

Letter of Intent: Contact Information Form

Created Monday, July 07, 2014

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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).

Guardian Academy Charter School of Peekskill

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: Peekskill 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	Audrey Warn	914-494-1430	audreycwarn@gmail.com	

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

(Multiple responses permitted)

- Parent
- 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	Audrey Warn	914-494-1430	audreycwarn@gmail.com	none

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	4-6	50	50	50	50	50
1st	5-7	50	50	50	50	50
2nd	6-8	0	50	50	50	50
3rd	7-9	0	0	50	50	50
4th	8-10	0	0	0	50	50
5th	9-11	0	0	0	0	50
Total		100	150	200	250	300

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	None
Partner Organization 1	None
Partner Organization 2	None

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).

Christine C. Wan

Date Signed (Lead or Co-Applicant)

2014/07/06

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:

Audrey Warn, [REDACTED]

Audrey is a parent, native and resident of Peekskill, who has advocated for social equity as a community member and organizer for many years.

b. Media Contact: Audrey Warn, 914.494.1430; guardianacademypeekskill@gmail.com

c. Applicant Founding Group

- **Audrey Warn** has worked for the past 7 years in community building and social justice. She has a background in institutional advancement and communications and, skills as a facilitator and leadership coordinator. As a mother of three who has served children in a variety of ways, she knows first-hand of the great potential that exists in every child regardless of background or circumstance and, she knows full-well the challenges many face when they do not receive the support they need to be successful. Currently the Advancement Director and Special Projects Coordinator for Assumption Church. Served on Peekskill's Historical Preservation Advisory Committee; past president of Assumption School's Parent Association. Proposed role: Board Member specializing in community outreach
- **Carlos Martinez** had a 21-year career in law enforcement culminating as the Commanding Officer, 42nd Precinct Detective Squad, Bronx, New York. Associate of FBI National Academy ; member of the Sergeant Benevolent Association. A 36-year resident of Peekskill, he serves on the Peekskill Youth Bureau Board. Veteran of the US Army Signal Corps achieving the rank of Sergeant. Proposed role: Board Member specializing in community outreach
- **Jamie Sanchez** is the bilingual son of Ecuadorian immigrants and a native of Peekskill. Pursuing his goal of becoming a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), he is in the Bachelor of Business Administration—Public Accounting Program with a minor in Finance at Pace University, where he holds offices in the Association of Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting (ALPFA) and the Robert S. Pace Accounting Society. Proposed role: Board Member specializing in financial oversight
- **Stefania Raschella** has over 12 years experience in education and leadership. Served as Assistant Principal at Holy Rosary School in Bronx, NY for 7 years. Holds two Masters Degrees in Elementary Education and School Building Leadership; Permanent Certification in Pre K through 6th Grade; NYS Professional Certification in School Building Leadership. Business experience as Sales Analyst; Account Coordinator; Account Executive. Currently the Assistant to the Deputy Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of New York and the Director of Strategic Planning. Proposed role: Board Member specializing in academic oversight
- **Natalie DiPaolo** is a science teacher in the Yonkers Public School District. She holds a B.S. in Biology and a M.S. in Education. She began teaching Biology to 8th grade students in a small satellite school in New York City in 1997. She has experience teaching General Science and Biology/Living Environment to grades 7-12. In the summer of 2014, Natalie will obtain her Ed.S degree in Leadership for Social Change in Education. Her focus is on teacher education and meeting the needs of all students in a multicultural science classroom. Proposed role: Board Member specializing in academic oversight
- **Jose Rodriguez, J.D** has lived in Peekskill for 17 years, serving on the Peekskill Youth Bureau since 2011. Retired as a NYS Senior Court Officer for the NYS Supreme Court, Grand Jury Division. He has been a coach and mentor for the Thurgood Marshall Junior High School Moot Court Competition and as a High School Equivalency Director at Bronx House of Detention and looks forward to continuing to serve the families of Peekskill. Proposed role: Board Member specializing in legal oversight.
- **Phil J. Whalen:** Principal of a Real Estate and Brokerage firm for the last 10 years. He purchased the firm after having been a long-term employee. Phil graduated cum laude from Fordham University with a B.A. degree in Math and Science. Phil sits on several charitable and not-for-profit boards, primarily in New York State. Proposed role: Board Member specializing in facilities.
- **John C. Greenan:** Executive Director of the Dutchess County Assoc. of REALTORS®. Founded "Fuel", the association's first professional networking group. Involved in a number of charitable and community organizations ranging from Big Brothers, Big Sisters, to The Hub—a young professionals association, to the Firemen's Association. Named *Top 40 under 40* by Dutchess County Chamber of Commerce for professional

and community accomplishments. His roots are in Peekskill and he maintains extensive ties to the city.
Proposed role: Board Member specializing in governance and management

