

Village Preparatory Academy Charter School for Young Men – Letter of Intent

I. Applicant Information

a. *Lead Applicants:*

Name	Mailing Address	Phone Number	Email Address	Applicant Information
Vanette Dandridge	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Educator/Community Resident
Jacqueline Scales	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Educator

b. *Media Contact:*

Village Preparatory Academy Charter School for Young Men - vpaforyoungmen@gmail.com

c. *Founding Group:*

- **Terri Allen-Miles** (Founding Math Teacher) – Learning Specialist at East Side Middle School, New York, NY; 15 year residency in District 5.
- **Vanette Dandridge** (Founder of VPA; Proposed Non-Voting Trustee) – Teacher, Social Studies and Special Education, Opportunity Charter School, New York, NY; 20 year residency in District 5.
- **Deloris Johnson** (Founding Community Liaison/Parent Coordinator) – Therapeutic Foster Parent for Cardinal McCloskey Services; 50 year residency in District 5.
- **Jacqueline Scales** (Co-Founder of VPA; Proposed Non-Voting Trustee) – Mathematics Teacher and Math Team Leader at East Bronx Academy for the Future, Bronx, NY.

d. *Proposed Founding Board of Trustees:*

- ***Peter Crawford, Engineer***, (Proposed Board of Trustee) – Civil Engineer with the Metro North Railroad, Mentor, Community Activist, 50 year residency in District 5.
- ***Anthony E. Harbour, Recruiting Coordinator***, (Proposed Board of Trustee) – Diversity outreach, annual conference and events promoter, Washington, DC.
- ***David McGill, Esq.*** (Proposed Board of Trustee) – Practicing Attorney specializing in Intellectual Property Law, New York, NY; Metropolitan Black Bar Association, New York State Bar Association.
- ***George Reff, Jr., Esq.*** (Proposed Board of Trustee) – Practicing Attorney with a Japan-based insurance corporation within the Legal & Compliance department; New York, NY; Metropolitan Black Bar Association, New York State Bar Association.
- ***Machelle Sweeting, Esq.*** (Proposed Board of Trustee) – Administrative Law Judge, Adjunct Professor at the College of New Rochelle, Mentor, New York, NY; Metropolitan Black Bar Association, New York State Bar Association; 40 year residency in District 5.

e. *Replication or Network Information: Not Applicable*

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f. **Proposal History:** This is the first time any member of this group has been a part of a founding group for a New York State Charter School.

II. Proposed Charter School Information

- a. **Name:** Village Preparatory Academy Charter School for Young Men
- b. **Location:** Preferred Community School District 5, alternates are 2, 4, or 6
- c. **Planned Grades and Enrollment:** Village Preparatory Academy (VPA) Charter School for Young Men will begin with 100 students in the 9th grade and will add one grade level per year until we reach a full-scale enrollment of 400 students in grades 9 – 12. The school plans on back-filling student enrollment vacancies in the 9th grade. VPA will not back-fill in grades 10, 11 and 12 due to the complexity and specialization of educating our students to become professionals or teachers in the field of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

	Number of Students				
Grades	Year 1 2013 – 2014	Year 2 2014 – 2015	Year 3 2015 -2016	Year 4 2016 – 2017	Year 5 2017 - 2018
9	100	105	105	100	95
10	-	95	100	105	100
11	-	-	95	100	105
12	-	-	-	95	100
Total	100	200	300	400	400
<i>Number of classes per grade will be 5 with an average number of young men being 20 per content section</i>					

- d. **Proposed Management/Partner Organization:** Not Applicable
- e. **School Mission:** Village Preparatory Academy Charter School for Young Men will prepare a community of male scholars in grades 9-12, by educating the whole child in a safe, nurturing and engaging environment that promotes respect, confidence, and maturity, while inspiring authentic and creative thinking with a rigorous curriculum that will foster their desire to become professionals or educators in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).
- f. **School Overview:** The goal and objective of VPA Charter School for Young Men will be to educate inner-city young men from all social, economic and racial backgrounds. This will be done by providing a community of effective learning that will prepare and holistically guide each student from 9th grade through completion of all 12th grade graduation requirements, with the ultimate goal being college admission into their specialized field of a teacher education program or professions that will focus on STEM. Every student will be instructed in the core subjects of English, history, science, math, technology and foreign language. This will be in alignment with the New York State Common Core Standards to develop knowledge through higher order

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thinking skills. Implementation of this will be done through the utilization of Wiggins and McTighe, education scholars who have proven that an effective approach to curriculum planning is through "backward design"; a method with a focus on SMARTER planning, which involves content, process and integration that includes Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Backward Design and UDL will provide the most effective framework for understanding how to create curricula that meets or exceeds the needs of all learners.

Administrators and teachers will take full advantage of the school day with extended hours throughout the school year; school hours 8:00am - 4:10pm (Monday - Thursday) & 8:00am - 3:40pm (Friday). The extended hours will allow teachers to be available before and after Instructional Time to meet with parents and/or students when needed; prepare and review work; and attend instruction-enhancing professional development. VPA Charter School for Young Men plans to adopt and be in alignment with the New York State Education Department requirement of a minimum of 182 instructional days, which will include two Parent-Teacher Conference dates as set by the Chancellor: one in the Fall Term and one in the Spring Term for academic year 2013 - 2014. Additionally there will be a Saturday and a Summer Enrichment Program. The Saturday Program will run the academic year with staff who will work to maximize the young men's learning potential with a platform that will foster their desire to become life-long learners. The Summer Enrichment Program will consist of 30 instructional days that will begin July 7th through August 15th with academic and internship programs.

All teachers will be identified as highly qualified in their specific core subject (minimum Masters Degree); which will bring a greater depth of passion, expertise and innovation to the lecturing, methodology and manipulation of material to enhance student learning.

