Letter of Intent: Contact Information Form

Created Wednesday, June 25, 2014

Page 1

All applicants seeking to establish a charter school authorized by the Board of Regents to open in 2014 must submit a Letter of Intent to Apply, which requires completion of this contact form, and an upload of your 5 page Letter of Intent to Apply as outlined in the 2014 RFP and Application Kit. Please submit these tasks by 3:00 PM on February 3, 2014. Applicants who do not submit a complete Letter of Intent to Apply by the 3:00 PM deadline will not be permitted to submit a Full Application.

a. 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).

Friendship Tech Charter School of Excellence

b. Preferred school location.

Select the preferred geographical area on the left and then select the preferred school district or community school district on the right.

Upstate School Districts: Mount Vernon City School District

Select a second geographical area on left and then select the school district or community school district on right.

None

If necessary, select a third geographical area on left and then select the school district or community school district on right.

None

c. Applicant(s) information, including mailing address, phone number, and email address, and information establishing that the applicant(s) is a parent, teacher, school administrator or community resident.

(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	Street Address, City, State, Zip
Lead Applicant	Collie Edwers	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]

As the Lead Applicant(s), I (we) can best be described as a:

(Multiple responses permitted)

- Community Resident

d. Contact Person: please provide a phone number and/or email address to which public inquires about the proposed charter school may be addressed.

	First and Last Name	Best Phone Number (###-###-####)	Email Address	URL (type web address or the word "none")
Media Contact	Collie Nathan Edwers	914-668-1210	FriendshipTech2015@gmail.com	Friendshiptech@wix.com

e. Planned grades and enrollment in each year of the proposed charter term.

	Ages (or age ranges)	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
K	5	63	63	63	63	63
1st	6	48	63	63	63	63
2nd	7	0	48	63	63	63
3rd	8	0	0	48	63	63
4th	9	0	0	0	48	63
Total		111	174	237	300	315

f. 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 40 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

You have the option of adding your signature(s) as the Lead Applicant or Co-Lead Applicants directly on the bottom of your Letter of Intent before you scan and upload it into the portal.

OR you may sign below using the mouse on your PC or stylist on your mobile device to sign your name.

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).

Date Signed (Lead or Co-Applicant)

2014/06/25

Co-Applicant listed in section c above

(Internet Explorer may not support this feature. Open the portal using Google Chrome, Firefox, or Safari).

Date Signed (Co-Applicant)

(No response)

Thank you for completing the Contact Form which will be duplicative of some information contained in your letter of intent. Having information in this form allows the Department to merge applicant contact information into our existing data system. Please proceed to upload your signed and dated 5 page Letter of Intent to Apply.

I. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

A. Lead Applicant: Dr. C. Nathan Edwers resides at [redacted] His contact information is: [redacted]

B. Public Contact: Dr. C. Nathan Edwers, friendshiptech2015@gmail.com, 914-646-3211

C. Applicant Group Information:

- **Dr. C. Nathan Edwers** - Pastor of Friendship Unified Freewill Baptist Church and community activist. Dr. Edwers currently oversees the plant operation and rental space of Amani Public Charter School. He is the Founder and CEO of Friendship for Tots, Inc. (childcare), Friendship After-school Tutorial Program, Friendship Worship Center (FWC), Friendship Visitation Center (a mandated court visitation site for foster care children), and FWC Enrichment Summer Program. Dr. Edwers has expertise in leadership and organizational management.
- **Dorothea Muccigrosso** - Educational consultant for Sylvan Learning Center and an Adjunct Professor for Manhattanville College. She has 40 years experience as a teacher, principal, and assistant superintendent for early childhood literacy. Her expertise is in curriculum development, budgeting and instructional leadership.
- **Nycolle Woodard** - Computer Math Lab teacher in grades Pre-k through 5 in the NYC Public School System. She utilizes the Common Core State Standards to provide technology and mathematical concepts instruction to students in grades Pre-k through 5.
- **Sherri Edwers** - Certified Childhood Special Education teacher in the NYC Public School System. She is a resident of Mount Vernon, graduate of the Mount Vernon School District and brings a clear understanding of the community, curriculum development, program design and education research.
- **Cheryl Corn** - Learning Specialist. She provides academic counseling and enrichment services to 600+ students each academic year. She has expertise in public health and social services, health professions education, program development, and fundraising.
- **Felicia Leary** - Community Coordinator/Lead Facilitator for the NYC Administration for Children's Services/Central Operations-Parent Support and a resident of Mount Vernon. She has over 31 years of administrative, project and event planning experience in corporate, hospital, not-for-profit and the family/children services arenas.
- **Virginia Chiambalero, O. P.** – Former Professor at Mount Saint Mary College, Newburgh, New York. She has experience as an administrator, superintendent, high school teacher, elementary school teacher, and teacher of English as a second language.
- **Karen K. Senior** - Parent, Community Member and Administrative Assistant to the Dean of Student Services at Miami Dade College. She has expertise in student affairs and parental needs assessments.

