

# Letter of Intent: Contact Information Form

Created Thursday, June 26, 2014

Updated Sunday, July 06, 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).

Greater Works Charter School

### 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: Rochester City School District (not BOCES)

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	Ted J. Morris, Jr.	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

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

(Multiple responses permitted)

- Current or former School Administrator
- 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	Ted J. Morris, Jr.	585-568-7833	info@gwcharterschool.org	www.gwcharterschool.org

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
9th	14-16	96	96	96	96	96
10th	15-17	0	96	96	96	96
11th	16-18	0	0	96	96	96
12th	17-19	0	0	0	96	96
Total		96	192	288	384	384

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 stylus 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)

(No response)

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.

July 7, 2014

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



To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Founding Group of Greater Works Charter School (GWCS), I am honored 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.

## I. Applicant Information

**a. Lead applicant: Ted J. Morris, Jr.** [REDACTED]

Phone number: [REDACTED]

Ted is a lifelong community resident of Rochester, New York. He was born, raised and still resides in the [REDACTED]

**b. Public contact: Ted J. Morris, Jr.**

Phone number: (585) 568-7833

E-mail address: [info@gwcharterschool.org](mailto:info@gwcharterschool.org) and website is [www.GWCharterSchool.org](http://www.GWCharterSchool.org)

**c. Applicant Group Information:** The applicant founding group of Greater Works Charter School is comprised of ten educators, administrators, business executives, leaders, parents and city residents with several years of experience in the fields of education, administration, accounting, operations management, law, social work, reentry initiatives, marketing and other areas. **Ursula Burke** is a parent, community resident and small business owner. Previously, she worked 12 years at the Child Care Council. Ursula is active in the community as a volunteer with the American Cancer Society. Ursula will be on the initial Board of Trustees. **Andrea Clarke** is a Community Health Advocate at the University of Rochester Medical Center. She is a parent, city resident and is active in the community as a volunteer. Andrea will transition into a volunteer advisor once the school is opened. **Roberta Favitta** is a Senior Document Solutions Specialist and Sales Manager at Documentelligence by CFBT. Previously, she has worked as a Brand Consultant, VP of Sales and Marketing, and as a Lending Officer for a local bank. She has over 30+ years of experience in sales, branding, marketing and operations management. She is a volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters, Volunteers of America, Veteran's Outreach Center, the Gates-Chili Chamber of Commerce and will serve on the initial Board of Trustees. **Dr. Peter L. Kozik** is an Assistant Professor of Education at Keuka College. He has 25+ years of experience in the field of education. Peter is a certified teacher in N-6 and English 7-12, a certified School District Administrator, Certified Process Therapist and Certified Facilitator in Appreciation Inquiry. Peter will be on the initial Board of Trustees. **Dr. Norman Meres** is a molecular environmental scientist and educator with more than a decade of postsecondary and secondary teaching experience. He has taught high school science and mathematics in public and private schools in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, and has taught college biology and environmental science at Northern Virginia Community College, Lord Fairfax Community College, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and George Mason University. Norman has an A.A.S. in marine science and a B.S. in chemistry from the University of the District of Columbia, an M.S. in biotechnology from Johns Hopkins University, and a Ph.D. in Environmental Science and Public Policy from George Mason University. Norman will serve on the initial Board of Trustees. **Ted J. Morris, Jr.** is the Lead Applicant for and Founder of Greater Works Charter School. He is a life-long resident of Rochester, NY. Currently, Ted is an education consultant with the Morris Firm and has previously held positions such as the Director of Operations, Finance, Development, and Assistant CEO with various non-profit youth, education, and

