured and Supportive School Culture**

As a school that will hold our students, staff and parents to the highest level of accountability; we will operate under a philosophy that dictates high expectations for all students, parents and teachers. High standards will be set for every student, reflective of our belief that each student, regardless of background, is capable of high academic achievement and success in life when provided with the right set of supports and opportunities. Coupled with these high expectations, Rockland Academy will provide a structured and supportive environment that will foster in our

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students the intrinsic **D.R.I.V.E** to succeed; **D**etermination, **R**esponsibility, **I**ntegrity, **V**ision and **E**xcellence in all endeavors.

**Reflective and Data-Driven Pedagogy**

Rockland Academy is committed to hiring highly qualified, passionate and committed teachers who have experienced success in teaching in an urban school environment and who believe firmly in the power of effective planning and data analysis to impact student achievement. In our school, we believe curriculum and assessment are inseparable. Using a backwards design process, our teachers will identify learning objectives for our students and essential questions to be explored, all aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). At the same time, teachers will also identify the assessment evidence needed to document and validate that the targeted learning has been achieved.

**More Time**

A key element of Rockland Academy's mission is to develop college and career readiness in all of our students. We expect that many students who enter Rockland Academy will require significant remediation in the core disciplines of literacy and mathematics. We therefore anticipate that our students will need more time to learn skills and content assumed to have been learned in previous grades, as well as an opportunity to acquire grade level appropriate skills and content to prevent additional academic deficits. Our academic program, delivered during a school day running from 7:30am to 5:00pm, will provide students with dramatically more time on instruction.

**Ongoing Teacher Support and Development**

Rockland Academy is committed to hiring skilled, passionate teachers and providing them with the support necessary to hone their craft. Through weekly in-house professional development workshops, visits to other successful schools, external professional development opportunities, regular observation and feedback, collaborative planning, and peer support, the school will provide teachers with the tools and assistance necessary to provide a college-preparatory academic experience to all students. Those teachers who are new to the profession will receive supplemental support through a mentoring program, enabling Rockland Academy to capitalize on the talents of master teachers on its staff.

**g. Briefly describe the school's target population and the community that the school intends to serve.**

Rockland Academy of Excellence Charter School will serve students in Grades 6-8 in the East Ramapo Central School Community. East Ramapo is a vibrant community that is economically, racially and culturally diverse; 59% of East Ramapo school-age children are Black/African American, 22% are Latino/Hispanic, 11% are White and 8% are Asian. The majority of students live at or below the poverty line, with 65% of the students in the district receiving free or

reduced lunch. English Language Learners make up 23% of the student population and students with special education needs make up 25% of the student population. We anticipate that our school's population will be reflective of the East Ramapo community.

### **III. Enrollment and retention of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program.**

Since 25% of East Ramapo's students are classified special education students and 23% are designated English Language Learners (ELL), Rockland Academy's planning team has ensured that all recruitment materials contain specific language that promotes our services to the Special Education and ELL populations. For the enrollment of our free and reduced lunch students, we have notified the related social services providers who serve the families of East Ramapo of our school design. We have also advertised our ESL services in community centers, churches, and stores frequented by non-English speaking immigrants as well as neighborhoods that are inhabited by the same immigrants

Retention of our students will be driven by our school's Reflective and Informed Education Practitioner philosophy which promotes the use of real-time data to guide interventions, new program development, and classroom instruction. This will ensure that our students' needs are addressed in a timely manner. Additionally, our Advisory program will serve as a supportive structure geared to developing and maintaining relationships among students, teachers and parents. Our ongoing Student and Family Satisfaction Surveys will help school administrators maintain an awareness of the opinions of stakeholders and areas of growth for the school, and will allow them to make strategic adjustments in order to respond to student and family requests.

### **IV. Public Outreach and Community Support**

Over the last three years, our planning team visited homes, churches, community centers, library, businesses and social service agencies to share plans for the school with community stakeholders and solicit signatures in support of opening the school. We collected more than 200 signatures expressing support from parents of eligible 2014-2015 sixth graders. Members of the founding team held several information sessions with members of the East Ramapo community where we shared the design elements of our school. The planning team held several community forums at the Village Planning Board meetings, houses of worship and on local television cable shows. We have met with and received support from local elected officials and community leaders.