

APPLICATION SUMMARY

Charter School Name	Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School
Applicant Name(s)	Shannon Hockswender
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Media Contact Email Address	ali@withlovealib.com
Media Contact Telephone Number	(646)773-4081
District of Location	Warwick Valley, Minisink, or Florida School Districts
Opening Date	September 2013
Proposed Charter Term	5 Years
Proposed Management Company or Partners	None
Projected Enrollment and Grade Span During Charter Term	2013-2014 : K-5, 206 students 2014-2015 : K-6, 250 students 2015-2016 : K-6, 250 students 2016-2017 : K-6, 250 students 2017-2018 : K-6, 250 students
Projected Maximum Enrollment and Grade Span	K-6, 250
Mission Statement	The DIRT Charter School will provide children with the opportunity to reach their full academic and developmental potential and become lifelong learners by fostering interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking skills, and a deep understanding of the interdependence of our local and global existence.

SCHOOL SUMMARY

The Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School will embrace the rich history of agriculture in Orange County. Teachers at the school will create an interdisciplinary curriculum that focuses on a student attention on their local community and how it serves the larger global good.

The mission of DIRT Charter School is to provide children with the opportunity to reach their full academic and developmental potential and become lifelong learners by fostering interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking skills, and a deep understanding of the interdependence of our local and global existence.

The general objectives of DIRT Charter School are:

- To ensure all students reach their academic and developmental potential
- To prepare students to become lifelong learners
- To create respectful, compassionate, and productive citizens who are good stewards of the environment.

One of DIRT's key design elements is to provide each student with a solid foundation in the Environmental Sciences. Teachers at DIRT will utilize an innovative curriculum where students will spend a significant portion of instructional time outdoors engaged in hands-on learning. Students will develop a deep understanding and appreciation of the local environment.

A unique characteristic of our environmental science program will be that students at DIRT will get to fully participate in the agricultural process. Students will visit Rogowski Farm, a local organic vegetable farm whose owner is a recipient of the "Genius MacArthur Fellows Award" for her farming innovations. DIRT faculty will design curriculum for students that will include hands-on opportunities at the farm. Students will see how seeds are planted, cared for, harvested and sold. Based on these real world experiences, DIRT teachers will work with students to plan school gardens, create animal habitats and develop sustainable water systems.

DIRT's food service program will be sourced through Red Rabbit, an established company based in New York City, which already purchases produce in Orange County to use in the meals they provide to New York City charter schools. Red Rabbit has agreed to support our plan to source locally grown foods and will expand contracting initiatives with Orange County farmers to accomplish our goals.

Rural Orange County has a large population of Spanish speaking immigrants who move to the area for economic opportunities in agriculture. In keeping with our mission of living locally and thinking globally, and in an effort to reach one of our target student populations, DIRT will offer English Language Learner services as well as teach Spanish as a second language. One of DIRT's goals is to help close the cultural gap between the two communities that live in the same area.

DIRT is designed to accelerate the achievement of special needs and ELL students. Our hands on, project based, approach to teaching, our use of the environment as a classroom, and our small class sizes, all contribute to our ability to meet the needs of each child. The range of interventions available at DIRT includes:

- Supplemental curricula
- Small group instruction
- Push-in and pull-out services by certified special education staff and contractors

DIRT's curriculum will be dedicated to the stewardship of the environment and the interdisciplinary study of the science of sustainability. The school's educators will use local natural and community surroundings as a context for standards-based instruction. DIRT will use environmental science as the frame work for our curriculum. Critical thinking skills will be developed in all students. The DIRT program will include:

- Environmental Science
- Interdependence of local, natural and community surroundings
- Integrated and interdisciplinary, collaborative instruction

DIRT's curriculum will also prepare all students to meet and successfully master the common core curriculum based on the New York State Common Core Learning Standards.

To accomplish DIRT's mission, the school's leadership design will include a Principal, a Head Teacher and a Director of Business and Operations. The Principal, along with the entire team of teachers, will be responsible for developing and refining the curriculum. This collaboration will be viable due to the schools small size that includes only two classes per grade and a full capacity of 250 students. The Head Teacher will assist the Principal with student discipline. The Director of Business and Operations will be responsible for the non-instructional functions of the school, which will allow the Principal to focus on supporting instruction.

DIRT Charter School will offer Orange County students a unique option in public education not currently found in our area.

CERTIFICATION AND ASSURANCES STATEMENT

Proposed Charter School Name: Developing Innovative Rural Thinking Charter School
 Proposed School Location (District): Orange County

I hereby certify that the founding group/prospective Board of Trustees have all read Article 56 of the New York State Education Law, and understand the relationship between a charter school and the authorized chartering entity as defined in that statute. By submitting a charter school application to the Board of Regents, the founding group/prospective Board of Trustees understands that the Board of Regents is the authorized chartering entity with the authority to approve our application to establish the proposed charter school and enter into a charter agreement setting forth the terms and conditions under which the Board of Trustees will operate the charter school. The applicant founding group/prospective Board of Trustees also understands that this charter school application serves as the first component of an application for a federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) Planning and Implementation Grant. We understand that if the charter application is approved and a charter is issued by the Board of Regents, the school is qualified to receive a CSP grant, pending available funding and final approval of additional materials – including budget materials - by NYSED and by the New York State Office of the Comptroller. We agree to complete all required budget information and assurances according to forthcoming instructions and a revised timeframe to be issued by NYSED.

I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and further I understand that, if awarded a charter, the proposed school shall be open to all students on a space available basis, and shall not discriminate or limit the admission of any student on any unlawful basis, including on the basis of ethnicity, race, creed, national origin or ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, disability, intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, age, religion, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or academic achievement. I understand that the Charter Schools Act allows, to the extent consistent with Federal law, “the establishment of a single-sex charter school or a charter school designed to provide expanded learning opportunities for students at-risk of academic failure or students with disabilities and English language learners.”⁷

The applicant(s) also make(s) the following assurances pursuant to Section 5203(b)(3) of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, which will be incorporated into, and made a part of, the Charter School’s charter, if granted, and be binding on the Charter School itself:

- An assurance that the charter school will annually provide the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education and the State Education Department such information as may be required to determine if the charter school is making satisfactory progress toward achieving the objectives described in this application ⁸
- An assurance that the charter school will cooperate with the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education and the State Education Department in evaluating the program assisted under this subpart;⁹ and,
- That the charter school will provide such other information and assurances as the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education and the State Education Department may require.¹⁰

Signature of Applicants:	
Date:	July 12, 2012
Print/Type Name:	Shannon Hockswender

⁷ N.Y. Education Law § 2854(2)(a)

⁸ ESEA § 5203(b)(3)(J)

⁹ ESEA § 5203(b)(3)(K)

¹⁰ ESEA § 5203(b)(3)(N)

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I. MISSION, KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS, ENROLLMENT, AND COMMUNITY

A. Mission Statement and Objectives

Mission Statement: The DIRT Charter School will provide children with the opportunity to reach their full academic and developmental potential and become lifelong learners by fostering interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking skills, and a deep understanding of the interdependence of our local and global existence.

Objectives: The general objectives of DIRT Charter School are to:

- ensure all students reach their academic and developmental potential
- prepare our students to become lifelong learners
- create respectful, compassionate, and productive citizens who are good stewards of our environment

To meet these objectives, we must ensure that all students can:

- read, write and compute at or above grade level
- use their knowledge, skills, technology, and creativity to problem solve
- exhibit positive behavior and make healthy choices

Education Law §2850(2) states that charter schools should:

- improve student learning and achievement
- increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure
- encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods
- create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel
- provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system
- provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems by holding the schools established under this article accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results

To meet these expectations DIRT Charter School will:

- use interdisciplinary and hands on teaching methods to increase deeper student understanding and application of concepts
- develop a unique school befitting a rural community that currently has no charter or magnet school choices
- provide professional development for it's teachers and staff on how to integrate the environment into all subject areas
- create jobs for teachers and staff in an area hit hard by recent education cuts
- assess student learning using a variety of performance based and standardized methods

B. Key Design Elements

DIRT's curriculum will be dedicated to the stewardship of the environment and the interdisciplinary study of the science of sustainability. The school's educators will use local natural and community surroundings as a context for standards-based instruction.

DIRT will use environmental science as the frame work for our curriculum. Critical thinking skills will be developed in all students. The DIRT program will include:

- Environmental Science
- Interdependence of local, natural and community surroundings
- Integrated and interdisciplinary, collaborative instruction

Environmental Science: A key design element at DIRT Charter School is to provide each child with a solid foundation in environmental science. Teachers at DIRT will use local natural and community surroundings as a context for providing standards-based instruction. Students will be able to perform experiments, farm, garden and hike in settings outside of the school. The school will be small with two classes per grade level and will offer a longer school day which will begin at 8:00 am and end at 3:55 pm. DIRT team members believe this educational approach will provide parents and students with expanded choices in the type of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system and will encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.

Interdependence Local, Natural and Community Surroundings: The outdoor settings at DIRT where students study and do their work will be called 'Learning Laboratories.' Teachers will develop project-based, hands-on lessons that are learner-centered and based on the New York State student academic achievement standards. Learning Laboratory experiences will be a part of each student's school day. Each student will have a developmentally appropriate written laboratory investigation to complete on a daily basis. In addition, in each quarter of the academic school year students will be guided to answer a developmentally appropriate, "Big agriculture and/ or environmental question." We believe that our Learning Laboratories will increase learning opportunities for all students, encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods, with a special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure. Students who study and work in learning laboratories will be able to meet the New York State student academic achievement standards.

Integrated and interdisciplinary instruction: A unique educational design feature at DIRT Charter School will be it's innovative curriculum, which will be designed using the key concepts and performance indicators from the New York State Common Core Learning Standards (NYSCCLS). All core subjects will be integrated and teachers will work collaboratively and be trained in the instructional strategy of curriculum integration, in which students acquire, apply, and integrate core knowledge and skills in all subject areas. Research has demonstrated that an integrated curriculum improves student motivation and student effort, and leads to a deeper conceptual knowledge rather than traditional separate subject instruction.¹ We believe the use of an integrated curriculum will improve student learning and achievement.

One educational goal for DIRT Charter School is to create an exciting curriculum that will challenge students to develop and apply their critical thinking skills in solving real-world problems. Our students will become literate in using information, media, and technology which will prepare them for the 21st century. Teachers will develop a curriculum that allows for:

- Creativity and innovation

¹ S.M. Drake, R.C. Burns, Meeting Standards Through Integrated Curriculum (ASCD Publications, 2004).

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Communication and collaboration

Data-driven Decision Making: One pedagogical approach that teachers will utilize at DIRT is Data-driven decision making. Teachers will collect and analyze multiple forms of data, including student assessment data, student demographic data, program data, and other sources of data such as student products and classroom observation. We believe the use of data-driven decision making will provide teachers and schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability. Teachers will use collected data to evaluate student learning and to diagnose teaching/learning difficulties. All faculty members will be trained in analyzing and using data to diagnose student learning, to make decisions about instruction, to guide student’s work, and to set instructional goals. Program data will be used as a way to communicate with parents by sharing the progress of their child. Curriculum-based assessments along with performance tasks will test student’s abilities to apply knowledge and skills in authentic situations. We believe the use of Data-driven decision making will create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel.

Fiscal Planning: DIRT’s key elements are reflected in our fiscal plan. We have budgeted for both curriculum materials that align with our key elements and training from curriculum vendors on using materials. Our teachers will have at least one paid week of professional development before school begins each year. In keeping with our use of local, natural and community surroundings, \$200 per student has been budgeted for field trips.

C. Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention

DIRT is planning to start a kindergarten through fifth grade elementary school in our first year of operation. We will expand to a K - 6 charter school in our second year of operation, which will bring our school’s target enrollment to 250 students. In order to hit our target enrollment of 250 students we feel it is important to offer six grade levels in our first year of operation. Our rationale for selecting this particular enrollment size is that students will benefit from having a consistent learning environment over many years. We will offer an interdisciplinary curriculum that will be developed according to the spiral learning approach. As students move upwards through the levels in school their learning will grow and expand based on the concepts they have previously encountered in an earlier grade.

We plan on having all of our kindergarten through fifth grade teachers in place our first year. This will allow them to develop a comprehensive K - 6 curriculum as a team.

DIRT will have two classes in each grade level. The chart below reflects the maximum amount of students we plan to enroll.

Projected Enrollment Table over the Charter Term

Grades	Age	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
K	5-6	30	30	30	30	30

1st	6-7	30	30	30	30	30
2nd	7-8	30	30	30	30	30
3rd	8-9	30	30	30	30	30
4th	9-10	42	42	42	42	42
5th	10-11	44	44	44	44	44
6th	11-12	0	44	44	44	44
Total		206	250	250	250	250

Community Support and Interest: Our applicant group has assessed family and community support within the proposed sending district/region by completing surveys, hosting informational meetings and speaking to the press. Over 315 supporters have signed our petition via our website or in person. 231 children have been signed up via a survey as prospective students. Our Facebook page is visited often. Our website has had over 2,080 visits. We have received numerous inquiries about job openings at the school. Parents well outside the 15 mile transportation radius have expressed an interest in enrolling their children and transporting them to the school. One parent told us at an informational meeting that she is eagerly awaiting our decision on a location so that she can move to a home within 15 miles of the school. DIRT, being the first charter school in this area, has generated excitement and support from parents and the community. As plans for DIRT progress, support grows. Based on this interest, we believe we will meet or exceed our enrollment targets.

Recruitment: DIRT Charter School plans to recruit and retain students with disabilities, ELL students, students who receive free lunch and students whose families may be less informed about available options. DIRT will comply with all aspects of the Charter School Law, especially the amendments of 2010 regarding attracting and educating students with disabilities and the recent July 16, 2012 methodology adopted by the Board of Regents.

DIRT plans on recruiting special education students by promoting our small class size, which will allow for individualized student attention. Our unique hands-on curriculum will allow students with disabilities a multi-modal learning experience where they will receive instruction through visual, audio, and tactile modes. We believe that DIRT's Learning Laboratories (which will be located in outdoor settings) will appeal to special needs students because students will be actively engaged in their learning rather than passively receiving instruction at a desk. We will work with parents to ensure that children of all needs are welcome at DIRT and that students with disabilities will receive the individual care that is needed to help them succeed. Our school facility will be handicapped accessible. We will retain students with disabilities by providing an individualized learning approach that is tailored to meet each students learning needs. In our three districts of possible location preliminary enrollment targets as set by the Charter Schools Institute for special education students are; 13% for Warwick, 13.9% for Minisink, and 10.3% for Florida.

The most common second language in Orange County is Spanish. We are recruiting English Language Learners by distributing our DIRT Charter School fliers in both English and Spanish. All marketing materials and student applications will be written in English and Spanish. One of our goals is to provide all of our students with foreign language instruction. We intend on hiring teachers and support staff who are bi-lingual so that we can offer Spanish as a foreign language and ensure clear communication with ELL parents. We will retain ELL students by using a structured immersion model tailored to meet the needs of each learner. Additionally, ELL students will receive literacy support in their native language. In our three districts of possible location preliminary enrollment targets as set by the Charter Schools Institute for English Language Learners are; 0.7% for Warwick, 1% for Minisink, and 2.1% for Florida.

DIRT Charter School will recruit students who are eligible for free or reduced meals and students whose families may be less informed about available school options by using our website, Facebook page, informational meetings and newspaper articles to communicate what support is available regarding free or reduced meals, school supplies, school uniforms, and after school activity fees, etc. We will retain these students by providing parents with necessary information in a timely manner so that students individual needs will be met every school year. In our three districts of possible location preliminary enrollment targets as set by the Charter Schools Institute for students eligible for free or reduced lunch are; 8.7% for Warwick, 17.7% for Minisink, and 13.9% for Florida.

Application, Admissions and Enrollment: Applications for DIRT students will be made available through mail, e-mail, fax, or through our website. In addition, we will distribute applications through local pre-schools and day care organizations, including those servicing migrant worker children in our community. The admission and enrollment process at DIRT Charter School will give preference to siblings, and then to students who reside in the schools home district.

Plan for a Public Lottery: A lottery system will be used if student demand exceeds capacity. Students who are not chosen will be placed on a waiting list and will be notified in writing of any vacancy in their grade level. More details of our application, admissions, and enrollment process are described in Attachment 1.

D. Community to be Served

Value of the School in the Community: DIRT Charter School's location will be in Orange County, New York. Orange County is located approximately one hour north of New York City. It is a largely rural county that is abundant with farmland and small towns. The 2010 census showed there were 372,813 people living in Orange County. There was a 9.2% increase in population from the year 2000 and this made Orange County the second fastest growing county in New York. Yet, Orange County currently has no charter school options for its students. With five elementary schools in Orange County being listed as, "Being in Improvement Status," the need for a quality education option is apparent. DIRT Charter School will be the first charter school in our area. The value of DIRT charter school in the community will be the educational alternative it will provide for local children. Our community outreach efforts, which include hosting public meetings and providing newspaper articles for local papers, have generated support and interest from area parents.

Expected Student Population: The student population that DIRT would serve would be similar to student populations in the southern Orange County area. Student demographics vary from district to district in Orange County. The Warwick Valley Central School District Report Card for 2010 - 2011 shows that 84% of 4,166 students are white. 7% of students are eligible for free lunch, and 4% for reduced price lunch. Just 1% of Warwick students are considered limited in English proficiency. Neighboring school district, Minisink Valley shows that 80% of 4,425 students are white. In Minisink 12% of students are eligible for free lunch and 7% are eligible for reduced priced lunches. Just 1% of students are considered limited in English proficiency. The demographics of DIRT Charter School would reflect the similar student population of school districts in the area. There is a need for free and reduced meals services and ELL services. DIRT will offer a free and reduced meal services program and ELL services for students whose native language is not English.

Selection of Community: The DIRT applicant group selected Orange County as a community that we would like to serve because we are Orange County residents who would like to increase options for public education in our area. Many of the applicants for our school have young children whom they wish to enroll. As a result, our team is extremely motivated to make DIRT Charter School a success. Our prospective board of trustees and applicants possess a variety of skills and experience that are needed to create and maintain a charter school. These skills include teaching, school administration, non-profit board experience, entrepreneurship, curriculum development, fundraising, and marketing. We believe that our combined experiences and abilities, our passion for education and our love for Orange County would allow us to successfully serve our community.

Enhancing and Expanding Educational Options: DIRT Charter School will enhance and expand educational options for Orange County students. Currently there are five elementary schools in Orange County that are listed as, "Being in Improvement Status." Over the past few years, our area schools have increased classroom sizes, cut educational programs and eliminated many extra curricular activities. Several area schools have considered reducing kindergarten classes to a half day or eliminating kindergarten altogether. DIRT Charter School will provide a full day kindergarten program and offer a variety of after school enrichment programs. We will offer a longer school day that starts at 8:00 am and finishes at 3:55 pm.

Art and Music classes are being reduced or eliminated in many schools in Orange County. The arts will be fully integrated into DIRT's curriculum. Art and Music will be offered daily to students and they will be offered as a choice in our after school enrichment programs.

Currently, Orange County's elementary schools operate as traditional public schools with little environmental science taught or incorporated in their curriculum. Students rarely go outdoors to study the world around them. DIRT Charter School students will go outdoors on a regular basis in order to learn about their environment, within their environment. Environmental science will permeate all aspects of our curriculum. Students at DIRT will do more hands-on, authentic learning than is currently found in any Orange County public elementary school.

We believe our small class size, longer school day, commitment to teach Art and Music and our innovative hands-on curriculum will enhance and expand educational options for Orange County students.

Assessing Family and Community Support: Our applicant group has assessed family and community support within the proposed sending region for the proposed school by conducting surveys throughout the Orange County area. Our survey shows 153 parents and guardians who have already indicated an interest in enrolling 231 students in DIRT charter school. More information on how we assessed family and community support via our outreach efforts can be found in the next section.

E. Public Outreach

DIRT Charter School applicants have completed the following public outreach efforts in conformity with a thorough and meaningful public review process prescribed by the Board of Regents:

On February 28, 2012 a press release was sent to local media outlets announcing our first informational meeting. Three positive and informative articles about our proposed Charter School and charter schools in general were published. They were published in the *Times Herald Record*, *The Warwick Advertiser*, and *The Warwick Valley Dispatch*. Please see Attachment 2 for articles.

Three public information meetings were held with stakeholders in the community in the school district(s) in which the proposed charter school may be located on the following dates:

1. Warwick on March 18, 2012
2. Westtown (in Minisink School District) on May 2, 2012
3. Monroe on June 4, 2012
4. An additional informational meeting is scheduled for Greenwood Lake parents in the summer.
5. A meeting in Florida, NY is being planned for early this fall. Florida, NY is part of the town of Warwick, but is a separate school district. A number of Florida parents also came to our first meeting in Warwick.

At our information meetings members of the DIRT application team presented general charter school information, discussed potential school locations, reviewed our target student population, covered the grades to be served and provided parents with a description of our educational program(s). Parents and community members were able to ask questions about the school as well as provide feedback.

DIRT applicant group team members have solicited letters of support from local organizations with missions similar to our own. These are included in Attachment 2.

Our applicant group has met with the Warwick Valley Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Education to discuss the charter school and to inquire about renting a vacant

elementary school building in their district. We have submitted a request to rent the school, in writing, to the Board of Education and asked in a public Board of Education meeting in July of 2012. A member of our DIRT applicant team also met with the Goshen Superintendent of Schools. The DIRT applicant team has also sent informational letters to the Superintendents of Florida and Minisink Valley School Districts inviting them to meet with us. Copies of the letters are included in Attachment 2.

A member of our applicant team has created a website at www.dirtcharter.com that provides the public with information about DIRT Charter School and charter schools in general. Stakeholders in the community have the opportunity to submit comment on the proposed charter school. The site, to date, has been visited 2,080 times by 1,340 unique visitors. The contact link on the website goes to our e-mail address at dirtcharterschool@gmail.com. The website has been greatly utilized by parents, community members and prospective staff to communicate support and ask questions. Comments that our received from the impacted community concerning the educational and programmatic needs of the students are addressed by a member of our charter school team through our website. This process remains ongoing. A sampling of the comments and questions are included in Attachment 2.

A member of our applicant team has created a DIRT charter school Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/dirtcharter>. This page provides a way for the community to give feedback, and ask questions. It allows our team to give updates to the public on our proposed charter school regarding upcoming events and provides them with a link to current news article that feature DIRT Charter School or charter schools in general.

We circulated a survey via e-mail and through our website. 315 people have entered their names as supporters of the proposed DIRT Charter School. 153 of those supporters are parents or guardians interested in sending their children to DIRT Charter School. We have a growing list of 231 students who are interested in attending our proposed school. The survey provides a space for public comment or questions.

Members of our applicant team have distributed double-sided English/Spanish fliers that have been given out at presentations and distributed by hand to prospective applicants. A copy of our flier is included in Attachment 2.

Members of our applicant team have written letters to the editor to our local paper in support of DIRT Charter School. Copies of the letters are included in Attachment 2.

Members of our applicant team have created DIRT Charter School t-shirts. DIRT applicant team members wear these t-shirts to community events a “conversation starters,” and create family interest in our proposed school.

As we progress through the charter school application process and continue our community outreach, public awareness about our proposed charter school continues to

grow. We will continue to use the above mentioned public outreach as a way to inform students in our community about our proposed charter school and give all students an equal opportunity to attend DIRT Charter School. We have taken community feedback from our meetings, survey, webpage, and Facebook page seriously and will continue to use it to refine our plans for DIRT.

F. Programmatic and Fiscal Impact

Programmatic Impact: We feel DIRT Charter School will not have a programmatic impact on other elementary schools in Orange County. Our school will open with 206 students and our anticipated full enrollment is 250 students. Parents and guardians from 12 different public school districts in Orange County have shown an interest in enrolling their children in DIRT. This geographically diverse interest is a result of our public outreach efforts. One of the DIRT team goals is to recruit as many students as possible from the 12 different school districts so that we would not negatively impact one school district in general.

Orange County has less than ten private elementary schools and most of the schools serve children who are members of a particular religious community. DIRT Charter School would likely not have a programmatic impact on the area's private school population due to the differences in our curriculum.

DIRT has the potential to positively impact local schools by modeling innovative instructional programs and sharing effective teaching practices. We will make a concentrated effort to collaborate with other educators in the Orange County area and share our ideas and experiences on professional development, parent involvement, extra-curricular activities, and community building.

Fiscal Impact: Our projected assessment of the fiscal impact of our proposed charter school on other public and nonpublic schools in the area will be minimal. According to our public outreach survey prospective DIRT students are coming from twelve different school districts in Orange County. Our prospective enrollment list currently has 59% of DIRT students coming from the Warwick Valley School District, 11% from Minisink, and 11% from Goshen, and the rest coming from 9 other districts. If DIRT Charter School was filled to 95% capacity in our first year and 59% percent of those students were from Warwick, the estimated tuition would be \$1,414,968, which is about 1.8% of the entire Warwick budget of \$80,046,419. Under the same assumptions, the estimated tuition for Minisink students would be \$252,144, which is about 0.3% of the entire Minisink budget of \$85,425,656. For Goshen students, estimated tuition would be \$281,006, which is about 0.5% of the entire Goshen budget of \$61,613,356. More information on the expected tuition over the first 5 years, from the other 9 districts can be found in Section III, Part K. Budget and Cash Flow starting on page 52. As our charter school team continues our community outreach plan we anticipate gaining more prospective students from other neighboring school districts in Orange County.

With less than ten private elementary schools in Orange County and most of those being religious schools, DIRT Charter School would likely not have a financial impact on the area's private schools due to the differences in our curriculum.

II. EDUCATIONAL PLAN

A. Achievement Goals

Goal 1: DIRT Students will demonstrate skills in reading and writing at or above grade level.

Evaluation 1:

- 75% of all students who have enrolled at DIRT for 2 full academic years or more will score at a Level 3 or 4 on the State English Arts Test (ELA) in the grade levels the test is given. (Absolute)
- DIRT students who have enrolled at DIRT for 2 full academic years will outperform the New York State's total percentage of students scoring at Level 3 or 4 by 10 percentage points, in the grade levels the test is given. (Comparative)

Goal 2: DIRT students will demonstrate proficiency in mathematics.

Evaluation 2:

- 75% of all students who have enrolled at DIRT for 2 full academic years or more will score at a Level 3 or 4 on the New York State Mathematics exam in the grade levels the test is given. (Absolute)
- DIRT students who have enrolled at DIRT for 2 full academic years will outperform the New York State's total percentage of students scoring at Level 3 or 4 by 10 percentage points, in the grade levels the test is given. (Comparative)

Goal 3: DIRT students will possess science skills at or above grade level.

Evaluation 3:

- 75% of all students who have enrolled at DIRT for 2 full academic years or more will score at a Level 3 or 4 on the New York State Science exam in the grade levels the test is given. (Absolute)
- DIRT students who have enrolled at DIRT for 2 full academic years will outperform the New York State's total percentage of students scoring at Level 3 or 4 by 10 percentage points, in the grade levels the test is given. (Comparative)

Goal 4: DIRT will achieve Adequate Yearly Progress.

Evaluation 4:

- Each year the school will attain a status of "In Good Standing" under the state's NCLB accountability system. (Absolute)

Goal 5: DIRT will demonstrate strong annual attendance and enrollment.