D. Founding Group/Initial Board of Trustee Information: Same as letter C above.

E. Replication or Network Information: Not Applicable

F. Applicant History: Not Applicable

II. PROPOSED CHARTER SCHOOL INFORMATION

A. Proposed School Name: Friendship Tech Charter School of Excellence (FTCSE)

B. Proposed School Location: Mount Vernon, NY. FTCSE does not request a district facility.

C. Planned Grades and Enrollment in each of the years of the proposed charter term:

Projected Enrollment Table Over the Charter Term[1]						
Grades	**Ages**	**2015-2016**	**2016-2017**	**2017-2018**	**2018-2019**	**2019-2020**
K	5	63	63	63	63	63
1st	6	48	63	63	63	63
2nd	7		48	63	63	63
3rd	8			48	63	63
4th	9				48	63
Totals		111	174	237	300	315

[1] N.Y. Education Law § 2851(2)(p).

D. **Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s):** Not Applicable

E. **Proposed School Mission:** The mission of Friendship Tech Charter School of Excellence is to ensure that every child achieves their potential through a rigorous academic program which integrates STEM into the core disciplines of reading, writing and math while developing critical and creative thinking through digital and real life experiences.

F. **School overview:** There are four key design elements that make FTCSE uniquely positioned to identify and meet the needs of the Mount Vernon student population. These elements will provide students with the means to become college and career ready, lifelong learners and aspiring leaders. The four key design elements are:

1. **Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) and Social and Digital Consciousness:** On a daily basis, students will use technology to master ELA and STEM learning objectives. Using Science Fusion, an interactive digital curriculum in conjunction with a Teacher Digital Management System complete with staff development, students will work at computer stations using laptops to access websites and software to integrate multiple subject areas. Students will work with video projects, virtual lab data as well as leveled science readers supporting science concepts and the knowledge of STEM vocabulary. Additionally, Makerspace stations will be used to build skills in robotics, circuitry, comic book design, and create manufactured works that would not be possible to create with the resources available to students working alone. Teachers will use SMART Boards and SMART Tables to engage students interactively in their lessons. Students will learn to utilize social media, podcasts and email. Students will access social media using Skype to communicate with students around the world. FTCSE will integrate all technology used and instruction with guidance in social consciousness. This will impart to students the importance of using social media and digital technology responsibly, which will develop social awareness that promotes positive, sensitive, and knowledgeable members of the Mount Vernon and global marketplace.
2. **Differentiated Staffing Model:** Our teaching staff is comprised of general education teachers, a special education teacher, an ESL teacher, and support staff to assist with the implementation of the highest quality education. This methodology encourages the success of student achievement by grouping students with teachers who have specialty training in core subject areas where students demonstrate the greatest need. For example, a first grade special education teacher may work with a group of six Kindergarteners that are in tier two of our Response to Intervention program. Student small groupings will be determined by phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, word attack skills, comprehension and fluency levels, allowing targeted instruction and multiple opportunities to increase student learning.
3. **Blended Rotational Model**: FTCSE will use authentic formative assessment data to deliver individualized and small group instruction based on the needs of students. Students will be grouped based on the Journey's 2014 Common Core Learning benchmark assessments, Dream Box Math and the student's observed learning style and ability. Students who demonstrate the greatest needs will be placed in the smallest sized groups. Every six to eight weeks, teachers will reassess all students and develop new ability based groupings. The rotational schedule will include computer/iPad stations in math and reading, independent reading, journaling/reading response stations and guided teacher instruction with targeted groups. The blended rotational model will ensure that FTCSE students will function or exceed grade level proficiency.
4. **Inquiry Based Curriculum:** Classroom projects will offer students opportunities to apply problem-solving skills learned and mastered through the STEM curriculum while fostering independent (self-directed) learning experiences. FTCSE's curriculum will create real-world learning experiences for students in each grade. Students will participate in learning experiences with visits to and from STEM specialists. FTCSE will provide trips to STEM locations including the Science Center, Airport, Recycling Centers, Planetarium, Botanical Gardens, and the SONY Wonder Technology Lab Museum that will provide weekly collaboration with community based partners. Students will explore the arts, sports, and sciences to develop their interest and research into the many professional careers available to them.