- **Ellen Bennett:** Almost 20 years of experience working in the pharmaceutical industry with a 14-year focus on corporate compliance programs and investigation of allegations of misconduct. Developed training programs to promote ethical behavior in the work place; holds certification in Healthcare Compliance. Experience as a Paralegal and Operations Manager. Proposed role: Advisory Board
- **Larry DeNoia:** Founder of ITI Strategies, Inc (Investment, Tax, Insurance Strategies) and Certified Financial Planner for over 25 years. Held leadership positions in community to include: Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce, Paramount Center for the Arts, Lincoln Society and Rotary Club. Proposed role: Advisory Board
- **Kate Shea Kennon:** Assistant Dean, Fordham University School of Business. Contributing Writer to the *Cape Cod Times*. Board Member of Origins Theatre Company, Westchester Swim Conference, Fordham University Association. Proposed role: Advisory Board
- **Timothy Kennon:** President /Owner of McVicker & Higginbotham, Inc.— direct marketing company specializing in fundraising print and mail for the arts and cultural, education and healthcare markets. Pres. Association of Marketing Services Providers, NY Chapter; VP Direct Marketing Fundraisers Association; advisor to Board of Directors, Marketing Club of New York. Proposed role: Advisory Board

d. Initial Board of Trustees: Audrey Warn, Carlos Martinez, Jamie Sanchez, Stefania Raschella, Natalie DiPaolo, Jose Rodriguez, John C. Greenan, Phil Whalen

e. Replication or Network Information: This is an application for a new school, not a replication or part of a network. No member of the applicant group sits on the board of trustees of an existing charter school, and the applicant group is not submitting other applications during this round

f. Application History: Audrey Warn submitted an RFP as Lead Applicant to the NYSED Charter School Office during Round I of the 2013. Unfortunately, the proposed Board was not asked to capacity interviews and, decided to withdraw the application. After analyzing the NYSED feedback, a new founding group came together, including some of the same members, to continue to explore ways to bring educational choice to the families of Peekskill. The current proposed Board has worked diligently to respond to the NYSED feedback and learn all they can about charter schools and the chartering process while continuing to speak to families and leaders in the community about their educational needs and desires.

II. Proposed Charter School Information

- a. Proposed School Name:** Guardian Academy Charter School of Peekskill
- b. Proposed School Location:** Peekskill, NY. We do not intend to request siting in district facilities.
- c. Planned Grades and Enrollment:**

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
K	50	50	50	50	50
1	50	50	50	50	50
2		50	50	50	50
3			50	50	50
4				50	50
5					50
Total	100	150	200	250	300

We will have two classes per grade. *Guardian Academy* will open with grades K-1 and add one grade per year until it is ultimately a K-8 school. We feel an obligation to serve as many scholars as possible and intend to backfill open seats in all grades.

- d. Proposed Management/Partner organizations:** Not applicable
- e. Proposed School Mission:** The *Guardian Academy Charter School of Peekskill* will empower a diverse group of scholars to reach their full potential academically and socially through the development of intellectual

and character strengths within a rigorous, flexible and community-centered learning environment. All scholars will graduate proficient in core subjects as well as develop the character traits necessary not only for success in school but success in life.

f. **School Overview:** Based on our belief in the inveterate potential of all our scholars, we know that academic success and impeccable character are well within their grasp. We will work to build a culture of excellence that thrives on these core values: **Hard-work, Engagement, Accountability, Respectfulness and Thoughtfulness (HEART)**. Recognizing that we all learn and grow at different rates and have unique talents and challenges, we will have high expectations for all—scholars, teachers and staff. All are expected to bring their best selves to school each day and, the *Guardian Academy* will provide the tools necessary to achieve that goal.