Evaluation 5:

- The average daily attendance rate will meet or exceed 95% each year. (Absolute)
- DIRT will retain its students at an annual rate of 90% or more during the term of its charter. (Absolute)

B. School Schedule and Calendar

Our application team has designed a balanced and innovative school schedule that will maximize student learning time while also supporting student and teacher needs. We will have four terms with a total of 180 instructional days. The New York State Education Department requires a minimum of 180 days of instruction and a five-hour school day, exclusive of lunch for full-day kindergarten through grade 6. Our school day will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 3:55 p.m. On each instructional school day DIRT students will receive 8 hours, less a 60 minute lunch/recess, of instruction during the regular day. Enrichment classes will be scheduled to complement the classroom curriculum on a regular basis and will supplement core and special subjects.

Typical day for students K - 2

8:00 - 8:30	Morning circle time, welcoming activities
8:30 - 9:30	Whole and small group ELA skill instruction
9:30 -10:30	Integrated writing, illustrations, paragraph development, bookmaking, author's chair, etc.
(8:30 -10:30)	Response to Intervention (RTI), English Language Learners (ELL) sometime in this time slot
10:30 -10:45	Nutritious snack-making, social time, clean up (A small, rotating group will go to the dining room to help with lunch preparation and table-setting.)
10:45 -11:45	Mathematics
11:45 - 12:15	Recess (last 10 minutes as clean up for lunch)
12:15 -12:45	Lunch (including Lunch Prep)
12:50 -1:05	Story-time, read-alouds
1:05 -1:35	Science or Social Studies integrated with Technology: bars, graphs, etc.
1:35 - 2:35	Science or Social Studies lab, field trips, experiments, interviews, ELA and Math Integration
2:35 - 3:15	Art or Music; alternates with PE
3:15 - 3:45	Spanish
3:45 - 3:55	Wrap-up, reflections, going-home plans
3:55	Dismissal

4:00 - 4:55	After school Enrichment Program
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Typical day for students 3 - 5 (6)

8:00 - 8:10	Welcoming activities, goals for the day
8:10 - 9:10	Whole and small group ELA skill instruction, RTI, ELL
9:10 - 9:50	Art, Music, or PE
9:50 - 10:05	Healthy snack preparation, enjoyment, social time, clean up (A small, rotating group will go to the dining room to help with lunch preparation)
10:05 -10:35	Science or Social Studies class
10:55 - 11:20	Science or Social Studies lab, field trips, experiments, interviews, ELA & Math Integration
11:20 - 12:20	Writing process in different genre, direct instruction, technology presentation skills
12:20 - 12:50	Recess (last 10 minutes as clean up for lunch)
12:50-1:20	Lunch (including Lunch Prep)
1:20 - 2:20	Math
2:20 - 3:00	Spanish
3:00-3:45	Odds & Ends (Finish up, individual/small group help, practice/ reinforcement, enrichment, teacher read aloud, light snack, etc.)
3:45-3:55	Review of goals, carry-over, pack-up
3:55	Dismissal
4:00-4:55	After school Enrichment Program

Student Work Day/Week

- School day will be from 8:00 a.m. to 3:55 p.m. with an after school program until 4:55.
- Students will have 120 minutes of ELA instruction daily (60 minutes of reading and 60 minutes of writing,) and 60 minutes of math instruction daily.
- Students below grade level in Reading or Math will have English Language Learners (ELL) support when necessary and Response to Intervention (RTI) 3 times per week for 60 minutes each, and 1 time per week for 40 minutes (total of 3 hours and 40 minutes per week).

- Services will be delivered to special needs students through team-teaching, or pull-out, push-in settings.
- Students will have small group and one-on-one tutorials in math intervention 2 times per week for 40 minutes each during after-school.
- Science and/or social studies lessons will occur 4 days a week for an average of 120 minutes each per week. Teachers may decide to do a on-going concentrated lesson each week i.e. Science one week and/or Social Studies the following week.
- Foreign language instruction will occur 2 times per week for 40 minutes (may be modified for those requiring interventions) for grades 3 through 6, and 30 minutes for grades K through 2.
- Physical Education- 3 times a week, for 450 minutes each (total of 120 minutes per week). A portion of each session will include Personal Energy (Health & Nutrition).
- Music or Art- 1 time per week for 40 minutes each (total of 80 minutes) with additional 40 minute Art or Music Enrichment periods every other day.
- Recess daily for 30 minutes each (total of 150 minutes each week).
- An extended arts or sports enrichment activity will be available for one hour every day after school.

Teacher Work Day/Week

- Teachers work day will be from 7:55 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each day, except on Wednesdays when it will be from 7:55 - 5:00. Teachers may also have responsibilities after student dismissal, which may include tutoring, professional development, family meetings, or other meetings.
- A planning period daily when students are in enrichment classes.
- An uninterrupted lunch period daily.
- Teachers will have one hour staff meetings on Wednesdays, which may include common planning time to collaborate with other teachers and/or professional development.

See Attachments 3a and 3b for a Sample Weekly Student Schedule, a Sample Weekly Teacher Schedule and a Proposed First Year Calendar. For grading purposes, the calendar is divided into four quarters.

C. Curriculum and Instruction

English Language Arts: One underlying aim for DIRT's English Language Arts program will be to address the New York State ELA's standard's increased focus on the comprehension of nonfictional material. DIRT's core curriculum for Reading/Language Arts for kindergarten and first grade will be *Literacy by Design*, by Rigby. *Literacy by Design* is consistent with DIRT's mission and education design because it utilizes both fiction and nonfiction selections that are based on either a science or social studies theme. One of DIRT's goals is to provide each student with a strong foundation in reading and writing skills so that they will be prepared for the more rigorous work in later elementary grades. This curriculum series uses the balanced literary approach to English Language Arts (ELA) and provides both direct instruction and differentiated instruction in phonics, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension skills. The program has a special comprehension component which focuses on building reading

stamina.² It aligns with the New York State Learning Standards and the Common Core State Standards. The reading instruction model includes: whole class modeled reading, shared reading, and interactive reading and allows for small group strategic reading and independent reading. The writing instruction model includes: whole class modeled writing, shared writing, and interactive writing and allows for small group writing and independent writing. *Literacy by Design* has built in benchmarks that allow teachers to have ongoing progress monitoring.³

DIRTs' core curriculum for literacy for grades 2-5 (and later 6) will be *Seeds of Science/Roots of Reading* by Wireless Generation. This program is consistent with DIRT's mission because it has been designed to reflect the practices of real scientists, and to meet the needs of all students, including English language learners. This research-based, field-tested curriculum will increase student achievement in both science and literacy. *Seeds/Roots* is an innovative, fully integrated science and literacy program. The *Seeds/Roots* curriculum has integrated science and literacy units that have been correlated with the State of New York English Language Arts standards. The program employs a multi-modal instructional model called "Do-it, Talk-it, Read-it, Write-it."⁴ This approach provides rich and varied opportunities for students to learn science as they investigate through firsthand inquiry, talk with others about their investigations, read content-rich books, and write to record and reflect on their learning.⁵ DIRT will use the *Seeds/Roots* curriculum to improve students' abilities to read and write in the context of science, excite students with active hands-on investigation, and optimize instructional time by addressing goals in two subject areas at the same time. Each *Seeds/Roots* unit includes an equipment kit for science experiments, student books and investigation notebooks for students to record, brainstorm, summarize, reflect, prepare for oral communication, and write in scientific genres. *The Seeds/Roots* curriculum also contains a set of pre- and post-assessments for teachers to use that enable them to measure student's learning over the course of a unit.

In all grade levels in Reading/Language Arts there will be a focus on writing development in expository and creative writing. Teachers will use a combination of individualized, small group and whole group instruction in order to reach every student at his or her academic level. In addition, supplemental literature of non-fiction, science, cultural, and historical readings will make up the core of the DIRT classroom libraries.

Mathematics: DIRT's core curriculum for mathematics will be *Everyday Mathematics*, published by Wright Group/McGraw Hill. This research-based curriculum balances direct instruction in mathematical facts and skills with developing conceptual understanding. The program focuses on real-life problem solving and asks students to communicate their own mathematical thinking. It uses a spiraling approach, promoting retention by providing multiple exposures to important concepts and skills, often over more than one

² Literacy by Design, "Connecting Reading and Writing- Program Overview," Created by authors of Literacy by Design, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 10 July 2012 <http://rigby.hmhco.com/en/literacydesign_reading.htm>.

³ Literacy by Design, "Connecting Reading and Writing- Program Overview," Created by authors of Literacy by Design, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 10 July 2012 <http://rigby.hmhco.com/en/literacydesign_reading.htm>.

⁴ Seeds of Science/Roots of Reading, "A better way to teach literacy," Created by authors of Seeds of Science/Roots of Reading, Wireless Generation, 10 July 2012 <<http://www.wirelessgeneration.com/curriculum-instruction/seeds-of-science/overview>>.

⁵ Seeds of Science/Roots of Reading, "A better way to teach literacy," Created by authors of Seeds of Science/Roots of Reading, Wireless Generation, 10 July 2012 <<http://www.wirelessgeneration.com/curriculum-instruction/seeds-of-science/overview>>.

grade level.⁶ *Everyday Mathematics* is 100% aligned with the common core standards. The philosophy for the program is based on the reasoning that students acquire knowledge and skills and develop an understanding of mathematics from their own experience. The curriculum for *Everyday Mathematics* was written with the thought that mathematics is more meaningful to students when it is rooted in real life contexts and situations. One of DIRT charter school's goals is to integrate the core subjects and to allow students the opportunity to interact with their environment while they are immersed in hands-on learning.

Everyday Mathematics has been selected as the mathematics curriculum for kindergarten through fifth grade (and later 6) because of their unique program design. We will focus on using mathematics in authentic agricultural and environmental settings so that students will have an opportunity to apply math concepts in real life. Using concrete examples and math manipulatives, mathematics will be taught using various forms of instruction, including whole-group and small group instruction along with special activities. *Everyday Mathematics* emphasizes the importance of 'fact-power,' differentiated instruction and encourages students to learn multiple solutions for doing arithmetic operations.⁷ *Everyday Mathematics* uses ongoing assessment (regular and weekly assessment), periodic assessment and progress check-ins. These assessments help teachers to assess whether a student is on track to meet grade-level goals.

Science curriculum: The Science curriculum for DIRT will come from several sources. One source that teachers can tap into for kindergarten and first grader students will be the *Literacy by Design* reading units. Teachers for second through fifth grades (and later 6) will use the *Seeds of Science/Roots of Reading* program to develop science lessons. Teachers of grades kindergarten through fifth will utilize the *Project WILD* science curriculum that is offered through a national network of State Wildlife Agencies and Sponsors. *Project WILD* is a conservation and environmental education program that is based on the premise that young people have a vital interest in learning about our natural world.⁸ DIRT teachers will attend instructional workshops offered by certified leaders and supported by a network of sponsoring state, national, and international agencies in order to be trained in the use of *Project WILD*'s core curricular materials.

Students in each grade level at DIRT Charter School will have a specific environmental theme that students will investigate throughout the school year:

- Kindergarten: Soil
- First Grade: Plants
- Second Grade: Insects
- Third Grade: Weather
- Fourth Grade: Water
- Fifth Grade: Agriculture at the farm
- Sixth: Agriculture in society

⁶ Everyday Mathematics Resource and Information Center, Created by authors of Everyday Mathematics, The University of Chicago School Mathematics Project, Mc-Graw Hill Education, 10 July 2012 <<http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu/>>.

⁷ Everyday Mathematics Resource and Information Center, Created by authors of Everyday Mathematics, The University of Chicago School Mathematics Project, Mc-Graw Hill Education, 10 July 2012 <<http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu/>>.

⁸ Project WILD, "About Us- Conserving wildlife through education," Council for Environmental Education (CEE), Published by Project WILD, 10 July 2012 <<http://www.projectwild.org/aboutus.htm>>.

All Science curriculum will align with the Common Core State Standards. Science instruction will take place outside, in the field, as much as possible so that students can observe and interact with what they are studying in it's natural habitat/environment. Students will carry science notebooks in which they write down observations, notes, illustrations, or hypothesis.

Social Studies curriculum: Social Studies will be integrated throughout subject areas as students look at issues of sustainability from a wide range of social systems. Social Studies curriculum will be developed based on the New York State learning standards and will be designed to include units on the following topics: community, school, governments, economics, transportation, agriculture, culture/society, geography, history, and New York State. DIRT teachers will guide students to make local connections focused on these issues and they will become part of a daily laboratory learning experience where students discuss, debate and use "*Systems*" *thinking* to help students understand the complex interactions between NATURAL and SOCIAL systems.⁹ By using "*Systems*" *thinking*, students will develop strategies that facilitate the solving of complex problems. Teachers will help students identify systems in the natural world as well as the social world we live in. DIRT students will study the what people do to our environment and how it impacts both the natural and social world we live in.

Foreign Language: DIRT will offer foreign language instruction in Spanish. Spanish is the second most common language spoken in Orange County. The Orange County area has many farms, and the majority of farm workers and their children speak both Spanish and English. By incorporating foreign language instruction in Spanish, starting in kindergarten, we hope to encourage English as a Second Language students to enroll at our school and succeed. The curriculum for Spanish will be based on New York State Learning Standards for Languages Other Than English.

Technology: Many textbooks and resources are becoming digital, and technology provides an ever expanding potential for students to interact with subject matter. The technology that is used at DIRT will enable our students to fully engage with digitized information and allow them greater freedom in pursuing lines of inquiry and to develop projects that demonstrate what they have learned. Technological literacy will be key in preparing students with the 21st-century skills of problem solving, innovation, and communication. Flexibility in the use of technology at DIRT will be important and will change as new technology emerges.

Music: The DIRT Charter School will provide a comprehensive music program that fully integrates with all other core subjects. Using the four New York State Standards in the Arts as a guide, we will provide every student with the opportunity to perform, create, listen to, and participate in music by providing chorus and general music classes for all students. In addition to specific instruction, frequent collaboration with local musicians will be essential to the curriculum that we will provide. We will also offer a weekly extended music enrichment period.

Instrumental Band and Strings will be offered for grades 3 – 5 (and later 6) during our after-school enrichment program. Students will be able to rent instruments from the several reliable music companies in our area.

⁹ Patricia Vathis and Jean Wallace, "Systems Thinking and Green Woods Charter School's EIC Model," 10 July 2012, <<http://www.greenwoodscharter.org/pdf/SystemsThinking.pdf>>.

Art: The visual arts will be an important part of the curriculum at DIRT Charter School. Through planning with classroom teachers, meaningful art experiences will be integrated into the classroom. Students will create projects that focus on a specific topic that classroom teachers have covered. Students learning in art will be further enriched by having specific art instruction twice a week. We will also offer students a weekly extended arts enrichment period. Art teachers at DIRT will collaborate with local community arts organizations, such as the Walkkill River School and Orange County Arts Council, to create opportunities for students to get involved in exciting arts-related projects in Orange County. DIRT art teachers will be able to plan field trips for students to many of the art and cultural institutions in nearby New York City.

Physical Education: “P.E.” at DIRT Charter School stands for Physical Education as well as Personal Energy. Every student will have P.E. three times a week. One session per week will be a Health class which will focus on healthful foods, making healthy personal choices, fitness, and one’s own Personal Energy.

Learning Laboratory: DIRT’s Learning Laboratories are based on a strategies model for integrating the teaching of core content while students learn scientific inquiry and cooperative learning. The *New York State Learning Standards for Math, Science, and Technology* and the *Living Environment Core Curriculum* for grades 9 – 12 “assumes that the content, skills, and vocabulary... will have been taught in the elementary and middle school grades.”¹⁰ DIRT Charter School assumes that responsibility. On a daily basis, all students will be scheduled to participate in a learning laboratory where they will explore and test the goals of NYSED MST Standard 1: *Students will use mathematical analysis, scientific inquiry, and engineering design, as appropriate to pose questions, seek answers, and develop solutions.*

Through the use of technology software and by keeping a written journal of the scientific inquiry process, NYSED MST Standard 2: *Information technology is used to retrieve, process, and communicate information and as a tool to enhance learning* is addressed. In this laboratory setting, each student will be required to keep an appropriate written science journal, for example, pictures and drawings of observations for early kindergarten, graphic organizers of cause and effect for grade 3, or a generalization pattern organizer for grade 5.

As teachers integrate the mathematics, science and technology curriculum in the learning laboratory the interconnectedness goal of DIRT Charter School will be reflected. In NYSED MST Learning Standard 6: *Students will understand the relationships and common themes that connect mathematics, science, and technology and apply the themes to these and other areas of learning.* and Standard 7: *Students will apply the knowledge and thinking skills of mathematics, science, and technology to address real-life problems and make informed decisions.*

Cooperative Learning: Cooperative Learning is one of twelve research-based strategies that increase student achievement.¹¹ Through professional development, teachers will learn the strategies of cooperative learning and apply them to the learning

¹⁰ The Living Environment Core Curriculum, (The New York State Education Department), 7.

¹¹ Robert Marzano, Debra Pickering, Jane Pollack, Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement, ASCD, 2001, pp 84-91.

laboratory environment.

A possible Learning Lab location for DIRT Charter School will be Rogowski Farms, a local organic vegetable farm whose owner is a recipient of the “Genius MacArthur Fellows Award” for her farming innovations. The owner of Rogowski Farm is excited to provide students with hands-on opportunities where they will learn how their food gets to the table. Children will be able to see the process by which agriculture is planted, cared for, and harvested. One of DIRT Charter School goals is to instill in students a deeper understanding of the work of farmers, and a greater respect for the food they eat.

After School Enrichment: DIRT will offer a one hour enrichment period after every school day where students may choose from activities in the arts or sports. This will be an optional portion of the day, and families will pay an activity fee to participate in any activities they sign up for. Parents/guardians will provide transportation home for students enrolled in any enrichment activity. DIRT will partner with local organizations, such as the The Walkkill River School, a nonprofit artist's cooperative that runs an art school and gallery, to provide staff for after school enrichment. DIRT may also hire part time instructors. Instructors will either be paid through a partner organization or by DIRT through the activity fee. We will help students who may need financial assistance in order to participate in enrichment.

D. Assessment System

The DIRT Charter School subscribes to the relationship of curriculum, teaching strategies, student learning, assessment through multiple measures, and data-driven decisions that are based on the findings. Our school must also evaluate its own mission, objectives, and overall educational priorities. This requires a combination of standardized and flexible ways to measure success.

Multiple Measures of Assessment: As part of the enrollment process, parents will be required to give permission to DIRT Charter School to request and receive prior data from the student's previous school(s). This information will become part of the student's assessment record.

Diagnostic: At quarterly intervals that include the beginning and end of the school year, the teacher will administer Pearson's Diagnostic Reading Assessment, DRA, to each student. The teacher teams and principal will interpret and monitor individual progress and cohort progress throughout the school year for steady and/or exceptional progress. Response to Intervention plans will be developed by the RTI team at the first sign of Reading, Math, or Emotional difficulties.

Individualized: KWL: As part of the introduction and later summary of each grade level's quarterly Theme and its Essential Questions, teachers will conduct an age-appropriate K-W-L (What do you already **K**now about this theme; What do you **W**ant to Know?, and summarizing, What did you **L**earn about this theme?). Teachers can use this information in a variety of grouping, challenging, and teaching/re-teaching decisions. It is the nature of DIRT's Essential Questions to provoke higher level thinking and metacognition in all of its students. Additionally, the “What do you want to know?” portion of this analytical tool lends itself to the design of more challenging research projects for those students responding to more complex materials and ways of thinking.

The KWL product and its supportive learning examples will become a part of each student's portfolio.

Portfolio Assessment: Each student will maintain a portfolio of individual "best works." Prior to beginning the inquiry for answers to Essential Questions, teachers will guide students in a Standards-based rubric development for each student's product that will be considered for inclusion. Technology will assist in how to include the quarterly expression from The Arts, as previously mentioned in this application, in an individual portfolio.

The portfolio will also include two other examples of the individual student's ability to communicate in writing:

- The Learning Laboratory journal
- A final written expression that includes the student's thought processes and editing as he or she goes through the writing process toward the final piece.

The teacher will set a reasonable, but no less than every two weeks, schedule where the teacher conferences with the student about the learning laboratory journal and/or the selection of best work pieces to include or replace in the portfolio.

A consistent and efficient means to note items discussed and guidance given will be developed during professional development times. These will become part of the Learning Laboratory Journal.

Formative: The literacy and mathematics textbook programs that DIRT adopts will provide daily and periodic activities to monitor and adjust for individual progress as part of their program in ELA and Mathematics.

Summative: The DIRT mission and goals reflect what the students will need to know, what students need to be like, and what students need to be able to do that are a part of the New York State and Common Core Learning Standards. Furthermore, by being taught in and learning from the expectations of the DIRT curricula, students will meet or exceed the expectations from the concomitant mandated assessments. Therefore, we do not subscribe to any "test prep" time beyond student exposure to testing formats and test-taking strategies.

Students in grades 3, 4, 5, (and later 6) will participate in all New York State Assessments in ELA and Mathematics. Additionally, students in grade 4 will be educated to satisfactorily participate in the NY Science assessment.

Cohort Evaluation: DIRT will adopt a standardized assessment, such as the Stanford Achievement Test, 10th edition, which gives national and local norms in ELA and Math. This will be administered in grades K – 5 (and later 6) during the Spring of each year. The cohort and individual data will become a contributing part of the school's action plan for the following school year.

DIRT Program Evaluation: The local norms from the standardized and state-mandated assessments will be used by DIRT teachers and administrators to assure that our comparable student population meets or exceeds the achievement of similar cohorts in the sending school districts. If necessary, the DIRT Program will be adjusted and refined for continuing progress. A clear idea of "next program steps" will be the outcome of

professional development before the end of the current school year.

Reporting Assessment and Evaluation Results: Results of any and all assessment tools and how they are used for educational decisions will be a part of two scheduled parent-teacher-student conferences. One conference will be after the first quarter; the second will be after the third quarter. Students will be invited to participate in these conferences and to respond with questions and suggestions for continued academic and behavioral improvement and goal-setting. Teachers will be compensated with commensurate release time.

A parent, student, or teacher may request additional conferences throughout the school year, but without compensation. Staff members will be expected to respond to any parent, student, or administrative communication within 24 hours. If the teacher feels the request should involve others, it is the teacher's responsibility to contact the necessary individuals or groups.

Staff Evaluation Criteria: A staff evaluation will be developed by the applicants that follows the following guidelines:

- The DIRT School's governing board will use all student summative assessment data as 50% of the evaluation of instructional effectiveness, teacher performance, the professional development plan, and progress towards the schools goals.
- The remaining 50% will be from principal's regular and consistent classroom observations and student results in formative assessment collections, portfolios, authentic assessment, and presentations.

Administration Evaluation Criteria: A monthly evaluation of the principal will be from written feedback from the governing board. Prior to each written feedback, the principal will participate in an open discussion with at least one Board member. At the end of the school year, the principal will receive an annual summative and written evaluation that reflects the principal's achievements in DIRT's goals and mission.

E. Performance, Promotion, and Graduation Standards

Promotion Standards: Promotion from grade to grade will be based on the student's (at least minimum) achievement of the Standards-based grade level expectations. The teacher, principal, and other applicable professional team members will make a recommendation for promotion that is based on continued improvement, as evidenced in formative and summative data and the student's response to any required interventions.

Exit Standards: In order to complete school at DIRT Charter School, a student must demonstrate mastery of skills, content and character in all subjects. Our sample exit standards below are for the 2nd (lower elementary) and 5th grade (upper elementary) in English language arts and Mathematics based on the Common Core Learning Standards.

