

PHASE I: Letter of Intent

Created Tuesday, January 27, 2015
Updated Monday, February 09, 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 | CNY Institute of the Arts Charter School |
| Grades Served (K-5, .6-8, 9-12, etc.) During Initial Term | 7-12 |
| Number of Students During Initial Term | 600 |

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 (###-###-####) | Email Address |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Proposed/Current Board Chair | John Cataldo | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |
| Public/Media Contact Person | Jana Rogers | 315-313-5444 | info@ciacs.org |

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

www.ciacs.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 | none |
| Partner Organization 1 | none |
| Partner Organization 2 | none |

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).

A handwritten signature consisting of three large, bold letters: 'D', 'C', and 'C'. The 'D' is a large, rounded shape with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right. The first 'C' is a simple, rounded shape. The second 'C' is more stylized, with a vertical line extending upwards from its top and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right, ending in a small flourish.

Date Signed (Lead or Co-Applicant)

2015/01/26

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

CNY Institute of the Arts Charter School: Letter of Intent

February 10th, 2015

New York State Education Department, Charter School Office
89 Washington Avenue, Room 471 EBA
Albany, New York 12234

On behalf of the Founding Group of CNY Institute of the Arts Charter School (CIACS), I am pleased to submit this letter to the Charter School Office of the New York State Education Department, expressing our intent to submit an application to establish a New York State Charter School in Syracuse, New York. Please see the below information:

I. Applicant Group Information:

- a. Please see Table 1 for full contact information
- b. Please see Table 1 for roles and qualifications of applicant group and board members.
- c. Public Contact: Jana C. Rogers Phone: 315-313-5444
Email address: info@ciacs.org

- d. Application History: None

II. Proposed Charter School Information

- A. Proposed Charter School Name: CNY Institute of the Arts Charter School
- B. Proposed Charter School Location: Syracuse City School District
- C. Planned grades and enrollment in each year:

| Grade | Age | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 |
|------------------|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 7 th | 12-14 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| 8 th | 13-15 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| 9 th | 14-16 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| 10 th | 15-17 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| 11 th | 16-18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 |
| 12 th | 17-19 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| Total | | 200 | 300 | 400 | 500 | 600 |

- D. Proposed Management or Partner Organization: None
- E. Proposed School Mission:

CIACS seeks to serve 600 diverse students in grades 7-12 with an interest in the fine arts. Our mission is to nurture and expand each unique learner’s intellectual and expressive potential in a vibrant community of rigorous academics and fine arts. We offer programs of study in music, art, dance, drama, and creative writing. We believe that correlating arts with academics will develop critical and creative thinking while enabling students to experience real world challenges that promote deeper learning. Within this supportive framework, our graduates will gain the essential skills necessary for success in college and beyond. CIACS seeks to engage students with inspiring artistic experiences that will propel their creativity and excite them about learning and life itself.

F. School Overview: Keys of CNY Institute for the Arts

1. Fine Arts Integration: “Students flourish when creativity drives instruction”.

All subject areas at CIACS will use Fine Arts integration. This is an instructional method where the arts are deeply embedded within all curriculum subjects and can be addressed as cross-curricular, in depth projects. The instruction provided will still be common core and standards-based and linked to both summative and formative assessments. Through this approach all students will be actively engaged in learning and provided a forum to create, perform, and respond artistically in core subject areas. Fine Arts Integration uses teaching practices that have been proved in brain-based research to improve comprehension and long-term retention. This will lead to an increase in intrinsic motivation and an increase in academic performance and rigor for our students. This program will be modeled from the “Opening Minds through the Arts” program at Tucson Unified School District, which began in 2008 and has a proven track record of success both in the arts and in increasing academic performance. It is a nationally recognized as a leading student achievement program. Research has determined that the program raises test scores and teacher effectiveness (on AIMS and National Stanford 9 testing). They also focus on engaging every student and building community, as we plan to do at CIACS. More information on the program can be found at: <http://www.edutopia.org/arts-opening-minds-integration>.

2. Safe and Nurturing environment

CIACS’s first priority is a safe and nurturing learning environment that inspires, challenges and motivates, because it is key to achieving success. CIACS students are embraced by a school that allows them to be who they are and not only accept their differences, but also celebrate them. In this regard, a firm discipline policy will be in place to hold our students to high behavioral standards (Including following the Dignity for All Students Act of 2010) that ensures CIACS is a safe place for everyone. This warm environment opens doors to creativity and expression for every child.

3. College Preparation

Our goal at CIACS is that every graduate continue their education in an institute for higher learning that best fits their life goals. We are dedicated to creating a culture of learning that firmly establishes a college-bound culture and high expectations. This culture is embedded in our classrooms, experiences, and environment. We will provide SAT/ACT Prep courses for our students, AP Courses, internships for real-world learning, after-school and weekend tutoring, summer school for the arts, and college fairs and visits. Our counseling staff will be well versed in all college admission programs and employ multiple technologies to ensure that our students achieve their goals. In addition, our counselors will have a robust knowledge of fine arts related fields and majors, along with their corresponding colleges, so that our students will have many doors open to them.

