

PHASE I: Letter of Intent

Created Wednesday, January 28, 2015

Updated Tuesday, February 10, 2015

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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	Education for Tomorrow Bronx Charter High School
Grades Served (K-5, .6-8, 9-12, etc.) During Initial Term	9-12
Number of Students During Initial Term	400

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	Kerry Decker Rutishauser	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Public/Media Contact Person	Cynthia McCallister	917-566-4798	mccallistercynthia@gmail.com

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

www.EducationForTomorrow.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	NA
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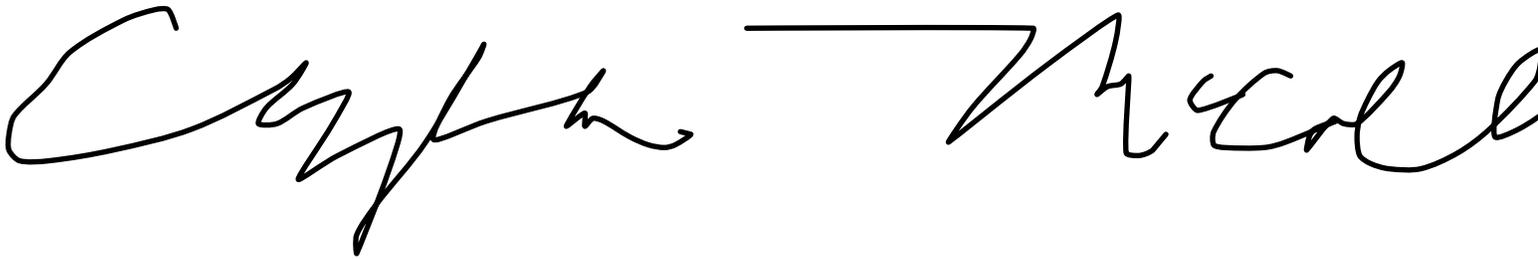
Partner Organization 1	NA
Partner Organization 2	NA

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 first signature is on the left and the second is on the right, separated by 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.

I. Applicant Group Information

- a. See Table 1.
- b. See Table 1.
- c. **Public Contact:** Cynthia McCallister, eftbronx@gmail.com
- d. **Application History:** N/A. This is our first submission in any state for a charter.

II. Proposed Charter School Information

a. **Proposed School Name:** Education for Tomorrow Bronx Charter High School (EFT Bronx)

b. **Proposed School Location:** Bronx Community School District (CSD) 9. We will request to be located in NYC DOE facilities. In case a co-located option is unavailable, we have enlisted the help of community members and a real estate broker to identify private facilities in CSD 9.

c. **Planned Grades and Enrollment:** EFT Bronx will serve 400 students in grades 9-12. The school will start with a full 9th grade class and a small founding 10th grade class. Because our model has a track record of success in integrating new students into the school's culture and academic program, we will backfill from the waitlist in each grade. The table below presents planned enrollment in each year of the five-year charter term.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
9 th	100	100	100	100	100
10 th	20	100	100	100	100
11 th		20	100	100	100
12 th			20	100	100
TOTAL	120	220	320	400	400

d. **Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s):** N/A.

e. **Proposed School Mission:** EFT Bronx will prepare all students, especially those learning English as a second language and/or overcoming disabilities, poverty and homelessness, for college and career. By developing intellectual, social and life skills at EFT Bronx, all students will graduate with a sense of purpose and sufficient preparation to make the changes they want to see in their world.