human service-related agencies. He has 7+ years of experience in these fields. Ted has a B.S. in Human Services, an M.S.W. in Non-Profit Leadership and is finishing up his Ed.D. in Administration. Ted will serve on the initial Board of Trustees. **Emily Robbins** was born and raised in Rochester, New York. She is an independent insurance agent working for the Barry York Insurance agency. Currently she resides in Penfield, New York with her two children. At her agency, she has the opportunity to work with both families and businesses to ensure that they have the proper coverage so in the event of a loss they are adequately insured. As her customers change and grow, she enjoys working closely by their side to advise them on changes that need to be made to stay protected as they undertake new ventures. Prior to her career in insurance, she was an event coordinator running events from 15-500 people. Emily attended SUNY Geneseo where she studied Elementary and Special Education from 2002-2005. Emily will serve on the initial Board of Trustees. **Asfa Sill** is the Assistant Director at Action for Better Community and has been for over 7 years. Prior to that, he was a teacher for over 11 years. Asfa has a Bachelor's Degree in Community and Human Service from Empire State College and his Master's Degree from Canisius College in Educational Administration. In addition, he has taken the School Building Leader (SBL) certification exam. Asfa will serve on the initial Board of Trustees. **Bonni Thousand** is an Administrator at the University of Rochester, while pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Public Health – Bioethics. She is also a city resident and homeowner in the 14621 neighborhood of the Rochester, NY within the Rochester City School District. Bonni also has past mentoring experience, working with young women within RCSD to help them achieve their personal goals and to successfully graduate from high school. As a member of the community, Bonni has a long-term vested interest to find ways to serve the at-risk youth in our community so that they may have the opportunity and the resources to achieve a good education. Bonni has chosen to serve and invest her time and efforts to achieve the mission by serving on the initial Board of Trustees. **Christie Weidenhamer** is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC), Board Certified Professional Counselor (BCPC), National Certified Counselor (NCC), and Approved Clinical Supervisor (ACS) in private practice. She is finishing up her Ed.D. at the University of Rochester in the Counselor and Counselor Education degree program. Christie has worked with families for 9+ years whose children struggle with mental health and behavioral issues. She educates parents about mental health and behavioral issues through adult education classes offered at East Irondequoit School District. Christie previously worked for Hillside Family of Agencies in the General Prevention Program, and Strong Behavioral Health's Child and Adolescent Outpatient Program. She is currently in private practice at the Mental Health Counseling and Consulting Services. Christie has worked in the Rochester City Community with the North East Area Development in a number of capacities. Christie is a dedicated community member who wants to see all students be successful in their academic endeavors to be a self-sufficient, productive member in the community. Christie has chosen to serve and invest her time and efforts to achieve the mission by serving on the initial Board of Trustees.

- d. **Initial Board of Trustees Information:** The nine proposed members of the initial Board of Trustees are Ursula Burke, Roberta Favitta, Dr. Peter L. Kozik, Dr. Norman Meres, Ted J. Morris, Jr., Emily Robbins, Asfa Sill, Bonni Thousand, and Christie Weidenhamer. Descriptions of relevant experience and skills for all proposed board members can be found in Section C of this document – so we refer to that section to avoid repetition. In addition to the individuals named above, the GWCS founding group has received resumes and interest from several other individuals who are interested in being on the initial board of trustees. Additional members added to the initial board of trustees will be included in the full application.
- e. **Replication or Network Information:** This request is not applicable.
- f. **Application History:** The founding group has previously applied to the NYSED Charter School Office in the January 2010 Charter School Application Cycle. We submitted a Letter of Intent and a Prospectus but were not asked to submit a full application. We also participated in the Charter School Institute's Special Call for Application in July 2011 but were not invited to submit a full application. In January 2012, we sent a Letter of Intent and submitted an application but chose to

withdraw and strengthen our application. We submitted a Letter of Intent in January 2013 but were not asked to submit a full application. Lastly, we submitted a Letter of Intent and Full Application in the Round 2 of the 2013 RFP process and a Letter of Intent in Round 1 of the 2014 RFP process and again, chose to withdraw and strengthen our application and the capacity of our applicant group. We have since worked with a number of consultants, strengthened our application, continued to develop our founding group/board of trustees and conducted additional community outreach.

## II. Proposed Charter School Information

- a. **Proposed school name:** Greater Works Charter School
- b. **Proposed school location:** Rochester City School District (Downtown Rochester)
- c. **Planned grades and enrollment:** Year 1 (2015-16): Grade 9 and 96 students  
Year 2 (2016-17): Grades 9-10 and 192 students  
Year 3 (2017-18): Grades 9-11 and 288 students  
Year 4 (2018-19): Grades 9-12 and 384 students  
Year 5 (2019-20): Grades 9-12 and 384 students

Grade and class sizes: There will be 96 students in each grade and less than 24 students in each class.

