

# PHASE I: Letter of Intent

Created Thursday, February 05, 2015

Updated Tuesday, February 10, 2015

## Page 1

Applicant groups and Existing Education Corporations interested in submitting an application to establish Regents-authorized charter schools are asked to complete this brief information sheet. The Department will use this information to plan and coordinate peer review panels with appropriate expertise to evaluate all application materials.

Please indicate whether an Applicant Group or an Existing Education Corporation is submitting this Round 1 Letter of Intent.

Applicant Group LOI to establish a single, brand new charter school

## 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(s)).

|   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| School Name   | VOICE 2 Charter School            |
| Grades Served (K-5, .6-8, 9-12, etc.) During Initial Term | K-5; K-8 at full growth in Year 8 |
| Number of Students During Initial Term                    | 504 in Year 5                     |

Proposed or Current Board Chair and Public Contact information, including mailing address, phone number, and email address.

(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<br>(###-###-####)   | Email Address               |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Proposed/Current Board Chair | Randolph A. Ford                  |  | randolphford@yahoo.com      |
| Public/Media Contact Person  | Franklin Headley (Lead Applicant) | 718-786-6213  | info@voicecharterschool.org |

If available, please provide the URL to the website established for the proposed school or existing education corporation.

<http://www.voicecharterschool.org/>

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 45-46 of the application kit for definitions and guidance as only "substantial" partnerships should be listed here).

Proposed Management Company

Lead Applicant(s) Signature and Date

Use your PC mouse or your mobile device stylus to sign your name below.

Lead or Co-Applicant listed in section c above.

(Internet Explorer may not support this feature. Open the portal using Google Chrome, Firefox, or Safari).

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is written in a cursive style, starting with a large 'S' and ending with a horizontal line. The signature on the right is also in cursive, starting with a tall 'H' and ending with a horizontal line.

Date Signed (Lead or Co-Applicant)

2015/02/09

Thank you for completing this survey so that the Department may plan its review panel accordingly.

VOICE 2 Charter School  
 Letter of Intent

I. Applicant Group Information

- a. Please see Table 1.
- b. Please see Table 1.
- c. **Public Contact:** Franklin Headley, 718-786-6213, info@voicecharterschool.org
- d. **Application History:** The lead applicant was previously lead applicant for VOICE Charter School, a DOE-authorized charter school currently in its second charter term. This application was approved and the school was authorized by NYC DOE in 2008.

II. Proposed Charter School Information

- a. **Proposed school name:** VOICE 2 Charter School
- b. **Proposed school location:** New York City CSD #30. The applicant group has not requested facilities from the district.
- c. **Planned grades and enrollment** in each of the year of the proposed charter term;

| Grade | Age   | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-2020 | 2020-2021 | Full Growth: Year 8 |
|-------|-------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|
| K     | 5-6   | 84      | 84      | 84      | 84        | 84        | 84                  |
| 1     | 6-7   | 84      | 84      | 84      | 84        | 84        | 84                  |
| 2     | 7-8   |         | 84      | 84      | 84        | 84        | 84                  |
| 3     | 8-9   |         |         | 84      | 84        | 84        | 84                  |
| 4     | 9-10  |         |         |         | 84        | 84        | 84                  |
| 5     | 10-11 |         |         |         |           | 84        | 84                  |
| 6     | 11-12 |         |         |         |           |           | 84                  |
| 7     | 12-13 |         |         |         |           |           | 84                  |
| 8     | 13-14 |         |         |         |           |           | 84                  |
| Total |       | 168     | 252     | 336     | 420       | 504       | 756                 |

d. **Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s):** VOICE Charter School will be a partner organization.

e. **Proposed school mission:**

The mission of VOICE 2 Charter School is to create a safe and healthy learning environment that will nurture, motivate, and challenge all of our children to achieve the highest level of academic excellence and to develop into mindful, responsible, contributing participants in their education, their community, and the diverse society in which we live.

f. **School Overview:**

VOICE 2 Charter School will replicate the mission and design of VOICE Charter School, a New York City Department of Education-authorized charter school currently operating in its second charter term.

At VOICE staff and leadership believe that all students are capable of performing at high levels; and that adults are responsible for cultivating the right conditions and employing effective strategies to ensure that each student finds success. VOICE provides rigorous instruction and practice in all subjects, including the arts, to equip students with the habits and skills necessary to enter competitive high schools and eventually pursue high-level work in the area of their choice. Despite limited resources in our area, we believe in offering a pedagogy of choice rather than one of poverty.

VOICE implements a rigorous, Common Core-aligned curriculum, utilizing Teachers College and EngageNY, to ensure that students are prepared to reach mastery in ELA and math. A spiraling curriculum in all subject areas allows students to build upon and develop skills and strategies at each level of instruction.