f. **School Overview:** EFT Bronx will implement the *Learning Cultures*® (LC) educational model, which emphasizes student responsibility and social cooperation. The model has a proven track record of success in eight NYC schools. In an evaluative study of the pilot implementation of LC on a school-wide scale at the Jacob Riis School (JRS) in Manhattan from 2007-2012, ELA and Math achievement was compared to 5,000 students in 10 other demographically similar schools. This study demonstrated statistically-significant gains in both content areas during the first year of implementation, with increased gains maintained throughout the duration of the study. JRS English Language Learners (ELLs) outperformed the general population of JRS students by three times.¹ Similar achievement gains have been replicated in seven other schools since 2011, with ELLs, Students with Disabilities (SWDs), over-age and “bottom-third” students consistently demonstrating even larger gains than the general population. LC was used as a school turnaround strategy at Urban Assembly High School for Green Careers (UAGC), an unscreened school that was one of the 5 lowest performing NYC high schools in 2012. The graduation rate at UAGC increased by 11% in 2014, and pass rates for the English and Living Environment Regents exams doubled. High School of Language and Innovation, where LC was used as a school-founding model, will graduate its first class in 2015. These students, 80% of whom are ELLs, will have had LC for four years and 25% of the cohort is on track to

¹ C. McCallister, D. Olson & C. Erneling. (in process). *Learning Cultures: A new model for enhancing literacy learning.*

graduate with Advanced Regents diplomas. At Urban Assembly Unison School, where LC was implemented in 2013-14 as a turnaround, the Violent and Disruptive Incident Report rating declined from 5.6 incidents per student in 2013 to 0.54 incidents per student in 2014. The LC model, developed by EFT founder Cynthia McCallister, is organized by *school-wide systems* and *classroom systems* that include:

- *Learning Formats*: At the classroom level, each period is organized into activity systems known as *Learning Formats*. The Formats are rule-bound routines and procedures that are designed to maximize student autonomy, engagement and social interaction. They include: Cooperative Unison Reading®, Work Time, Learning Conferences, Content Share, Writing Conferences, Small Group Instruction and Responsibility Teams (see: www.LearningCultures.net). Teachers coach students to strategically use each of these Formats in order to engage in cooperative problem solving and learn content. Over time, students become increasingly adept at goal setting, planning and pacing their own work. As students gain independence, they increasingly rely on collaboration with peers as a chief mechanism for learning.
- *Integrated Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)*: LC integrates SEL into the core curriculum. Students have built-in opportunities to be coached by teachers and reflect on their own social-emotional growth and that of their peers using an SEL assessment called *C-DEEP*, which measures the SEL domains of cooperation, discipline, effort, emotions and purpose. Students engage in regular cycles of self- and peer-assessment using *C-DEEP*, which is used for progress monitoring purposes alongside academic data.
- *Distributed Leadership*: Teacher-leaders serve as “leads” in five critical areas of the school: Curriculum, Professional Development, Assessment, School Culture and Student Support. Leads are responsible for evaluating school needs and executing action steps in each domain. Lead responsibilities and year-long goals are elaborated into an annual implementation plan, which is used by administrators to evaluate school progress and make school-wide decisions.
- *Genre Practice*: All students participate in designated writing classes where they write about topics of their choice. While being taught how different forms of writing function in society, students are given the simple directive of deciding who they want to write for and what they want to express to that audience. Thus, students learn to use writing as a tool for meaningful self-expression. Students engage in frequent cycles of small-group and large-group sharing, exchanging feedback, and revising, thereby gaining the 21st century literacy skills outlined in the Common Core State Standards.

Some other key design features of the school are:

- *Integrated Athletics*: In partnership with Revolution Training of Stamford, CT, EFT Bronx will house a boxing club. Strength training will be integrated into the school day. This component furthers the mission of the school, by providing an opportunity for students to be coached in the disciplined sport of boxing in order to experience the tangible results of goal setting, perseverance, endurance, and strategy. Our coaching team will also work with students in classrooms to coach them in the procedures of the *Learning Formats*. They will leverage their skillset in teaching discipline and respect and their unique relationships with students in order to provide extra support to students who exhibit challenging behaviors or who have difficulty self-regulating to academic tasks.
- *An “Irresistible” School Day*: Every facet of the EFT Bronx experience is designed to boost achievement, develop relationships with peers, and ignite students’ passions and interests. Every student will have the opportunity to participate in *game tournaments* (e.g. chess, educational videogames) during lunch and after

school. The infusion of games into the schooling experience will support students in developing a sense of “we-ness” and teach important foundational abilities in strategic thinking.