4. After school programs and extra help

CIACS will have many programs in place to offer academic support to all learners. These differentiated programs help increase performance of low achieving students and also further bolster those who are already excelling. Our programs include AIS instruction for math and ELA on a push-in basis during the day, after school tutoring programs, ELL instruction, and special education services, including a RTI team to further assist struggling students. Regular student assessments will be performed and analyzed to provide research-based, high quality interventions.

5. Parent Involvement

Because parent and family involvement are key to student academic, social, and emotional success each teacher and administrator at CIACS will actively reach out to families through emails, phone calls, newsletters, formal and informal meetings, parent/teacher conferences, as well as home visits. In addition we will have a student-learning portal where parents can keep abreast of their child's progress, behavior, attendance and the school's policies. We will also enlist parents and families as a crucial part in school planning by having a parent liaison on the school board, and foster an active parent-teacher organization.

6. Extended Learning

Because research has shown that more time in school increases student performance CIACS will institute an extended learning day. Our school hours are from 7:45 to 3:45, with extended learning opportunities available until 5:00. Our school is also open for extra support and enrichment activities on Saturdays and throughout the summer as well. These extra programs provide students with valuable learning experiences as well as create a safe and supportive space for our students during after-school hours.

7. Varied accountability and assessment

Frequent and varied standards-based assessments are used to monitor progress and inform instruction. This assessment system, based on Dueck's "Grading Smarter, Not Harder" has been proven to more truly measure the academic progress of students and to foster an environment that is focused on growth and improvement. Multiple and varied formative and summative assessments will provide a myriad of opportunities to capture individual strengths, find and improve on weaknesses, and benchmark performance data against the standards. Our team of teachers and administrators will frequently review and use this data to ensure our students are making adequate progress in achieving the standards.

8. Project based learning

CIACS uses this research-based approach to classroom learning because it gives students the ability to use their skills and knowledge in authentic, real-world settings. This active learning model is proven to increase language and communication skills, increase relevancy and motivation in students, foster relationships between students, teachers, and the community, increase retaining of knowledge and information in students, and bolster critical thinking and other 21st century skills, which are a part of NYS's Common Core.

9. Professional Development for Faculty and staff

Our goal is to have high quality instruction in every classroom. Extensive professional development is planned for our faculty, using 10 PD days in our calendar, as well as common planning time whenever possible. Our faculty will have training in the OMA model of Fine Arts Integration, as well as Anti-Bullying, Character Education, project-based learning and professional learning communities. In addition we will be partnering with the Institute for Excellence and Ethics to ensure that we have a positive learning and working environment, that our faculty and students are exemplars of good character, and that all of our graduates are college and career ready.

G. Replication of High Quality Schools: None

III. Enrollment and Retention of Students with Disabilities, ELL Learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced lunch program:

A. It is CIACS vision to serve a representative group of students from Syracuse City School District and surrounding school districts in a diverse setting where the educational needs of all

students are met. Of the SCSD total student enrollment of 19,713 students, 50% are African American, 26% are Caucasian, 13% are Hispanic, 7% are Asian and 3% are multi-racial. The district serves a needy population, with 80% receive free or reduced lunch, 13% are ELL, and in 2012 only 21% of seventh grade and 20% of eighth graders students scored a three or a four on the ELA state assessment and 24% and 21% in math. Our school will be prepared to support these students academically, culturally, socially, and artistically so that they will succeed, not just in school, but in life. In addition, if there is enrollment space, the school may draw students from the surrounding suburbs of North Syracuse and Liverpool school districts, as well as others. Our focus will be on meeting the needs of all students and increasing the academic rigor and performance.

CNY Institute for the Arts Charter School will attract students within our mission by performing a widespread outreach campaign, both in Syracuse and surrounding regions. We will continue to disseminate information about our program through community meetings, our website, print materials, news outlets, churches, YMCA programs, City Youth programs, as well as artistic youth programs through Syracuse City and other organizations to attract students of all abilities and backgrounds. To retain students we will continue to offer a robust program in the arts and work with each individual student and their families to meet their needs.

B. CNY Institute for the Arts Charter School will make a strong effort to attract students with disabilities, including the afore mentioned outreach campaign, as well as school visits to 6th graders if possible, and information nights geared towards students and parents with special needs. We also will continue having one on one meetings with parents to address their concerns in a more private setting. To retain these students our Arts Integration model will help them to be motivated and excited to learn in the classroom, and the special education teacher and assistants will work with individual students to help them achieve their academic goals in dedicated time during the school day.

