

PHASE I: Letter of Intent

Created Monday, February 09, 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	Prime Public Charter School
Grades Served (K-5, .6-8, 9-12, etc.) During Initial Term	6-8
Number of Students During Initial Term	324

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	Tony Siddall	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Public/Media Contact Person	April Gariepy	917-443-6192	april.gariepy@gmail.com

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

primepublicschools.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
Partner Organization 1
Partner Organization 2

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 in black ink, appearing to read "John Spell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a distinct "S".

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.

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LETTER OF INTENT

I. Applicant Group Information

a. & b. See Table 1

c. **Public Contact:** Jonathan Skolnick, Phone: 917-699-9819, Email: jonskolnick@gmail.com

d. **Applicant History:** N/A

II. Proposed Charter School Information

a. **Proposed School Name:** Prime Public Charter School (Prime)

b. **Proposed School Location:** Prime Public Charter School will be located in CSD13 in Brooklyn. We plan to go through the process to apply for public space, but we are in discussions with real estate brokers who specialize in CSD13 locations to secure private space if necessary.

c. Planned Grades and Enrollment

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Grade 6	108	108	108	108	108
Grade 7		108	108	108	108
Grade 8			108	108	108
Total	108	216	324	324	324

d. **Proposed Management and/or Partner Organizations:** N/A

e. **Mission Statement:** Prime Public Charter School will ensure that **all** students master college- and career-ready standards, demonstrate healthy habits of mind and body, and develop creative or career-driven expertise in an area of their choice. We achieve this by empowering teachers to create rigorous and personalized learning environments in which students can realize their highest academic and personal potential within a loving and challenging community.

f. **School Overview:** Prime Public is a groundbreaking new middle school with a personalized learning model enabled by professional, flexible, and high-quality teaching. In order to achieve our mission of a) mastery of Common Core State Standards b) social-emotional development and c) enabling career or passion-driven expertise, our model brings together the culture of high expectations and talent development used in high-performing “no-excuses” charter schools while adopting structures that add relevance, deep relationships, and deeper learning to the student experience. Specifically, students learn each day in three environments:

- **Core Content Teams:** Teams of 2-3 teachers, including a certified special education teacher, work together in a Teaching Practice to cover STEM and Humanities content that align to rigorous Common Core State Standards. Students, families, and the principal work to match each student to a Teaching Practice. Students spend approximately 5 hours daily working in their Core Content Team, which includes time for independent work (reading and writing across the curriculum along with self-paced math work) under the guidance of certified teachers. These teams comprise an average of 25-30 students, depending partially on the experience level and capacity of each Teaching Practice.
- **Personal Development Teams:** These teams of 12-16 students are led by teachers from the Core Content Teams in conjunction with outside social workers and guidance counselors. They implement a robust personal development and college-readiness curriculum to ensure that students develop the social-emotional toolkit necessary to navigate diverse environments

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with poise and presence. Students spend about 1 hour daily in their Personal Development Team.

- **Prime Passion Teams:** These teams are led by outside “master craftspeople” who work with the Teaching Practices to offer students authentic opportunities to discover a new career or passion through the creation of real products and projects on behalf of the outside organization. Students spend approximately 2 hours per day in their Prime Passion teams. The Passion teams vary in size based on student interest.

These three unique environments help us to realize rigorous **personalized learning** and **professionalized teaching** in order to enable student success.

Personalization:

- **Teacher Practice Matching Profile (TPMP):** Upon matriculation, the principal meets with each student and his or her family to fill out a TPMP, which helps each family determine which Teaching Practice is the right fit, based on a match of cognitive style¹, personality, and instructional expertise. Families can watch videos of each Teaching Practice beforehand to help determine what practice works best.
- **Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs):** All students at Prime are given diagnostic assessments and surveys that help students to craft a Personalized Learning Plan with their Teaching Practice. The PLP serves as a way to gauge individual goals and demonstrations of mastery over time.
- **Self-Paced Learning:** In the Core Content Teams, teachers use a variety of methods, from blended learning rotations (in which students rotate from small-group to collaborative to online adaptive learning) to peer tutoring, to help students master standards at the pace described in their PLP. At the same time, teachers plan rigorous, whole-group, differentiated class discussions that allow students at all levels to learn together, utilizing the principles of Universal Design for Learning, a model that gives students a variety of ways to access content within the same space.
- **Data-Driven Instruction and Intervention:** Prime teachers will look at formative data (behavioral as well as academic) at regular intervals to ensure that students are on track toward grade-level mastery. This allows us to intervene early with students who may initially struggle with a more self-paced learning environment. To ensure high levels of rigor and appropriate progress, we use the Response to Intervention (RtI) model to identify at-risk students and provide them with targeted support. Students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs) will have PLPs that match them to special education-licensed teachers, and English Language Learners will likewise have PLPs that use tools such as the NYSITELL to determine ELL status and match them to teachers with expertise in ELL instruction.
- **Real-World Learning:** In the Prime Passion Teams (mentioned above), students are exposed to real-world problems facing local creative or commercial organizations. Students are overseen and supervised by Prime staff, which helps to integrate classroom learning with lessons from the wealth of real-world resources that exist in CSD13.
- **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy:** Following the principles of the NYCDOE’s Expanded Success Initiative, Prime will bring the ideas of culturally relevant and responsive curriculum to the middle school level, with a special eye to engaging adolescent Black and Latino males.

¹ See Cafferty, E. I. (1980). An analysis of student performance based upon the degree of match between the educational cognitive style of the teacher and the educational cognitive style of the students.

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Prime's pedagogy will address the need for academic rigor, youth development, and school culture, which have been shown to help engage and retain young men of color in school².

Teacher Professionalization:

- **Teaching Practices:** Rather than assigning the same number of students randomly to each teacher, we match students to a variable-sized Teaching Practice that teaches the core subjects. Teaching Practices have teams of 2-3 teachers who design and manage their own practices. Under the supervision of the principal, Teaching Practices will have substantial autonomy within a set of mandated structures to organize their classrooms and class times, as well as the allocation of resources that the school provides to each team. Because teachers work in teams and across content areas, they have much lower total student loads, which has been shown to increase student achievement.³
- **Teacher Growth:** Prime will have a range of support programs for new teachers and specified pathways, based on proven results shown by student growth and achievement, to progress through a continuum of roles, each with greater autonomy, responsibility, and compensation as it is earned. This will include, initially, Teaching Residents, Fellows, and Partners.
- **Teacher Support:** To ensure that teachers develop as professionals, we provide them with significant support (six weeks per year, in addition to daily planning time and weekly workshops) and hold them to high standards in three areas: Performance, Pedagogy, and Personal Development. Performance is assessed through student work products, student surveys, and student test score growth. Pedagogy is assessed through frequent administrative and peer classroom observations. Prime will use the [Marshall Teacher Evaluation Rubric](#) to give staff a common vocabulary around excellent pedagogy. Teachers will also maintain a portfolio of unit and lesson plans, conduct one-on-one reflections, and showcase knowledge of key teaching concepts. We also expect all teachers to participate in ongoing Instructional Rounds to share what works across Teaching Practices. Personal development is assessed through twice-yearly 360 reviews from students, peers, and families, as well as a personal reflection process detailing the ways in which teachers demonstrate personal growth.

g. Target Population/Community Served: Prime Public Charter School's target population should roughly mirror the demographics of CSD13, but with a specific goal to reach our enrollment targets for underserved students. We believe that public schools represent a sacred charge to provide an engine for social mobility for all students. We have chosen CSD13 because it is an area with a wealth of cultural resources that nonetheless struggles with sharp disparities in academic achievement across schools and neighborhoods. CSD13 serves over 22,500 public school students in grades pre-k through 12; we have chosen to start a rigorous, high-performing middle school to address persistent middle school achievement gaps in the district. In the most recent NYCDOE School Quality Reports, within CSD13 K-8 and middle schools, nearly 70% were either not meeting or approaching School Progress or Student Achievement targets, and 76% were either not meeting or approaching School Environment targets. High-quality options within CSD13, including P.S. 8, Arts & Letters, Community Roots Charter School and Brooklyn Prospect Charter School, all enroll students from their elementary schools, leaving few available seats for rising 6th graders.