- **Field Learning and Career and Technical Education (CTE)**: Students will spend 10% of their time in field learning, under the direction of a Field Learning Coordinator. The field program is a venue for CTE, as it expands world-awareness and instills curiosity, while developing motivation and intentionality. Field learning in Years I and II is designed to provide foundational experiences in STEM, arts and history. During Years III and IV, students will begin working toward CTE endorsements, taking part in internships or work opportunities.

g. Target Population/Community Served: In seeking to locate in CSD 9, EFT Bronx will target students who are at a high risk for educational failure. In 2014, fewer than 3% of CSD 9 ELLs and SWDs scored at or above proficient on the ELA exam. Fewer than 6% of ELLs and SWDs were at or above proficient in Math. By targeting ELLs, SWDs, over-age and under-credited students, EFT Bronx intends to combat above-average dropout rates and below-average graduation rates in the district. EFT Bronx will also meet the existing need for high quality educational choice. In 2014, there were 4,301 applicants for 811 seats at charter schools in CSD 9. Additionally, with the second highest rate of homelessness out of any NYC school district, CSD 9 was home to over 6,000 homeless students during the 2012-2013 school year. In City Council Districts 14 and 15, where CSD 9 lies, there are a total of 16 shelters serving a total of 1,116 homeless families. EFT Bronx intends to recruit and serve students living in these shelters.

h. Replication of High Quality School Models: EFT Bronx is not a charter replication. However, it will replicate the LC model that has been implemented in eight NYC DOE Pre-K-12th grade schools.

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.

It is our priority to recruit and retain an equal or larger proportion of ELLs, SWDs, free and reduced price lunch (FRPL) applicants, and over-age, under-credited students as compared to the district average.

Recruitment of those identified in the school’s mission: In order to recruit over-age/ under-credited and homeless students, EFT Bronx will engage in continued outreach and relationship-building with principals and guidance counselors. Additionally, members of the New Settlement Apartments Parent Action Committee (NSAPAC) (see below, *Public Outreach*) that represent a constituency of 100 CDS 9 parents, have been engaging in training in the LC model via our online video series and meetings with members of the EFT Bronx team since December 2014. Members of this organization, paired with EFT Bronx applicant team members, will host information sessions for parents and also hold public meetings and travel to make presentations at community centers and homeless shelters as part of the recruitment effort. Our two Trustees who live in CSD9 and have extensive involvement with community youth and education organizations will disseminate information about EFT Bronx at community organizations and shelters.

Recruitment of ELLs: We will utilize multilingual outreach in a variety of modes. As one of the most effective recruitment methods is word-of-mouth, students from peer mentoring programs at other LC schools will act as EFT ambassadors, meeting with prospective students and families of the same national origin/language group. Many of the existing LC peer mentors are ELLs who embody the academic and leadership achievements that are possible for students of this subgroup.

Recruitment of SWDs: Our outreach includes visiting and providing school information to middle schools and high schools, as well as utilizing our existing relationships in the community in order to reach out to parents of students with IEP’s and organizations identified as servicing students with disabilities. EFT will also work with

the Committee on Special Education for CSD 9 and the NYC DOE enrollment office to inform them of our capacity to meet the needs of the subgroups targeted in our recruitment plan.

Recruitment of FRPL students: 93% of students in CSD 9 are eligible for free and reduced price lunch. By engaging in community outreach in local shelters, food banks, and tenant organizations of low-income housing projects, we will recruit socio-economically disadvantaged and homeless students.

Retention of those identified in the school's mission: Key retention mechanisms for all of the target subgroups are embedded in the LC model and the design of the school. The LC program is especially well suited to meet the needs of these high need subgroups as it focuses on self-determination and building strong positive emotional connections to school. With the combination of teacher support and increasing familiarity with the *Learning Formats* over time, students build a sense of independence and responsibility. As students become more autonomous and experienced at working at the right level of skill and challenge, they become intrinsically motivated to succeed and stay in school. Additionally, the school will implement Response to Intervention (RTI), whereby students' progress is consistently monitored in general or Tier I programs. Those who do not adequately respond to Tier I instruction are provided increasingly intensive assistance in either Tier II interventions (targeted small-group instruction) or Tier III (one-on-one instruction) as needed to maintain expected academic progress.