- d. **Proposed Management and/or Partnership Organizations:** This request is not applicable.
- e. **Proposed school mission:** The mission of the Greater Works Charter School is to prepare students to be self-sufficient citizens. We will accomplish this mission by providing a high-quality education in a safe and supportive environment that provides our students with the academic and technical skills necessary to earn a Regents diploma and to succeed in college and/or today's workforce.
- f. **School overview:** Greater Works Charter School will combine several key design elements and best practices in education to achieve the school's mission. The school's key design elements will include a longer school day and school year; a rigorous academic and social emotional curriculum with high standards and expectations that are supportive and personalized, with meaningful and relevant learning; arts and technology integration across academic content, providing a hands-on approach and engaging most learning styles; ongoing professional development, teacher mentoring, strong instructional leadership and peer coaching; ongoing monitoring, accountability and assessment; individual learning plans; collaborations with a local social services agency and educational opportunity center; a restorative justice approach to discipline and more that will be detailed in our full application. Together the school's key design elements will be put into action to create a safe and supportive learning environment that will prepare all students for college, today's workforce and a life of self-sufficiency. Greater Works Charter School will improve student learning and achievement and increase learning opportunities for all students with special emphasis on students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who qualify for the free and reduced price lunch program.
- g. **Target Population/Community Served:** The School's target population is all students in the City of Rochester (including students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who qualify for the free and reduced price lunch program) who have the desire to graduate from high school and become a self-sufficient and contributing member of society. Greater Works Charter School will recruit students from throughout the City. The Rochester City School District is the third largest urban school system in New York State. The Rochester City School District serves approximately 32,000 students in pre-K through grade 12. The district's student enrollment is comprised of 60.1 percent African-American/Black; 25.6 percent Hispanic; 10.2 percent White; 4.1 percent Native American, Asian, East Indian, and other minorities. About 10 percent of the district's enrollment is made up of English Language Learners (ELL) and 16.5 percent of the district's enrollment is made up of students with disabilities or special needs<sup>1</sup>. The graduation rate in the Rochester City School District is a staggeringly low 43 percent, with less than 10 percent of those

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rcsdk12.org/domain/8>

graduates being ready for college. In 1970, the United States had the world's highest rate of high school and college graduation. Today, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, we've slipped to No. 21 in high school completion and No. 15 in college completion. As the Superintendent of the RCSD said in a late 2013 press conference and again in a June 2013 press release, this is "painfully unacceptable." A recent report found that Rochester ranks third poorest city in the Nation<sup>2</sup>. This high poverty rate is further attested to by the high percentages of students eligible for federal free or reduced price lunch. Approximately 79.3 percent of the Rochester City School District's students are eligible for federally free or reduced price lunch. This makes the RCSD the poorest big-city school district in the state. Graduating more students and enabling them to become self-sufficient citizens is imperative and will contribute to the Rochester region's economic growth, among other things.

### **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.**

Greater Works Charter School will admit students without regard to race, creed, ethnicity, disability, or socio-economic background. We will enroll 96 students in grade 9 in our first year. Upon approval, the School will commence several general recruitment efforts to find, recruit, and enroll students. These general methods for recruitment of students will include:

- Utilization of local print and electronic media widely available at community libraries and recreation centers (i.e. Minority Reporter, City News, La Voz, Democrat & Chronicle, etc.);
- Appearances on local radio shows (including stations whose audience includes those speaking a language other than English) whose target audience closely aligns with our target population;
- Collaboration with the County and City to provide applications and information to neighborhood organizations, clubs, agencies (Center for Youth, Boys and Girls Club, Volunteers of America, Threshold, etc.) and churches. This will provide awareness of GWCS and availability of admissions applications at their offices;
- Identification of speakers cognizant of GWCS design, vision and mission to present at meetings, media events, etc;
- Participation in the 2015 School Choice Fair, facilitated by the Rochester City School District in January 2015 and other related school fairs and events (Public Market, Malls, etc); and
- Further development of our website and other social media (i.e. Twitter, Facebook, etc.).

Our general recruitment and outreach efforts will be focused in several youth concentration areas including libraries, community centers, churches, youth events, the downtown area and more. We will present ourselves in a non-judgmental way, offering those interested, a school brochure and a one-page admissions application. If interested, in addition to giving them information to review, we will take their contact information and will do follow up. This information will be recorded and tracked.