English Language Arts - 2nd grade

Reading

- Read unfamiliar informational texts to collect and interpret data, facts, and ideas, with assistance
- Read and understand written directions
- Locate information in a text that is needed to solve a problem, with assistance
- Identify main ideas and supporting details in informational texts, with assistance

- Recognize and use organizational features of texts, such as page numbers and chapter headings/subheadings, to locate information, with assistance
- Relate data and facts from informational texts to prior information and experience, with assistance
- Compare and contrast information on one topic from two different sources, with assistance
- Identify a conclusion that summarizes the main idea, with assistance
- Select books to meet informational needs, with assistance
- Identify and interpret facts taken from maps, graphs, charts, and other visuals, with assistance
- Use graphic organizers to record significant details from informational texts, with assistance
- Select literature on the basis of personal needs and interests from a variety of genres and by different authors, with assistance
- Engage in purposeful oral reading in small and large groups
- Read print-based and electronic literary texts silently on a daily basis for enjoyment
- Explain the difference between fact and fiction, with assistance
- Use previous reading and life experiences to understand literature, with assistance
- Use graphic organizers to record significant details to compare and contrast characters and events in stories, with assistance
- Summarize main ideas and supporting details from literary text, both orally and in writing, with assistance
- Evaluate the content by identifying, with assistance the author's purpose, important and unimportant details, whether events, actions, characters, and/or setting are realistic
- Judge the accuracy of content, with assistance from teachers and parents/caregivers
- Share reading experiences to build relationships with peers or adults; for example, read together silently or aloud
- Respect the age, gender, position, and cultural traditions of the writer
- Recognize the types of language that are appropriate to social communication

Writing

- Use two sources of information in writing a report
- Take notes to record facts by following teacher directions, with assistance
- State a main idea and support it with facts, with assistance
- Use organizational patterns, such as time/order, for expository writing
- Connect personal experiences to new information from school subject areas, with assistance
- Use spelling resources, such as dictionaries, word walls, and/or computer software, to spell words correctly
- Produce clear, well-organized, short reports to demonstrate understanding of a topic
- Support explanations with evidence from text
- Maintain a portfolio that includes informational writing as a method of reviewing work with teachers and parents/caregivers, with assistance
- Use resources such as personal experiences to stimulate own writing
- Use prewriting tools, such as semantic webs and concept maps, to organize ideas and information
- State a main idea and provide supporting details from the text
- Use relevant examples, such as reasons to support ideas, with assistance
- Use effective vocabulary in expository writing, with assistance
- Use details from stories or informational texts to predict events
- Maintain a portfolio that includes written analysis and evaluation as a method of reviewing work with teachers and parents/caregivers
- Share the process of writing with peers and adults; for example, write with a partner
- Respect the age, gender, social position, and cultural traditions of the recipient
- Use the tone, vocabulary, and sentence structure of informal conversation, with assistance
- Maintain a portfolio that includes writing for social interaction as a method of reviewing work with teachers and parents/caregivers

Listening

- Acquire information and/or understand procedures
- Identify essential details, with assistance
- Determine a sequence of steps given, with assistance
- Identify main ideas and supporting details, with assistance
- Interpret information by drawing on prior knowledge and experience, with assistance
- Collect information, with assistance
- Distinguish between fact and opinion, with assistance
- Evaluate the speaker's style of delivery by using criteria such as volume and tone of voice
- Respect the age, gender, social position, and culture of the speaker

Speaking

- Provide simple directions
- Express an opinion
- Ask questions
- Summarize, with assistance
- Provide a sequence of steps
- Describe a problem and suggest a solution
- State a main idea with supporting examples and details, with assistance

- Present a short oral report, using at least one source of information, such as a person, book, magazine article, television program, or electronic text
- Use complete sentences, using age- and content appropriate vocabulary
- Discuss the impact of illustrations and titles in evaluating ideas, information, and experiences
- Use personal experience and knowledge to analyze new ideas
- Ask and respond to questions
- Speak with appropriate rate and volume for the audience
- Take turns speaking in a group
- Respect the age, gender, social position, and cultural traditions of the listener when speaking
- Avoid interrupting in social conversation

English Language Arts - 5th grade

Reading

- Use the table of contents and indexes to locate information
- Read to collect and interpret data, facts, and ideas from multiple sources
- Read the steps in a procedure in order to accomplish a task such as completing a science experiment
- Skim material to gain an overview of content or locate specific information
- Use text features, such as headings, captions, and titles, to understand and interpret informational texts
- Recognize organizational formats to assist in comprehension of informational texts
- Identify missing information and irrelevant information
- Distinguish between fact and opinion
- Identify information that is implied rather than stated
- Compare and contrast information on one topic from multiple sources
- Recognize how new information is related to prior knowledge or experience
- Identify main ideas and supporting details in informational texts to distinguish relevant and irrelevant information
- Make inferences and draw conclusions, on the basis of information from the text, with assistance
- Read, view, and interpret literary texts from a variety of genres
- Define characteristics of different genres
- Select literary texts on the basis of personal needs and interests and read silently for enjoyment for extended periods
- Evaluate information, ideas, opinions, and themes in texts by identifying a central idea and supporting details details that are primary and those that are less important, statements of fact, opinion, and exaggeration, and missing or unclear information.
- Share reading experiences to build a relationship with peers or adults; for example, read together silently or aloud with a partner or in small groups
- Respect the age, gender, position, and cultural traditions of the writer

Writing

- Use at least three sources of information in writing a report, with assistance
- Take notes to record and organize relevant data, facts, and ideas, with assistance, and use notes as part of prewriting activities
- State a main idea and support it with details and examples
- Compare and contrast ideas and information from two sources
- Write labels or captions for graphics, such as charts, graphs, and diagrams, to convey information
- Adopt an organizational format, such as chronological order, that is appropriate for informational writing
- Use paragraphing to organize ideas and information, with assistance
- Maintain a portfolio that includes informational writing
- Use strategies, such as note taking, semantic webbing, or mapping, to plan and organize writing
- Use supporting evidence from text to evaluate ideas, information, themes, or experiences
- Use information and ideas from other subject areas and personal experiences to form and express opinions
- Use precise vocabulary in writing analysis and evaluation, with assistance
- Maintain a writing portfolio that includes writing for critical analysis and evaluation
- Share the process of writing with peers and adults
- Respect the age, gender, position, and cultural traditions of the recipient
- Develop a personal voice that enables the reader to get to know the writer
- Maintain a portfolio that includes writing for social communication

Listening

- Follow instructions that provide information about a task or assignment
- Identify essential details for note taking
- Distinguish between fact and opinion
- Identify information that is implicit rather than stated
- Connect new information to prior knowledge or experience
- Distinguish different genres, such as story, biography, poem, or play, with assistance

- Use personal experience and prior knowledge to interpret and respond to literary texts and performances
- Use prior knowledge and experiences to analyze the content of presentations
- Recognize friendly communication on the basis of volume and tone of the speaker's voice

Speaking

- Ask probing questions
- Interview peers
- Share information from personal experience
- Share information from a variety of texts
- State a main idea and support it with facts, details, and examples
- Compare and contrast information
- Present reports of approximately five minutes for teachers and peers
- Summarize main points
- Use notes, outlines, and visual aids appropriate to the presentation
- Ask questions and respond to questions for clarification
- Use notes or outlines appropriately in presentations
- Use the informal language of social communication
- Use the rules of conversation, such as avoid interrupting and respond respectfully

Mathematics - 2nd grade

Numbers and Numeration

- Count on by 1s, 2s, 5s, 10s, 25s, and 100s past 1,000 and back by 1s, 10s, and 100s from any number less than 1,000 with and without number grids, number lines, and calculators.
- Read, write, and model with manipulatives whole numbers up to 10,000; identify places in such numbers and the values of the digits in those places; read and write money amounts in dollars-and-cents notation.
- Use manipulatives and drawings to model fractions as equal parts of a region or a collection; describe the models and name the fractions.
- Recognize numbers as odd or even.
- Use tally marks, arrays, and numerical expressions involving addition and subtraction to give equivalent names for whole numbers.
- Use manipulatives and drawings to model equivalent names for $\frac{1}{2}$.
- Compare and order whole numbers up to 10,000; use area models to compare fractions.

Operations and Computation

- Demonstrate automaticity with all addition facts through $10 + 10$ and fluency with the related subtraction facts. Use manipulatives, number grids, tally marks, mental arithmetic, paper & pencil, and calculators to solve problems involving the addition and subtraction of multidigit whole numbers; describe the strategies used; calculate and compare values of coin and bill combinations.
- Make reasonable estimates for whole number addition and subtraction problems; explain how the estimates were obtained.
- Identify and describe change, comparison, and parts-and-total situations; use repeated addition, arrays, and skip counting to model multiplication; use equal sharing and equal grouping to model division.

Data and Chance

- Collect and organize data or use given data to create tally charts, tables, graphs, and line plots.
- Use graphs to ask and answer simple questions and draw conclusions; find the maximum, minimum, mode, and median of a data set.
- Describe events using certain, likely, unlikely, impossible, and other basic probability terms; explain the choice of language.

Measurement and Reference Frames

- Estimate length with and without tools; measure length to the nearest inch and centimeter; use standard and nonstandard tools to measure and estimate weight.
- Partition rectangles into unit squares and count unit squares to find areas.
- Describe relationships between days in a week and hours in a day.
- Make exchanges between coins and bills.
- Read temperature on both the Fahrenheit and Celsius scales.
- Tell and show time to the nearest five minutes on an analog clock; tell and write time in digital notation.

Geometry

- Draw line segments and identify parallel line segments.
- Identify, describe, and model plane and solid figures including circles, triangles, squares, rectangles, hexagons, trapezoids, rhombuses, spheres, cylinders, rectangular prisms, pyramids, cones, and cubes.
- Create and complete two-dimensional symmetric shapes or designs.

Patterns, Functions, and Algebra

- Extend, describe, and create numeric, visual, and concrete patterns; describe rules for patterns and use them to solve problems; use words and symbols to describe and write rules for functions involving addition and subtraction and use those rules to solve problems.
- Read, write, and explain expressions and number sentences using the symbols +, -, =, >, and <; solve number sentences involving addition and subtraction; write expressions and number sentences to model number stories.
- Describe the Commutative and Associative Properties of Addition and the Additive Identity and apply them to mental arithmetic problems.

Mathematics - 5th grade

Numbers and Numeration

- Read and write whole numbers and decimals; identify places in such numbers and the values of the digits in those places; use expanded notation to represent whole numbers and decimals.
- Solve problems involving percents and discounts; describe and explain strategies used; identify the unit whole in situations involving fractions.
- Identify prime and composite numbers; factor numbers; find prime factorizations.
- Use numerical expressions involving one or more of the basic four arithmetic operations, grouping symbols, and exponents to give equivalent names for whole numbers; convert between base-10, exponential, and repeated-factor notations.
- Use numerical expressions to find and represent equivalent names for fractions, decimals, and percents; use and explain multiplication and division rules to find equivalent fractions and fractions in simplest form; convert between fractions and mixed numbers; convert between fractions, decimals, and percents.
- Compare and order rational numbers; use area models, benchmark fractions, and analyses of numerators and denominators to compare and order fractions and mixed numbers; describe strategies used to compare fractions and mixed numbers.

Operations and Computation

- Use manipulatives, mental arithmetic, paper-and-pencil algorithms and models, and calculators to solve problems involving the addition and subtraction of whole numbers, decimals, and signed numbers; describe the strategies used and explain how they work.
- Demonstrate automaticity with multiplication and division fact extensions.
- Use manipulatives, mental arithmetic, paper-and-pencil algorithms and models, and calculators to solve problems involving the multiplication of whole numbers and decimals and the division of multidigit whole numbers and decimals by whole numbers; express remainders as whole numbers or fractions as appropriate; describe the strategies used and explain how they work.
- Use mental arithmetic, paper-and-pencil algorithms and models, and calculators to solve problems involving the addition and subtraction of fractions and mixed numbers; describe the strategies used and explain how they work.
- Use area models, mental arithmetic, paper-and-pencil algorithms and models, and calculators to solve problems involving the multiplication of fractions and mixed numbers; use visual models, paper-and-pencil methods, and calculators to solve problems involving the division of fractions; describe the strategies used.
- Make reasonable estimates for whole number and decimal addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems and fraction and mixed number addition and subtraction problems; explain how the estimates were obtained.
- Use repeated addition, arrays, area, and scaling to model multiplication and division; use ratios expressed as words, fractions, percents, and with colons; solve problems involving ratios of parts of a set to the whole set.

Data and Chance

- Collect and organize data or use given data to create graphic displays with reasonable titles, labels, keys, and intervals.
- Use the maximum, minimum, range, median, mode, and mean and graphs to ask and answer questions, draw conclusions, and make predictions.
- Describe events using certain, very likely, likely, unlikely, very unlikely, impossible and other basic probability terms; use more likely, equally likely, same chance, 50-50, less likely, and other basic probability terms to compare events; explain the choice of language
- Predict the outcomes of experiments, test the predictions using manipulatives, and summarize the results; compare predictions based on theoretical probability with experimental results; use summaries and comparisons to predict future events; express the probability of an event as a fraction, decimal, or percent.

Measurement and Reference Frames

- Estimate length with and without tools; measure length with tools to the nearest $\frac{1}{8}$ inch and millimeter; estimate the measure of angles with and without tools; use tools to draw angles with given measures.
- Describe and use strategies to find the perimeter of polygons and the area of circles; choose and use appropriate methods, including formulas, to find the areas of rectangles, parallelograms, and triangles, and the volume of a prism;

define pi as the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter.

- Describe relationships among U.S. customary units of measure and among metric units of measure.
- Use ordered pairs of numbers to name, locate, and plot points in all four quadrants of a coordinate grid.

Geometry

- Identify, describe, compare, name, and draw right, acute, obtuse, straight, and reflex angles; determine angle measures in vertical and supplementary angles and by applying properties of sums of angle measures in triangles and quadrangles.

Describe, compare, and classify plane and solid figures using appropriate geometric terms; identify congruent figures and describe their properties.

- Identify, describe, and sketch examples of reflections, translations, and rotations.

Patterns, Functions, and Algebra

- Extend, describe, and create numeric patterns; describe rules for patterns and use them to solve problems; write rules for functions involving the four basic arithmetic operations; represent functions using words, symbols, tables, and graphs and use those representations to solve problems.

- Determine whether number sentences are true or false; solve open number sentences and explain the solutions; use a letter variable to write an open sentence to model a number story; use a pan-balance model to solve linear equations in one unknown.

- Evaluate numeric expressions containing grouping symbols and nested grouping symbols; insert grouping symbols and nested grouping symbols to make number sentences true; describe and use the precedence of multiplication and division over addition and subtraction.

- Describe and apply properties of arithmetic.

F. School Culture and Climate

Every effort will be made by each and every staff member, parent, student, and community member to motivate and encourage each of these affected members to become a part of developing innovative rural thinking. This attitude of motivation and encouragement should be a sensory experience upon entering the school and its environs. One should be able to “feel” the positive climate, as well as to see, hear, touch, and taste it. This will be encouraged from a clear posting of what DIRT Charter School stands for and promotes and modeled by every staff member.

Also clearly posted, in big and small ways, will be the three ways we want all the affected participants “to be:”

- Be respectful
- Be safe
- Be happily educated.

It is the certain knowledge that through the use of these important attributes for motivation, all positive interactions will flow. We all want to know what is expected of us and the consequences of our actions. Toward that end, before the DIRT Charter School is opened, the staff will develop some exemplars in each of the ways “to be” and a three-tiered level of consequences. The consequences will become increasingly restrictive, depending on the frequency or intensity of infractions.

We believe “the punishment should match the crime” and should comply with NY State Education Laws, to include Due Process. Parents should be informed when classroom behavior becomes a distraction to others. Parents must be informed when other adults have to be involved or when removal from the classroom is deemed necessary. Throughout the school year, each learning environment will be expected to convey to students through postings, the three ways “to be” at DIRT.

DIRT Charter School will also look for ways to integrate mindfulness into its school culture and climate. Mindfulness incorporates five basic strategies; development of positive social skills, deliberate attention, focus, self-regulatory strategies, tools created for cultivating well-being and striking emotional balance. These tools provide emotional and cognitive methods to help students manage emotions and behaviors, reduce stress, sharpen concentration, and increase empathy and optimism.

G. Special Student Populations and Related Services

Members of the prospective board for DIRT viewed the Powerpoint presentation and the webinar on Special Education Services available on the NYSED website. One of DIRT's goal is to accelerate the achievement of special needs and ELL students. We will meet the needs of each child through our hands on, project based, approach to teaching, use of the environment as a classroom, and our small class sizes. The range of interventions available at DIRT includes:

- Supplemental curricula
- Small group instruction
- Push-in and pull-out services by certified special education staff and contractors

English Language Learners (ELL): In many of our local school districts, less than 1% of students are considered limited in English proficiency. DIRT's demographics would likely reflect a similar percentage of English Language Learner (ELL) students.

ELL Identification: The school will use the State Education Department's process for identifying students who are English Language Learners. Before the school year begins, students will be screened using the Home Language Survey, which will also be administered to any student enrolling during the school year. If this screening process reveals the home language is other than English or the student's native language is other than English, appropriate school staff will conduct an informal interview. If the student speaks a language other than English and also speaks little or no English, the school will administer the Language Assessment Battery – Revised (LAB-R) to determine eligibility for services.

ELL Staffing: DIRT will hire a part time ELL teacher/coordinator who will be responsible for the implementation of our programs for ELL students. They will maintain all records, ensure timely screening to establish initial eligibility for services, and administer annual assessment to determine ongoing eligibility. Once we know our students and can evaluate their needs, the school is prepared to hire additional staff or contract with external service providers.

ELL Services: DIRT will bring ELL students to proficiency in English using a structured immersion model tailored to the needs of each learner. ELL students will be taught the same curriculum as English-speaking students and will be expected to achieve the same high standards. They will have full access to all of the programs and services of the school, while simultaneously receiving the level of support needed to achieve fluency in English. Additionally, ELL students will receive continued literacy support in their native language. We will utilize bilingual education personnel to provide specialized services for ELL students requiring a more intensive level of intervention. The specific nature of the ELL program will vary for each student depending on his or her level of English proficiency and overall academic level. Our daily schedule will allow for both push-in and pull out services, as determined by the teacher, and principal. Spanish, being the most

common second language in our area, will be taught as a foreign language at DIRT, further encouraging all our students to be bilingual.

ELL Accessibility: DIRT will ensure that ELL students will not be excluded from the general curriculum or extra-curricular activities based on an inability to speak and understand the language of instruction. ELL students will not be assigned to special education because of their lack of English proficiency. The school will also make every effort to provide parents with limited English proficiency with notices and information in their native language to encourage participation in the school by all members of the community.

ELL Program Evaluation: School leaders will regularly evaluate the efficacy of our ELL program by analyzing student performance data and reviewing student progress towards English proficiency. Parents will also be surveyed to determine their perspective on services and communication.

Response to Intervention: Traditionally, schools provide interventions for struggling students only after they test and verify chronic failure. However, students who begin to struggle need intervention immediately. The Principal and grade level teachers will make up the Response to Intervention (RTI) team and will work to immediately identify and make instructional and behavioral decisions to best support Special Education and ELL students. The RTI process at DIRT Charter School will be:

1. Estimate the academic skill gap between the student and typically-performing peers.
2. Determine the likely reason(s) for the student's depressed academic performance.
3. Select a research-based intervention likely to improve academic functioning.
4. Provide ongoing monitoring of academic progress to evaluate the impact of the intervention and try alternatives if necessary.
5. If the student fails to respond to multiple well-implemented interventions, refer to CSE for evaluation.

The RTI team will meet monthly and will monitor not only students who may possibly need academic interventions, but also those students who are ELL, who have IEPs and 504 plans. These discussions will use all available information, including standardized test results, teachers' observations and records, behavior, and parent input. The result will be the creation of an intervention plan.

Special Education: DIRT will create a safe, welcoming, and respectful school climate that supports equality and access for all learners. We believe that all students can achieve academically. Special education students will be expected to master the general curriculum and participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities to the maximum extent possible.

Special Education Identification: Our RTI process is designed to identify whether general education techniques and supports are sufficient or if a student might require special education services. We recognize that the school itself cannot make a determination and will work closely with the CSE of the students home school district to provide all necessary information to support its evaluation and IEP development processes. Our staff will also work closely with parents to involve them throughout the entire process.

To identify students with a pre-existing IEP, after our enrollment lottery is held in the spring (or if a student enrolls during the school year), school staff will immediately request student records to identify incoming students with disabilities. Staff will obtain and evaluate IEPs to determine whether our school is able to provide the services mandated in the IEP and will work with parents and the CSE to modify IEPs if necessary. In instances where the school cannot provide the placement specified by the IEP and the parent provides consent, the CSE will secure the student placement in a school that provides the required services.

Special Education Staffing: General education teachers will be trained in and expected to use differentiated instructional strategies, materials and assessments within their classroom. In addition, DIRT Charter School will employ a teacher(s) certified in special education to provide support services for students with IEPs and other at-risk students. In the case of students whose IEPs require the provision of related services not available at the school (such as speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling), the school will contact the CSE of the school district of residence to arrange for services to be provided by the Department of Education or contract with external providers.

DIRT teachers will consult and collaborate with, individual external providers, to create an integrated, developmentally appropriate academic program that will ensure that the social, emotional, and academic needs of special education students are met throughout all learning contexts and environments in the school. When possible, external providers will be included in instructional planning for students.

Managing IEPs and Student Records: DIRT will hire a Special Education Teacher. This teacher will be responsible for maintaining all confidential records, including IEPs, in a secure manner and making them available to staff as appropriate. These records will be stored in locked filing cabinets in an administrative office and an access log will be maintained. At the beginning of the school year IEPs will be provided to teachers along with a summary containing a description of the disability, goals, and required services. The Special Education teacher will meet with each teacher to go over the IEPs, including goals, responsibilities, accommodations and instructional strategies, and to ensure the privacy of all records. General education teachers will also receive ongoing training to provide them with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively include students with disabilities in their classrooms. Common planning time will also support collaboration between general and special educators. Teachers of special needs students will be expected to participate in CSE meetings.

Special Education Services: We believe that students with disabilities should be taught in the least restrictive environment and that our inclusion model will permit them to receive many of their required services within the general education classroom. Related service providers will be integrated into the school so that the pull-out model is avoided unless specifically required by a student's IEP. Students with disabilities will only be grouped together where necessary to meet their specific academic needs and their IEP goals and requirements. DIRT staff will provide small group instruction, as well as individual pull-out and push-in services for students with designated Resource Room time on their IEPs.

To help all our students successfully navigate the transition into a middle school, each graduating student with an IEP or who functions below grade level proficiency will have

a transition plan. The transition plan will include current levels of performance in the core content areas, a baseline assessment, and an intervention plan with targeted student learning goals aimed towards meeting grade level proficiency. This will be passed along to the student’s next school.

Special Education Reviews: DIRT will conform to all laws and regulations regarding the regular review of IEPs. If the Special Education Coordinator and support staff determine that a student’s IEP may no longer be appropriate to the child's needs, they may recommend that the CSE conduct a re-evaluation to adapt the IEP or declassify the student.

Special Education Program Evaluation: The Special Education Teacher, Principal, Teachers and Staff will regularly evaluate the efficacy of our special education program by analyzing student performance data and reviewing progress toward goals of students with IEPs. Parents will also be surveyed to determine their perspective on the services their child receives.

III. ORGANIZATIONAL AND FISCAL PLAN

A. Applicant(s)/Founding Group Capacity

Our founding group possesses a range of experience and skills proven relevant to the founding and start-up of a successful charter school:

Applicants/Founding Group

Name	Current Employment	Relevant experience/skills and role on founding group	Proposed role(s)
Shannon Hockswender	Pre-school teacher at Kids Club House	<p>Experience: 20 years in education, trained in the Orton-Gillingham method of teaching reading, speech therapy practicum, specialized as a resource room teacher, full-time elementary teaching experience for first, second and fifth grades, writing and implementing IEPs, parent of two elementary school-aged children</p> <p>Expertise: MA in Teaching, BA in Speech Pathology and Audiology, Certified in Elementary Education, Certified in Special Education</p> <p>Role: Lead Applicant, Curriculum Team, Professional Development Team</p>	Lead Applicant & Board Member

Allison Berman	Owner of With Love, Ali B.	<p>Experience: 18 years marketing communications and public relations experience in corporate America and non-profits including the last 6 years as owner of her own home decor company. She is also an active board member for various non-profit organizations. She is also a former newspaper columnist and the parent of two elementary school-aged children.</p> <p>Expertise: BA in Psychology with a minor in Fine Arts</p> <p>Role: Public Relations, Food Services Team</p>	Board Member
Christina Pahucki	Art Teacher at Goshen Middle School	<p>Experience: 13 years as an art teacher, trained in Person Centered Planning to create and implement transition plans for teens with special needs, Science Program Coordinator for an overnight camp, parent of three elementary school-aged children</p> <p>Expertise: MA and BA in Art Education Certified in Art Education</p> <p>Role: Curriculum Team, Building Team</p>	Board Member
Marlene Caraballo	Owner of MP Designs	<p>Experience: Over 20 years of marketing, public relations, graphic design and fundraising experience, freelance design business owner for 12 years, active community volunteer for Boy Scouts and the Orange County Youth Football League, has held board positions with the Warwick Valley Humane Society; the WVCSD Parent Teacher Association; and the Pine Island Chamber of Commerce, where she is currently serving as President, parent of three school-aged children</p> <p>Expertise: BS in Industrial Technology</p> <p>Role: Community Outreach Team, Marketing Team, Building Team</p>	Board Member
Janine Bloom	Stay at Home Mom	<p>Experience: Volunteers for the Pulaski Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary, Girl Scout leader, cheer-leading coach, Tee ball coach, girls softball coach, 4-H Leader, active PTA member, parent of 4 young children</p> <p>Expertise: NYS Certified EMT</p> <p>Role: Community Outreach Team, Building Team</p>	Board Member

Paul Ruskiewicz	Co-owns and farms a 200 acre vegetable farm	<p>Experience: Served on a number of boards including President of the Orange County Vegetable Growers Association, the New York State Vegetable Growers Association, and Orange County Farm Bureau, serves on the town of Warwick Planning board as well as the Community Preservation board, served eight years (four as vice chairman, four as chairman) on the national board of The Fraternity of Alpha Zeta, which is the honorary and professional fraternity for men and women in agriculture, parent of 2 school aged children</p> <p>Expertise: MA in Farm Management and Production Economics</p> <p>Role: Community Outreach Team, Building Team</p>	Board Member
Olivia Keeler	Substitute Teacher, Monroe Woodbury CSD, Private art lessons	<p>Experience: Substitute teacher for grade 6, tutor, teaching assistant, Managing Editor for an Alumni Magazine for a Waldorf School, Human Resource Coordinator for KPMG accounting firm, parent of 2 young children</p> <p>Expertise: MS in Education, BA in Interpersonal and Intercultural Communication, Certified in Childhood Education 1-6, Certified in Art Education K-12</p> <p>Role: Curriculum Team</p>	Board Member
Tracey Pietrzak	Co-owner of TV Tech Managers Inc.	<p>Experience: Past president of the Pine Island PTA, current secretary of the Warwick Council of PTAs, co-owner of a small television production company, lead an afterschool enrichment program on kids and healthy cooking, member of two Chambers of Commerce, trustee of the Drowned Lands Historical Society, president of the Warwick High School PTA, parent of 2 school aged children</p> <p>Expertise: BA in Music and Business</p> <p>Role: Community Outreach Team, Fundraising Team, Food Services Team</p>	Advisor
Jeanne Lancer	Substitute Teacher, Warwick Valley CSD	<p>Experience: 12 years education experience in both private and public education, full time elementary teaching experience in first and fourth grade, trained in Response to Intervention techniques, Educational Director of a historical museum, parent of 3 school aged children</p> <p>Expertise: MA in Teaching, Certified in Elementary Education</p> <p>Role: Curriculum Development and Building Teams</p>	Advisor

Noel Thompson	President of Thompson Imports	<p><u>Experience:</u> President and owner of Thompson Imports for over 6 years, alumni president for Aiglon College in Switzerland, general management experience for several companies, non-profit board experience, on founding board of the All Saints Episcopal Day School in Hoboken</p> <p><u>Expertise:</u> AB in German</p> <p><u>Role:</u> Fundraising Team</p>	Advisor
Sherrie DeBergh	Educator, Consultant, Staff Development Workshops	<p><u>Experience:</u> Grade 5 ELA, Ancient History and Yoga teacher for both regular ed and mainstreamed special needs students, designed and implemented curriculum, created and implemented a character development program, lead an integrated outdoor education curriculum, lead staff development workshops in yoga and mindfulness practice and techniques, offers workshops on teaching content plus 21st century skills, initiated extra-curricular programs</p> <p><u>Expertise:</u> BA and MA in Literacy Education</p> <p><u>Role:</u> Curriculum Team and Professional Development</p>	Advisor

Jane Hamburger	Retired (2011) Elementary Principal	<p>Experience: Principal of the K - 5 Pine Island Elementary School for 22 years, 28 years as District Coordinator of Staff Development, 22 years as District Coordinator of K-5 Art and Music, 9 years as gifted and talented teacher for elementary students, 8 years teaching elementary classroom and middle-school visual art teaching experiences in six U.S. and Dept. of Defense districts, development and supervised implementation of a math problem-solving approach and a science exploration curriculum that dramatically raised test scores, developed a Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies program at the building level, created a Response to Intervention at 3 tiers of intervention, helped create a District alternative program of choice, grades 1-6, got the whole school involvement of creation and care of five gardens, each with a different purpose, supervised two capital improvement projects at the school, building-level supervision of K-6 special education instruction through self-contained 12:1:1 environment, as well as inclusion</p> <p>Expertise: School District Administrator NY Certification, Permanent, MA in Elementary Education, BA Art Education</p> <p>Role: Curriculum Development and Professional Development</p>	Advisor
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Proposal Development: DIRT Charter School was initially conceived by a group of Warwick parents. Through a series of meetings we identified key elements of the school and explored potential locations. Our meetings were initially bi-weekly at a local dance school with minutes e-mailed to all members re-capping the meeting.

Our core group grew with our community outreach this past spring, at which time we divided ourselves into teams including Curriculum, Community Outreach, Fundraising, Food Services, and Buildings and Grounds to more efficiently research and develop a plan for DIRT. The smaller teams met and corresponded via phone and e-mail as needed to further develop parts of the school plan. In addition, some applicants visited various charter schools, traveling as far as Philadelphia, to see how charter schools look in action.

The primary authors of the application are Shannon Hockswender, Jane Hamburger and Christina Pahucki, although many other team members also contributed. The application and letter of intent, both written online as Google Docs, allowed multiple people to write, revise and comment simultaneously via the Internet, making the application process a collaborative effort.

At times, two team members would be on the phone with each other typing content at their computers, watching the color coded cursors move and type live. Many DIRT team

members are busy parents, and this use of technology enabled efficient collaboration on all parts of the application process. When a draft was complete, review meetings were held to read through and revise the application.