Retention of ELLs: In addition to taking part in all Tier I curriculum activities in heterogeneous groups, ELLs will take part in "sheltered" Cooperative Unison Reading® groups, which are facilitated by an ESL teacher three times per week in order to secure confidence and initiative to use English to communicate and learn. The teacher team will also regularly monitor the progress of ELLs using Curriculum-Based Measures (CBMs) in oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, writing, and math. The results of these progress monitoring assessments will be analyzed for growth patterns and then shared with students so that each ELL can engage in a continuous goal setting process with a member of the teacher team. Additionally, the LC model is grounded in a usage-based theory of language acquisition. This means that rather than relying largely upon teaching explicit grammar structures or leveled reading, students take part in group activities which support language development and content learning while teachers ensure achievement and language learning. This theoretical underpinning results in a learning environment that is both rigorous and supportive of ELLs.

Retention of SWDs: RTI will be used to identify and support SWDs. CBMs are administered to all SWDs on an on-going basis. A Student Support Team, including the School Director, Assessment Lead, Student Support Lead, ELL Coordinator and Special Education Coordinator will consistently monitor academic and behavioral data in order to make recommendations for Tier II and/or Tier III interventions. EFT Bronx athletic coaching staff will support these students during independent work. The LC formats of Small Group Instruction and Learning Conferences provide additional venues to address special needs.

Retention of FRPL students: The elements of fun that are infused throughout our school day, including boxing and gaming, are motivating factors that increase retention. Additionally, LC is a curriculum of collaborative learning. As students become accustomed to learning from their peers and engaging in cooperative learning, they experience positive social pressure which supports engagement and attendance.

IV. Public Outreach and Community Support: EFT Bronx has engaged in a rigorous community outreach campaign to inform the public and solicit meaningful feedback regarding the needs of CSD 9 students.

Parent Outreach: Our team has repeatedly met with leaders of the Parent Action Committee (PAC) of the New Settlement Apartments (NSA), an organization of community members and parents dedicated to school

reform in CSD 9. We have met with, presented to, and engaged in feedback discussions with this group on a frequent basis. We also attended a NSAPAC General Meeting where we presented our school to 35 CSD 9 parents, and presented and solicited feedback from the PTA at P.S. 294 in CSD 9. We have received a total of 82 signatures indicating support for the school.

Meetings with Elected Officials: We have met with elected officials and/or staff members from the offices of Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner, Councilwoman Vanessa Gibson, Councilman Ritchie Torres, and Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz. We expect letters of support from each of these elected officials. We will be meeting with Councilman Fernando Cabrera in late February, and have reached out to Assemblyman Michael Blake and Assemblyman Marcos Crespo.

Outreach to Community Organizations: We presented to both the Youth and Education Subcommittee and the full board of Community Board 4. We answered questions and solicited feedback from both groups, and received a letter of support from the Community Board. We also participated in Enlace Women's Network Group's career development event for high school girls, and we have reached out to the following community organizations: A House on Beekman, Bronx Youth Empowerment Program, Families for Excellent Schools, New York City Parents' Union, Northwest Bronx Clergy, Coalition for Educational Justice, We Stay Nos Quedamos Inc., and South Bronx Rising Together. We have met with one of the members of Community Education Council (CEC) 9 and are scheduling a presentation at the CEC.

Web Outreach: In order to raise awareness of our application, and facilitate communication with and feedback from the community, we have established the following web presence: an EFT Facebook page, an EFT website (www.educationfortomorrow.org), and an online video series explaining the LC model and the design of the school. An introductory video that is being circulated among community members by NSAPAC leaders will be accessible online in both French and Spanish versions in order to reach the sizable West African and Dominican communities of CSD 9.