G. **Target Population/Community Served:** FTCSE is committed to improving the academic proficiencies of students living in Mount Vernon where a glaring socio-economic and academic divide exist. As of 2013, Mount Vernon Elementary Schools are not meeting NYS proficiency standards. For example, one of the highest performing schools in Mount Vernon ranked worse than 50.7% of elementary schools in the state. FTCSE is dedicated to closing the achievement gap for these children regardless of their poverty level, English language proficiency, disability status, or race.

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.

Early intervention programs will be notified of FTCSE goals, programs, and expectation for all students including ELL and special needs students. To meet or exceed enrollment and retention targeted requirements for these subpopulations of students; FTCSE will attract students and families utilizing aggressive marketing campaigns via radio, local newspapers, social media, our webpage, flyers, daycares, preschools, community centers, the Mount Vernon Library, apartment complexes, churches, supermarkets, and community outreach house meetings.

Enrollment of Those Identified in the School's Mission:

FTCSE will recruit from Mount Vernon district preschool programs, community-wide childcare educational centers that have graduated their Pre-K children and families with children in elementary school. Early intervention programs will be notified of FTCSE goals, programs and expectation for all students including ELL and special need students. FTCSE will admit students without regard for race, creed, ethnicity, disability, or socioeconomic background. Students will be admitted through a lottery process.

Retention of Those Identified in the School's Mission:

We will make every effort to retain students by engaging them and their families in our general educational program during the regular academic year and summer recess. Our general education program will provide a strong emphasis on the core disciplines with the emphasis placed on raising the ELA proficiencies of all FTCSE students. New York State Common Core standards will become the benchmark of FTCSE's academic standards. It is reasonable to assume that FTCSE students will exceed their grade standards in the general education core disciplines. We will establish home visits before school starts to engage parents in their child's education, collaborate with community organizations to provide wraparound services for struggling students and families and provide targeted assistance to at-risk students.

Recruitment of Students with Disabilities:

In addition to the outreach described above, FTCSE has identified and developed relationships with five preschool programs that serve students with disabilities as part of its marketing strategy. New York State Early Intervention programs and the Westchester Early Childhood Direction Center will support and serve as network partners for special needs and ELL children within the Mount Vernon community. FTCSE will ensure that all outreach includes an explanation of services to support students with disabilities with specific mention of our inclusionary model of educating children with disabilities.

Retention of Students with Disabilities:

FTCSE will provide an opportunity for students with disabilities to learn in the least restrictive environment. We will provide an integrated co-teaching model with a full time certified special education teacher. The teacher will apply push in and pull out methods of instruction to meet student's specific needs. A Special Education Coordinator along with teachers whose credentials reflect training in special education will provide additional targeted support and intervention to meet the needs of students with disabilities and oversee the special education program in collaboration with the school's leadership team. The Special Education Coordinator will work closely with classroom teachers to assess and monitor student growth. The Special Education Coordinator and FTCSE's leadership team will communicate with parents on a regular basis their student's progress and any IEP modification needed to provide opportunities for students to excel.

Recruitment of English Language Learners:

FTCSE will distribute recruiting materials in multiple languages, and have translators at recruiting events. Our recruitment will include the Mount Vernon Spanish and Portuguese communities as well as agencies that focus on families where English has become their second language. We will also work with the Bilingual Technical Assistance Center (BTAC) for assistance with recruiting English language learners.

Retention of English Language Learners:
FTCSE will hire a full time certified English as a Second Language (ESL) bilingual teacher who will deliver push in and pull out ESL instruction and work in collaboration with school leadership and teachers to improve student's language acquisition skills. The ESL teacher will use the Journeys curriculum to support ELL students with targeted instruction and intervention strategies. FTCSE will provide an ESL resource center for students, their families and school staff to share literature in diverse languages, strategies for increasing language acquisition at home and a forum for support. The resource center will be open during and after school hours and in the summer for continuous access to information in diverse languages.

Recruitment of students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced priced lunch programs:
During our recruitment process, FTCSE will advertise to families in high needs poverty areas and areas with the lowest performing schools. Poverty areas include but are not limited to Levister Towers, Ebony Gardens and The Plaza (Lefrak Housing) housing complexes, which are identified by the state of New York as low-income family units.