B. Board of Trustees and Governance

Proposed Founding Board of Trustees

Trustee Name	Voting	Position	Length of Initial Term
Shannon Hockswender	Y	Member	3
Allison Berman	Y	Member	3
Christina Pahucki	Y	Member	1
Marlene Caraballo	Y	Member	2
Janine Bloom	Y	Member	2
Paul Ruskiewicz	Y	Member	3
Olivia Keeler	Y	Member	1

The capacity of our founding board is demonstrated by 1) extensive and relevant professional experience, 2) community connections and 3) solid plans and procedures for governing the school.

Experience: Three of our proposed board members have significant experience in education. Shannon Hockswender has been a teacher for 20 years and Christina Pahucki has been an art teacher for 13 years. Both have professional experience working with special education students. They have developed curriculum and implemented it successfully with their students. Christina’s art students have won local, state and national awards for art and have benefited from the advanced art program she created to get middle school students high school credit in art.

All of our proposed Board members have school aged children that may potentially enroll in DIRT. While many charter schools are started by organizations, ours will be started by educators and parents. Our commitment to the success of DIRT Charter School comes from the overwhelming desire as parents, to provide an excellent education for our community and our own children.

Three proposed Board members, Allison Berman, Marlene Caraballo, and Paul Ruskiewicz own and operate their own businesses. Their marketing and financial skills will be vital to the success of DIRT.

Community Connections: All of DIRT’s proposed members live, work and play in Orange County and are deeply committed to promoting growth and opportunity for our community.

Both Paul Ruskiewicz and Christina Pahucki grew up on farms in Orange County and came back from college to work in Orange County. Paul runs a 200 acre vegetable farm

with his father and has taken many leadership roles in the community from sitting on the planning board to being president of the Orange County Vegetable Growers Association.

Many of our prospective board members are active with our children's schools. Paul Ruskiewicz, Christina Pahucki, Allison Berman and Marlene Caraballo often attend public school board meetings and speak out to protect student programs.

Paul is a constant advocate for the districts Agriculture Program. Allison was selected to work with Warwick Board members and administrators to rewrite WVCSD Health and Wellness policy to provide students with healthier food choices and improved nutrition education. To facilitate a successful outcome, she designed a transition plan to track progress. Christina Pahucki, Allison Berman, Marlene Caraballo, Shannon Hockswender and Janine Bloom are all PTA members.

DIRT's prospective board has experience volunteering in the community and serving on non-profit boards. Allison Berman was recognized for her extensive community involvement receiving "The Rising Star" award in 2008. She has served on non-profit boards for the Jewish Federation and the Anti Defamation League Foundation and has been an active fundraiser for the American Cancer Society.

Marlene Caraballo currently serves as the Pine Island Chamber of Commerce President and is constantly out and about in the community supporting local business through a myriad of events from farmers markets to fundraisers. Marlene has been a volunteer for Boy Scouts and the Orange County Youth Football League and has held board positions with the Warwick Valley Humane Society and the Warwick Valley Central School District PTA.

Janine Bloom volunteers for most activities in which her four children are involved, including Girl Scouts, 4-H, cheerleading, tee ball, and softball. She is also an active PTA and Ladies Auxilliary Member. Paul Ruskiewicz has served as President of the Orange County Vegetable Growers Association, the New York State Vegetable Growers Association, and Orange County Farm Bureau. Paul currently serves on the town of Warwick Planning board as well as the Community Preservation board.

Governance Practices and Procedures: Our founding Board understands the responsibility of governing a charter school. The board will have a performance contract with the Board of Regents that provides the school with the autonomy to design and operate its programs in exchange for accountability for results, namely academic performance, organizational viability and fiscal soundness. The Board's roles and responsibilities include:

- Establishing the school's mission and school design
- Ensuring adequate resources for implementation of the school program
- Recruiting, hiring and evaluating the Principal
- Approving major policies and regularly reviewing and revising them as necessary
- Preparing for and attending board and committee meetings
- Making informed decisions to support the success of the school
- Monitoring program implementation and compliance with the charter agreement and relevant laws and regulations
- Facilitating long term strategic planning
- Recruiting and orienting new board members and assessing board performance
- Participating as appropriate in the grievance process

- Enhancing the school's public standing

The qualifications to serve on the DIRT Board of Trustees will include:

- Belief in and support of the mission and design of the school
- Be at least 18 years of age
- Be able to read and write English
- Be a U.S. citizen
- Willingness to attend board and committee meetings and volunteer for board work
- NOT be an employee of the charter school
- NOT hold office if a member of his/her household is an employee of the charter school
- NOT hold office if a member of his/her family is a member of the Board
- NOT simultaneously hold another incompatible office (e.g., town supervisor)
- NOT have been removed from a school district office within one year of election

As noted in our by-laws, the board will have at least five members. Board members will initially serve one, two or three year terms in order to stagger Board member turnover. After the initial term, as previously stated in the "Proposed Founding Board of Trustees" chart, Board members will all serve three year terms, and will then be up for re-election.

The Board will meet monthly at the school. The Board will include the following officer positions: President, Secretary and Treasurer. The agenda will be developed by the President in consultation with the Principal and will include a written or oral report by the Principal, a financial report and opportunity for public comments. The Secretary will be responsible for sending the agenda to each board member at least seven days in advance of the meeting, with all relevant materials. Each meeting will start with a public comment period. All meetings will be open to the public in accordance with the Open Meetings Law, and the Board will only go into executive session for reasons set out in the Open Meetings law after passing a resolution detailing these reasons. Minutes will be taken at all board and committee meetings, copies of which will be posted on our website within two weeks of the meeting's date, and archived in the school office. Meetings will be publicized as follows:

- The Board will establish an annual meeting calendar with the time and place of each meeting.
- The calendar will be posted on the school's website.
- A notice of each meeting will be posted prominently at the school, on the school website, and in the local press as required by the Open Meetings Law.

The board will operate as a whole and may appoint sub-committees as needed to carry out the work of the board. Committees will have a job description that clearly describes any delegation of authority by the full Board and a committee chair appointed by the Board Chair. The Board will delegate authority for the day-to-day operations of the school to the Principal, who will oversee all operations of the school and report directly to the Board. The Board will establish measurable annual performance goals, conduct end-of-year evaluations of the Principal, and ultimately hold him or her accountable for effectively running the school. The Principal will present at each board meeting, on enrollment, attendance, financial, compliance and student performance data.

Parent and Staff Involvement: The Board will encourage parent and staff input regarding the governance of the school. Board meetings will adhere to the Open

Meeting Law and include an opportunity for public comment, and surveys of parents and staff will be used as part of school oversight and the Principal's evaluation. The Board will enact and publicize a complaint policy that contains a clear process for bringing issues to the attention of the board and for the Board to respond in a timely fashion. Board members will also regularly visit the school and attend school community events and actively solicit feedback from parents.

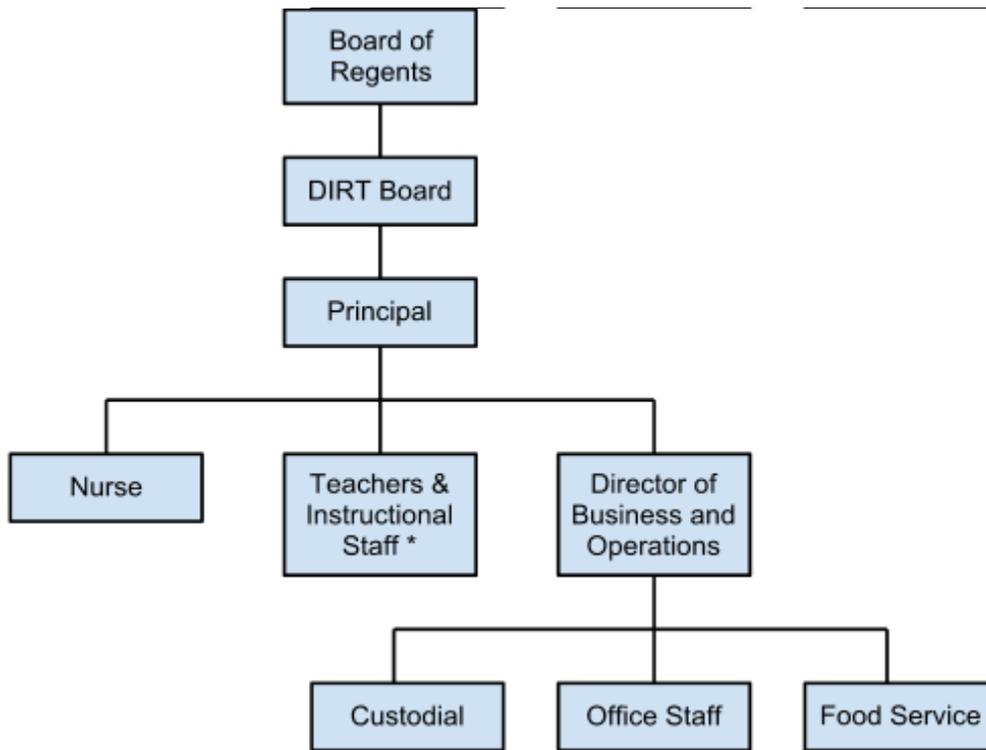
In addition, the Board will reserve a seat for a parent (or guardian) representative. The parent Board member will normally be the elected President of the Parent Teacher Association unless the President does not wish to serve in which case the Board will nominate a parent candidate. The parent Board member will have the right to vote but will cease to be a Board member if his or her child ceases to be a student at the school or his or her term of office ends.

The Board will require the principal to inform the school staff, about matters discussed by the Board that are related to their professional responsibilities. The principal will also solicit staff feedback and communicate that to the Board on an ongoing basis. In addition, the Board will occasionally request presentations from members of the school staff on specific aspects of the school's program.

The Board may solicit additional parents or teachers to participate in specific committees. The Board can establish committees to address distinct issues that come to the attention of the Board and require the advice and research of multiple constituents: teachers, parents, staff and sometimes, students. Input from students' families and all school staff is essential to the continuous improvement of the school and the Board's ability to assess and support DIRT's mission.

Board Recruitment: As needed, the Board will recruit and vote on the appointment of new members who demonstrate adequate qualifications and commitment. All new Board members will receive orientation materials, including a copy of the charter, Board member job description and committee descriptions, previous meeting minutes and major policies. The Board will undertake ongoing governance training to ensure all members have a common vision of the Board's roles and responsibilities and best practices.

C. Management and Staffing



*This includes the Head Teacher, Special Education Coordinator and ELL Coordinator

Organizational Chart: Our organizational chart reflects the needs of a small school. The Board of Trustees hires the Principal, who reports directly to the board and is responsible for day-to-day management of the school. The Principal is the primary instructional leader of the school and will supervise and evaluate teachers. The Director of Business and Operations will supervise the office staff, custodial and food service staff allowing the Principal to focus the bulk of their time on supporting instruction.

Responsibilities and qualifications for key positions are provided in Attachment 8a. We have not identified a school leader, but intend to initiate a search as soon as the charter is approved. Key qualifications include high expectations for learning and behavior, demonstrated success in raising student achievement, experience with start-up environments, and skills managing staff in a complex organization.

Staffing Plan: We believe the following staffing structure is aligned with DIRT's mission, budget, enrollment, and school schedule. It takes into account the needs of the school from an enrollment and pedagogical perspective and ensures that teachers, students, and administration receive the organizational support they need to succeed.

Staffing Plan

Title(s)	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Salary Range
Principal	1	1	1	1	1	\$70,000 - \$100,000
Director of Business & Operations	1	1	1	1	1	\$40,000 - \$60,000
K-6 Classroom Teachers	12	14	14	14	14	\$40,000 - \$60,000
Special Education/ AIS Teacher	1	1	1	1	1	\$40,000 - \$60,000
Health/PE Teacher (Part Time)	1	1	1	1	1	\$20,000 - \$30,000
Art Teacher (Part Time)	1	1	1	1	1	\$20,000 - \$30,000
Music Teacher (Part Time)	1	1	1	1	1	\$20,000 - \$30,000
Spanish Teacher (Part Time)	1	1	1	1	1	\$20,000 - \$30,000
ELL Teacher (Part Time)	1	1	1	1	1	\$20,000 - \$30,000
Nurse/Attendance	1	1	1	1	1	\$30,000 - \$50,000
Custodians	2	2	2	2	2	\$30,000 - \$40,000
Food Service Staff	2	2	2	2	2	\$10,000 - \$15,000
Office Staff	2	2	2	2	2	\$20,000 - \$30,000
Aides/Lunch & Recess Monitors	3	3	3	3	3	\$10,000 - \$15,000

Hiring and Personnel Policies and Procedures: The members of the Board along with the Principal will work diligently to attract and retain experienced and skilled teachers. Throughout our planning, the founding group has met many talented educators who have expressed excitement at the possibility of working at DIRT Charter School and/or helping to network to find experienced teachers. In addition, the following organizations provide job postings, fairs, and potential hiring resources for us: Green Charter School Network, NYCSI, and the Charter Center.

We have budgeted \$40,000 - \$60,000 per general classroom teacher depending on experience. We have budgeted the same per special education teacher. This is about average in our area for teaching salaries at a public school. We will offer a competitive compensation package in order to attract a solid core of experience. We may explore three-year contracts or bonus structure as funds become available, in order to encourage staff to stay and ensure low turnover. The Principal will determine the actual salary of teachers and staff based on prior experience, performance and responsibilities. The Board will determine the salary for the Principal. We hope to raise salaries as the school gains financial efficiency in later years with full student enrollment. Any change to a staff members salary will be approved by the Principal in writing, and approved by the Board.

We will provide a supportive, professional environment where staff will develop strong relationships with each other, as well as with students and families, and will see their efforts rewarded through student learning. We believe that we will have success developing and retaining high-quality staff members by creating a culture and schedule that support teachers' planning, collaboration, and professional growth. We seek elementary state-certified educators with a demonstrated record of success teaching elementary school aged students.

General qualifications for all staff include: strong academic preparation, a high degree of competence, intellectual rigor, emotional maturity, enthusiastic and professional attitude, knowledge of job-related practices, and the ability to further the goals of DIRT Charter School. Successful candidates will understand and be committed to the mission, goals, philosophy, and activities of DIRT, as described in the school's charter. Special attention will be paid to the candidate's academic records and previous relevant experience. Prospective job candidates must demonstrate that they are willing and able to provide the support that a diverse student population requires. They must demonstrate their instructional prowess through a model lesson and must have strong references in all aspects of teaching, but particularly in areas of: differentiation of instruction, teacher collaboration, innovation, flexibility, and commitment to continuous improvement.

Teacher Evaluation: Our teacher evaluations will take into account not only student results on standardized tests, but also other measures of student outcomes, such as authentic product assessments, formative and summative assessments and portfolios, in addition to Principal evaluations. The Principal will have primary responsibility for evaluating teachers. The Principal will conduct a formal annual evaluation of each teacher; however, informal evaluations will take place on an ongoing, consistent basis. Formal evaluations for faculty will include specific criteria and a narrative summary. These will be in letter form, written by the Principal based on year-to-date observations, and objective student assessment data. The focus of the evaluation letter will be on exceptional strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers will also be asked to submit a self-evaluation.

Faculty will receive targeted support from the Principal around the areas they cited for improvement, including professional development, coaching and mentoring by appropriate staff, as well as outside consultants. The Principal will prepare a written report to discuss with the teacher in a formal evaluation conference, and, will determine if the teacher's at-will contract will be renewed and salaries increased.

Non-Certified Instructional Personnel: The school reserves the option to employ non-certified teachers so long as they comport to the following: are exactly the kind of individual(s) we seek that are committed to doing what it takes to improve student academic performance; fulfill at least one of the four criteria stipulated in Education Law § 2854(3)(a-1); that the total number of such teachers is equal to but not more than 30 percent of the teaching staff, or five teachers, whichever is less; and qualify as subject-based competent pursuant to the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Pursuant to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), all teachers providing instruction to students with disabilities (as identified by a Committee on Special Education) will be New York State certified in special education.

Employer-employee relationship: DIRT strives to be a dynamic learning organization where individual and organizational growth occurs at all levels of the school. We believe

in the importance of involving staff members in the decision-making processes at DIRT, particularly during the start-up phase. The Principal will seek teacher input regarding school curriculum, culture, and policy. We have built time into the schedule for the core teachers and administration to meet as a group once a week, not just for professional development, but also to discuss the school's progress and needs.

C.1. Charter Management Organization

We **do not intend to contract** with a charter management organization.

C.2. Partner Organization

DIRT does not have a partner organization.

D. Evaluation

Programmatic Audits: Programmatic audits will focus on the quality of implementation and results. Implementation of curriculum programs, interventions and assessments will be monitored by the Principal, through planning meetings and direct observation. Analysis of student performance data will be the primary method for evaluating efficacy. We will analyze data and look for trends in sub-groups. DIRT will submit an Annual Report to the NYSED detailing its performance and progress towards its accountability goals. We expect to have regular oversight visits by the NYSED and will use any constructive feedback to make necessary changes to the academic program.

Principal Evaluation: The board will conduct an annual evaluation of the Principal focused heavily on academic achievement and financial stability, which will be used to determine the Principal's raise in salary. At the beginning of the year the board and Principal will establish measurable process and outcome goals for the year. An end of the year, a written review will be provided to the Principal and used to determine eligibility for a raise. The evaluator will seek input from the Principal, teachers and staff, families and students, and the board. Data sources will include assessment results, enrollment and attendance, parent satisfaction surveys, grievance records, and budget information and audit results.

Teacher Evaluation: Please see the section below on Professional Development and the Personnel Policies in Attachment 8a.

Board Evaluation: The board will develop a self-evaluation instrument and use it annually to check Board performance. Domains will include member attendance and participation, communication with stakeholders, regular review and revision of key policies and procedures, financial oversight, evaluation of school leadership, handling of grievances, and adherence to the mission of the school. The board will use the results of these evaluations to inform the development of strategic goals and action plans. The board will also monitor its composition to maintain adequate skill sets to govern the school, as well as, diversify to ensure a variety of perspectives.

Family and Student Satisfaction: DIRT will gauge family and student satisfaction both directly and indirectly. We will semi-annually administer surveys to assess family satisfaction in areas such as instruction, school culture, and communication. We will also infer satisfaction based on our enrollment numbers and retention of students from year

to year. We believe our attention to parents through regular communication will keep them engaged in the life of the school and in their children's academic progress.

E. Professional Development

DIRT Charter School is committed to professional development that fosters the collective responsibility for improved student performance, is aligned with state student academic achievement standards, school improvement goals, and a shared commitment to serve all learners. Instructional planning will be supported by ongoing and embedded professional development.

The professional development plan will be adjusted each year to reflect an ongoing assessment and analysis of our curriculum, instruction, and assessment. It will be learning-focused and nurture a collaborative culture based on trust, shared instructional leadership, and mutual accountability. Student data and teacher input will be used to make decisions about professional development.

The primary goal of Professional Development is to improve teaching and therefore will be scheduled as to not disrupt the school day by pulling teachers from their classrooms. Professional development may be held after school hours, during the summer, and occasionally on days when students are not in attendance.

Training: Staff development sessions will be designed and coordinated by the Principal and may include the use of training consultants. Throughout our first charter term, all teachers will receive customized training in curriculum development, and in developing units, specifically focused on sustainability themes and units before the start of the school year. DIRT will also conduct trainings explaining the referral process for special education, RTI, IEP development and implementation, evaluation and reporting of the student's progress toward meeting IEP goals and objectives, confidentiality of student records, and structured English language immersion.

In the future, topics will be differentiated based on assessment of staff needs; new staff will be oriented to the school's program and practices while veteran staff will receive refresher or more advanced trainings. Training will begin before the school year starts during a 5 day session.

The professional development plan will be adjusted each year to reflect an ongoing assessment and analysis of our curriculum, instruction, and assessment. DIRT Charter School is committed to professional development that fosters the collective responsibility for improved student performance, and is aligned with state student academic achievement standards, school improvement goals, and a shared commitment to serve all learners. It will be learning-focused and nurture a collaborative culture based on trust, shared instructional leadership, and mutual accountability. Student data and teacher input will be used to inform decisions about professional development.

Staff Development Resources: Our Principal will be the driving force behind staff development and work closely with the teachers to ensure adequate resources, time in the schedule, trainers with relevant expertise, and technology. We intend to connect the school with external resources as well. Faculty may request funds for external training that is aligned with the school program and can be turn-keyed for the benefit of others.

Leadership: Throughout the school year, the Principal will spend time daily observing and supporting teachers in their classrooms in order to evaluate practice and provide feedback and support. The Principal will model and observe lessons to support teachers in meeting the needs of all the students in their classrooms. In follow-up discussions, the Principal will share their observations with the teacher as well as results of student assessments with the goal being the improvement of instruction and student learning. Additional professional development for individuals or groups times may be scheduled as needed as long as it does not interfere with instructional time.

Once a week, faculty and staff will meet with the Principal, after school hours. These meetings will be devoted to planning lessons and activities, reviewing data, identifying struggling students and making adjustments to instruction. Teachers will share effective teaching practices and collaborate. Grade level teacher teams will also have common planning time to integrate and coordinate instructional units, plan learning projects, and review student data.

Mentoring: As part of their job description, veteran teachers will be responsible for mentoring new teachers. They will be expected to include new teachers in planning activities and define clear roles in the classroom. They will support the new teachers and will provide school leaders with feedback regarding their progress, but will not formally evaluate them.

Teacher Evaluation and Review: We do not believe evaluation should be based on just one or two formal classroom visits; rather it should encompass cumulative evidence collected over the course of the school year from observation of classroom practice and professional responsibilities, student performance data, self-reflection and peer and parent input. Teachers will collect evidence throughout the year and bring that portfolio of evidence to a end-of-year conference with the principal to evaluate progress. Teachers with serious performance deficits will be placed on an improvement plan that includes specific objectives, strategies and deadlines for improvement. The end-of-year conference will inform bonuses and decisions about placement the following year.

F. Facilities

The DIRT Charter School Building and Grounds Team is currently exploring many location options. At minimum our school would need 8,000 square feet of space that could hold 12 classrooms in year one and 14 classrooms in year two. Two or more smaller office spaces would also be needed. Preference is being given to those locations that include land sufficient for outdoor activities such as Learning Laboratories and PE. Since our school is contracting out for food services, there is no need for a formal kitchen. No residential facilities will be provided by DIRT Charter School. Our applicant team will ensure that our school site will be accessible for students and adults with disabilities. Some of the sites below are already handicap accessible and some would need renovations to make them handicap accessible.

In this area prices per square foot can range from \$4 to \$20. We have budgeted for 60 square feet per student at \$20 per square foot. This brings our budgeted amount for rent to \$247,000 for year one and \$300,000 for years two through five.

Pending our charter's approval the Buildings and Grounds team will further discuss our options and take steps to secure a location. We may find additional suitable locations

as we progress throughout the charter approval process. All of our proposed locations below are within the Warwick, Minisink, or Florida School Districts (Florida is part of the town of Warwick) and are within a 15 mile radius of each other. DIRT plans to secure a location immediately after approval and to take occupancy of a location by July 1, 2013 at the latest. The chart below lists possible locations that are currently being considered.

Location/ School District	Information	Steps Taken
21 Glenmere Ave. Florida, NY Florida School District	Former Catholic school: Recently closed but still used some evenings and weekends for CCD classes. Large classrooms, auditorium, social hall, multiple office spaces, two kitchen facilities, restrooms, basketball court, ball fields, small playground, large parking lot, minor renovations needed, about 1.4 miles from Glenmere Lake which is about 300 acres, and has a public access area.	DIRT has contacted and met with the priest at St. Josephs, who has expressed interest in leasing the school.
2 Industrial Dr. Florida, NY Florida School District	Commercial building for sale or lease, currently used as a pre-school/ day care. Large office spaces to be divided for classrooms, restrooms. Large parking lot, elevator, small play ground, Minor renovations needed, potential to rent other buildings on the street for additional space.	DIRT has contacted the realtor of this site and done a walk through of the building.
22 Bergeron Rd Westtown, NY Minisink School District	Large residence, currently used as a spa, on 12 acres of land, two kitchens, many bathrooms, parking lot, tennis court, solar panels for electricity, small pool, barn/garage, some renovations needed to convert residential spaces into classroom spaces.	DIRT has contacted the realtor of this site and done a walk through of the building.
20 Schoolhouse Rd. Pine Island, NY Warwick Valley Central School District	Former elementary school, closed for just one year, still used evenings and weekends by a church. Ample classrooms, cafetorium, stage, restrooms, library, gym, small kitchen, multiple office spaces, large playground, elevator, ample parking and drop off areas. Minor renovations needed. Situated in the middle of farmland. School's capacity is 307 students	DIRT met with the Superintendent of schools and then requested, in writing, to lease the building. May be willing to negotiate- pending Charter approval.

<p>55 Carnage Rd Minisink, NY</p> <p>Minisink Valley School District</p>	<p>Former factory on about 4 wooded acres. Appalachian Trail cuts through the property. Huge open spaces, 18,000 square feet, restrooms. Major renovations needed. Walkkill River Wildlife Refuge and Walkkill River nearby.</p>	<p>DIRT has contacted the realtor of this site and done a walk through of the building.</p>
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G. Insurance

Based on the insurance policies obtained by other similar charter schools, here is the approximate coverage we expect to secure:

- General Aggregate: \$2 million aggregate and \$1 million for each occurrence
- Umbrella Liability: \$5 million limit of coverage
- School Leaders Errors & Omissions: \$1 million in coverage
- Student Accident: \$500,000 aggregate per accident
- Student Accident Medical: \$25,000 per accident
- Student Catastrophic Accident: \$1 million limit
- Auto: for non-owned vehicles used in school business
- Property: \$250,000 in coverage for school furnishings, equipment, and leased space
- Workers' Compensation: rate determined by state of New York

DIRT's prospective Board has already begun reaching out to area insurance agencies that can meet our needs.

H. Health, Food, and Transportation Services

Health Services: Members of the prospective board for DIRT viewed the Powerpoint presentation and the webinar on School Health and School Safety available on the NYSED website. DIRT Charter School will work with the Department of Education and the Department of Health to provide a nurse to maintain students' records and supervise the disbursement of medication and the treatment of students who are ill or injured. The nurse will be responsible for all record keeping and correspondence related to these responsibilities. Our school will have a full time nurse in it's first year of operation. At least two staff members will be trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of automated external defibrillator (AED) equipment. Vision and hearing screenings will be coordinated with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Health Records: Cumulative health records will be stored in locked filing cabinets accessible only by authorized staff members. These records will include proof of immunization and authorization for administration of medication. All visits to the nurse, including reason and treatment, will be documented in each child's file. Parents will be expected to provide at least three emergency contacts in the event their child becomes ill or is injured. In the event of an injury or illness parents or guardians will be contacted. If no one can be reached, the emergency contacts for that child will be utilized.

Immunizations: The school will ensure that all new students adhere to New York State requirements for immunization before they attend. Parents or guardians must provide documentation that their child has received all required doses of vaccines or at least one

dose of each of the required vaccines and is waiting to receive the subsequent doses at the appropriate time intervals. Required immunizations include: Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTaP, DTP, Tdap: 3 doses); Polio (IPV, OPV: 3 doses); Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR: 2 doses of measles containing vaccine and 1 dose each of mumps and rubella); Hepatitis B (3 doses); Varicella (1 dose). Parents or guardians may waive immunization in accordance with Public Health Law and exemptions to immunizations shall be granted if a licensed physician or nurse practitioner certifies such immunization may be detrimental to the student's health, or if the student's parent or guardian holds genuine and sincere beliefs contrary to such immunizations.