Initial Assessment of Parent Interest: There has been strong parent interest at every EFT presentation, with parents repeatedly indicating that they would enthusiastically apply to enroll their children in the school. Feedback received from parents and community members has been integrated into our school design. The importance of offering CTE options and pathways towards both college and career was repeatedly expressed by parents, who also articulated the expectation that the school would provide targeted academic support for the large constituency of ELLs and multi-lingual outreach so that families could be actively involved in the school. Parents also underscored the importance of having literacy support built into the school day, and expressed overwhelming support for the Cooperative Unison Reading® element of the LC model. Parents expressed concern regarding the current lack of high school seats in CSD 9, let alone high-quality high school seats. Many parents shared that their children have to leave the district in order to attend high school in neighboring school districts. Community members have therefore expressed the desire for EFT Bronx to be a true community school and ensure that recruitment and enrollment procedures give priority to CSD 9 students. This is a commitment we intend to uphold.

V. Proposed Board Chair Signature and Date


Kerry Decker, Board Chair

2-9-2015
Date

NAME OF APPLICANT GROUP MEMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS	CURRENT EMPLOYMENT
Cynthia McCallister	[REDACTED]	Associate Professor, New York University
Shira Wrightman	[REDACTED]	Lead Teacher, High School of Language and Innovation
Kerry Decker Rutishauser	[REDACTED]	Principal, The Urban Assembly School for Green Careers
Amy Piller	[REDACTED]	Assistant Principal, The Urban Assembly Unison School
Brian Brown	[REDACTED]	Executive Officer, Brian G. Brown, CPA PC
Christopher Donohoe	[REDACTED]	Senior Consultant, Paragon Solutions
Ronnette Summers	[REDACTED]	Senior Associate, Guggenheim Securities
Emily Jarrell	[REDACTED]	Principal, The Urban Assembly Unison School
Lynn Sanchez	[REDACTED]	Paralegal, Law Offices of Lisa Michael & Associates

Michelle Dellatorre	[REDACTED]	Attorney, Law Offices of Harvey Sorid, Esq.
Lee Podair	[REDACTED]	Partner, Hahn & Hessen LLP

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) (Trustee, Employee, Consultant, or No Continuing	PROPOSED POSITION ON THE BOARD (e.g., officer, trustee, or constituent representative)	LENGTH OF INITIAL TERM	VOTING MEMBER (YES OR NO)
Curriculum Development, Education Plan Committee, Public Outreach Committee, Fundraising	Employee	n/a	n/a	NO
Special Student Populations (ELLs) , School-Founding Experience, Professional Development Systems, New Teacher Mentoring, Education Plan Committee, Public Outreach Committee, Recruitment	Employee	n/a	n/a	NO
School Operations, Budgeting, School Culture Systems, Teacher Evaluation, Education Plan Committee	Trustee	Chair	3 years	YES
Assessment Systems, School-Founding Experience, Professional Development Systems, Technology/App Development, School Culture Systems, Education Plan Committee	Trustee	Trustee	3 years	YES
Accounting, Budget and Cash Flow, Human Resources, Real Estate & School Facilities, Finance Committee	Trustee	Trustee/Finance Committee	3 years	YES
Success Metrics & Performance Standards, Fundraising, Budgeting, Marketing, Branding, Organizational and Fiscal Plan Committee	Trustee	Trustee	3 years	YES
Community Organizing, Public Outreach Committee	Trustee	Trustee/Constituent Representative	3 years	YES
School Operations, Teacher Evaluation, Curriculum Development, Education Plan Committee	Trustee	Trustee	3 years	YES
Community Organizing, Public Outreach Committee	Trustee	Trustee/Constituent Representative	3 years	YES

Legal, Organizational and Fiscal Plan Committee	Trustee	Trustee	3 years	YES
Financial Transactions, Legal, Organizational and Fiscal Plan Committee	Trustee	Trustee/Finance Committee	3 years	YES