

**Bright Futures Academy Charter School  
Letter of Intent  
Submitted to New York State Department Charter School  
Office  
89 Washington Avenue  
Room 471 EBA  
Albany, New York 12234  
Email: [charterschools@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:charterschools@mail.nysed.gov)  
August 15, 2012**

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**I. Applicant Information**

Ericka K. Wala, School Administrator

Mailing Address: [REDACTED]

Telephone Number: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Tiehise E. Shell, Ed.D, School Administrator

Mailing Address: [REDACTED]

Telephone Number: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

**Media Contact:**

All public inquires about the proposed Charter School may be addressed to:

Email Address: BFACS@hotmail.com

**Founding Group:**

**Ericka K. Wala** is a certified classroom teacher, school building administrator and supervisor as well as a school district administrator with a graduate degree in school psychology and an advanced professional degree in school administration. Mrs. Wala began her education career 18 years ago as a Middle School Social Studies teacher in Brooklyn, New York, for the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE). She worked for the NYCDOE as a classroom teacher, district staff developer, Assistant Principal and Principal, six of those years serving schools in District 29. In addition she worked for the College of Saint Rose, in Albany, New York as an adjunct professor and for the Gwinnett County Public Schools in Gwinnett County, Georgia as an elementary school staff developer. Mrs. Wala plans to serve on the Board of Trustees of the proposed Bright Futures Academy Charter School.

**Dr. Tiehise Shell** is a certified classroom teacher, school building administrator and supervisor, and school district administrator with a doctoral degree in school administration. Dr. Shell began her pedagogical career as an elementary school teacher; serving as classroom teacher and science cluster teacher in the state of Delaware, and the New York City Department of Education in both District 28 and 29, nine years ago. She later became a Data Administrator and then Assistant Principal at a charter school in Queens, New York. She served Community District 29 through her work at a local afterschool program and summer camp. Dr. Shell is also a former resident of District 29 and attended District 29 public schools. Dr. Shell plans to serve as the Principal of the proposed Bright Futures Academy Charter School.

**Board of Trustees:**

Literacy Expert- Mrs. Tiffany Davis-Nealy has worked in the education field for over 18 years as a family literacy coordinator, a Literacy Coach for kindergarten through eighth grade, and as an adjunct professor at CCNY. Currently, Mrs. Davis-Nealy is an Educational Consultant at The Reading and Writing Project at Teacher's College, Columbia University. She provides professional development for teachers and administrators in methods of teaching, balanced literacy, common core state standards, and Danielson's effective teaching model. Last year, Mrs. Davis-Nealy had the opportunity to consult teachers and administrators internationally, in the Middle East in the country of Dubai.

Mathematics/Science Expert- Mr. Sam Sloves worked for the New York City Department of Education as the Director of Campus Transformation. He guided new schools as they entered a shared space environment with other schools. He came to this work after working as a teacher and principal. He taught math and co-founded the Peer Mediation Center at a city high school.

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Mr. Sloves holds degrees from Columbia, Pace, USC, and the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Attorney/ Legal- Mr. John J. Connolly graduated Cum Laude with a Law Degree from Brooklyn Law School, and was admitted to practice law before the Appellate and Supreme Court of the United States of America. Mr. Connolly has been practicing law for over 35 years. Before becoming an attorney Mr. Connolly retired from the NYC Fire Department as a Lieutenant.

Finance- Mr. Frantzo Pierre-Louis is currently the Managing Director of F&D Tax Consulting. He has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting from the State University of New York and a Management Degree from the University du Quebec Montreal (UQAM). He worked previously at Wisdom Capital Management as Chief Accountant and FSC Tax Lien LLP, a Tax Advocate firm, as Senior Accountant. He has also owned and operated two Liberty Tax franchise offices.

International Baccalaureate/ Social Studies Expert- Mrs. Ericka K. Wala will utilize her Social Studies background to support the school as need with the International Baccalaureate program. Mrs. Wala is one of the lead applicants and her full biography is written above.

**Replication or Network Information:**

Bright Futures Academy Charter School’s proposal is not a replication of another charter school model nor is it proposed to be part of a charter school network.

**Applicant History:**

The founding members have applied to NYSED during the 2012 RFP Round 2, and were invited to submit a full application. In the final review of our full application we discovered an error that took some time to correct, subsequently delaying the time in which we intended to submit the full application. At the time in which we attempted to submit the full application we experienced technical difficulties uploading the document, and were unable to upload the final required attachments in My Review Room before the 5:00pm deadline. We then decided to withdraw our application and apply in the 2012 RFP Round 3.