² See Harper (2014).

³ See Ouchi (2009).

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h. Replication of High Quality School Models: N/A

III. Enrollment and Retention: Prime is committed to serving a diverse group of students, both to ensure that our student body reflects CSD13, and because we believe that integrated, diverse learning environments are a critical component of any 21st century global education. We plan to work with CAMBA, Ingersoll Community Center, Brooklyn Teen Challenge, and Emmanuel Baptist Church to recruit families who are struggling financially and to find students with special needs. In addition, CSD13 is home to the Auburn Family Residence, a large family shelter that we have contacted; we are eager to support these homeless children and their families. We will actively canvass for students at community events, local places of worship, and public housing complexes. We will track our progress in recruiting students in each sub-category and adjust our strategies if we are not meeting our targets. All of our promotional materials note that we are specifically interested in hearing from families with children with special needs.

- **Free and Reduced Lunch:** We have analyzed the data on CSD13 elementary schools with high percentages of students eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch, and as a result we will reach out specifically to PS 133 (100%), PS 43 (96%), PS 94 (94%), and PS 56 (91%).
- **Students with Disabilities:** We have done the same data analysis for special education students, and will reach out specifically to PS 307 (29%), PS 270 (21%), and PS 54 (19%). We will work with the Brooklyn CSE to evaluate any students who may have disabilities.
- **English Language Learners:** While CSD13 does not have a relatively high level of ELLs, we will translate and distribute our informational fliers in multiple languages and reach out to the above social service organizations to see if there are recent immigrants whose families are interested in attending Prime. We will also seek out community organizations that specifically serve families where English is not the language spoken at home.
- **Retention of Students with Disabilities:** The three different learning environments in our model (see above) ensure that we will retain students with disabilities. We have built-in structures so that families can watch videos of Teaching Practices and work with the principal to select a practice with an expertise in supporting students with particular disabilities. Our Personal Development Teams will be particularly attractive to students who have suffered from trauma or who need to process complex and challenging emotions in safe and healthy ways.
- **Retention of English Language Learners:** Our model works well to retain English Language Learners (ELL) who need customized support to ensure that they develop their first language while learning to speak, read, write, and listen in English at and above grade level. We believe in an English as a Second Language (ESL) model and will capitalize on our teachers with ESL expertise to help all teachers address the needs of ELL students.
- **Retention of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch:** Research shows that income level is highly associated with academic performance, and that students living in poverty often experience high levels of anxiety. Our school's design, with its daily community meeting, close teacher-student relationships, PLPs, culturally relevant pedagogy, and Personal Development Teams all help to ensure that students are held to high expectations while given scaffolds they need to address the stress caused by persistent poverty.

For both students with disabilities and ELLs, as well as students generally, our Board will monitor and assess our recruitment and retention rates based on our targets set by the State as well as our own goals. If we are not meeting targets or goals the board will request

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implementation of action plans from staff, and if necessary, move to amend the charter to create admissions preferences for ELLs and/or special needs students.