GWCS will also employ additional strategies and techniques to recruit students with disabilities at a rate comparable to or greater than the percentage of the Rochester City School District (16.5 percent). Recruitment efforts will include: (a) distribution of brochures highlighting information about our school's special education program, (b) outreach to community programs and agencies (ACCES-VR, Lifetime Assistance Program, Learning Disabilities Association and Youth Advocacy Programs) where we will request opportunities to provide GWCS information during meetings hosted by these community agencies and service coordinators. We will seek to attract students among the high population of deaf students in Rochester and will provide sign language interpreting services for

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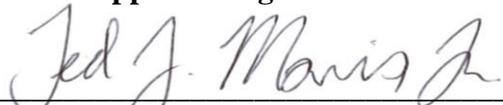
<sup>2</sup> <http://rochester.twcnews.com/content/news/743405/rochester-ranks-third-poorest-city-in-nation/>

community meetings, as needed. During the application process and meetings, we will clearly identify the special education services that will be available at GWCS, (c) provide meetings with members of special education staff and/or Board of Trustees with parents of students with disabilities who express interest in learning more about how GWCS will meet the needs of their child. It is our goal to retain a comparable number of enrolled students with disabilities to that of the Rochester City School District. To reach English Language Learners (ELLs), GWCS will work with the Rochester community and the Rochester City School District to identify the major languages spoken other than English. Once this information has been compiled, GWCS will target areas of highest ELL concentration and provide information about GWCS to the people in those areas in their languages. Also, we will distribute information to local clergy whose congregations are non-English speakers. We will display and provide GWCS materials in different cultural centers, including but not limited to Puerto Rican Youth Development Center, American Action League and Urban League, etc. We also will invite families and students to our recruitment events which will include open houses prior to and during the enrollment process. Native speakers, interpreters or translators will be available to facilitate these events. We will emphasize the availability of resources for ELL students. In addition, by offering arts and technology integrated programming at GWCS, we will utilize methods that tap into a variety of learning styles that are effective to reach special needs and ELL populations, allowing them new ways to express, acquire mastery and demonstrate understanding of content. This along with our other key design elements and a very supportive and experienced staff will also allow us to retain all students. More detailed information about our school's recruitment and retention strategies will be provided in our full application.

#### **IV. Public Outreach and Community Support**

The founding group of Greater Works Charter School has been conducting public outreach about our school for several years with the intent to inform the community about the proposed school and to solicit community input regarding the school. To date, we have had approximately 11 public community meetings, with the most two recent meetings held on May 24, 2014 (44 people in attendance) and June 21, 2014 (56 people in attendance). In addition, we have plans to conduct an additional community presentation on July 15, 2014 at 6:00pm at the Carter Street Neighborhood meeting. At each community meeting, a Spanish translator and ASL interpreter has been onsite, as needed. Each event was and will continue to be centrally located in the city of Rochester. Furthermore, we have had several discussions with community parents, stakeholders and organizations including, but not limited to Roderick Cox-Cooper (CEO of Wilson Commencement Park), Senator Joseph Robach, Dr. Gregory R. Wells (Senior Pastor of Victory Living Christian Faith Center), Thomas Pappas (Administrator, Rochester City School District), JoAnne Ryan (President/CEO of Volunteers of America WNY), Stacey Shells (Managing Director, Victory Education Partners), Dr. Elaine Spaul (City Councilwoman and Executive Director of the Center for Youth Services), several members of the RCSD Superintendent Cabinet, including Dr. Bolgen Vargas (Superintendent, Rochester City School District), and many more. We have also facilitated presentations at Aquinas Institute, Hillside Family of Agencies, Allendale Columbia School, New Born Fellowship Church, ArtPeace, and Victory Living Christian Faith Center. We have received several letters of support from various individuals/agencies and have been featured on Your News Now (YNN) Rochester and 13 WHAM News. In addition, we have set up a community feedback line (585-568-7833), a general website ([www.GWCharterSchool.org](http://www.GWCharterSchool.org)) that has received over 5,500 visits, and a Facebook page ([www.FB.com/GWCharterSchool](http://www.FB.com/GWCharterSchool)) with 184 followers and counting so the community can access information about GWCS and provide comments/feedback about the school. We have received positive comments and feedback about the school and we are confident that the community is excited about GWCS and ready to apply for admission once the school is approved. We look forward to submitting a full application.

#### **V. Lead Applicant Signature and Date Signed**

  
Ted J. Morris, Jr. – Lead Applicant

July 7, 2014  
Date signed