**II. Proposed Charter School Information**

**Proposed school name & Location:** The proposed school name is Bright Futures Academy Charter School. The proposed school location is Rosedale, Queens, which is within Community School District 29 in New York City. We plan to lease a private facility that meets all guidelines as an educational facility and has all of the required Certificates of Occupancy.

**Planned Grades Levels & Student Enrollment:** In the first year of operation enrollment will include Sixth Grade, with full service for grades Sixth through Eighth grade.

Projected Enrollment Table

Grades	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Sixth Grade	128	128	128	128	128
Seventh Grade		128	128	128	128
Eighth Grade			128	128	128
Total	128	256	384	384	384

**Management or Partner Organizations:** Bright Futures Academy Charter School does not plan to work with a management company and/ or partner organization. The proposed school will work independently but seek consultation from Pasek Consulting and Charter School Business Management in addition to seeking authorization as an International Baccalaureate Program World School for the curriculum framework and Middle Years Program. The International Baccalaureate Organization( IBO) is a not for profit educational foundation that offers three educational programs or curricular frameworks for students ages 3 through 19 to

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help develop the intellectual, emotional, and social skills to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world. The authorization process takes approximately 2.5 years in which the school cycles through three stages; consideration, candidacy and authorization.

**Proposed School Mission:** Bright Futures Academy Charter School's mission is to develop future leaders who are inspired to achieve academically, nurtured with the characteristics that enable them to become world-class, caring citizens and empowered with the collegiate expertise required to make a profound and positive impact on the ever changing world as lifelong learners. Academic achievement and collegiate expertise will be measured by the attainment of the common core state standards as measured by the NYS assessments, and successful completion of grade specific global service learning projects, and inquiry based critical thinking activities.

**School Overview:** The school model is designed to provide all students with an appropriate and academically rigorous education with an international focus. There are seven essential components that Bright Futures curriculum will address:

Critical and reflective thinkers using the International Baccalaureate curricular framework: Upon attainment of a charter, the school leaders will begin the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IB) authorization process. Through the process, the IB academic model will be implemented as the curricular framework. The Middle Years Programme (MYP) model provides a framework of academic challenge that encourages students to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and the real world; and become critical and reflective thinkers. The program consists of eight subject groups integrated through five areas of interaction that provide a framework for learning within and across the subjects. Students will be required to study their native language, a second language, humanities, sciences, mathematics, art, physical education and technology. In the final year of the program students will also engage in a personal project, which allows them to demonstrate their understanding and skills developed throughout the program. The overall philosophy of the program is expressed through three fundamental concepts that support and strengthen all areas of the curriculum. The concepts are based on intercultural awareness, holistic learning, and communication.

Expectations of achievement in the four core academic disciplines: In literacy the school will utilize a balanced literacy approach with support from Columbia University's Teachers College: Reading and Writing Project. The Singapore Mathematics program is aligned with the New York State Common Core Standards and will be utilized for mathematics instruction. The Social Studies and Science curriculum framework will be based upon the New York City Scope and Sequence and the integration of the International Baccalaureate Program.

Expectation of community service learning projects and travel: At each grade level students are taught to act on the knowledge they receive through specific service learning projects with a culmination project at the conclusion of grades six and seven engaging the community at large and a culmination project at the conclusion of grade eight involving international engagement where students travel as ambassadors or participate in student leadership summits. In order to incorporate the service learning projects we will partner with the People to People Ambassador program for students established by President Eisenhower in 1955.

Positive, nurturing environment with high expectations of distinguished behaviors as agreed upon by the entire school community: The entire school community will work collectively to establish the expectations that all members will be held accountable to in a respectful and nurturing environment where future leaders are developed into world-class caring citizens. This will be implemented through a focus on character building skills each month of the school year.

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Ongoing professional development opportunities for staff members: All staff members will receive ongoing professional development from consultants with expertise in each academic discipline. Teams from the International Baccalaureate World organization will also visit the school periodically in order to support an ongoing process of review and development, using standards and practices that apply to all International Baccalaureate World Schools. Teachers will receive training to effectively provide valuable feedback to students, in order to ensure that students have the guidance, tools and incentive to become more competent, more skillful and better at understanding how to learn.