C. In order to reach English Language Learners, we will continue to offer our print and online materials in Spanish and other languages as needed. We will also host multiple meetings and information sessions in neighborhoods with high levels of ELL students, such as the north side of Syracuse. To support and retain these students, we will provide an ELL teacher, as needed, to provide assistance that will be built into their school day so that the students will not be pulled out of their regular classes to attend ELL, thus getting further and further behind in their academics. In addition we plan to make many home visits and celebrate the many different cultures of our students through art, music, dance and language.

D. As 80% of the students in the Syracuse City School District receive free or reduced lunch, CNY Institute for the Arts Charter School has made attracting these students part of its mission and vision- to provide artistic and educational opportunities to students that otherwise would not be exposed or afforded these experiences. We plan on partnering with instrument manufacturers, local artists and craftsmen to be able to provide instruments and supplies to students with little to no cost to them or their families. We will also continue to spread the word about CIACS throughout all neighborhoods in Syracuse, NY. We will work with community organizations, churches, food pantries, parent groups, and artistic groups and programs through out the city. The school has been designed to support these students by using our Fine Arts Integration model,

an extended school day and school year, as well as RTI, AIS, and ELL support that is built in to the school day.

IV. Public Outreach and Community Support

A. The founding group of CIACS has undertaken community outreach to promote awareness for the school since the summer of 2014. We have held public events and meetings where we distributed information about the school and collected the community's feedback. This has led to an increase in support through the community. We have also met with Carl Thomas on the Syracuse City Economic Development Council and a developer for City Center and garnered key support for our vision. To garner key insight and advice we met with Dr. Hiyali, Superintendent of Syracuse Academy of Science in October, 2014. The CIACS community development committee has also created an online survey to gather data about the public's opinion of starting a charter school for the arts in the Syracuse. The data gathered showed that the 100% of those polled are in favor of a charter school in Syracuse and of strengthening the fine arts in Syracuse. An additional 60% are considering sending their children to our school. We also gathered many likes on our Facebook page in just two weeks, and there were also many inquiries of enrollment. In anticipation of the need for a positive social climate and character education, we also met with Dr. Matthew Davidson, founder of Excellence and Ethics in Education, to garner his support for our project in October, 2014. We are also in the process of garnering several letters of support from key businesses, churches, artists, and community members.

B. To garner parent interest and enrollment data we are in the process of creating a public relations campaign including relationships and contacts at The Syracuse Post Standard and Syracuse.com, in addition to reaching out to Dr. Brooke Wells, a professor in social media at Northwestern University, to help us best determine how to reach our target audience. We built and continue to develop a social media campaign on Facebook and Twitter that will target parent groups and local arts organizations like the Everson Museum, Symphoria, and Syracuse Opera, as well as cultivating relationships with music and fine arts schools at Syracuse University and Le Moyne College. Also Dr. Hiyali, of Syracuse Academy of Science, cited in our meeting that their charter school currently has a waiting list of over 1400 students and that he would support another successful charter school in the area to support these students. We have held additional one on one meetings with prospective parents, answering their questions and garnering their support to help spread the word. Thus far the level of parent interest generated has been extremely high in surveys and face-to-face meetings. The community development committee of CIACS has also created flyers that will be posted both online and at local community gathering places, like libraries and grocery stores to spread the word about future meetings and enrollment.

Signature of the Chair of the Board of Trustees: John Cataldo

Date: 2/8/15

| NAME OF APPLICANT GROUP MEMBER | EMAIL ADDRESS | CURRENT EMPLOYMENT |
|--------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Jana Rogers | [REDACTED] | Jefferson-Lewis BOCES |
| Tammy Williams | [REDACTED] | Bishop Grimes Jr/Sr High Schd |
| John J. Cataldo | [REDACTED] | retired superintendent |
| Richard Fields | [REDACTED] | retired music teacher/admin |
| Bryan Margulies | [REDACTED] | Asst Professor, SUNY Upstate |
| Dr. Steve Wechsler | [REDACTED] | Chiropractor, radio personalit |
| David Schwalm | [REDACTED] | COO- JPW Riggers, Inc. |

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

| RELEVANT EXPERIENCE, SKILLS, AND ROLE ON APPLICANT GROUP (Key Words) | PROPOSED ROLE (if any) | PROPOSED POSITION ON THE BOARD (e.g., officer, trustee, or constituent) | LENGTH OF INITIAL TERM |
|--|------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Music teacher, School Administrator | Employee | Employee Representative | 2 years |
| Music/Drama teacher | Employee | none | none |
| School business/finance, superintendent | Trustee | Officer | 2 years |
| Music teacher, School Administrator, comm | None | None | none |
| Grants, research, higher ed, community me | Trustee | Trustee | 2 years |
| Community member, health/wellness, sma | Trustee | Trustee | 2 years |
| Small Business, facility | Trustee | Trustee | 2 years |

| VOTING MEMBER (YES OR NO) |
|---------------------------------|
| Yes |
| no |
| yes |
| no |
| yes |
| yes |
| yes |