IV. Public Outreach and Community Support

Public Outreach: Prime Public Charter School was founded and designed as a direct result of the need in CSD13 neighborhoods for high-quality middle school options. One of our founding team members is a CSD13 parent with a child in elementary school. On 1/19/15, we held a community meeting with local elected officials, prospective Board members, and community parent members with children who go to schools in CSD13 (parents from P.S. 11, P.S. 9, and Compass Charter School were all present). On 1/23/15, we attended P.S. 11's PTA read-a-thon celebration and talked directly with parents of students entering 6th grade in 2016-17 about Prime. On 1/25/15, we attended the Compass Charter School Book Fair and talked with parents of students in grades K and 1 about the possible opening of Prime. We have announced another community engagement meeting on 2/27/15 and will spread the word through email, fliers, local places of worship and cultural organizations, and our Facebook page. We recently sent a press release to the Brooklyn Reader and the NYTimes Brooklyn blog to let the entire community know about our plans and to invite their input. Also, we have spoken directly with school leaders from local schools to ensure that we are building healthy partnerships with local district and charter schools: Abedemi Hope, the assistant principal of P.S. 11, Josh Beauregard, Principal of Unity Prep Charter School in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Dan Rubenstein, Executive Director of Brooklyn Prospect Charter School, Todd Sutler, Director of Strategic Development for Compass Charter School, and Cynthia McKnight, the co-President of P.S. 11's Parent Teacher Association (PTA). We have also spoken with local elected officials, including the District 35 Council Member Laurie Cumbo, New York State Assemblyman Walter Mosley, and U.S. Congressman Hakeem Jeffries. We are scheduled to meet with Councilwoman Cumbo on 2/27/15 and have reached out to CSD13 Superintendent Barbara Freeman. A meeting with Assemblyman Mosley is pending. Finally, we have spoken with the following community organizations about partnering with us during the planning process: The CEC for District 13, Good Shepherd, SCO Family of Services/ Center for Family Life, and P.S. 11 PTA.

Parent Interest: During our outreach phase, parents have clearly stated that a lack of quality middle school options in CSD13 is a concern for their families. Parents from P.S. 11 and Compass in particular have expressed that Prime's model feels like a natural extension of the rigorous and loving learning environments at both P.S. 11 and Compass. In total, we have collected over 40 signatures of support/interest from families with children currently in CSD13 elementary schools, and we are on track to collect well over 100 by the application deadline. During our feedback sessions, parents emphasized that they want a school with highly qualified, committed teachers. They also want a school where parents play a key role: One parent noted, "This sounds like the type of school that I want my daughter to be in. But what would my role be as a parent in the school...I want to make sure that parents are not just seen as people to do a bake sale." We will incorporate this and similar feedback through specific structures for parents to learn about their children's academic progress, contribute their own expertise to our Prime Passion Teams, and participate in the selection of their child's Teaching Practice.

V. Proposed Board Chair Signature and Date

Board Chair



Date: 2/10/15

TABLE 1: APPLICANT GROUP INFORMATION							
*Minimum of 5 members must be designated as Trustees							
NAME OF APPLICANT GROUP MEMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS	CURRENT EMPLOYMENT	RELEVANT EXPERIENCE, SKILLS, AND ROLE ON APPLICANT GROUP (Key Words)	PROPOSED ROLE (if any) (Trustee, Employee, Consultant, or	PROPOSED POSITION ON THE BOARD (e.g., officer, trustee, or constituent	LENGTH OF INITIAL TERM	VOTING MEMBER (YES OR NO)
Jonathan Skolnick	[REDACTED]	Harvard University - pursuing a Doctorate in Education Leadership	Jonathan has 11 years of direct educational experience in the classroom; providing professional development; in the NYCDOE's Office of Innovation, and working with charter schools and CMOs serving high-needs students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctorate of Education Leadership, Harvard University (in progress) • Lead Author, Caliber Schools Charter Application Education Program (opened Aug 2014) • Senior Director, NYCDOE Office of Innovation • Founding team and Director of Field Operations, School of One • Project Manager at NYCDOE Office of School Leadership (led creation of Principals' Portal and Teacher Development Toolkit) • Instructional Designer at Omnialearn, a K-8 STEM company • NYC Teaching Fellow and HS Social Studies Teacher • MST Pace University, BA Brown University Skills: School Design, Startup	Executive Director	N/A	N/A	N/A

<p>Sompon Oerlemans</p>		<p>NYCDOE - Deputy Network Leader</p>
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Sammi has 14 years of instructional leadership experience at middle schools and high schools throughout NYC:

- Deputy Network Leader, CFN107
- NYC Leadership Academy Graduate (2008)
- Founding Middle School English Teacher
- MA New York University, BA New York University

Skills: Instructional leadership, teacher development, adult learning, developing professional learning communities, new community school development