Medications: The school will implement strict policies and procedures regarding the safe and secure administration of medication, which will be communicated clearly to parents and staff. The school will only administer medication that is necessary to maintain students in school and which must be given during school hours. Prescribed medication that requires administration through a subcutaneous, intramuscular, intravenous or rectal route; or prescribed medications being administered through pumps, tubes or nebulizers; or oral, topical or inhalant medication needed by non-self-directed students will be given only by the nurse or licensed practical nurses under the direction of the nurse. The nurse may designate other staff to assist self-directed students taking their own oral, topical, and inhalant medication and will provide the training and supervision necessary to perform these tasks in a safe and effective manner.

DIRT Charter School will require in writing both orders from a licensed prescriber and permission from parents/guardians to administer medication. All medications, including nonprescription over the counter drugs, must be prescribed by a licensed prescriber on an individual basis. Written orders for prescription and nonprescription over the counter medications shall include: student's name and date of birth; name of medication; dosage and route of administration; frequency and time of administration; conditions under which medication should be administered; date written, prescriber's name, title, and signature; and prescriber's phone number. The school may request additional information, such as self-administration orders or potential adverse reactions. Medication orders must be renewed annually or when there is a change in medication or dosage.

Prescription medication must be delivered to the school in the original container with an appropriate label including student name; name and phone number of pharmacy; licensed prescriber's name; date and number of refills; name of medication/dosage; frequency of administration; and route of administration. Similarly, OTC medication and drug samples must be in the original manufacturer's container/package. Medications will not be transported daily to and from school; parents will be expected to provide an adequate supply to remain at the school, which will provide locked storage, including refrigeration if required, within a secure health office. If students chronically fail to come for medications, the school nurse will contact the parent to address the problem. The licensed prescriber will be also informed so that the medication protocol can be reviewed and possible adjustments made, e.g., home administration, extended release medication. Students may carry and self-administer prescribed medication under circumstances meeting the following conditions: demonstrated need, particularly as it relates to asthma or allergies; written prescriber's orders and request by parents/guardians; and student receives effective instruction and demonstrates adequate level of responsibility.

Food Services: Learning from and appreciating our environment will be a way of life at DIRT Charter School, leading the way with our food service program. Meal time is an excellent opportunity to further Develop Innovative Rural Thinking, to further educate the entire child, and to teach lifelong, healthy, eating habits.

We will not participate in the local school district's food service program as it does not meet our criteria. We will serve children foods that are of higher nutritional value and less processed including fresh, seasonal, local fruits and vegetables. We will support our farmers and whenever possible we will incorporate foods grown by the children as part of their academic studies.

This is something we plan to ultimately manage in-house, but until then we intend to enlist the services of Red Rabbit, based in New York City, to provide students with a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and snack. Red Rabbit already works with over 70 public, charter and independent schools and camps in the greater New York area, developing specific (made from scratch) meals to fit the requirements of each individual school. For our school, Red Rabbit has agreed to incorporate food grown by students.

We are thrilled to enter into a partnership with them, helping them to source even more produce from the Hudson Valley, as they provide our children with fresh, delicious meals, prepared to our highest of standards. Our applicant team has not yet finalized which school facility we will use. We are basing our plans regarding food on having limited kitchen resources.

The food will be prepared offsite in their NYC kitchens and will be transported to the school in large trays that we will re-heat and serve to the children and the teachers, family style. Each day, a small group of children on a rotating basis, will be involved in this process. Red Rabbit is able to tailor the program accordingly at a savings for DIRT if our chosen facility has vast kitchen resources.

DIRT Charter School will participate in the Federal school breakfast and lunch programs and will also provide students with snack. Research shows healthy food choices, longer meal time, and recess preceding the meal, yields less absenteeism, greater concentration, and improved behavior over children eating less healthy meals or skipping meals. Our food service program will provide the children with the foundation they need to achieve academic and personal success. The food service program will be funded by the students' families. Reduced and free meals will be provided to eligible students.

Transportation Services: DIRT will not provide transportation services directly, but will partner, as all area private schools do, with the local school districts. DIRT will work with the local districts to ensure that transportation is provided for any students with disabilities in compliance with all local and federal laws. Because we intend to provide numerous off campus trips, the school may contract with a private bus company to provide supplemental transportation. If our budget allows, we will purchase a vehicle(s) for field trip purposes.

The families of students outside of the 15 mile radius of the school's location will be responsible for providing their own transportation to DIRT. DIRT staff will assist parents of students outside the transportation radius in connecting them with other parents who may be from the same area for the purposes of carpooling.

The Director of Business and Operations will be responsible for coordinating transportation, including submission of required eligibility forms and identification of bus routes and stops. The Director of Business and Operations will contact eligible students' families to inform them of their child's bus number, bus stop, and estimated pick-up and drop-off time. We also intend to hold students accountable for their behavior on their way to and from school. Our code of conduct will address appropriate transportation behavior and staff will review bus safety rules and conduct bus drills.

I. Family and Community Involvement

Family Involvement: We believe strongly that parents are the first educators of their children and that parents have the primary moral responsibility of educating their children to adulthood. Families will be encouraged to actively participate in a variety of school functions and to volunteer at the school. Parents/guardians will have regular access to their child's teachers to ask questions and provide feedback, and will receive regular reports from teachers via phone calls, e-mail and letters home.

DIRT Charter School will support an active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) providing space to meet, access to communication tools, and scheduling/academic information that parents need to organize successful activities. School leadership will make every effort to attend PTA meetings and events, and will have an open door policy for its officers in order to hear their concerns.

Board meetings will be open and include a public comment period to further encourage familial involvement. Scholastic materials will be available in English and Spanish, and we will have Spanish speaking staff to ensure effective communication with all students and their families.

Community Involvement: DIRT has already started the process of engaging in an ongoing dialogue with parents, community members, and organizations from all over Orange County. Our public outreach campaign has generated a range of letters of support, from organizations such as the Hamptonburgh Grange, The Walkkill River School, The Pine Island Chamber of Commerce, The Orange County Farm Bureau, the Orange County Vegetable Improvement Cooperative Association and the Orange Arts Council. (see Attachment 2). These organizations will provide excellent opportunities for our students in participating in community service.

The environmental focus of our school offers an opportunity for community involvement. DIRT Charter School will take a leadership role in sustainability, our community involvement opportunities will include: building a garden, composting, and offering recycling for batteries or other materials. We will continue to reach out to additional community groups and cultivate opportunities to establish symbiotic relationships where our students can support their work, while learning valuable professional and life skills.

In addition, we will involve parents and the community in the planning, implementation and design of the school. There will be visiting parent groups, informal focus groups, surveys, discussions, and community events. Parents will be invited to join our Founding Team and our Outreach Team (serving as DIRT ambassadors) will continue to solicit feedback on what kind of school parents and the community want and need. We will have a parent representative designated on the DIRT Board.

We expect community relationships will deepen as the school demonstrates its commitment to the students in this community which will result in support ranging from advocacy to financial or pro-bono contributions to services for families. Many of our board members have extensive experience with community organizing and this will help our team grow DIRT.

J. Financial Management

Budget: DIRT Charter School firmly believes that its teachers and staff, who have the most contact time with students, know best what supplies and resources their students need for a high quality education. Building a yearly budget plan will start with teachers and staff. Each spring the Principal and Director of Business and Operations will meet with DIRT faculty and staff to discuss budget needs as a team. Teachers will bring requests for instructional materials and supplies to these meetings and then discuss and prioritize them as a group. The Principal and Director of Business and Operations will then, after sufficient input, determine the school's needs for the coming year, including staffing, technology, facility, and instructional materials, and develop a budget based on the previous year's revenues and expenditures and projections for the coming year.

The Principal will then recommend a proposed budget to the Board Treasurer who will then present a final budget to the Board for approval in May. The school will maintain a five year budget projection and revise it each year based on current information and long-term strategic plans. Major modifications of the budget will require board approval.

Financial Systems: The school intends to contract with an accounting firm for financial management at least for the first year of operation. DIRT Charter School will look for a firm which has extensive systems for financial management. This accounting firm will be responsible for instructing the school's staff regarding set up and maintenance of systems for accounting, student and staff records, payroll, tracking of student meals including student eligibility for free and reduced priced meals, enrollment and attendance.

Each year, the Board will review the need for an accounting firm vs. hiring a Finance Director to take over responsibility for financial management to determine which proves to be more efficient.

Below are the key services provided by an accounting firm during the planning year and once the school is operational:

Planning Year:

Payroll

- Set up payroll system using ADP
- Process payroll per school's pay schedule
- Post payroll expenses in accounting system
- Complete quarterly payroll reconciliations
- Review/distribute W-2s and prepare/distribute 1099s
- File payroll related documents

Finance/Accounting

- Set up accounting system using QuickBooks Online

- Create/recommend edits for the annual/multi-year budgets (including review of 5 year charter application budget)
- Create/recommend edits for the chart of accounts
- Create/recommend edits for Financial Policies and Procedures (FPP) manual
- Coordinate grant reporting and assess whether grant restrictions are fulfilled
- Reconcile monthly bank statements in the accounting system
- Close books and manage monthly, quarterly and annual fiscal reporting to all constituents including NYSED, Board of Trustees and Principal
- Post revenues & expenses and process deposits & disbursements
- File all financial documentation in CSBM's Binder System

Operational Years:

Human Resources

- Handle the administration related to HR files
- Enroll/withdraw staff members in benefits including insurance and retirement plans
- Payroll
- Process payroll per school's pay schedule
- Post payroll expenses in accounting system
- Complete quarterly payroll reconciliations
- Review/distribute W-2s and prepare/distribute 1099s
- File payroll related documents

Finance/Accounting

- Create/recommend edits for budgets
- Coordinate grant reporting and assess whether grant restrictions are fulfilled
- Reconcile monthly bank statements
- Close books and manage fiscal reporting to all constituents including NYSED, Board and Principal
- Present financial reports to Finance Committee and/or Board of Trustees
- Post revenues & expenses and process deposits & disbursements
- File all financial documentation in Binder System

Audit Preparation

- Support completion of the 990 by the auditors
- Prepare for on-site testing by auditors
- Close books for the fiscal year
- Prepare all requested schedules/analyses and work with auditors until completion
- Review/recommend edits for draft financial statements and draft management letter
- Participate in meeting with Finance Committee of
- Board of Trustees and auditors

Financial Controls: The board will adopt detailed financial policies and procedures to guide school staff and protect school resources. The Principal and two members of the Board of Trustees will be authorized check signers. Two signatures will be required for any transactions greater than \$5,000. Approval of the Board Chair is required to open a bank account. Clear procedures will be established to ensure:

- Segregation of duties to assure that funds are safeguarded and properly deposited.
- Establishment of controls to ensure that all receipts and expenditures are properly recorded in the accounting records.
- Identification of payments and receipts in sufficient detail to facilitate preparation of the monthly financial reports.

Annual Audits: The school will contract with an independent certified public accountant (CPA) to conduct an annual fiscal audit of all financial reports, including statement of financial position, statement of cash flows, statement of activities, and schedule of functional expenses. All financial transactions will be recorded in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). All audits will be conducted in accordance with the Government Auditing Standards. We expect the auditor will produce an Initial Statement of Financial Controls in the beginning of the school year and complete the annual audit the following fall. The board will review all audits, meet with the auditor without school staff present, and monitor all efforts by school leaders to address any found deficiencies.

K. Budget and Cash Flow

We have prepared a budget with assumptions based on the experiences of other charter schools. Our revenue estimates are based on 95% of our target enrollment while expenditures assume 100% enrollment. The per pupil rate varies from district to district in Orange County. Of the parents who have already stated that they are interested in sending their children to DIRT Charter School, approximately 60% are from Warwick Valley, 11% are from Minisink, and 10% are from Goshen, with the rest being from nine other districts in Orange County. The chart below shows our estimated revenue for our first year based on current student interest data.

Estimated Revenue Based on 95% Enrollment

District	Estimated # of Students Year 1	Estimated # of Students Year 2 - 5	Per Pupil Rate	Estimated Revenue Year 1	Estimated Revenue Year 2 - 5
Warwick Valley	116	140	\$12,198	\$1,414,968	\$1,707,720
Minisink	22	27	\$10,552	\$252,144	\$284,904
Goshen	22	27	\$12,773	\$281,006	\$344,871
Middletown	7	8	\$12,759	\$89,313	\$102,072
Florida	7	8	\$14,007	\$98,049	\$112,056
Monroe	6	7	\$13,089	\$78,534	\$91,623
Valley Central	4	5	\$11,222	\$44,888	\$56,110

Greenwood Lake	4	5	\$18,311	\$73,244	\$91,555
Pine Bush	3	4	\$11,570	\$34,710	\$46,280
Port Jervis	2	3	\$11,904	\$23,808	\$35,712
Chester	1		\$13,170	\$13,170	\$13,170
Tuxedo	2	2	\$17,470	\$34,940	\$34,940
Totals	196	237		\$2,418,774	\$2,921,013

We have assumed minimal revenue from grants and fundraising and hope to build a school that can ultimately operate primarily on public funds like any other public school.

Pre-Opening Budget:

Revenue: We anticipate revenues based on some fundraising and the first year CSP funding. Our proposed board and advisers have considerable experience with fundraising and have established reasonable fundraising targets.

Expenditures: Expenditures will primarily include hiring the Principal and the Director of Business and Operations and securing a location.

Cash Flow: We anticipate a positive cash balance for each month of the Pre-Opening period. Should the CSP grant arrive later than anticipated, we will consider deferring compensation.

Year 1 Budget:

Revenues: Almost all of our revenue is from per-pupil funding for general and special education students. We have assumed just \$10,000 in revenue from fundraising. We do not expect to receive IDEA funding until Year 2. We have conservatively estimated 10% for our students with disabilities. We also anticipate receiving the second of three CSP installments.

Expenditures: The bulk of expenditures is for salary. About 15% of salary expenses are administration and 74% are instructional staff. Personnel costs, including taxes and benefits, accounts for 67% of total expenditures, with another 6% devoted to contracted services. School operations are 11% and facility operations are 15% of our costs.

Cash Flow: Most start-up costs are incurred early in the year, while salaries are distributed across the year. We project a positive cash balance in all months of the first year of operation.

5 Year Budget:

Revenue: We expect to receive IDEA funds beginning in Year 2 and conservatively assume 10% eligibility. Title I funding will increase commensurate with enrollment. CSP is anticipated in the planning year, Year 1 and Year 2.

Expenditures: Salaries increase 2.5% per year, though in reality that may vary depending on economic conditions. Administration is 11% of salary costs and overall personnel is 73% of total expenditures in Year 5. Facility costs are 12% of total expenditures at the end of the charter term.

Should our assumptions and estimates prove wrong, contingencies include reducing salaries, reducing the number of non-instructional staff, and/or securing a bridge loan until we reach a more sustainable enrollment size.

Charter School Program (CSP) Grant: Our budget assumes only the base amount of \$500,000, though we hope DIRT Charter School will be awarded the entire \$750,000.

Dissolution Plan: The school will accumulate a reserve fund of \$75,000 by setting aside \$25,000 each year for the first three years of operation to cover debts in the case of the school's dissolution.

L. Pre-Opening Plan

BOT=Board of Trustees; PR=Principal; DBO= Director of Business & Operations

Domain	Action	Start Date	End Date	Responsibility
Governance	Ratify bylaws and code of ethics	Oct 2012	Oct 2012	BOT
Governance	Appoint board officers	Oct 2012	Oct 2012	BOT
Staffing	Recruit Head of School	Oct 2012	Jan 2013	BOT
Staffing	Recruit Director of Business & Operations	Jan 2013	Feb 2013	BOT, PR
Operations	Obtain 501c3 status	Oct 2012	Apr 2013	BOT
Facility	Conduct facility negotiations and execute lease	Oct 2012	Jan 2013	BOT
Facility	Renovation: identify needs, secure contractor, establish timeline, complete punch list	Nov 2012	May 2013	BOT, PR, DBO
Finance	Approve fiscal policies and procedures	Oct 2012	Nov 2012	BOT
Finance	Contract with an accounting firm to establish payroll and other financial systems	Jan 2013	Jun 2013	BOT, DBO
Recruitment	Recruit students	Jan 2013	Apr 2013	BOT, PR

Recruitment	Hold lottery, inform parents	Apr 2013	Apr 2013	BOT, PR, DBO
Operations	Obtain student records: obtain permission from parents, contact previous schools, etc.	Apr 2013	Jul 2013	PR, DBO
Staffing	Recruit school staff: draft job descriptions, post positions, interview candidates, check references	Feb 2013	Jun 2013	PR, DBO
Staffing	Hire school staff: salary negotiations and offer letters	Mar 2013	Jun 2013	PR, DBO
Academic	Research and secure curriculum resources	Mar 2013	Jun 2013	PR
Finance	Approve budget for Fiscal Year 13-14	Apr 2013	Apr 2013	BOT
Operations	Secure a contract for food services with vendor	Apr 2013	May 2013	DBO
Operations	Secure transportation: contact students home districts, coordinate bus routes and stops, inform parents of options	Apr 2013	Jul 2013	DBO
Human Resources	Finalize staff handbook and personnel policies	Apr 2013	Jun 2013	BOT, PR, DBO
Academic	Prepare school calendar and distribute	Apr 2013	May 2013	PR
Technology	Install Technology	Jun 2013	Aug 2013	DBO
Facility	Obtain Certificate of Occupancy	Jun 2013	Jun 2013	DBO
Recruitment	Conduct open houses for admitted students	Jun 2013	Jul 2013	PR, DBO
Academic	Contract with Related Service Providers	Jun 2013	Aug 2013	PR
Operations	Secure insurance policies	Jun 2013	Jul 2013	DBO
Professional Dev.	Prepare Summer Staff Training	Jun 2013	Aug 2013	PR
Finance	Complete Initial Statement of Financial Controls	Jul 2013	Jul 2013	DBO
Human Resources	Complete staff fingerprints and background checks	Jul 2013	Jul 2013	DBO, PR
Operations	Secure IEPs and student records	Jul 2013	Aug 2013	DBO, PR

Operations	Create a draft SAVE plan and submit it to SED	Jul 2013	Aug 2013	DBO
Operations	Purchase AEDs and train staff	Jul 2013	Aug 2013	DBO
Professional Dev.	Conduct Summer Staff Training	Aug 2013	Aug 2013	PR
Academic	Create lesson plans for first weeks of school	Aug 2013	Aug 2013	PR, Teachers

M. Dissolution Plan

DIRT Charter School will work closely with appropriate representatives of area school districts to develop and implement a dissolution plan that will govern the process of transferring students and student records, including Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), student health and immunization records, attendance records, and report cards. Prior to dissolution, the school will conduct meetings for parents to provide information about the dissolution and to support them in making decisions regarding selection of educational programs for their children.

The Board will designate one trustee and one school employee to oversee the closing of the school from an operational and financial perspective. After an employee termination date is established, the school will notify all employees of termination of employment and/or contracts, and notify benefit providers of pending termination of all employees. Employees will be notified of eligibility for New York State Unemployment Insurance pursuant to any regulations of the New York State Department of Labor. The dissolution plan will provide that all property, which the school has leased, borrowed, or contracted for use will be returned. The return of such property will conform with contractual prearrangement, where applicable, or will be done with reasonable promptness. The school will accumulate a reserve fund by setting aside funds each year for the first three years of operation to cover debts in the case of the school's dissolution. In the event of dissolution of assets in excess of those necessary to meet liabilities, all remaining assets of the school shall be transferred to another charter school within New York State as designated by the Board.

Attachment 1: Admissions Policy and Procedures

All students who reside in the state of New York are eligible to attend DIRT Charter School. The school shall be open to any child who is eligible under the laws of New York State for admission to a public school, and the school shall ensure compliance with all applicable anti-discrimination laws governing public schools. There are no financial or academic requirements for admission to DIRT Charter School; admission of students shall not be limited on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, ethnicity, race, creed, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, or for any other basis that would be unlawful for a public school. Children will be admitted to kindergarten who have reached the age of five by December 1 of the year in which they apply. The school intends to admit new students into kindergarten through 6th grade each year as space permits.

DIRT will engage in extensive efforts to inform families in Orange County about the new school. We will reach out to local schools, community-based organizations, businesses and religious organizations to raise awareness in the community. We will conduct open houses at the school; disseminate materials and host information sessions at day care centers, public and private elementary schools. Parental outreach and recruitment activities will be conducted in multiple languages.

To apply to DIRT Charter School, the only requirement is that the school receives a completed application for the child. Applications must be submitted by April 1st by families of students interested in attending the school. Applications must be hand delivered, mailed or e-mailed, and received no later than the admission period deadline listed on the form. The school will provide, via e-mail, confirmation of applications received by the deadline.

The DIRT Charter School application form will be designed in accordance with the State Education Department guidelines. The school will adapt the uniform application form within the following allowable parameters: print the application form with the school's letterhead and/or logo; brand the application form by including the school's mission statement and explanatory information about the school, and request additional information. All data elements that may be required to be submitted by the applicant will be marked with asterisk and the form will include the following notation: "* The items marked with an asterisk (*) are the only items that may be required in order to apply to this charter school. Any items not marked by an (*) are optional."

The following statement will also be included in the application form:

Non-Discrimination Statement: *A charter school shall not discriminate against or limit the admission of any student on any unlawful basis, including on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, race, creed, gender, national origin, religion or ancestry. A school may not require any action by a student or family (such as an admissions test, interview, essay, attendance at an information session, etc.) in order for an applicant to either receive or submit an application for admission to that school.*

The application will request information about students' eligibility for free- and reduced-price meals, but will not require that information.

DIRT Charter School will use the following preferences to enroll new students:

- Siblings of students enrolled in the school will have an absolute preference. When a student in the lottery with sibling(s) in the lottery is drawn, that student's sibling(s) will be added next to the list.
- Students residing within the district of location will receive an absolute preference, i.e., will be drawn before students living outside the district.

If the number of applicants exceeds the school's capacity, a random selection lottery process will be conducted on or about April 15, but no earlier than April 1. The lottery will be conducted by the Principal, a board member and a third adult who has no affiliation with the school. The actual process will be open to the public. After checking the birth dates to make sure that the application is the appropriate age for the entering grade, the child's name will be entered into the lottery. The following will also be noted for each child entered into the lottery:

- If there are siblings applying, each child's entry into the lottery will indicate that there is a sibling also applying.
- The place of residence will be noted so that preference can be given to students living in the school district in which DIRT is located.

The lottery will follow these steps for each grade:

1. Siblings of students already enrolled in the school will be drawn
2. Students who reside within DIRT's home school district will be drawn
3. Students who reside outside of DIRT's home school district will be drawn

Once the number of students equal to the number of available seats, the remaining applicants will be drawn and placed on the wait list in the order in which they are drawn. After all the names have been chosen, the parents will be notified by letter. For those students who are accepted, the letter will include a list of forms that need to be provided, specifically an original birth certificate, social security card, immunization records and proof of address, and a time to turn over the forms. Parents/guardians will be expected to document residence at the time of registration following our lottery; acceptable documentation will include a lease and/or utility bill.

For children not selected, the letter will indicate their number on the wait list, and will describe the steps that will take place if a space becomes available. That wait list will be maintained for the entire year. If a student withdraws, the next applicant on the wait list in that grade will be called and offered the space. Student withdrawal will be permitted upon the written request of the parent or legal guardian and proof of enrollment in another school. Following the written request of the admitting school, student records will be transferred. If a student does not return in September, the school will telephone and send the family a certified letter to determine the child's status. When a space opens, the waiting list will then be activated to admit the next child on the same grade level. For applications received after the April 1 deadline, those students will be added to the wait list in the order they are submitted. The wait list will expire annually at the lottery drawing for the next school year.

After the first year, students returning to the school will be considered to be enrolled in each successive year through the completion of 6th grade. Each year, school personnel will contact the families of all parents and guardians of currently enrolled students in writing to discuss enrollment plans for the following school year. Parents or guardians must then submit to the school a letter of intent confirming their desire to enroll their child(ren) in the school for the following year.

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Press

Warwick Advertiser front page announcement on March 2, 2012 of our first informational meeting.



Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Press
Times Herald Record Article from March 2, 2012

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NEWS SPORTS COMMUNITY BUSINESS MULTIMEDIA OPINION ENTERTAINMENT LIFESTYLE HEALTH

Warwick group seeks charter school with green focus

By Meghan E. Murphy
Times Herald-Record
Published: 2:00 AM - 03/02/12

Text Size: A | A | A

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A group of Warwick parents, educators and community members are crafting a proposal for a charter school focused on sustainability and the environment.

If successful, the school would be the first rural charter school in Orange County. Applications for schools opening for the 2013-14 school year are due to the state in July.

A few proposals for Hudson Valley charter schools have emerged and fizzled before jumping the hurdles of a complicated state application. A group in Newburgh is also mounting an application this year for a charter high school to educate drop-out students.

The Warwick group is considering locations throughout southern Orange County, looking to draw some 200 students to a kindergartenthrough-sixth-grade program. The group believes it could make use of one of several empty school buildings in the region, including Pine Island Elementary School.

Shannon Hockswender, a preschool teacher creating curriculum for the proposal, said the group members are interested in an alternative education model. While recognizing that students succeed in Warwick schools, she said parents aren't satisfied with the standardization of learning.

"A lot of education right now is top-down coming from the government. It's standards, it's curriculum, and it's not being child driven," Hockswender said.

The charter school program will incorporate outdoor learning and use local farm products as much as possible in the school lunch program, parent and teacher Christina Pahucki said.

"We live in an area that is so bountiful with ways to incorporate science, nature, and the environment into an education that I really wanted to be a part of something like that," Tracey Pietrzak, a Warwick parents, said.

The group has a lot of work ahead to meet the July application deadline. It must hold community meetings, garner support from parents and community groups, and complete a detailed application.

The first community presentation will be held from 1 to 3 p.m. March 18 at the Albert Wisner Library in Warwick.

mmurphy@th-record.com

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Press
The Warwick Advertiser Article from the March 15, 2012 front page



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Growing a new school from ‘DIRT’

Pine Island-based group hopes to open charter school by fall 2013

PUBLISHED MAR 15, 2012 AT 10:35 AM (UPDATED MAR 15, 2012)

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By Abby Wolf

WARWICK — Citing a desire for a more innovative curriculum and a school free of mandates that they see as too restrictive, a local group of parents, educators and members of the community are applying to The Charter Schools Institute, State University of New York, to open Orange County’s first charter school.

Shannon Hockswender, spokeswoman for the proposed new school, said that the parents she’s spoken with want a school that would be “innovative and unique.”

While many students initially may come from Pine Island and Warwick in general, her group “also wanted to draw kids from all over Orange County – we may have a shot (at getting state and federal funds)” for the new school, she said.

The school, to be named DIRT – an acronym for “Developing Innovative Rural Thinking” – would teach environmental studies and have science as its main focus, while concentrating on agriculture.