Retention of students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced priced lunch programs:
FTCSE will provide students in general education classes with a rigorous curriculum. To keep up with our rigorous curriculum, we will provide students with daily homework help outside of our afterschool program, which will be comprised of academic help, sports and cultural activities. Our leadership team will collaborate with classroom teachers to provide struggling students with intensive RTI instruction, especially to those students that may not have attended Universal Pre-Kindergarten. Progress will be closely monitored and changes in instruction are based on data collected from on-going assessment. RTI represents an educational strategy to close achievement gaps for all students by preventing smaller learning problems from becoming insurmountable gaps. FTCSE will respectfully communicate and partner with parents throughout the year and continuously monitor and measure parents' perception of FTCSE programs and their child's academic and social/emotional progress.

IV. Public Outreach and Community Support

FTCSE's founding group has undertaken a rigorous community outreach campaign to inform the public about our intent to open a charter school and to solicit meaningful feedback about the academic and programmatic needs of Mount Vernon students. During our outreach campaign, which has extended beyond one year, we have had personal discussions with community and educational stakeholders throughout Mount Vernon. These discussions have provided insightful feedback regarding the support and reservations of our proposed charter school. Discussion, feedback, testimonials, affirmations and concerns have been received from:

- The Mayor of Mount Vernon, The Honorable Ernest D. Davis
- Westchester County Executive The Honorable Robert Astorino
- Mount Vernon City Council member Richard Thomas
- Mount Vernon City Council member Marcus Griffin
- Interim Superintendent Judith Johnson
- Executive Director of Amani Public Charter School Debra Sterns
- New York State Senator Jeff Klein
- Editor of the Mount Vernon Inquirer Joe Parisi
- Community activist and site manager for Family Ties of Westchester, Inc. Bert Littlejohn
- Radio station WVOX 1460 FM which sponsors a Mount Vernon community talk show
- 20 clergy persons of the United Black Clergy of Westchester County

Outreach began in March 2013 and continued throughout the year with flyer distribution, meetings with the only charter school in Mount Vernon and hosting a community forum. Outreach continued in 2014 with flyer distribution, a meeting with the United Black Clergy of Westchester County and a full write-up in the Mount Vernon Inquirer newspaper about our proposed charter school. Outreach in recent months (March-June) included three community parent group meetings, media announcements, radio spots and an information booth at the Friendship for Tots, Inc. Annual Funtastic Kiddie Carnival and Family Fair June 21, 2014.

The community was informed of the application process by two press releases printed in the Mount Vernon Inquirer newspaper and posted on their website. FTCSE established a website and email address to take community feedback. Public outreach activities continue to be an ongoing effort for the FTCSE founding

group. Information is disseminated about these outreach efforts utilizing *Email blasts and Door-to-Door Information Distributions.* FTCSE's founding group mobilized a ground team of persons in each housing complex to serve as community liaisons to gain access in the buildings by establishing a face-to-face strategy to reach families that are traditionally less informed about educational choice options and charter schools.

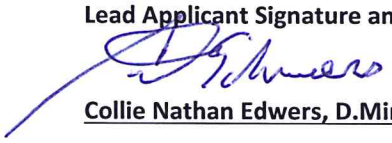
During this process, FTCSE began a petition to request signatures of residents to express their support for the school. A total of 1000 residents signed the petition expressing interest for the establishment of FTCSE. Signatures were gathered from the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center, local grocery stores, the Fleetwood Diner, scheduled community forums and neighborhood door-to-door visits. The process of obtaining signatures of support allowed us to engage in conversations about the proposed charter school.

Overall 457 of the petition signers expressed interest in enrolling their child/ren in FTCSE. A significant observation from our community outreach efforts indicate that the area of our greatest support, which is the 10550 zip code area is also the area with the lowest performing schools. Petitions came from the following zip code areas: 10550 = 577, 10551 = 70, 10552 = 283, and 10553 = 70.

Initial Assessment of Sufficient Interest: Valued feedback received as a result of the group's community outreach effort encouraged FTCSE's founding group to adjust the original proposal by increasing the number of children to be serviced, including STEM as an innovative approach to learning, and placing a greater emphasis on ELA proficiency to ensure that the Common Core Learning Standards are met. Overwhelmingly, the community stakeholders were concerned about career and college readiness standards being met. A significant observation from our community outreach efforts indicate that the area of our greatest support, which is the 10550 zip code area is also the area with the lowest performing schools. Though FTCSE employed broad reaching recruitment efforts that have saturated neighborhoods throughout Mount Vernon, FTCSE also created collaborative partnerships with building associations to maintain access and visibility in high needs areas.

Overall, community outreach has been well received. From the 1000 petition signatures, a database was established to stay in contact with interested persons to inform them of updates to our proposed charter school. FTCSE has also received numerous letters of support from local community leaders, educational partners, religious leaders and politicians.

Lead Applicant Signature and Dated June 25, 2014



Collie Nathan Edwers, D.Min.