Principal	N/A	N/A	N/A
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<p>April Gariepy</p>		<p>Achievement First - Director of network support recruitment and strategy</p>	<p>April has 12 Years experience working in leading CMOs and educational non-profits around community and parent engagement as well as performance management and strategic communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement First - Director of Network Support Recruitment and Human Capital • P.S. 11 School Leadership Team (SLT) elected parent member • Compass Charter School Advisory Board member • TNTP - Performance Management Group • La Cima Elementary Charter School - Director of Strategy and Planning • NYCDOE Talent Office - Communications Director • MPA Baruch College (National Urban Fellow), BA Bridgewater State University <p>Skills: Human capital strategy / external relations</p>	<p>Director of Community Outreach and School Culture</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
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<p>Guerschmid e Saint- Ange</p>		<p>Achievement First - Director of External Realtions</p>
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Guerschmide is an East New York native with eight years of experience engaging family voice and choice to assure a responsive, collaborative Board:

- Director of External Relations, NY - Achievement First
- Director of Advocacy and Parent Engagement, Achievement First
- School Support Specialist, Achievement Network
- 7th, 9th, 10th Grade English Teacher, Norfolk and Newport News, Virginia
- MA Harvard University, BA Hampton University

Key Skills: Community Outreach and External Affairs

<p>Trustee</p>	<p>Trustee</p>	<p>2 Years</p>	<p>Y</p>
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Stacey Gillett	[REDACTED]	Bloomberg Philanthropies
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Stacey managed the budget for a \$70 million innovation division and will ensure that innovation and high-quality execution go hand-in-hand. She has expertise in government innovation and political engagement:

- Government Innovation, Bloomberg Philanthropies
- Exec. Dir. for Strategy and Sustainability, NYCDOE
- Deputy Chief of Innovation, NYCDOE
- Advisor, NYC Center for Economic Opportunity
- Legislative Aide, Office of Senator Charles Schumer
- Staff Assistant, U.S. House of Representatives
- MPA NYU, BA The George Washington University

Key Skills: Operations, Financial Management, Strategy, and Government Relations

Trustee	Trustee	1 Year	Y
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Allison Akhnoukh	[REDACTED]	2Revolutions LLC -Chief of Staff
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Allison has worked with high-performing CMOs and has significant experience with financial analysis and oversight, organizational operations, budgeting, and development:

- Chief of Staff, 2Revolutions
- Founding COO/CEO, Caliber Schools
- Regional Director of Growth and Sustainability, KIPP Foundation
- Director of School Portfolio Management, Oakland Unified Public School District
- Director of Development, Epiphany Middle School
- Investment Banking Analyst, Lehman Brothers
- BA Dartmouth College, MBA Harvard Business School

Key Skills: Operations and Finance, Strategy and Growth, CMO Management

Trustee	Trustee	1 Year	Y
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Tony Siddall	[REDACTED]	Amplify - Director of Bids and Proposals
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Tony has extensive experience reviewing and managing charter schools and charter school board processes and systems:

- Director of Bids & Proposals, Amplify, Inc.
- Senior Director, Growth Strategy - Achievement First
- Senior Director of Governance and Authorizer Relations - Achievement First
- Program Coordinator, Boston Public Schools
- Assistant Director, Charter School Accountability - Massachusetts Department of Education
- MBA University of Oxford, BA Brown University

Key Skills: Charter School Board Governance and Authorization / Technology

Trustee	Board Chair	2 Years	Y
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Megan Adams	[REDACTED]	Lab Middle School for Collaborative Studies - Principal
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Megan has 13 years of experience as one of NYC's most respected middle school principals:

- Principal, Lab Middle School for Collaborative Studies
- Middle School Leadership Initiative
- Cahn Fellowship for Distinguished Principals
- Ed.D. Educational Administration, Ed.M, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Educational Leadership in Public Schools, Teachers College, Columbia University
- BA, History, Art History and Political Science, the University of Iowa

Key Skills: Instruction, Instructional Leadership, School Budgeting, Talent Recruitment, Staff Development

Trustee	Trustee	2 Years	Y
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