- **Excellence Through Co-Teaching:** Deliberately structured Co-teaching creates opportunities to differentiate instruction and meet the unique needs of learners, expanding opportunities for ELL's, Special Education students and others who may benefit from additional supports. In our purposeful use of Co-teaching—two General Education teachers, one ELL certified teacher and one Special Education certified teacher per grad level—we allow our focus to be on academics and high expectations for all scholars, meeting students where they are and pushing them to succeed.
- **Excellence Through Character Education:** Character education that is well-implemented and integrated across the curriculum can boost academic growth (Schwartz, Ed.D, Beatty & Dachnowicz, 2005). We will value helping scholars become young men and women of character who are not only achieving at their optimal academic level but, who will grow to become ethical leaders able to make substantial contributions to their communities.
- **Excellence Through Inclusion and Integration:** Our educators will build an inclusive learning community where all scholars will be instructed in reading, writing, speaking and listening across all content areas. The integration of content and language instruction provides multiple opportunities for meaningful understanding and, for acquiring language proficiency. Authentic integration provides a purposeful and motivating context for all language learners. This type of integration works hand in hand with social and cognitive development. Teaching language in isolation would contradict our mission by disassociating it from other aspects of child development. Lastly, integration of language and content respects the specificity of functional language use and allows our scholars to make relevant connections.
- **Excellence Through Data Driven Decision Making:** Our educators will foster a school-wide culture of purposeful, data driven decision making in which diagnostic and formative assessment data are frequently collected, analyzed and used to drive instruction, assist in the planning and implementation of professional development and help educators respond to student need in a timely and intentional manner.
- **Excellence Through Community Engagement:** We will succeed as a result of school staff, families, local community members and organizations all working together to meet our scholars' needs. Frequent communication, academic and social events, an engaged Board, opportunities to volunteer and partner with community will all contribute to a school deeply rooted in and responsive to the needs of our community.

g. **Target Population/Community:** *Guardian Academy* is proposing to serve the Peekskill area. Peekskill is a historic American river city approximately 40 miles north of New York City. The decline of manufacturing led to a slowing economy and diminishing population; nevertheless, Peekskill has seen a growing Latino and immigrant population. Census data from 2010 indicates that Peekskill is now 37% Hispanic or Latino, 36% White (non-Hispanic) and 24% Black. Moreover, 31% of Peekskill residents are foreign born and 40% speak a language other than English. More than two-thirds of Peekskill students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. We expect the Latino population has risen since 2010. *Guardian Academy* intends to serve this diverse community and anticipates a higher percentage of its student population will be English language learners and special education students.

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

Strategies to Attract, Recruit Students:

a. Students identified in school's mission: *Guardian Academy* has identified a "diverse" group of scholars in our mission and we will recruit with diversity as a priority. Our responsive and differentiated education program will serve as an attractive alternative to the District schools while our grade level Co-teaching team that addresses the needs of all learners is a direct response to community feedback and intended enrollment statistics. For this reason, we believe many parents will be interested in an alternative and, filling seats at the *Guardian Academy Charter School* will not be a challenge. Our mission signals our desire to serve any family who wants a rigorous and flexible curriculum in a nurturing environment that emphasizes both academic and character development and, our deliberate outreach to English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities and Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch and an inclusion of diverse communities and learners should lead to enrollment of all types of scholars.

Guardian Academy Charter School will undertake an energetic recruitment plan to attract a diverse student body. As a result of submitting our first RFP, the proposed Board has been diligent about educating the community about charter schools and listening to their feedback as this will be the first charter school in the area. On-going education will continue along with active recruiting efforts to WESTCOP Headstart programs, local pre-schools such as Creative Preschool and Lil Sprouts Early Learning Center, Child World and family-based day-care centers, social service, faith-based and non-profit organizations such as the Salvation Army, Church of the Assumption, Spanish Tabernacle, Iglesia Cristiana Amor Y Paz, Peekskill Area Pastor's Association, Field Library, Youth Bureau/Kiley Center and Be-First Boxing and especially those that deal more predominantly with underserved children. We will continue to conduct community information sessions and mailings and will continue to explain our school's program, school culture and, services for all scholars. Interest surveys are being distributed both physically and on-line. We maintain a Facebook page, an e-mail address and post-office box with plans in place for a website. We will continue to use local media to assist in our outreach.

b. Students with disabilities: Our program is designed to appeal to students and families that may have learning differences and we will deliberately outreach to attract and enroll these students. We will expect and encourage a diverse population of scholars and, will do all we can to attract students with disabilities by making our unique program known through our active recruitment efforts (above). We will clearly explain our commitment to serving all students including those with special needs and will outline some of our staffing supports for students to families. By clearly stating our use of Co-Teaching, assigning one certified Special Education teacher per grade team and our low-student teacher ratio, we are assured that recruiting students with disabilities will not be a challenge and that we will reach or exceed our enrollment targets.

c. English Language Learners: Our planning team has deep roots in the Latino community and we will use those connections as well as a broad and targeted outreach process to identify and recruit ELL families. Also, we believe that once our program of Co-Teaching with an ELL teacher per grade level team, Immersion and Integration is clearly stated, families will naturally be attracted to *Guardian Academy*. Once again, clear and targeted recruiting efforts to culturally diverse and language diverse populations have been and will continue to be implemented. Materials will be disseminated in both English and Spanish and, in should it be determined necessary, other languages. Our mission speaks for itself; we welcome diversity and consider it a strength.

d. Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch: There is a high-density of children eligible for free and reduced lunch in Peekskill's elementary schools. We will recruit free and reduced priced lunch eligible scholars meeting or exceeding our targets. We will employ targeted mailings, information sessions and door-to door distribution of materials and, will contact organizations, agencies and housing areas that generally work with families whose children are often eligible for free and reduced lunch such as WESTCOP Rapid Food Distribution program, WESTCOP Headstart, and Caring for the Homeless (CHOPS) Inc. Once again, a clear statement of our commitment to welcome all scholars will go a long way to recruit a diverse student population alongside our partnerships with community organizations that serve target populations.

Strategies to Retain Students:

a. Students identified in school's mission: We believe a strong education program that results in demonstrable academic progress will inspire parents to keep their children enrolled at *Guardian Academy*. We will have

special programs and services to meet the needs of all types of scholars and through partnering with parents, will understand early if there are issues we need to address.

b. English Language Learners: We intend to implement a robust early childhood integrated literacy program that uses variations of Co-Teaching instruction to enhance English proficiency in reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. We also believe parent involvement is important and will hire Spanish speaking staff who can communicate with families. Through regular benchmarking of reading levels and the NYSESLAT exam we will monitor and evaluate scholar progress and language proficiency. School administration and the Board will specifically track the retention rates of our ELL population and work to implement improvement plans if retention issues develop. However, through our efforts of Co-Teaching, Immersion and Integration as well as collaboration and engagement of all families, we expect to retain ELL students in the school, meeting or exceeding targets.

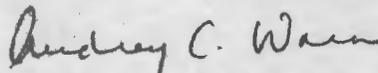
c. Students with disabilities: We will use a Response to Intervention model to identify and monitor scholars at risk of not attaining grade level standards. Multiple strategies will be attempted by classroom teachers and specialists before any scholar is referred for evaluation for special education. Once a scholar is determined to have a disability by the district's CSE, the school will commit to implementing each scholar's IEP with fidelity. Goals and strategies will be shared with classroom teachers and our certified Special Education teacher will provide additional support in and outside the classroom. We will provide any necessary related services for the scholars who require it. Our responsive program, Co-Teaching model and low scholar-to-staff teaching ratio will support all scholars but, particularly scholars who might have diverse learning needs. By serving these scholars well, we expect to retain them in the school.

d. Students Eligible for the Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program: We will retain these scholars by collaborating and communicating respectfully and effectively with parents, continuously monitoring and measuring parents' perceptions of the program to ensure we meet the needs of all scholars. As with all scholars, we expect most generally that the strength and responsiveness of our program will drive student growth and parent satisfaction, reducing or eliminating retention issues.

IV. Public Outreach and Community Support

a. Public Outreach Conducted to Date: The founding team has engaged in extensive outreach efforts since January 2012. We have spoken with community leaders to include mayors under two administrations, council members, and county legislator; pastors of 7 churches, the local Headstart director and nursery school directors, the former Youth Bureau Director and staff, members of Peekskill Agencies Together (P.A.T)--agencies that deal directly with children, two Field Library Directors, Chief of Police and DARE Officer. Made presentation to Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber members and participated in Gateway Experience. We have established potential collaborations with 4 organizations to enhance the overall curriculum and have 3 meetings scheduled to discuss other collaborations. We speak to community members and parents at monthly WESTCOP Rapid Food Distribution program. We have held 4 public information sessions with an average of 35 at each, the last being held on June 12. We made a presentation to parents of Riverbend neighborhood, have been interviewed on community access television twice. We have conducted mailings, held e-mail "conversations," maintained a Facebook page and have plans to launch a website this month. We have actively sought feedback from parents and educators at all venues. Promotional materials are in English and Spanish. The team will continue to conduct "grass-roots" outreach campaign throughout the application process at bus stops, bodegas, churches and local festivals/events including El Cisne Riverfront Festival. Acquiring letters of support and pursuing partnerships.

b. Initial Assessment of Interest: Based on conversations with families and community leaders and, initial interest surveys (331), there has been increased interest in the proposed school. Many have spoken of the "need" for a high-quality alternative educational option with flexibility to respond to scholar need. Some have spoken of their concern that so many children (over 200) leave Peekskill to attend school. Founders have made adjustments to academic design based on community feedback.



Audrey C. Warn, Lead Applicant

Date: 07/06/14