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Public school – with a difference

Charter schools are technically public schools in that they are free – they’re paid for by taxes – and are open to all students. The difference is that they have more flexibility with the curriculum, the school day and length of the school year. Some charter schools focus on arts or business or foreign languages, for example.

Further, charter schools may apply for and receive private money in the form of grants.

No “cherry-picking”

Contrary to popular belief, a charter school may not simply siphon off the top students in a given district.

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Press
The Warwick Advertiser Article from the March 15, 2012 front page (continued)

Students may come from the town in which the school is sited, or they may live in surrounding towns. A charter school is open to all students, on a first-come, first served, basis. Depending upon the size of the school and the need, additional prospective students may be put on a waiting list, and then be chosen by lottery to attend.

In the case of DIRT charter school, Hockswender has more than 100 prospective students from Warwick, Florida, Minisink, Goshen, Westtown, Middletown, Chester, Campbell Hall and Unionville.

DIRT ultimately plans to serve 200 students, K-5.

“When you’re granted a charter, you want to pull from all areas (versus just one district),” Hockswender said.

Flexibility for teachers, choice in learning for students

Teachers in charter schools have more latitude to teach their courses – they can choose to spend a greater part of the school day on a given subject, versus the need to spend, say, 60 instructional minutes of a class day on English Language Arts in a conventional public school, Hockswender noted.

“You could have (for example) a two-hour block of ELA” one day, perhaps 30 minutes the next day, and spend additional time on subjects such as science or art.

Hockswender said that the charter school setting also permits kids to “have some choice in their learning ... to have ownership.”

She added that teachers and students can do more project-based activities, using the Constructivist model of learning. (Constructivism is a form of educational theory that says that students learn collaboratively with their teachers, constructing their own understanding of the material, as opposed to learning and memorizing discrete bits of knowledge that the teacher gives them, which is the educational norm.)

Interdisciplinary curriculum

Hockswender found “Seeds to Read,” a combined science and reading curriculum: “It was field-tested and approved (by NYSED) ... (but a typical) public school wouldn’t pick this ... (they) would do a science, a reading and a math separately.”

In addition to environmental science, the proposed curriculum will include ELA, math, social studies, foreign language art and music, as well as after-school programs.

She added that the actual curriculum is still being developed, and will then be presented to the public, followed by a budget.

Standards

Still, charter schools must follow (state and federal) core teaching standards, and teachers are required to submit exit standards before promoting kids to the next grade level, to make sure that “kids are ready to move on,” Hockswender said.

Students at charter schools are still required to take state standardized tests, particularly the ELA and math.

According to The Charter Schools Institute, State University of New York Web site:

“As set forth in the Practices, Policies and Procedures for the Renewal of Charter Schools Authorized by the State University Board of Trustees, the single most important factor that the Charter Schools Institute and the State University Board of Trustees consider in making renewal determinations is the school’s record in generating successful student achievement outcomes. Whatever grades a school is providing, the expectation is that most if not all of the students will leave the school fully prepared and educated for the next step in their

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Press
The Warwick Advertiser Article from the March 15, 2012 front page (continued)

academic careers—middle school, high school or college.

In order to determine whether a school has met that high standard, each charter school that the State University Board of Trustees authorizes is required to enter into a performance agreement, known as the Accountability Plan, which becomes part of its charter.”

Having a mission

The state, Hockswender continued, will only grant charters to schools “with a distinct, succinct and consistent vision and mission.” Everyone involved has to be on the same page.

Special-needs students

Another advantage to the charter school model, according to Hockswender, is that the school does not need to have a Special Education teacher on staff, but rather has the flexibility to contract one out from a service provider, based on the number of Special Education students in a given year.

Limits on charter school funds

There are some restrictions on funding for these alternative schools: Funds may not be used for construction, re-construction, acquisition, rehabilitation or improvement of school facilities; however, the school may apply to the Charter School Stimulus Funds. Also, charter schools are permitted to accept gifts and grants to cover start-up costs. “It’s a lot of paperwork,” Hockswender said.

How did DIRT get its name?

“We were looking at a bunch of names, including place names, then we learned that the charter school commissioner wants the (school’s) name to match its mission,” Hockswender said. The name is very much in keeping with the environmental mission and agricultural area.

Why a charter school now?

“In so many New York State districts, the government is taking away funding for schools and our kids...we have to get creative for our kids,” Hockswender said.

She continued: “It’s interesting that there’s funding for charter schools, but no money for regular public schools.”

While DIRT is planned to be a K-5 charter school, Hockswender’s board’s survey results showed an interest in a middle school charter school eventually.

Process

Hockswender and DIRT’s board must complete and mail in an application to the Charter Board in Albany, and must undergo an interview process.

While some charter schools have failed because their boards weren’t consistent in their mission, Hockswender believes DIRT will do OK.

On the other hand, she said that even if the application is denied for a charter school in Orange County this time, “It’s been a great process,” and she’s “learned a lot.”



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Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Press
The Warwick Valley Dispatch front page from March 21, 2012

Digging Deeper into DIRT

By Nora Gurvich

A group of local educators, parents and business owners who are attempting to create the first rural charter school in New York State gave a presentation at the library to a crowd with opposing viewpoints about the sensitive subject on Sun., March 18.

The Developing Innovative Rural Thinking Charter School, or DIRT, would be a science, technology and environmentally focused charter school in Orange County for kindergarten through fifth grade with the hopes of adding sixth grade in its second year of existence.

Lead applicant, and a member of both the planning and curriculum teams for DIRT, Shannon Hockswender introduced herself as an educator with 20 years of experience. Hockswender stated that the team of people corroborating to open DIRT are educators and community members with a shared philosophy, "to develop a school that would instill a joy for learning in the children."

The presentation touched on general information beginning with what a charter school is, and then explained how charter schools are monitored. Following introductory material, Hockswender moved on to the more specific topic of the DIRT school; from the immediate and future plans and curriculum for DIRT, to the food services, technology and athletic programming intended at DIRT, to funding and accountability required of running a charter school.

What is a Charter School?
Charter schools are tuition-free public schools, open to all children, which operate independently of the hosting district. They are often created by parents, educators, and community leaders that are seeking an alternative to an existing public education system, and do not require the permission of the hosting district.

Charters are required to administer state tests and each state standards, but can govern themselves and therefore do not have to follow some of the mandates that traditional public schools must adhere to, giving them

more flexibility and autonomy. Charter schools are monitored by the State Education Department and the Board of Regents, and have to complete the same school report card and audit reports as traditional public schools.

Charter school budgets come from the taxpayers in the district of the attending students. This means that sixty to seventy percent of the tax dollars it costs to educate a student that resides in Warwick would follow that child to DIRT, while the remaining thirty to forty percent would remain with the residing district for transportation and special education costs. Likewise if a student resided in Westtown the same percentage of tax dollars would follow that child to DIRT, and so on. Charters also often rely on grant money for financial support of their schools, making the challenge of successfully running an independent school that much greater.

Students are taken on a first come first served basis until the school is at full capacity. DIRT intends to educate 210 students. Once full, remaining students interested in attending would be put in to a lottery system in the event that a space should open up at the school.

With nearly 5000 charter schools in the United States educating over one million students, a charter school is not a rare or unusual concept.

Why a Charter School?

Additional photo on page 5



Photo by Nora Gurvich

Allison Berman (from left) and Shannon Hockswender, of the Developing Innovative Rural Thinking Charter School movement, gave a presentation at the Albert Wisner Public Library about their intentions of opening the first rural charter school in New York State.

Digging Deeper into DIRT

continued from page 1

When questioned about the impulse to create DIRT Hockswender replied that as an educator she has always thought charter schools are exciting because of the flexibility they allow in curriculum and technique.

Allison Berman, a parent and member of the DIRT start-up committee specializing in food services, commented that, "For me it was food services and about supporting the community. We have all these great farms around here and the students could really get involved." DIRT intends to have the students actively participate in the food services process from planting and harvesting crops to preparing meals for the school. Hockswender summed up the response by saying that "at the heart of it, it's about the kids."

This is not the first time a group of citizens have attempted to create a charter school in the area. Past attempts at a charter school in and around Warwick occurred back in 1996 and again in 2006. The first application was denied, and the second time the application process was never completed as the project never made it to that stage of development.

When questioned why this attempt would be different the answer was that this is a different group of people coming together to create something, and the mission and focus of this school is unique. DIRT's focus is one in keeping with the acronym as the curriculum as explained by Hockswender delves into agriculture, earth science, mathematics, art, music, and exploratory foundational experiences in engineering through experiential and integrated learning that crosses over all subjects.

The Process of Securing a Charter

Although New York has hundreds of charter schools, none are in a rural setting. The application process is an arduous one beginning with a submission of a letter of intent and showing community outreach and support, and continuing with a completed proposal due to the New York State Department of Education in July. The committee will hear the decision in Sept. If approved, that gives the school one year to be up and running.

When asked about the location of the

said that the conversation was just beginning. Pahucki said "We are looking at vacant school buildings in Orange County."

Opposing Viewpoints

"My overall reaction at this point is that I don't see the benefit over what we already have in Warwick. And it will financially hit the school system" said Dave Eaton, president of the Warwick Valley Central School District Board of Education. "We have high performing schools," he continued.

Given the current economic climate, concerns were voiced over the loss of revenue to school districts. As around seventy percent of the tax dollars to educate a child would go with the student to their new school it was wondered what that would mean to the district the student resides in. Comments included that a loss of revenue could result in programming being in jeopardy in the school systems. In response to this question the committee members said they couldn't know, but that their intent was not to harm the districts or schools, but to do what is best for the children.

Several attendees conveyed that this movement should be a wake-up call for school administrations and districts. With over one hundred families already showing interest in the new school from communities throughout Orange County including Florida, Goshen, Greenwood Lake, Minisink, Montgomery, Walden, Westtown and Warwick, it was suggested that the schools might ask themselves why parents are seeking an alternative to the public education available to their children.

More Information

The DIRT initiative is seeking help from administrators, educators, and the greater public throughout Orange County as the school will be open to children in the entire county.

The DIRT committee intends to present again in the county, looking for dates in Greenwood Lake, Middletown and Westtown. More information about the presentation and charter school is available at www.dirtcharter.com.

Editor's Note: Nora Gurvich, a reporter for the Warwick Valley Dispatch, is also a member of the DIRT Charter School committee assisting

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Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Press

The Warwick Valley Dispatch in the Letters to the Editor Section from April 4, 2012 under the question "There's discussion of Opening a Charter School in Warwick that Would be the First Rural Charter School in New York State. How Do You Think This Would Affect Warwick?"



"Charter schools can be a positive thing if they do not have a negative impact on the greater majority of the people. I'm not sure if having one here is a good idea because I can see a negative impact on programs like PIE and the class sizes in the other schools. I'm not sure we have the population to support it. In general, I think they are a good idea, especially in troubled areas where students don't have a lot of choices in districts that have problems. Charter schools there would give motivated students choices. I'm just not sure that is the situation here in Warwick."

Sharon Scott
Arundel Publishing, Editor



"The only thing I've heard about charter schools is that a lot of people like them. There might be a different curriculum. It might not be as strict. Now students are on such a tight schedule. I know we didn't do nearly as much as they do in school now, and sometimes a kid has to be a kid not just a robot. I don't know enough about the one they are talk-

ing about making in Pine Island. They've got to cover the basics and they need to use more books than computers because without a computer, students don't even know how to open up a book today. I think too much information can be too much. If a charter school can make it not as hard for the kids, then I like it. A lot of times, as soon as my daughter comes home she has to do homework. It's not a lot of homework but for a 6-year-old, it is a lot to do after school. She is in the top of her class at Sandfordville, though, so what do you say? 'It's too hard on her but she's doing great?' She's missing out on being a kid. The homework doesn't leave much time for play. If the charter school they want to make here is agricultural, that would be good. Having that agricultural component will teach them a work ethic besides brain ethics. You need both to be a well-rounded person. To grow your own food is excellent. Our farm has been certified organic since 1976. My daughter can eat anything out of our farm without washing it. Learning about growing food is teaching the kids to sustain their own selves down the road."

Vincent D'Attolico (& Clarice)
Certified Organic Farmer



"I think the enrollment might go down in the local schools, but not by much because the charter schools are a small population. It depends on how you feel about it. I personally like public school. I went to public school. My kids go to public school. I like choice. I think it's a good thing to have choice. If the charter school here is agricultural, that could be a good thing. But I like the public schools."

Lauren Decker
Driving School Instructor & School Bus Driver



"In general, I'm a supporter of charter schools and bringing people a choice of how to get their education if that's what they want. I think it's always a good thing to have choice. Competition always makes things better. Sometimes you get too comfortable in a situation and rest on your laurels, so sometimes a charter school can push them to improve the public school."

Stuart
Athletic Trainer

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Press
The Warwick Valley Dispatch in the Letters to the Editor Section from March 7, 2012

Alice Would Be Welcome at Charter School

Editor,

In response to Mr. Joseph Stanaitis, thank you for regularly stepping up and voicing your opinions about all things local. And yes, we are fortunate to have a local paper like the Dispatch to print all sides equally.

Many of the people on the committee to start the DIRT Charter school were simply not old enough to have been parents at the time when "our schools were full and the majority of grads were going off to college." However, it would seem that the decisions made during

those very same years that chose to spend money to build large capacity buildings at huge taxpayer expense, is now coming to the surface. Therefore, your concerns about the potential closures and layoffs in the WVCSD may be better addressed by the current administration who manage our school tax money, as well the powers that be in Albany, who decide how much aid our district receives.

As parents of elementary school children, we were concerned that in Orange County, (as well as New York State) there are many schools that are listed as "improving." Add this fact to the constant budget constraints that continue to limit choices and programs within our local school districts. Indeed it is a very tough situation for any district to be in.

On the positive side, we are extremely fortunate to live in a region that supports agriculture, environmental accountability and conservation, the arts, and a diverse international population. Combine these thoughts with passionate educators, community members and eager to learn students, and you have a recipe for a successful learning environment. DIRT Charter school will prove to meet and exceed the current New York State "Core Curriculum" requirements. The mission statement of the DIRT Charter School is that it will provide children with the opportunity to reach their full academic and developmental potential and become lifelong learners by fostering interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking skills, and a deep understanding of the interdependence of our local and global existence. One of the main objectives of the charter school is to include purchasing local produce and products for students. Children will be incorporating nutrition, food preparation and lunchroom set-up into their basic curriculum. Several Orange County farms have already come forward to offer many forms of support.

A small elementary school with high academic standing was a major draw for our young family to buy a house here. When asked, this was the main reason that many young families chose to purchase their homes in Warwick. I believe that the reason you have not found there to be dissent among the readers of the Dispatch that were interviewed as well as even local residents, is because the climate of education is changing. Simply put, we can do better for our kids. Creating a Charter School will encourage young families to once again choose Warwick and the surrounding areas to fill those vacant "For Sale" properties. Our intention is to create something that will benefit not just Warwick, but our whole area, by offering a choice in public education. You mention educators and new college grads are out of work. A new school would create many new jobs in education as well as support staff. It would also bring people to our area to attend school activities that could only increase revenue for local businesses.

My name is Tracey Pietrzak and I am a resident of Warwick. I am a small business owner, the secretary of the Warwick Council of PTA's, and the parents of two children that currently attend 2 schools in Warwick. To the best of my knowledge, I do not currently live near any "girls named Alice." However, should Alice be interested in attending a charter school, she and her parents are welcome to learn more about the DIRT school by visiting our website at <http://www.dirtcharter.com/index.html>.

TRACEY PIETRZAK

Why NOT a Charter School Now?

Editor,

Many of the questions in Mr. Stanaitis's letter "Why a Charter School Now?" could have been answered if he had just gone to the proposed school's website at dirtcharter.com or gone to the informational meeting we held.

The proposed charter school is the result of many parents, educators, and community members wishing to create an option in public education for Orange County whose names are listed on our website. Our list of people supporting the charter initiative, or offering to help, grows daily. Once we determine our proposed board, a more formal list of people involved and their roles will be posted.

The Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) charter school is proposed to be a school of about 200 students, and about that many prospective students have already signed up for the fall of 2013. Any New York student can attend, and those within 15 miles of our location will be provided transportation, the same as if they went to a private school. Currently, our prospective students come from eight different school districts.

The area school districts have been laying off teachers for years, creating a pool of very talented and experienced teachers without jobs in this area. DIRT's class sizes are proposed to be small, and therefore will create a number of jobs for teachers and school staff. We have already been flooded by the resumes of highly qualified teachers looking for jobs.

New York's urban areas have many educational options, but these have been slow to spread to rural areas. In other states, that have had charter school laws longer, they have charter schools both in urban and rural communities. New York is getting there, with three charter school proposals this year in Orange County. What you are seeing happen is a need for choices in public education, and groups of people trying to create options. I wish one of the previous local charter school attempts had been successful and started a school a dozen years ago.

DIRT plans to have longer school days, with students spending much of their time engaged in hands on learning. DIRT students will be outdoors as much as possible, and will integrate environmental science throughout the curriculum. Assessment will be done in a variety of creative ways that will incorporate the arts and music, rather than primarily using written testing. DIRT also proposes to have extensive after school programs that reflect student interests in the arts, music, sports, etc. The proposed lunch program will support our local farmers, bring local produce into our school, and involve our students in preparing and serving the food.

At a time when school districts are constrained by unfunded mandates, are constantly cutting student programs, increasing class sizes, and focusing more and more on teaching to the newest test, charter schools are being proposed to offer parents other alternatives.

So, if your question Mr. Stanaitis, is why now, I'd have to ask why NOT now?

CHRISSY PAHUCKI

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Press
Times Herald Record Article from July 17, 2012

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NEWS SPORTS COMMUNITY BUSINESS MULTIMEDIA OPINION ENTERTAINMENT LIFESTYLE HEALTH

4 of mid-Hudson's proposed charter schools clear major hurdles

Photo 1 of 1 | Zoom Photo + BUY PHOTO



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Four proposed charter schools in the area are nearer than ever to opening. Ben Pahucki, 8; Shannon Hockswender, a lead applicant for the proposed DIRT charter school; Samantha Pahucki, 11; and Owen Hockswender, 10, learn about turtles in Pine Island on Monday.

John DeSanto/Times Herald-Record

By Pauline Liu
Times Herald-Record
Published: 2:00 AM - 07/17/12

All four of the mid-Hudson's charter school proposals have made it one step closer to opening their doors next year.

On Friday, the state Education Department allowed the two remaining proposals to advance to the next phase, which is submitting full applications. The Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School is an elementary school proposed for southern Orange County, while the Newburgh Preparatory Charter High School would serve dropouts in the Greater Newburgh area.

"I'm elated because we get to submit this application, into which we put so much hard work," said Tom Fitzgerald, who is the organizer behind Newburgh Prep.

Earlier this month, the SUNY board approved two potential charter schools here to move on to the next round. They are Hudson Scholars Charter School and the Liberty Public Charter School, which have been proposed for Newburgh and Middletown, respectively. They applied for charters or contracts from the SUNY Charter Institute.

Three of the schools are applying to open by September 2013. The Hudson Scholars Charter School has a proposed opening of August 2013.

Instead of being overseen by a board of education and a schools superintendent, each charter school is run by a board of trustees. They offer an alternative to district-run public schools. Most also have longer school days.

Now the waiting game has begun. The two applicants to SUNY must wait to see if they'll be invited to face-to-face interviews with members of the Charter Institute next month. If they advance to the next phase, SUNY charter applicants could be awarded charters by October.

For state Board of Regents applicants, there's a longer wait. The Regents will vote on who will be awarded charters at its meeting in December.

pliu@th-record.com

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Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letters of Support



Pine Island Chamber of Commerce

June 2, 2012

Ms. Christina Pahucki
DIRT Charter School
PO Box 23
Pine Island, NY 10969

Dear Ms. Pahucki:

As a community non-profit organization, the Pine Island Chamber was founded to support, protect and promote the people, businesses and land in this unique black dirt region. We do so through a variety of community events, an on-going beautification program, community farmers market, local business publicity and promotion, a black dirt scholarship program, and more. Pine Island is a hamlet of the Town of Warwick and works cooperatively with surrounding communities for the benefit of our members and residents.

We are in full support of the proposal for the Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (D.I.R.T.) Charter School in our community, and the potential it has for providing a hands-on rural learning environment for elementary students in the region.

The school's theme and proposed curriculum are in line with the area's agricultural heritage, as well as a perfect fit for the many outdoor/farming/ environmental learning opportunities that exist in and around the hamlet.

There are many natural, cooperative relationships that can be fostered that would benefit the children's studies as well as benefit the community. Examples include the many local produce, dairy, and sod farms, local producers of eggs and honey, the local historical society, access to a number of natural creeks and rivers, a nearby wildlife refuge and Appalachian Trail access point, unique local geology, local farmers markets, local preschool, and more!

An elementary school in our hamlet also provides additional jobs, visitors and customers to frequent our local businesses.

We enthusiastically support the possibilities this charter school presents. Let us know what we can do to help!

Sincerely,

Marlene Caraballo
Marlene Caraballo
President

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letters of Support

**THE WALLKILL
RIVER SCHOOL**



Shawn Dell Joyce
Director

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Thomas Bolger
Jim Rathbun

Legal Counsel:

Gary Schuster, Esq.
Jacobowitz and Gubits
Walden, NY.

"Local Color, Local Flavor, Local Art!"

June 1, 2012

New York State Board of Education

Re:
DIRT Charter School
PO Box 23
Pine Island, NY 10969

Dear Board of Education-

Our organization highly recommends chartering the DIRT Charter School for Orange County. We are a nonprofit 501©3 artist's cooperative with a mission of creating economic opportunity for local artists, and preserving our small farms and agricultural heritage. Part of our efforts are raising awareness of our region's rich agricultural history, particularly in the Black Dirt area, which produces our nation's onion supply.

Our children are growing up in a region with a unique history and geography that most are oblivious to. Our public school system is very homogenized without much local emphasis, or arts education. The DIRT Charter School can fill a niche here, and connect our children with the land that sustains us through art and education.

We intend to support the DIRT Charter School with our artistic resources, and assist this sister organization in becoming a much-needed flourishing program in our county. We urge you to do the same, and thank you. Please feel free to contact me personally if there is anything further you need.

Sincerely,

Shawn Dell Joyce
Director
Cell (845) 728-4001

232 Ward St. Montgomery, NY 12549 (845) 457-ARTS (2787)

www.WallkillRiverSchool.com

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letters of Support



THE GRANGE

AMERICA'S FAMILY COMMUNITY FRATERNITY

Hamptonburgh Grange # 950 May 1, 2012

Hamptonburgh Grange # 950, Patrons of Husbandry support the Dirt Charter School initiative, (Developing Innovative Rural Thinking). the National Grange, a Family Fraternity, which was organized in 1867, with the Subordinate Granges. (Community Granges) started in 1868: Have as one of their declarations of Purposes, to advance the cause of education, we recognize the necessity to develop new and better methods of education. Thus we support the Dirt Charter School initiative.

Hamptonburgh Grange # 950

Frances Hulle, Secretary

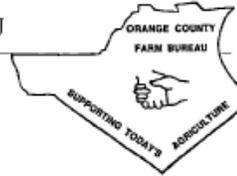
Frances Hulle

28 Hulle Road
Middletown, New York, 10941

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letters of Support

ORANGE COUNTY FARM BUREAU

193 BIG ISLAND ROAD
WARWICK, NY 10990
845-651-3300



DIRT Charter School
PO Box 23
Pine Island, NY 10969

July 3, 2012

To Whom it May Concern,

Orange County Farm Bureau was excited to hear about the potential for a rural-oriented elementary school in our area. We feel that agricultural and environmental education are of increasing importance for youth who will be responsible for feeding 2.4 billion more by 2050 on the same (or less) land than we currently farm in 2012. The Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School may be a way for us to reach that goal as community members and as consumers.

We support a school that will offer interdisciplinary learning, unique hands-on opportunities and standard academics, all with an eye on community and the earth. As farmers and environmentalists, we are very interested in seeing the plan for the DIRT Charter School come to fruition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Lupinski". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Lupinski, President

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letters of Support

Orange County
Vegetable Improvement Cooperative
Association, Inc.

8 Scanlon Ave.
Florida, New York 10921

OFFICERS

Paul Ruskiewicz
President
Pine Island, NY
DIRT Charter School
PO Box 23
Pine Island, NY 10969

John Glebocki
Vice President
Goshen, NY
June 19, 2012

Carol Korey
Secretary
Florida, NY
Dear NYS Education Department,

Alex Kocot, Jr.
Treasurer
Warwick, NY
This letter is in support of the Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School. As we are faced with the challenge of feeding a growing population (estimated to be 2.4 billion by 2050) the importance of agricultural and environmental education of our young people becomes increasingly vital.

The Orange County Vegetable Improvement Cooperative Association feels that given the strong agricultural industry in Orange County, a charter school of this nature would be extremely beneficial to our area. Therefore, we fully support the plan for the DIRT Charter School and we look forward to seeing it come to fruition.

Sincerely,



Paul Ruskiewicz
President

DIRECTORS

Ronald Myruski
Chris Pawelski
Russ Kowal
John David Madura
Lewis Myruski, III
Rick Minkus
Mark Rogowski, Jr.
Tom Zangrillo

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letters of Support



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Orange County
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Executive Director

Dawn Ansbro

Arts Administrator

Jen D'Andrea

July 18, 2012

New York State Board of Education

Re: DIRT Charter School

Dear Board of Education:

The Orange County Arts Council is a non-profit arts service organization whose goal is to promote, support and unite the arts in the county and to look for ways in which we can integrate the arts into the fabric of our community life. As such, we enthusiastically support the DIRT Charter School which will provide a unique opportunity to educate our students and the community about our farms and our agricultural history through mediums such as art and music.

At the Arts Council, we believe strongly that involvement in the arts helps students to develop critical thinking skills, embrace diversity and become better citizens. The DIRT Charter School will establish this very important foundation for our students. I have had the pleasure of working with several of the individuals involved in the development of this project and believe strongly that their combined talent, dedication and commitment will result in the successful creation of this very valuable asset for the county.

The Orange County Arts Council is prepared to support this project in any way we can. Please let us know how we can help.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dawn Ansbro".

Dawn Ansbro
Executive Director

www.ocartscouncil.org

P.O. Box 574
Sugar Loaf, New York 10981
Tel 845.469.9168 • Fax 845.469.3145

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letter to the Minisink Superintendent of Schools

DIRT Charter School
P.O. Box 23
Pine Island, NY 10969

Minisink Central School District
P.O. Box 217
Rte. 6, Slate Hill, NY 10973

July 26, 2012

Dear Superintendent Latini,

My name is Shannon Hockswender and I am a member of the Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School applicant team. Our team is applying to the New York State Department of Education Board of Regents in the hopes of creating an elementary charter school for Orange County students. The school would open in September 2013 and would serve Kindergarten through fifth grade students, in 2014, sixth grade would be added.

Our team vision is to create a school that embraces the rich history of agriculture in Orange County. One of the key design elements at DIRT Charter School will be to provide each student with a solid foundation in the Environmental Sciences. Students at our school will spend a significant portion of instructional time outdoors engaged in hands-on learning. Our curriculum will also have a strong character education component. Teachers will concentrate on guiding students to be the best they can be, providing each student with a high level of instructional support. Our school will be small with two classes at each grade level with a maximum of 250 students. Any student that lives in Orange County will be eligible to be a student at DIRT Charter School.