Unique to VOICE is arts-infused model in which students take 5-10 arts/music classes per week. Rather than treating the arts as enrichment, we see these disciplines as necessary in exploring a full spectrum of modes of thinking, individual practice, group dynamics, and the world's cultural heritage. As such the arts programs at VOICE are taught with the same level of rigor, assessment, and differentiation as the core subjects.

We are a Professional Learning Community. VOICE's organizational culture is one that privileges collaboration, team decision-making and peer leadership among staff. It is the responsibility of the Board and Principal to provide the necessary supports for this type of community to flourish: open communication, access to resources, professional development, opportunities for upward mobility, and a safe, joyful, student-oriented environment.

A defining feature of our school is not only to engage in constant dialogue about our school values, formally and informally, among school staff, students, and parents. Regular professional

development sessions and staff meetings are dedicated to teaching and learning school culture. School values concepts are integrated across subject areas and referenced often as touchstones of our school's community.

**g. Target Population/Community Served:**

VOICE 2 will serve students in CSD #30, in Long Island City, Queens. Enrollment data<sup>1</sup> from the New York State Education Department (“NYSED”) for the 2012-13 school year, the most recently available from NYSED, shows that CSD #30 is diverse, with more than half of students in the district identified as Hispanic or Latino and 21% identified as Limited English Proficient. 87% of students in CSD #30 qualified for free or reduced price lunch in the 2012-13 school year.

**h. Replication of High Quality School Models:**

VOICE 2 will replicate the model in place at VOICE Charter School. VOICE is chartered to serve grades K-8 and is currently in its seventh year of operation. In 2012 VOICE received a full five-year renewal. In each year of operation, VOICE has been deemed “In Good Standing” by NYSED and has been compliant with all applicable local, state, and federal laws as well as the VOICE charter contract.

In 2014, 39% of VOICE students scored proficient on the NYS ELA exam, higher than the average statewide (31%). In math, 70% of students at VOICE scored proficient on the 2014 NYS math exam, far higher than the statewide average of 36%. In addition to scoring higher than the statewide average in 2014, VOICE students exceeded the performance of students in CSD #30 on the 2014 NYS exams. In 2014, students in CSD #30 scored at 32% proficient in ELA and 40% proficient in math.

VOICE seeks to replicate to meet demand from the community for a high quality educational option that ensures student academic proficiency while also providing daily arts education. VOICE has a proven track record of providing both a challenging and engaging combination of arts and academics that effectively prepares students for success.

**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.**

VOICE 2 will utilize the same good faith efforts used successfully by VOICE for recruiting and retaining students in at-risk subgroups. In the 2014-15 school year, VOICE has 16% ELL, 79% FRPL, and 15% SWD in grades K-7. We anticipate similar enrollment patterns for VOICE 2 and will work to meet and exceed our NYSED enrollment targets for enrollment and retention. The following section describes these efforts.

To recruit students with disabilities, VOICE uses direct mail advertising that mentions special needs, and all other advertising (e.g., community newspapers, fliers) mentions our supports for

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<sup>1</sup> NYC GEOG DIST #30 - QUEENS Enrollment (2012 - 13): Accessed at: <http://data.nysed.gov/enrollment.php?year=2013&instid=800000042344>

special needs mentions special needs. In addition, our website clearly describes these supports. VOICE also conducts outreach to specialized feeder schools and programs for students with disabilities.

For English language learners (“ELL”), VOICE uses direct mail advertising and other advertising (e.g. radio, TV, flyer) in languages other than English, conducts in-person outreach by multi-lingual staff, and targets outreach to visit immigrant communities and immigrant advocacy groups in our district. VOICE translates advertising and school materials as needed and all sessions have at least one Spanish-speaking individual present. Members of the VOICE office staff are bilingual. VOICE distributes applications to current ELL families at VOICE and encourages them to give them out to other families they might know outside of VOICE to encourage word-of-mouth ELL recruiting. In addition to a Home Language Survey, NISTELL, and NYSESLAT, we use a variety of formative assessments to determine academic needs as well as particular skills related to language for those learning English in addition to another language. We use this data to form specific supports. One support is to provide our ELLs with regular time on Imagine Learning, a computer software program designed to promote language acquisition, syntax, and vocabulary. We also build specific academic vocabulary into our whole group instruction and differentiate it with additional picture and realia support. Our workshop model allows for explicit modeling and opportunities for differentiated practice, which is helpful for ELLs. Our music curriculum integrates research showing the benefits for ELLs through its study of the structure of language as well as singing in a variety of languages. Our systemic phonics approach, Foundations, is particularly successful in teaching the rules and conventions of English. Throughout our subjects we work to build our student's oral language as well as receptive listening skills to make them well rounded language learners.