Data driven instructional practices with individualized instructional plan of action for students: Instruction will be data driven through ongoing, authentic assessment and projects, as well as data analysis. Students will be required to complete ongoing projects based on the IB program requirements, as well as regular classroom assessments in their core subject areas. Assessments are an important part of each unit of inquiry as it both enhances learning and provides opportunities for students to reflect on what they know, understand and can do. In addition, students will be required to complete a Baseline Assessment, Mid-Year Assessment, and End of Year Assessment in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. The assessments will be aligned with the New York State Common Core Standards in order to measure their strengths, weaknesses, readiness, stamina and growth. Throughout the school year students will also complete Interim Assessments that will be utilized to enhance their individual needs and provide remediation. The data will be housed in a database that is accessible to all teachers and staff to ensure that each student's growth is documented and tracked during regularly scheduled data meetings.

Exploration and study of enrichment programs: A vital component of the instructional program is the arts, music and athletics. Students will receive enrichment through specialty classes and after school programs. We will enlist the support of Track Star Tutoring, for students who require additional support, which has an established record of service in the Rosedale community. Bright Futures Academy will also work with the local athletics and arts programs such as the Rosedale Football team to provide students with enrichment opportunities. The school will provide an Academic After-School Program for at-risk students and students whose performance is below grade level, as well as a Performing Arts/Sports After-School program.

**Targeted Population:** The mission of the Bright Futures Academy Charter School is to develop future leaders. We expect the school's population to mirror the population served by Community School District (CSD) 29, which has a total population of 285,185. According to the New York State District Report Card for 2010-2011, the current population of CSD 29 comprises 1% American Indian/Alaska Native, 70% African American, 13% Hispanic, 14% Asian/Native Hawaiian, and 2% Caucasian. As indicated on the NYS District Report Card for CSD 29, 65 % of students are eligible for free lunch and 9% are eligible for reduced lunch, and CSD 29 receives Title I funding. English Language Learners (ELL) comprise 7% of the students in this district and 12% of students in CSD 29 have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Based on the statistics this district is predominantly African American with a growing number of Hispanic/Latino and Asian/Native Hawaiian students.

CSD 29 been identified on the New York State District Report Card as a District In Need of Improvement in English Language Arts (ELA) for 2011-2012. The percentage of students that scored at or above a level 3 on the ELA Exam is 38% in sixth grade, 31% in seventh grade, and 32% in eighth grade. The percentage of students that scored at or above a level 3 on the Math Exam is 45% in sixth grade, 44% in seventh grade, and 43% in eighth grade. Students with

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Disabilities (SWD) and English Language Learners (ELL) have not made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in both ELA and Math. The percentage of SWD that scored at or above a level 3 on the NYS ELA and Math Exam is 12% in ELA and 17% in Math for sixth grade; 5% in ELA and 17% in Math for seventh grade; and 7% in ELA and 18% in Math for eighth grade. The percentage of ELL that scored at or above a level 3 on the NYS ELA and Math Exam is 7% in ELA and 24% in Math for sixth grade; 4% in ELA and 11% in Math for seventh grade; and 6% in ELA and 20% in Math for eighth grade.

**III. Enrollment & Retention of Students**

Bright Futures Academy will conduct targeted outreach to attract at-risk students that is equivalent to the averages in CSD 29. This outreach will include ELL, SWD and students that are eligible to receive free and reduced lunch. In order to recruit SWD and ELL in CSD 29 we will make efforts to attract and interest those families through open house sessions that explain the programs that we offer. We will work with the Committee on Special Education to help recruit special education students in CSD 29. In order to attract and interest ELL students, all advertisement materials will be translated into Spanish and Haitian Creole. Since, the growing population in CSD 29 is the Hispanic/Latino; a Spanish speaking volunteer will be identified to assist in the outreach and recruitment efforts.

Bright Futures Academy will ensure the retention of all at-risk students by meeting the needs of the students and working closely with their families. Student data will be regularly monitored by administration and teachers to ensure that students receive all necessary services. The academic rigor and varied educational experiences will be attractive to the families in this community. An open door policy will be established where stakeholders, families and staff can communicate about the needs of the families that attend our school during a monthly meeting.