In an effort to create a diverse and well-balanced student population our public outreach team has been hosting informational meetings about our proposed school throughout Orange County. We have created a website (www.dirtcharter.com) where you can find information about our proposed school and contact members of our team with questions.

We submitted a Letter of Intent, which has been accepted by the NYS Board of Regents. Our next step in the process is to submit our full charter school application, which is due on July 31, 2012. Part of the application process requires us (under charter school law) to notify any and all community stakeholders that a charter school may either be located in your school district and/or your students may be able to attend such school. We do not have a set location for our school yet, however an ideal one would have a large outdoor area for our students to work in. Two facilities/spaces that we are listing on our application as possibilities are located in Minisink.

We welcome any comments or questions from you and can be reached through our website, listed above, or you can call our media contact person, Ms. Alison Berman at (646) 773-4081 or email her at ali@withlovealib.com

Respectfully,

Shannon Hockswender
Member of the DIRT Charter School Application Team

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letter to the Florida Superintendent of Schools

DIRT Charter School
P.O. Box 23
Pine Island, NY 10969

Florida Central School District
51 North Main St.
Florida, NY 10921

July 26, 2012

Dear Superintendent Munro,

My name is Shannon Hockswender and I am a member of the Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School applicant team. Our team is applying to the New York State Department of Education Board of Regents in the hopes of creating an elementary charter school for Orange County students. The school would open in September 2013 and would serve Kindergarten through fifth grade students, in 2014, sixth grade would be added.

Our team vision is to create a school that embraces the rich history of agriculture in Orange County. One of the key design elements at DIRT Charter School will be to provide each student with a solid foundation in the Environmental Sciences. Students at our school will spend a significant portion of instructional time outdoors engaged in hands-on learning. Our curriculum will also have a strong character education component. Teachers will concentrate on guiding students to be the best they can be, providing each student with a high level of instructional support. Our school will be small with two classes at each grade level with a maximum of 250 students. Any student that lives in Orange County will be eligible to be a student at DIRT Charter School.

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We welcome any comments or questions from you and can be reached through our website, listed above, or you can call our media contact person, Ms. Alison Berman at (646) 773-4081 or email her at ali@withlovealib.com

Respectfully,

Shannon Hockswender
Member of the DIRT Charter School Application Team

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letter to Warwick's School Board

March 28, 2012

Board of Education
Warwick Valley Central School District
PO Box 595
Warwick, NY 10990

Re: D.I.R.T. Charter School

Members of the Board of Education,

This letter is a follow-up to a meeting I had with Dr. Bryant on February 29, 2012. During that meeting we discussed several issues, one of which was a group of parents and community members who are interested in starting a charter school in Orange County. I explained that we are in the process of applying to the state for a charter and that we are considering a number of possible locations in southern Orange County, including the Pine Island School.

While Dr. Bryant did not feel that a charter school would be feasible in Orange County, he did indicate that if the building were available when and if a charter was approved then it could be possible for the BOE to lease the building for that purpose.

Therefore, I would like to respectfully request that the board consider the possibility of leasing the Pine Island School to the D.I.R.T Charter School once a charter is granted. With 170 prospective students the Pine Island School would be a good location for this purpose. I realize that part of the building is currently being leased to the Visions Community Church. We feel that it would be possible for both the DIRT Charter and the church to share the building.

While I understand that the Board may not be supportive of a charter school opening in Warwick for a number of reasons, I would like to ask that you seriously consider this request as I feel it would be an efficient use of the building and would provide revenue for the district.

If you have any questions or would like further information please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for considering this request.

Respectfully,

Paul Ruskiewicz
PO Box 46
Pine Island, NY 10969
845-726-4518
paulruszk@msn.com



DIRT Charter School

Welcome to DIRT Charter School

The Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School is a proposed charter school for September 2013. DIRT will hold about 200 students in grades K – 5 it's first year and expand to 6th grade in 2014. The school will focus on using the surrounding Orange County environment to integrate environmental science throughout their NYS approved curriculum.

What is a charter school?

Charter schools are public schools, free for any student. They operate on the tax dollars that follow the students who enroll. Charter schools have more flexibility with their curriculum, school day, and school year because they are not held to the same mandates constraining other public schools.

About DIRT

DIRT is currently considering several locations in the Warwick area. Students do not have to be from Warwick to attend. Any student within 15 miles of the school's location would be provided transportation to the school. Those who reside outside of the 15 mile radius are also welcome to attend, but will have to provide their own transportation.

A team of educators, administrators, parents, business owners, and community members are creating the school. DIRT students will be outdoors doing hands on learning activities as much as possible. DIRT will have individualized programs for students needing special education or English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. DIRT Charter School also plans to teach Spanish, and have extensive after school programs in the arts, music and sports.

Interested in learning more about DIRT?

Please visit our website at:

www.dirtcharter.com



DIRT Charter School

Bienvenidos a la Escuela Chárter DIRT

El Desarrollo Rural del Pensamiento Innovador (DIRT) de la escuela Chárter es una propuesta para septiembre del año 2013. DIRT mantendrá alrededor de 200 estudiantes en los grados K-5, durante su primer año, y se extenderá al 6to grado en el año 2014. La escuela se enfocará en el medio ambiente de los alrededores del Condado de Orange para integrar ciencia de medioambiente a través del currículo aprobado por el Estado de Nueva York.

¿Qué es una escuela chárter?

Las escuelas charter son escuelas públicas, libres para cualquier estudiante. Ellos operan en los dólares de los impuestos que siguen los estudiantes que se matriculan. Las escuelas charter tienen más flexibilidad con su plan de estudios, el día de la escuela, y el año escolar debido a que no están sujetos a los mismos mandatos que limitan otras escuelas públicas.

Acerca de DIRT

DIRT está considerando actualmente varias localidades en el área de Warwick. Los Estudiantes no tienen que ser de Warwick para atender a ésta escuela. Cualquier estudiante que viva a 15 millas del lugar dónde se encuentre la escuela tendrá transportación para la misma. Los estudiantes que residan fuera del radio de los 15 millas también están invitados, pero tendrán que proveer su propia transportación.

Un equipo de educadores, de administradores, de padres, de personas de negocios, y de miembros de la comunidad están creando ésta escuela. Los estudiantes de la escuela DIRT harán actividades manuales de aprendizaje al aire libre tanto como sea posible. La escuela DIRT tendrá programas individualizados para estudiantes que necesiten educación especial o Inglés como segunda lengua (ESL). La escuela DIRT también planea enseñar español, y planea tener programas extensivos para después de la escuela en las áreas de arte, música, y deportes.

Interesado en aprender más sobre la escuela DIRT?

Por favor visite nuestro sitio web:

www.dirtcharter.com

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letters to politicians

Facebook message to Orange County Legislator for District 10 Albert Buckbee (Warwick and Greenwood Lake) from Jan. 25, 2012 (note our original school name was the Waywayanda Charter School)

 **Albert Buckbee** Messages

 **Chrissy Spoor Pahucki** 25 Janu.

I just wanted to give you a heads up, that myself and a number of parents and teachers are working on opening a charter school. It's called the Wawayanda Charter school. Wawayanda is an old Native American name that means winding waters. Although there is a lake, and a town that chose to keep this name, it historically was the name for all of OC, when it was sold as the Wawayanda Patent in 1703.

It would be a small K-5 school of about 200 students, and hopefully be K-6 by it's second year. It will incorporate lots of art and music, as well as environmental studies and agriculture into it's curriculum. If all goes well, and the state grants us a charter, we can open in September 2013. We hope to rent the PI school building and perhaps share it with the church, but we are keeping our options open and also looking at alternate locations in Warwick and even Florida, NY.

I think that this could be a great addition to the Warwick community, and Orange County. If approved, it would be the first truly rural Charter school in all of New York State. It's a public school, where the tax dollars follow the children, so that it's completely tuition free. It would provide parents a choice in publication, and of course a little competition for WVCSD. A little competition would also benefit the WVCSD to promote change. It would actually be open to all students within a 15 mile radius, which would include all of Warwick, Minisink, Goshen, Florida, and parts of other districts. Students from the host district (probably Warwick) get first dibs on seats.

Anyway, I'm really excited, and although we are not going public with any of this for about another month, I wanted to let you know what we are working on. What do you think? Is Wawayanda Charter School something you'd be willing to support?

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Discussions and comments from our online survey:

“Thank you for taking the initiative to start this process. We would be thrilled to have our daughter attend a progressive school that would expand her horizons. We know children who have benefited greatly from the charter school experience and are behind you all the way.”

- Martha, Warwick, NY

"I would love to see future children of Warwick have the same experience in education as other children...."

- RoseMary, Chester, NY

"The proposed school will give kids opportunities they can't get any other way. Innovative education and curriculum are more important than the politics and rigidity that stifle creative kids and regiment the rest."

- Pat, Warwick, NY

"Would we be able to attend if I had no problem driving him in? We are about 17 miles from the Clubhouse."

- Gina, Middletown, NY

"I absolutely LOVE the idea of the Charter school, though, since I have already started looking into the idea of Montessori/Waldorf schools as well. I think the charter school would be great for us. Thanks!!!"

- Kristen, Warwick, NY

"The state has increased mandates and decreased funding options for the school districts. This reality, in combination with mismanagement of funds and misguided priorities on the part of the local school boards is tearing apart our education system. I would welcome the chance to send my children to a school that could give them better opportunities in life. Also, if the local school districts have to compete for student tax dollars, the school boards might strive to better answer the needs of it's local families. Regardless of the outcome, I applaud and appreciate your efforts."

- Audra, Westtown, NY

"I am in the process of obtaining my masters in education at the University of Scranton and would be interested in a possible teaching position. I attended Goshen schools and have a bachelors degree in biology from Cornell University. I am thrilled by what this charter school represents and the potential it offers. I truly hope this project happens."

- Eric, South Abinton, PA

"My wife is a Montessori teacher and we were fortunate enough to send all 5 of our children to Montessori schools for a few years. While we live in Montgomery, which is a good school district, we wish there were more choices for private non-religious schools in the area. As they got older, we wound up having our kids spread out in 3 different school districts last year, which was just unmanageable. After much deliberation we decided to enroll them all in Valley Central to have them in the same school district. We love Montgomery Elementary, but strongly feel that there should be more choice, considering the high school taxes we all pay in Orange County. I will do all I can to support this Charter School as I feel we are very fortunate to live in such a beautiful area of the State and Country. PLEASE contact me if our family can be of any assistance. I feel that through hard work and persistence with our State Government, there is no reason this shouldn't become a reality."

Walter, Montgomery, NY

"Would love to have a charter school I am currently looking for other school options! I am available to help out as well."

- Liane, Warwick, NY

"I think this is a wonderful idea."

- Maria, Westtown, NY

"I think this is a great idea and would be in high demand in our area."

-Maria, Unionville, NY

"Orange County is in dire need of a charter school. Unfortunately my youngest will be entering 5th grade in September 2012. I wish you the best of luck though!"

- Nancy, Westtown, NY

"I am interested in the possibilities of starting a charter school in Warwick devoted to nurturing life long learners and creative thinkers. I am an experienced progressive educator (MS, NYS certified) concerned about the current misdirection and lack of strategies to prepare our youth for the 21st century. Please contact me to discuss how I may support your efforts."

- Sherrie, Warwick, NY

"I would love to see a Charter school in Warwick, New York."

- John, Westtown, NY

"I would LOVE LOVE LOVE to have my children in a Charter school !! We were originally going to home school because of my differences in regards to how the public school is run but my children are too social and hands on for me to homeschool (plus I have decided it was not what I wanted to do) .

Thank you for reading my letter!"

Best regards,

- Louise, Walden, NY

"A charter school in my community would be an improvement to the area. We would like to see a school back in Pine Island, even though we do not have school age children."

- Jeanne, Warwick, NY

"I have 2 sons. I think a charter school would better fit their hands on learning style."

- Jeanette, Port Jervis, NY

"Smart Move!! I wish my kids were young enough to be a part of this!!"

- Denice, Warwick NY

"Best of luck!! This area could really use a good school.....wish it went to 12th grade."

- Stefanie, Warwick

"I was part of a group trying to start a charter several years ago; it was based on the principles of Waldorf Education. It's so exciting to know there will be an alternative - and one so badly needed. Despite the hard work of all the teachers, the educational system is outdated. The emphasis on cerebral learning does not help to create a healthy education of 'head, heart and hands'."

- Jean, Warwick

"We're enthusiastically hoping for education alternatives!"

- Jen, Pine Island

"I am very supportive of this type of charter school opening in our area. Thank you for all of your hard work and time ! My son will be entering kindergarten in 2013 and I would love for him to attend this school. Much appreciation."

- Melissa, Greenwood Lake

"I think its a great idea to give parents a choice in education for their children. I wish I had this choice when my children were still in school. The best of luck with DIRT."

- Gail, Pine Island

"We are very excited to have a school like this in the area as we used to live in Montgomery and had a farm."

- Michelle, Goshen

"The premise is a good one for Orange County - the theme reflects characteristics that are present here and contrasts with what is being currently offered. I have been a county resident for twenty years, have raised three children and would like to see more choices for our students."

- Veronica, Chester

"The agriculture and produce of Orange County, NY are some of the biggest contributions to the over-all good of New York State. Steeping children and families in the attitudes of productive rural thinking addresses the 21st century learning skills of entrepreneurship, creative thinking , and scientific investigations. The area public schools are missing this opportunity. By creating a charter school that is focused on these principles, as Orange County children begin their formal education, bodes well for shaping the future of all of us."

- Jane, Warwick

"Providing alternate educational opportunities for the children of Orange County will benefit everyone as these children grow to adulthood."

- Connie, Goshen

"I am very enthusiastic about this idea for the Warwick Community. The education of our children has been reduced to test results and critical thinking has been thrown out the window. In a world changing as rapidly as the one we live in skills in the Sciences are desperately needed!!!"

- Maureen, Warwick

"I am so delighted that a charter school may become a reality in Orange County even though my children are older than school age. Many years ago I was involved in an attempt to get a charter school approved in the Warwick area. I'm happy to be able to support the the D.I.R.T. Charter School. Good luck"

- Ann, Warwick

"I think it is an innovative idea and an asset to our community."

- Barbara, Warwick

"I am very interested in your application. I am a school administrator and I am not happy with the state of public education. Class sizes are increasing and best practices in teaching and learning are often not being implemented. I think this is happening for a variety of reasons, but in short, I want better for my children. They deserve to learn

in an environment that is engaging and promotes the joy of learning without having to survive class sizes hovering around thirty. What a burden that is for them as well as the educators. When the application is complete and submitted, would you be willing to share it? I would like to understand your vision as a whole so as to determine if the setting would be appropriate for my children. Thank you for your time. If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact me.”

-Marie, Westtown

“I think this is a perfect setting and the timing is right.”

- Linda, Warwick

“Very excited to see this coming the Orange County NY!!!”

- Denise, Cuddebackville

“I am very interested in this school and the concept of a rural charter school with a focus on environmentalism, even though my children are not of age yet to join. My biggest worry would be that the school might be too far from tuxedo! But I am very interested and would love to learn more about participating in the planning of what sounds like a wonderful school!”

- Miiriam, Tuxedo

“I have forward this to all my family members to sign up. I want this for my daughters and myself!!!”

- Arielle, Florida, NY

“I think this would be a great education for all the hands on learners, especially my nieces.”

- Courtney, Greenwood Lake

“I would love for my daughter's to attend the DIRT Charter School. This is the only way that I've learned when I was younger. An education with hands on activity is the best way to go!”

- Mike, Florida, NY

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Questions and responses from our Contact Form or Survey on our website:

Question: “Would the charter school only go through 5th grade? What about middle school? Is is mandatory for all of the teachers to hold state teaching certificates or can the teachers be unlicensed as many are in private schools?” - Colleen

Our response: Colleen, Thanks for filling out the survey! In 2013 the school would only be K - 5. We plan to add 6th grade in 2014. There have been a number of response asking for us to consider making a MS or HS. Many of the committee members and myself also have kids in the upper grades. If all goes well with this first school, we would definitely consider opening a 7 - 12 school in the future. At least 70% of charter school teachers must hold a teaching certification. If a teacher wasn't certified, they'd have to meet other criteria.

Question: My name is Lisa Grove and my husband and I have two daughters Malina, age 5 and Sierra, age 2. We live in Warwick, but are in the Florida school district. I have been reading about your petition to start the DIRT charter school in this area, and I am very interested. My husband and I have been wanting something like this in our area and really hope that the state accepts your petition. I wish that we were able to come to the library on Sunday but we will be out of town. Please let me know if you are taking students names on a waiting list.

Our response: Lisa, You can put your children on the waiting list by filling out the survey that is linked on the dirtcharter.com home page. This will automatically put you and your children's grade levels onto our list of prospective students.

Statement: Just found your website. On behalf of us all at Green Woods Charter School, we are pleased to have been an inspiration and wish you the best of luck!
Jean M. Wallace, CEO of Green Woods Charter School

Our response: We just found that great video clip of Green Woods a few days ago, and added it to our page. I hope you don't mind! I talked to the group the other night and probably 2 or 3 of us hope to make it down for a visit in April. We just went public with our plans for the school two weeks ago, and via the website already have a list of 135 prospective students and a stack of resumes. The outpouring of support so far has been overwhelming. Our first public presentation is Sunday, which is why we've been a little bogged down getting ready for it. I'll put together a few possible visit dates, and then you just let us know when would be best. We don't want to take up too much of your time, but we just want to see the students at work, ask you a bunch of questions about the schools structure, etc.

Side Note: Six DIRT team members went to visit the Green Woods Charter School

Question: "I am very excited about this Charter School. I do have a question about Charter Schools. Are there accommodations (like 504's), guidance counselors, special education in some subjects and other classes available to students just like in regular public schools?" - Janine

Response: For special ed or 504 students Warwick would still be the district that develops the IEP, but it would be up to the charter school to provide the services or contract out somewhere if necessary.

Side Note: Janine was asked to be on our Board of Trustees, and constantly provides us with valuable insight into the concerns of parents.

Question: How does the transportation for students work. Is there going to be a dress code or uniform like in the video. We are for the uniform idea or dress code.

Response: Kids within a 15 mile radius of the schools location will be provided free transportation by their home school district, just like they would for a private school. Yes, we are definitely leaning towards a uniform like they have at Green Woods. We were also thinking khakis (maybe jeans on fridays) with t-shirts and sweatshirts with the schools logo on them.

Statement: If you have an email list, I would like to be added. I am an Orange County parent (and a college educator who began her career teaching in a NYC charter HS) who is interested in learning more about this local initiative for my children. I first saw information about this in the Warwick Valley Dispatch. Thanks, Leigh

Response: Thanks for your interest, and we will definitely add you to our mailing list. Please go to the survey link on our homepage at dirtcharter.com, and it will automatically add your contact information, and your children to our list.

Question: Would after care programs be available at the DIRT Charter School?
Deborah

Response: Our school day goes until 4 and our after school enrichment program (optional) goes until 5. By January of the first year we will have the afterschool enrichment program set up. Ideally we will have activities scheduled for 5 days a week in the the arts and sports. We haven't discussed an after care program, but if there's a substantial need for it, we could certainly add it.

Attachment 3a: Sample Daily Schedules

Weekly Student Schedule for a K – 2 Class

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00 – 8:30	Circle time, Welcoming Activities, Breakfast	Circle time, Welcoming Activities, Breakfast	Circle time, Welcoming Activities, Breakfast	Circle time, Welcoming Activities, Breakfast	Circle time, Welcoming Activities, Breakfast
8:30 – 9:30	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA
9:30 – 10:30	Integrated Writing	Integrated Writing	Integrated Writing	Integrated Writing	Integrated Writing
(8:30 -10:30)	RTI & ELL for Some Students	RTI & ELL for Some Students	RTI & ELL for Some Students	RTI & ELL for Some Students	RTI & ELL for Some Students
10:30–10:45	Snack & Social Time	Snack & Social Time	Snack & Social Time	Snack & Social Time	Snack & Social Time
10:45 – 11:45	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
11:45 -12:15	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
12:15–12:45	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:50 – 1:05	Story-time, Read-alouds	Story-time, Read-alouds	Story-time, Read-alouds	Story-time, Read-alouds	Story-time, Read-alouds
1:05 - 1:35	Science or Social Studies integrated with Technology	Science or Social Studies integrated with Technology	Science or Social Studies integrated with Technology	Science or Social Studies integrated with Technology	Science or Social Studies integrated with Technology
1:35 – 2:35	Science or Social Studies Lab	Science or Social Studies Lab	Science or Social Studies Lab	Science or Social Studies Lab	Science or Social Studies Lab
2:35 - 3:15	Art	PE	Music	PE	Art
3:15 - 3:45	Art or Music Enrichment	Spanish	Art or Music Enrichment	Spanish	Art or Music Enrichment
3:45 - 3:55	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up
3:55	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
4:00 - 4:55	After-school Enrichment	After-school Enrichment	After-school Enrichment	After-school Enrichment	After-school Enrichment

Attachment 3a: Sample Daily Schedules

Weekly Student Schedule for a Grade 3 – 5 (6) Class

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00 – 8:10	Welcoming Activities,				
8:10 - 9:10	ELA (RTI & ELL for some students)				
9:10 – 9:50	Art	PE	Music	PE	Art
9:50–10:05	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack
10:05-10:35	Science or Social Studies				
10:35-11:20	Science or Social Studies Lab				
11:20-12:20	Integrated Writing				
12:20-12:50	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
12:50-1:20	Lunch	Lunch Prep	Lunch Prep	Lunch Prep	Lunch Prep
1:20 – 2:20	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
2:20 – 3:00	Art or Music Enrichment	Spanish	Art or Music Enrichment	Spanish	Art or Music Enrichment
3:00 – 3:45	Odds & Ends				
3:45 – 3:55	Wrap Up				
3:55	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
4:00 - 4:55	After-school Enrichment				

Attachment 3a: Sample Daily Schedules

Weekly Teacher Schedule for Grades K – 2

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:55	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival
8:00 – 8:30	Circle time, Welcoming Activities, Breakfast	Circle time, Welcoming Activities, Breakfast	Circle time, Welcoming Activities, Breakfast	Circle time, Welcoming Activities, Breakfast	Circle time, Welcoming Activities, Breakfast
8:30 – 9:30	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA
9:30-10:30	Integrated Writing	Integrated Writing	Integrated Writing	Integrated Writing	Integrated Writing
10:30-10:45	Snack & Social Time	Snack & Social Time	Snack & Social Time	Snack & Social Time	Snack & Social Time
10:45-11:45	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
11:45-12:45	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:50-1:05	Story-time, Read-alouds	Story-time, Read-alouds	Story-time, Read-alouds	Story-time, Read-alouds	Story-time, Read-alouds
1:05-1:35	Science or Social Studies integrated with Technology	Science or Social Studies integrated with Technology	Science or Social Studies integrated with Technology	Science or Social Studies integrated with Technology	Science or Social Studies integrated with Technology
1:35 – 2:35	Science or Social Studies Lab	Science or Social Studies Lab	Science or Social Studies Lab	Science or Social Studies Lab	Science or Social Studies Lab
2:35 - 3:15	Prep Period	Prep Period	Prep Period	Prep Period	Prep Period
3:15 - 3:45	Art or Music Enrichment	Spanish	Art or Music Enrichment	Spanish	Art or Music Enrichment
3:45 - 3:55	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up
4:00	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
4:00 - 5:00			Staff Meeting		

Attachment 3a: Sample Daily Schedules

Weekly Teacher Schedule for Grades 3 – 5

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:55	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival
8:00 – 8:10	Welcoming Activities,				
8:10 - 9:10	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA
9:10 – 9:50	Prep Period				
9:50–10:05	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack
10:05-10:35	Science or Social Studies				
10:35-11:20	Science or Social Studies Lab				
11:20-12:20	Integrated Writing				
12:20-1:20	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:20 – 2:20	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
2:20 – 3:00	Art or Music Enrichment	Spanish	Art or Music Enrichment	Spanish	Art or Music Enrichment
3:00 – 3:45	Odds & Ends				
3:45 – 3:55	Wrap Up				
4:00	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
4:00 - 5:00			Staff Meeting		

Attachment 3b: Proposed 2013-2014 School Calendar

**DIRT Charter School
2013 - 2014**

September				
M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

August 26-30 Staff Dev.

September 2 Labor Day
3 First Day
5 Rosh Hashanah

February				
M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

October				
M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

October 14 Columbus Day

November 11 Veteran's Day
28-29 Thanksgiving

December 23-31 Winter Break

March				
M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

November				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

January 1-3 Winter Break
21 MLK Day

February 14-17 Presidents Day

April 18-25 Spring Break

April				
M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

December				
M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

May 26 Memorial Day

June 20 Last Day

184 School Days
- 4 Snow Days
180 School Days

May				
M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

January				
M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

Make up days if necessary will begin with February 14, then June 23, then June 24

June				
M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

Attachment 4: Student Discipline Policy

Mission: The DIRT Charter School will provide children with the opportunity to reach their full academic and developmental potential and become lifelong learners by fostering interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking skills, and a deep understanding of the interdependence of our local and global existence.

Ways “to be” at DIRT Charter School:

- Be respectful
- Be safe
- Be happily educated.

DIRT’s Commitment to Excellence:

1. **Timeliness** – We will arrive every day by 7:55 A.M. and remain at school until 4:00 P.M.
2. **High Quality Education** – We will do whatever it takes to respect, appreciate, and nurture every students’ creativity, knowledge, and character as we prepare them for life.
3. **Communication** – We promise to communicate regularly with parents or guardians about their child’s progress and make ourselves available in person and by phone. We will return parent phone calls within 24 hours. We will conduct ourselves respectfully and professionally in our communications. When students are disciplined or deserve recognition for their accomplishments, we will inform their parents promptly.
4. **Homework** – We will assign productive, worthwhile homework to reinforce and support skills and concepts learned in class.
5. **Fairness** – We will address all issues consistently and fairly.
6. **Safety** – We will always protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals.

Parent/Guardian Commitment:

1. **Attendance** – We will make sure our child comes to school every day. We will make every effort to schedule doctor’s appointments, vacations, etc. for days when school is not in session. We understand that there will be consequences for multiple absences.
2. **Timeliness** – We will make sure our child arrives at school every day on time (by 8:00 A.M.). We will make sure to promptly pick up our child at the end of the school day (3:55 P.M.) or allow them to take the bus at dismissal.
3. **Support & Homework** – We will provide a quiet space at home for our child to study. We will check our child’s homework every night. We will make sure our child gets enough sleep each night. We will do whatever it takes for our child to learn and perform to his/her optimal ability.
4. **Communication** – We will make ourselves available to our child and the school, and respond to any concerns they might have. We will return phone calls from the school within 24 hours. If we are asked to attend a meeting regarding our child’s education or behavior, we will attend. If we have any concerns we will

raise them with someone at the school. We will promptly inform the school if our address and/or phone number changes. We will conduct ourselves respectfully and professionally in our communications.

5. **Dress Code** – We will make sure our child follows the DIRT Charter dress code every day.

Student Commitment:

1. **Ways “to be”** - I will be respectful, safe, and happily educated.
2. **Work Hard** – I will work hard and do my best every day.
3. **Homework** – I will do my homework every night and ask my teacher if I need help.
4. **Directions** – I will follow the directions of my parents and all of the adults at school and on the bus.
5. **Choices** – I will use appropriate behavior and language at all times.