1. VPA Charter School for Young Men's 21st century classroom:

- Teacher-to-student classroom ratio will be (20:1), which will allow for effective individual student attention, contributing to increased comprehension and engagement.
- There will be technology in the classroom that is reflective of male learning. The inclusion of technology will support the objective: content and practice/application to create innovative instruction that is engaging and develops higher order thinking skills; bringing discussion, investigation and analysis to text and materials along with visual and auditory aid. This will support differentiated instruction to meet the learning needs of all male students who are admitted.
- Real world applications that will be used in every class to marry theory and practice together; creating more effective student comprehension and use of the New York State Common Core Standards by allowing the following to occur: Open the classroom to more communication opportunities. Encourage more student-to-teacher and student-to-student discussion. Share the authority as more resources are brought into the classroom. Create opportunities for tasks that are complex and authentic and connected to projects, which may be multidisciplinary and long term.
- Collaborative Team Teaching for special needs students will include modified lessons that will support strategies for a differentiated classroom; instruction will support the learning needs based on individualized education plan (IEP), modified test-taking, one-

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to-one and small group teaching with two in-class highly qualified master teachers; content specific and a special education generalist.

- VPA Charter School for Young Men will include educational solution programs: Pearson School, Teacher Created Materials, Scholastic and McGraw Hill. Additionally, teachers will be equipped with Enhanced Professional Practice - A Framework for Teaching. By implementing these products and resources the staff can execute a solid foundation of teaching that will initiate and challenge the young men to excel academically.

2. A mandatory school uniform policy will be implemented into the school community. Our school uniform will consist of hunter green sweater or vest, black Slacks, long sleeve white polo shirts (fall and winter) and black shorts and white polo shirts for the summer with the emblem of VPA.

g. **Target Population:** VPA Charter School for Young Men will be open to all male students in New York City and our admission process will be conducted by lottery. The target population will include males from community schools in District 5, low-income; working class; single-parent; Black and Latino; English Language Learners; at-risk and students diagnosed with special learning disabilities as outlined in the IDEA 2004. Presently, there are 5 high schools in District 5 with a total student population of 12,952, in which 49 percent are males. Students' ethnicities are 58.8 percent Black, 38 percent Hispanic and 2 percent Asian. Many of the students who attend school in Community School District 5 are economically disadvantaged and qualify for Title I Funds, and more than 72 percent are eligible for the free lunch and 6 percent qualify for reduced-priced lunch.

“According to national estimates, only 59 percent of Black males and 49 percent of Latino males complete high school (Greene and Winters 2006). In New York City, the largest public school system in the nation, only about 44 percent of both Black and Latino males from the 2005 cohort graduated after six years of high school (NYCDOE 2008). What happens to the other nearly 60 percent? In New York City, many Black and Latino males are still enrolled after 4 years; however, a substantial percentage of them are dropping out.”¹

III. Enrollment and Retention of Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners and students who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch program.

The staff of VPA Charter School for Young Men will create a culture of excellence with high expectations that will raise the benchmark on student learning and achievement. VPA for Young Men plans to recruit and retain students who have been identified as English Language Learners (ELL), students with IEP's and at-risk underserved males.

¹ New York City Department of Education. *Graduation Rates for the Class of 2007*, New York City Department of Education. 2008

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In order to meet this goal it will be important to develop an awareness of the different values and practices in homes and of cultures. This will include hiring a bilingual Special Education teacher who can assist families with questions, concerns and applications. VPA will invite parents to sit-in on classes with the interpreter to gain an insight into what their son is learning. Additionally, to assist and retain ELL Students, VPA will have a resource room for parents who are seeking additional information on the school or community.

VPA will have smaller class sizes and an Extended Day and Saturday Enrichment Program for ELL and struggling students who have been classified as at-risk. VPA will also have a Literacy and Math Intervention Program that will include push-in services to meet the needs of ELL students and students with disabilities to prevent loss of instructional time.

Real world applications will be used in every class to bring educational practices together with specific instructional strategies that can be implemented to target the needs of ELL students. These strategies will include: technology, building background, listening center, visual cues, graphic organizers, manipulatives, conferencing, modeling, mini-lessons, read-aloud, vocabulary building, hands-on and grouping activities. These activities will promote more student-to-student discussions, text-to-self and text-to-world connections for student engagement. The Special Education teachers will collaborate with the content teachers to implement language learning goals to drive student instruction and to make modifications.

VPA will have continuous professional development for instructional staff on Cultural Diversity to understand ELL's and at-risk underserved minority males, which will bridge cultural differences. This will be in association with The State Education Department that requires teachers to incorporate a knowledge and understanding of their students' strengths and limitations as well as the environmental factors that influence their students learning. Additionally, VPA will use the New York State Common Core Learning Standards as the base for English as a Second Language, English Language Arts as well as other content area instruction.

IV. Public Outreach and Community Support

VPA's founding team has undertaken an extensive community outreach campaign in order to create awareness and solicit feedback in relation to our proposed charter school. We presented at a Community Board 5 meeting before the panel, parents and community members to solicit comments regarding the proposed charter and to incorporate their feedback into the application. We have attended Parent-Teacher Association Meetings within District 5 Middle Schools. There have been fliers distributed in both English and Spanish to inform parents of native language ELL students. In addition, we solicited comments on the proposed Charter through Facebook. We have also advertised in a local community newspaper. We held a community outreach forum, where we spoke extensively with residents to generate feedback that allowed us to make modifications to our Saturday Enrichment Program. We are engaged in continued community outreach to foster discussion surrounding an all male school that will focus on educating young men to become professionals or educators in the field of STEM.

_____ Date: _____
Vanette A. Dandridge

_____ Date: _____
Jacqueline Scales