**IV. Public Outreach and Community Support**

Public outreach has been made to the community through two full page advertisement (Attachment I) in the Queens Chronicle, which circulated prior to the submission of this letter. A half page advertisement in the Queens Courier Sun, and a full page advertisement in the Queens Tribune will circulate after the submission of this letter. All interested members of the community were welcomed to make comments or post questions via e-mail. We have also had several meetings with stakeholders in CSD 29, to ensure that this charter will meet the needs of the community, and to gain their support of the mission and purpose of this charter. Those stakeholders include District 29Q Community Superintendent, Mr. Leon Murray, Community District 29Q Education Council President, Alicia Hyndman, District 29 community activist Jacques Leandre, Rosedale Civic Association (RCA) President Bill Perkins and Principal Andrea Belcher of the elementary school near the proposed location. All of the stakeholders were all in full support of the submission of this letter of intent. We also attended the Rosedale Memorial Day Parade, which is hosted by the RCA, and we have presented the charter at the CSD 29 RCA public meeting. Subsequent, to our meeting and advertisements, we interfaced with the community through e-mailed correspondences and the submission of completed Outreach Surveys (Attachment III). We are scheduling a presentation to the Community District 29 Education Council. We will continue to have meetings scheduled with local churches, community centers and the feeder elementary schools to discuss the intention of the charter and provide flyers for the parents where they will again have the opportunity complete the Outreach Survey (Attachment III) and continue to contact us via e-mail.

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**Attachment I  
Signature Page**

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Signature/ Date:

 7/31/12

Signature/ Date:

 7/31/12

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**Attachment II**  
**Bright Futures Academy Charter School Flyer**



**BRIGHT FUTURES  
ACADEMY  
CHARTER SCHOOL**

**AN APPLICATION WILL BE SUBMITTED TO NYSED TO OPEN A NEW CHARTER SCHOOL IN 2013.**

**BRIGHT FUTURES ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL**

Bright Futures Academy Charter School's mission is to develop future leaders who are inspired to achieve academically, nurtured with the characteristics that enable them to become world-class, caring citizens and empowered with the collegiate expertise required to make a profound and positive impact on the ever changing world as lifelong learners. Academic achievement and collegiate expertise will be measured by the attainment of the common core state standards as measured by the NYS assessments, and successful completion of grade specific global service learning projects, and inquiry based critical thinking activities.

**The school will serve Sixth through Eighth Grade students in District 29. Opening initially with Sixth Grade boys and girls in Sept 2013; adding a grade each year until full capacity.**

The school model is designed to provide all students with an appropriate and academically rigorous education with an international focus point for learning. This program will offer a curriculum framework to help develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills students need to live learn and work in this rapidly globalizing world. The school aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. This program model focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside.

**The proposed school location is Rosedale Queens, which is located in District 29 in the New York City Area.**

**WE NEED YOUR INPUT!**

In order to establish a school that meets the needs of this community and the rigors Common Core State Standards we need your feedback and comments. Please submit any comments that you have to [BFACS@hotmail.com](mailto:BFACS@hotmail.com) which will be considered as we prepare the proposal for the state.

**BRIGHT FUTURES ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL  
SEEKS APPROVAL FOR A NEW CHARTER [BFACS@HOTMAIL.COM](mailto:BFACS@HOTMAIL.COM)**

**Attachment III**  
**BRIGHT FUTURES ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL:**  
**COMMUNITY OUTREACH INTEREST SURVEY**

1. What grade is your child in as of today?

2. Are you interested in enrolling your child in a Charter School that focuses on critical and reflective thinking and attainment of High Academic Standards in all subject areas?

- Extremely Interested
- Moderately interested
- Slightly Interested
- Not interested

3. If you had a choice regarding the grades offered at your school, what would you prefer?

- Kindergarten to Fifth Grade
- Kindergarten to Eighth Grade
- Sixth Grade to Eighth Grade
- Sixth Grade to Twelfth Grade

4. Would you be interested in your child learning another language in school, if so which language?

- Chinese
- Korean
- French
- Spanish
- Other Language (please specify)

5. How interested would you be in after school programs?

- Extremely Interested
- Very Interested
- Moderately Interested
- Slightly Interested
- Not at all Interested

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6. What additional programs offered at your child's school would be MOST important to you?

- After School Academic Programs
- After School Enrichment Programs (Dance, theater, instrumental)
- Tutorial Program (one on one or small group instruction)
- After School Sports Program

7. Are you in support of Charter Schools?

- Extremely in Support
- Moderately in Support
- Slightly in Support
- Not at all in Support
- Unsure

8. Are you interested in enrolling your child in a school that focuses on international learning?

- Extremely Interested
- Moderately Interested
- Slightly Interested
- Not Interested

9. Would you support an academic program for a student that involves travel?

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A tremendous amount

10. What suggestions do you have for the needs of students in your local school district?

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Please go to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NGS8J6Z> if you would like to complete this survey online or know of other interested stakeholders that would like to comment.