For students eligible for free and reduced lunch programs, VOICE covers the free meal program during our school open house, on our application and during tours. We offer support to assist families in completing all necessary paperwork to ensure eligible students participate in the lunch program. VOICE recruits throughout the neighborhoods surrounding our school and in the local district. All VOICE brochures, mailings and applications mention that the school accommodates students with disabilities, English language learners and participates in the free and reduced lunch program.

#### IV. Public Outreach and Community Support

- a. VOICE has conducted five outreach sessions in the Long Island Community to solicit community input about our proposed school. During these sessions, members of the VOICE communications team presented plans for VOICE 2 and solicited feedback and answered questions from the audience. These sessions are listed in the table below.

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| Date              | Event  | Audience   |
|-------------------|--|--|
| November 25, 2014 | VOICE Parent-Teacher Conferences                       | Parents of current VOICE students  |
| December 17, 2014 | Long Island City YMCA weekly parent meeting            | Parents in Long Island City  |
| January 9, 2015   | Astoria Blue Feather Head Start Policy Council Meeting | Parents of preschool students  |
| January 22, 2015  | Principal's Night at 82 <sup>nd</sup> Street Academics | Parents looking for schools in Jackson Heights and surrounding communities |
| January 28, 2015  | VOICE Student of the Month Ceremony                    | Parents of current VOICE students  |

In addition to the events listed above, VOICE has received letters of support for VOICE 2 from Sister Tesa Fitzgerald, Executive Director of Hour Children, a Long Island City-based nonprofit with headquarters near VOICE, and James Merriman, CEO of the New York City Charter Center.

- b. Parents have offered overwhelming support for the proposed VOICE 2 school. Word of VOICE has spread throughout the Long Island City/CSD #30 community and there is high demand for our program. We currently maintain a waiting list of 956 students for VOICE in all grades. With this demand, we anticipate meeting our enrollment targets for both VOICE and the proposed VOICE 2.

**V. Proposed Board Chair Signature and Date**

The applicant group for VOICE 2 Charter School respectfully submits this letter of intent to open VOICE 2. Thank you for your consideration.



Randolph Ford  
 Proposed Chair, Board of Trustees  
 VOICE 2 Charter School

2/9/2015  
 Date

| NAME OF APPLICANT GROUP MEMBER | EMAIL ADDRESS | CURRENT EMPLOYMENT                              |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---|
| Franklin Headley               | [REDACTED]    | Principal, VOICE Charter School                 |
| Michael Karp                   | [REDACTED]    | Retired   |
| Richard Grasse                 | [REDACTED]    | Wealth Management Group, UBS Financial Services |
| Marc Cohen                     | [REDACTED]    | MSC Trading                                     |
| Robert de Luna                 | [REDACTED]    | United Hospital Fund                            |
| Kevin Bean                     | [REDACTED]    | Priest-in-Charge, St. Philip's Episcopal Church |
| Lorraine Cecere                | [REDACTED]    | [REDACTED]                                      |
| [REDACTED]                     | [REDACTED]    | Principal, P.S. 131                             |
| Casey Lamb                     | [REDACTED]    | National Director of Growth, Schools That Can   |

**TABLE 1: APPLICANT GROUP INFORMATION****\*Minimum of 5 members must be designated as Trustees**

| <b>RELEVANT EXPERIENCE, SKILLS, AND ROLE ON APPLICANT GROUP (Key Words)</b> | <b>PROPOSED ROLE (if any) (Trustee, Employee, Consultant, or None Continuing Role)</b> | <b>PROPOSED POSITION ON THE BOARD (e.g., officer, trustee, or constituent representative)</b> | <b>LENGTH OF INITIAL TERM</b> | <b>VOTING MEMBER (YES OR NO)</b> |
|---|--|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Lead Applicant: leadership, education                                       | Proposed leader of VOICE 2   | N/A   | N/A                           | N/A                              |
| Management, Nonprofits  | Trustee  | Trustee   | 3 years                       | YES                              |
| Finance   | Trustee  | Trustee   | 3 years                       | YES                              |
| Finance   | Trustee  | Trustee   | 3 years                       | YES                              |
| Communications  | Trustee  | Trustee   | 3 years                       | YES                              |
| Community Leadership  | Trustee  | Trustee   | 3 years                       | YES                              |
| Education   | Trustee  | Trustee   | 3 years                       | YES                              |
| Education   | Trustee  | Proposed Board Chair  | 3 years                       | YES                              |
| Education, Nonprofits   | Trustee  | Trustee   | 3 years                       | YES                              |