Dress Code: DIRT Charter School has a primary objective of developing a community of learners. A uniform is a unifying factor within our school and a visible signature of our school to the larger community. Uniforms also allow parents to save money by not having to buy an entire wardrobe of school clothing and they minimize learning distractions in the school. The school uniform will also help ensure the safety of DIRT’s students.

While DIRT will identify an inexpensive uniform provider, it understands that all families may not be able to afford the uniform. No student will be denied access to the school because of an inability to purchase the school uniform. The school will keep reserves on hand to assist families who cannot afford the uniform.

DIRT Charter School Uniform: Our school uniform will be the same for girls and boys and will consist of:

- DIRT shirt
- DIRT sweatshirt (in colder weather)
- Khaki Slacks (Jeans on Fridays)
- Sneakers or hiking shoes

The following dress code guidelines apply to all students:

1. Students will wear the DIRT Charter School Uniform every day.
2. All pants must fit around the waist. Belts of an appropriate size and nature should be worn if necessary.
3. Pants may not be excessively baggy or inappropriately tight and may not cover the shoes.
4. Students may not wear jogging pants, sweat pants or shorts. Shorts are permitted if the weather is above 75 degrees and must be of appropriate length (exceeding the tips of students fingers when arms are at the sides).
5. Students may not wear skirts, or dresses as we will be outdoors often.
6. Students may not wear hats, caps, or other head coverings in the school (except in the case of religious observance).
7. For safety reasons the following jewelry will not be permitted at DIRT: necklaces (outside of shirt), loose bracelets, and dangle earrings (studs are permitted).
8. Students may not wear makeup, sparkles or glitter, or fake fingernail tips.
9. For safety reasons students cannot wear flip flops or sandals.

Code of Conduct: DIRT Charter School has very high expectations for student behavior and a strict code of conduct to ensure students act appropriately at all times and are always within a safe, structured environment. The school takes a preventive and proactive approach to discipline to ensure that students behave properly and that there are no obstacles to learning. Each teacher and staff person will be encouraged to keep a log regarding any discipline issues. Consequences are designed to help students recognize negative behavior, teach them alternative choices, and protect other members of the community from disruptions or danger. There is a range of possible consequences for violating school rules depending on the severity of the infraction or the logical consequence within the given situation; these consequences may include:

- **Verbal Warning:** Students are informed that their conduct is not conducive to learning and are warned not to continue the conduct. Continuing the conduct will result in more severe consequences.
- **Time Out:** Students take a “time out” by going to a designated part of the room or to another classroom to complete their assigned work. This gives a student time to get back on track and think briefly about their actions. The length of a time out varies from grade to grade and is also based on the severity of the behavior.
- **Parent Contact:** Teachers will call, e-mail or write to family members to inform them of their child’s behavior and the consequence and to discuss appropriate strategies that can be used both at school and at home.
- **Lunch/Recess Detention:** Teachers keep students in their classroom during the lunch/recess period. Students may be required to complete written reflections, complete missed work or make up for their behavior by doing some form of community service during this time.
- **Reparations:** In order to reinforce the idea that negative behavior affects others, students may be asked to compensate those affected by their negative behavior, or “fix” the situation. For example, a student may be required to clean or paint over vandalism or replace damaged property that he/she caused.
- **Office Referral:** If a student repeatedly disrupts the learning environment, the student may be removed from class and referred to an administrator.
- **Parent Conference/Conversations:** Teachers and/or administrators will be communicating on a regular basis via phone, email or by meeting to make sure that all parties are aware of issues and are working together to solve the problem.
- **Loss of Privileges:** Students who continue to exhibit negative behaviors will face the loss of privileges, including access to extra-curricular programs, field trips, special events and ceremonies.
- **In-School Suspension:** DIRT may require students to serve an in-school suspension during which they are not allowed to spend the day as members of their class communities. In-school suspensions are determined by the Principal and are used only for serious or persistent infractions of school rules. Students, who have received an in-school suspension, must spend the school day supervised by a staff member in one of the school offices doing their schoolwork.
- **Out of School Suspension:** The DIRT principal will suspend students from school for serious breaches of the Code of Conduct. Parents or guardians will be informed and suspensions will be recorded in student’s records. In the event that a child is suspended, an alternative instructional setting will be established as soon as possible, no later than the day after the suspension is effective. The

school staff involved shall make reasonable efforts to verify facts and statements prior to recommending suspension.

- Short Term Suspension: A short-term suspension is defined as an suspension of 5 days or less.
- Long Term Suspension: A long-term suspension is defined as an in-school or out-of school suspension of more than 5 days.
- **Expulsion:** An expulsion is the permanent removal of a student from the school. The DIRT principal will expel students from school for the most serious breaches of the Code of Conduct. Parents or guardians will be informed and expulsions will be recorded in student’s records.

Below is a list of possible infractions and their potential consequences. This list is not exhaustive and teachers and staff can supplement these rules with their own rules for classes and events. All discipline will take into account the history, specific context and severity of the negative behavior. In addition, violations of the Code of Conduct and consequences are subject to the discretion of the Principal and may be adjusted accordingly. Finally, any breaches of state or federal law may be handled in cooperation with the police or other authorities.

Level 1

Infractions	Range of Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Calling out an answer ● Being off-task ● Rolling eyes or other minor disrespectful behavior ● Failing to be in school uniform and/or violating the dress code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Warning/reprimand by school staff ● Student is reminded of appropriate behavior and task at hand ● Student is provided with productive alternative choices that should be made

Level 2

Infractions	Range of Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Repeating a Level 1 infraction ● Being unprepared for class (which includes but is not limited to failing to bring pencil, not completing homework, etc...) ● Failing to follow directions ● Failing to complete work ● Arriving late to school/class and/or violating school attendance policy ● Disrupting class or educational process in any way at any time (which includes but is not limited to making excessive noise in a classroom, failing to participate, refusing to work with partners, etc...) ● Failing to be in one’s assigned place on school premises ● Getting out of your seat without 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student is reminded of appropriate behavior ● Student is given a verbal warning ● Student is given a “Time Out” within the classroom ● Removal from classroom for "Time Out" outside of the classroom ● Additional assignments which require student to reflect on behavior in writing or orally ● Call home to parents ● Student-Parent-Teacher conference ● Student-Parent-Administrator conference ● In-school disciplinary action (which includes but is not limited to exclusion from recess, communal lunch, enrichment activities, school events,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • permission • Going to the bathroom without permission • Making noise in the hallways, or common spaces without permission • Inappropriate noise levels • Leaving the recess area without permission • Engaging in unsafe behavior, failing to use recess equipment properly, or failing to follow directions during recess • Excluding classmates in games/ activities during recess • Using school equipment (i.e. computers, faxes, phones) without permission • Bringing electronic equipment to school without school authorization (which includes but is not limited to cell phones, game systems, ipods, headphones, etc...) • Littering on school grounds • Verbally disrespecting a fellow student (which includes but is not limited to teasing, name calling, being rude, mocking, etc...) • Verbally disrespecting faculty, staff, or other school community members (which includes but is not limited to being rude, disobeying instructions, etc...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> trips, or other activities) • Verbal or written apology to community • In-school suspension (possibly immediate) • Out-of-school suspension (possibly immediate) • Other consequences/responses deemed appropriate by school (including but not limited to extended suspension for a fixed period or expulsion)
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Level 3

Infractions	Range of Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeating a Level 2 infraction • Disrespecting a fellow student using profanity, racial slurs, or any foul or discriminatory language • Disrespecting a faculty or staff member using profanity, racial slurs, or any foul or discriminatory language • Disobeying or defying school staff or any school authority/personnel • Using profane, obscene, lewd, abusive, or discriminatory language or gestures • Posting or distributing inappropriate materials (which includes but is not limited to unauthorized materials, defamatory or libelous materials, or threatening materials) • Violating the school's Internet policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sent to Principal's office • Loss of classroom/school privileges • Additional assignments which require student to reflect on behavior in writing or orally • Call home to parents • Removal from classroom for "Time Out" outside of the classroom • Student-Parent-Administrator Conference • In-School disciplinary action (which includes but is not limited to exclusion from recess, communal lunch, enrichment activities, sports, school events, trips, or other activities) • Verbal or written apology to community • In-school suspension (possibly

<p>(which includes but is not limited to using the Internet for purposes not related to school or non-educational purposes or which result in security/privacy violations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Forgery of any kind ● Lying or providing false or misleading information to school personnel ● Engaging in any academic dishonesty (which includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarizing, copying another's work) ● Tampering with school records or school documents/materials by any method ● Falsely activating a fire alarm or other alarm ● Misusing other people's property ● Vandalizing school property or property belonging to staff, students, or others ● Stealing or knowingly possessing property belonging to another person without proper authorization ● Smoking ● Gambling ● Throwing any objects inappropriately ● Engaging in inappropriate or unwanted physical contact ● Fighting or engaging in physically aggressive behavior of any kind (which includes but is not limited to play fighting, horsing around, shoving, pushing, or any unwanted or aggressive physical contact) ● Leaving class, school activity, or school premises without school authorization ● Repeatedly failing to show up to class or school 	<p>immediate)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Out-of-school suspension (possibly immediate) ● Other consequences/responses deemed appropriate by school (including but not limited to extended suspension for a fixed period) ● Expulsion
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Level 4

Infractions	Range of Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Repeating a Level 3 Infraction ● Repeated in-school and/or out-of-school suspensions ● Exhibiting blatant and repeated disrespect for school code, policies, community, or culture ● Destroying or attempting to destroy school property ● Engaging in intimidation, bullying, harassment, coercion, or threatening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sent to Principal/school administrator ● Loss of classroom/school privileges ● Additional assignments which require student to reflect on behavior in writing or orally ● Call home to parents ● Removal from classroom or "Time Out" outside of the classroom ● Student-Parent-Administrator Conference

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● violence, injury, or harm to others ● Engaging in behavior which creates a substantial risk of or results in injury/ assault against any member of the school community ● Engaging in sexual, racial, or any other type of harassment ● Possessing, transferring, or using alcohol, other drugs or controlled substances ● Participating in an incident of group violence ● Possessing a weapon ● Charged with or convicted of a felony 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In-school disciplinary action (which includes but is not limited to exclusion from recess, communal lunch, enrichment activities, sports, school events, trips, or other activities) ● Verbal or written apology to community ● In-school suspension (possibly immediate) ● Out-of-school suspension (possibly immediate) ● Other consequences/responses deemed appropriate by school (including but not limited to extended suspension for a fixed period) ● Expulsion
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Disciplinary Procedures and Due Process: Parents will be notified of all consequences that involve removing students from class, activities or the school. Students will be told of all charges against them and be provided with the opportunity to describe their side of the story. The principal shall consider this explanation prior to taking disciplinary action. For minor infractions parents may be merely notified and/or a conference requested to assist in resolving the situation. For more serious issues that involve removal of the student from participation in the school, parents will be notified and have opportunities to discuss and appeal the disciplinary action. In cases where the student has committed a crime or violation of local, state or federal law, law enforcement authorities will be notified.

Suspension: When the school proposes suspending a student, the parent/guardian will be notified immediately or as soon as possible by telephone. If the school has the parent/guardian's email address, notification will be provided by email. The notice will include the reason(s) for the proposed suspension, the proposed duration of the suspension and whether the proposed suspension will be in-school or out-of-school. The notice will also advise the parent/guardian that he/she will have the opportunity to request a conference with the Principal. At the conference, the student and parent/guardian will be given an opportunity to deny or explain the charges, to present his/her own evidence. A decision will be issued after the conference. The principal will also advise the parent/guardian and the student of the student's right to a formal hearing at which he/she may be represented by counsel, cross-examine witnesses against him/her, and present witnesses and evidence of his/her own. If the student or his/her parent/guardian will be represented by counsel at the hearing, notice must be provided to the Principal no less than 2 days before the hearing. The Principal or a delegate will preside over the hearing and all members of the staff who were involved in witnessing the alleged discipline violation are required to participate. A decision by the Principal will stand as the final decision regarding the student's long-term suspension status, though the student's family has the right to appeal to the Board of Trustees.

Expulsion: In the case of conduct which in the school's judgment warrants expulsion, the student may be subjected to a short or long-term suspension first. If the Principal decides that an infraction warrants expulsion, a hearing as described above will be held. Based on that hearing, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board

of Trustees, which will make the final decision. That decision may be appealed to the Board. If the school expels a student, the school will cooperate with any school to which the student seeks to enroll, including providing the receiving school with all relevant information regarding the student's academic performance and student records, upon request of the school or parent/guardian.

Students with Disabilities: The school's disciplinary policy, in regarding any student with a disability, will be consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), its implementing regulations and applicable New York State law respecting students with disabilities. The school will cooperate with the Committee on Special Education (CSE) of the student's district of residence as necessary to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. Generally, a student with, or suspected of having, a disability may be disciplined in the same manner as his/her non-disabled peers as set forth above. A student whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) includes a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) will be disciplined in accordance with the BIP. If the BIP appears not be effective or if there is a concern for the health and safety of the student or others if the BIP is followed with respect to an infraction, the matter will be immediately referred to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) for consideration.

Alternative Instruction: Students who are suspended will be provided with alternative instruction. Arrangements will be made between the school and each individual family on a case-by-case basis. Alternative instruction by qualified staff will be offered within 24 hours of any suspension. Such instruction can be at a location and time of the school's choosing, so long as each is reasonable and the student has notice of it. A suspended student will be assigned to alternative instruction for direct instruction for a minimum of one hour per day. The school can choose to provide tutoring to a suspended student at the school, the student's home or some other reasonably accessible location, either during the school day or before or after school hours. The quality of the instruction will be designed to allow the student to keep pace with school work, receive all assignments and assessments, and generally advance with the curriculum. In addition, when appropriate, the student may be assigned a project designed to address the conduct that gave rise to the suspension. During long-term suspensions, the school may also seek to place the student, during the term of the suspension, in any alternate education program that is operated by the student's school district of residence.

For a student who has been expelled by the school, the means and manner of alternative instruction will be the same as for a student who has been suspended. Alternative instruction will be provided until the student is enrolled at another accredited school, or otherwise participating in an accredited program, including any alternative education program operated by the student's school district of residence, to the extent the provision of such services is required by law. As above, the school may seek, where appropriate, to place the student in an alternative education program operated by the student's school district of residence.

Bus Policy: Appropriate behavior on school buses is necessary at all times to make transportation safe and efficient; therefore, misconduct on the bus will not be tolerated. The following system is in place in the event a student does not behave properly on the bus:

- 1st incident: a warning is issued
- 2nd incident: the student will not be allowed to use the bus for one day

- 3rd incident: the student will not be allowed to use the bus for an entire school week
- 4th incident: the student will be prohibited from using the bus.

Gun-Free Schools: Federal and state law require expulsion from school for a period of not less than one year for a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to the school, or to have possessed a firearm at school, except that the Principal may modify such expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis. "Weapon" as used in this law includes firearms and explosives. The principal shall refer a student who has been determined to have brought a weapon or firearm to school to a presentment agency for a juvenile delinquency proceeding. Any action taken by criminal justice or juvenile agencies will be in addition to, and independent of, discipline imposed by a school.

Attachment 5a: Charter School Trustee Background Information: Shannon Hockwender

School Trustee Background Information
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Each proposed or prospective charter school board member must provide the information requested below.

Name: Shannon Hockswender

Charter School Name: D.I.R.T. Charter School

Charter School Address: PO Box 23 Pine Island, NY 10969

To which charter school board position(s) and/or offices(s) are you asking to be appointed? (e.g., member, parent representative, vice-president, Finance committee, etc.): Board Member, Curriculum Coordinator, Building and Grounds Team Member

As you may know, serving on a public charter school board of trustees (“board”) is a position of great trust and responsibility. As a member of a public charter school’s board, you are charged with overseeing the education of all students enrolled in the school, as well as the expenditure of public monies directed to the charter school.

The Department’s consent is required **before** any new member may serve on the board. Accordingly, and in order to properly evaluate proposed board members, we ask that you please provide full and complete answers to each of the items below and provide the required assurance indicated. Note that providing false, misleading, and/or incomplete information may lead to a withdrawal of the Department’s approval, nullifying your appointment to the board.

Background

1. Please provide your educational and employment history. You may do so by attaching a résumé. Resume Attached
2. Please affirm that you are or will be at least eighteen years old at the time of your appointment/election to the board. I affirm.
3. Please affirm that you have read Article 56 of the New York State Education Law, and understand the relationship between a charter school and the authorized chartering entity as defined in that statute. I affirm.

4. Please indicate how you became aware of the charter school and the opportunity to serve as a member of its board.

I was an original member of the charter school exploratory committee.

5. Please explain why you wish to serve on the board.

I would like to make sure that DIRT charter school stays true to the original vision and mission of the school founders. It is also important to me to be able to monitor how the school is doing academically and how to make improvements if necessary

6. Please indicate whether you have previously served or are currently serving on a board of a school district, a non-public school or any not-for-profit corporation (to the extent not otherwise indicated in your response to Item 1, above). In addition, please describe any other experience, knowledge or skills you feel is relevant to service on the charter school board.

Yes: *In 2009, I served as a Girl Scout Troop Leader in Orange County, California and was trained in Board protocol, i.e: Rules of Order. I am an active member of the Warwick Valley Central School District Parent-Teacher Association.*

7. Please indicate whether or not you have ever been convicted of a misdemeanor and/or felony in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

8. Please indicate if you currently have any criminal charge(s) pending against you in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

Conflict of Interest

9. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any of the other prospective or current board members.

Yes.

If your answer is yes, please indicate the precise nature of your relationship here:

We have been working together to form the DIRT Charter School.

10. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any person who is a prospective or current charter school employee.

I / we do not know any such persons.

11. Please indicate if you, your spouse, or other family member or any corporation, business or other entity in which you, your spouse or other family member serve as an employee, officer, or director or own a controlling interest in, contracts or does business with, or plans to contract or do business with, the charter school, including but not limited to, the lease of real or personal property to the charter school.

No.

12. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider (a management company, whether for-profit or not-for-profit), please indicate whether you, your spouse, or any family member knows any employees, officers, owners, directors or agents of that provider. If your answer is in the affirmative, please describe any such relationship.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

13. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider, please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member has a direct or indirect ownership, employment, contractual or management interest in the provider. For any interest indicated, please provide a detailed description.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

14. If the charter school is partnered with an educational services provider, please indicate if you, your spouse or other family member anticipates conducting, or is conducting, any business with the provider. If so, please indicate the precise nature of the business that is being or will be conducted.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

15. Please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member is a director, officer, employee, partner or member of, or is otherwise associated with, any organization which filed an application in conjunction with the charter school, i.e., is partnered with the charter school. To the extent you have provided this information in response to items 9-12, you may so indicate. This does not apply to me, my spouse or other family members.

16. Please indicate the potential ethical or legal conflicts of interests (if any) that would, or are likely to, exist should you be approved for service on the charter school's board.

None

17. Please explain how you would handle a situation in which you believe one or more members of the charter school's board are involved in working for their own benefit, or the benefit of their friends and family.

I would have the situation investigated and discussed by the Board so that the appropriate corrective action could take place.

Educational Philosophy

18. Please explain your understanding of the charter school's mission and/or philosophy.

The DIRT Charter School will provide children with the opportunity to reach their full academic and developmental potential and become lifelong learners by fostering interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking skills, and a deep understanding of the interdependence of our local and global existence.

19. Please explain your understanding of the educational program of the charter school.
The school will offer a unique, interdisciplinary education program that is being developed specifically for DIRT students. Teachers will take students outdoors daily and provide them with opportunities for hands-on lessons in which they will get to interact within their environment.

20. Please indicate what you believe to be the characteristics of a successful charter school. In particular, please provide the specific steps you think the board of the charter school will need to take to ensure that this charter school is and remains successful.

A successful charter school will have eager students who show enthusiasm for what they are learning and are excited to come to school each day. Parents will be involved in their children's individual progress and interested in the success of the school and its programs. They will volunteer their time and expertise in whatever capacity they can. Teachers will be engaging, creative, challenging, supportive, and display good character traits. Teachers will be at the heart of the school, they will be able to work together to plan and develop lessons that work best for their students needs. The Principal will maintain the mission and vision of the school and make sure that the school culture remains positive and effective. The board of the charter school would need to (1) Hire qualified, capable employees who fit with the mission and vision of the school. (2) Maintain employees by helping to build a positive, safe and enriching school culture for both students and teachers. (3) Develop annual fundraising events and activities for parents to be involved in. (4) Create and maintain a school budget that allows for innovative educational programming. (5) Meet the expectations of the authorized charter agreement.

Other

21. Please explain your understanding of the appropriate role of a public charter school board member.

I think Board training is very important for all charter school board members, especially for the first few years of school operation. Whether it's general or more specialized training, either can help a new board to run properly. School board members should have some experience with strategic planning, legal requirements for meetings, conflict resolution and be able to keep the schools vision and mission clearly in mind when making decisions.

22. Please affirm that you have read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies.

I have read and I understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies.

23. Please provide any other information that you feel is pertinent to the Department's review.

I have worked in the field of education for 20 years. For the last several years, I have had the opportunity to work at a pre-school/education center. It is a unique school because it is owned privately and has programs for children ages 10 months to age 5. The owner has operated the school for 20 years and has developed special programs for children at each age/developmental level. My work at this school has allowed me see the importance of developing a school culture that is felt throughout the building. Every parent, child and teacher that comes through the door is treated as part of an extended family. Families and teachers are encouraged to interact and help each other meet the needs of the students. It is this team approach that has allowed the school to flourish and continue to be successful year after year. I think my experience working there has prepared me to be an effective school leader.

A Statement of Assurance must be signed by and submitted for each proposed Board Member.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

I, Shannon Hockswender (name of proposed board member) state that I am the applicant for board member approval and I have read the questionnaire and any supporting documents and know the contents thereof; that the same is true to my knowledge except as to the matters therein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true and further acknowledge that I am aware of the fact that, pursuant to Penal Law §175.30, a person who knowingly offers a false instrument for filing to a public official or public servant is guilty of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the 2nd Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor.

Shannon Hockswender

July 9, 2012

Signature

Date

Please note that this document is considered a public record and as such, may be made available to members of the public upon request under the Freedom of Information Law. Personal contact information provided below will be redacted.

Business Telephone: _____

Business Address: _____

E-Mail Address: [REDACTED] _____

Home Telephone: [REDACTED] _____

Home Address: [REDACTED] _____

Shannon Hockswender

Education

Fairleigh Dickinson University, Teaneck, NJ
Masters of Arts in Teaching Degree
Elementary Education Certification with Advanced Standing (K-8)
Teacher of the Handicapped Certification
Trained in Orton-Gillingham Reading Method

Rutgers University, Douglass College, New Brunswick, NJ
Bachelor of Arts in Speech/Language Pathology and Audiology

Teaching Experience

Kids Club House, Pine Island, NY September 2010 - Present

Pre-school Classroom Teacher (Ages 4 and 5)

- Responsible for planning thematic, hands-on lessons for 20 students
- Work closely with parents to monitor students growth and academic development
- Act as an administrator for the schools Facebook page
- Responsible for keeping the schools website up-to-date
- Planned two community events for the school in cooperation with the Pine Island Chamber of Commerce and the Warwick Valley Gardeners
- Write and distribute press releases/photos to newspapers
- Actively search for advertising and marketing opportunities for the school

Benjamin Franklin Elementary School, Westfield, NJ September 1997 - 2001

Classroom teacher (First grade and Fifth grade)

- Instructed reading and language arts using a combination of whole language and phonics lessons
- Utilized hands-on science and manipulatives in mathematics in accordance with the NCTM standards
- Customized lesson plans for integrated special education students
- Responsible for planning and implementing Family Math Night, a once a week school-wide program at which parents and their children played and enjoyed math games together

Euclid Elementary School, Hasbrouck Heights, NJ September 1996 - June 1997

Resource Room Teacher (Grades K - 5)

- Responsible for a case load of 13 classified students in grades K - 5
- Worked cooperatively with the Child Study Team, School Principal, Teachers, and Parents in pupil case management
- Provided pull out support and instruction for seven students in all subject areas
- Initiated in class support structures (team teaching) for classified students in the mainstream
- Designed and implemented both individualized and full classroom behavior modification systems.

New Jersey Institute of Technology, N.J.I.T, Newark, NJ July and August 1996

- **Special Education Assistant** at N.J.I.T. sponsored math/science/technology camp for girls in middle school

Orchard Elementary School, Ridgewood, NJ September 1995 – December 1995

Student Teaching (Grade Two)

- Responsible for curriculum development for 21 students including lesson planning, classroom management, introduction of new units, parent interaction and student evaluation
- Facilitated class poetry recital for an audience of parents and community members

St. Rose of Lima, Newark, NJ July 1995

Multisensory Reading Program

- Utilized the Orton-Gillingham approach to instruct learning disabled students

Orchard Elementary School, Ridgewood, NJ February - May 1995

Field Experience (Grade 5)

- Observed and assisted in a cooperative teaching environment
- Developed lesson plans utilizing the inquiry approach within a research setting

Douglass Speech and Hearing Clinic, New Brunswick, NJ September 1991 – May 1992

Student Clinician

- Prepared and administered lesson plans and I.E.P.'s for individual speech therapy
- Observed 120 hours of articulation and language therapy in various service settings.

Other Experience

Certified in CPR/AED device August 2011

Infant/Toddler Developmental Center, Ridgewood, NJ Sept. 1994 – Sept. 1995

Teaching Assistant

- Classroom team-teacher for students in 1 year old, 2 year old and 3 year old classrooms

Robert Wood Johnson School of Medicine & Dentistry, New Brunswick, NJ 8/93-9/94

Preservice Trainer in Developmental Disabilities Department

- Involved in a completion of activities in an individualized training program
- Observed and interviewed professionals working in the field
- Visited and evaluated service settings

Volunteer Experience

St. Stephen's Church Warwick, NY September 2011 – July 2012

Catechism Teacher

- Taught third and fourth grade students

Our Lady Queen of Angels School Newport Beach, CA January 2007 – April 2009

Parent Volunteer

- School Auction Volunteer- responsible for community outreach, gathering photos and paintings from art galleries for the school's silent auction which net approx. \$400K for the school
- Classroom volunteer for grades kindergarten - 2

Attachment 5a: Charter School Trustee Background Information: Allison Berman

School Trustee Background Information
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Each proposed or prospective charter school board member must provide the information requested below.

Name: Allison Berman

Charter School Name: DIRT Charter School

Charter School Address: PO Box 23, Pine Island, NY 10969

To which charter school board position(s) and/or offices(s) are you asking to be appointed? (e.g., member, parent representative, vice-president, Finance committee, etc.): Board Member, Public Relations Representative, Food Services Facilitator

As you may know, serving on a public charter school board of trustees (“board”) is a position of great trust and responsibility. As a member of a public charter school’s board, you are charged with overseeing the education of all students enrolled in the school, as well as the expenditure of public monies directed to the charter school.

The Department’s consent is required **before** any new member may serve on the board. Accordingly, and in order to properly evaluate proposed board members, we ask that you please provide full and complete answers to each of the items below and provide the required assurance indicated. Note that providing false, misleading, and/or incomplete information may lead to a withdrawal of the Department’s approval, nullifying your appointment to the board.

Background

1. Please provide your educational and employment history. You may do so by attaching a résumé. Resume Attached

2. Please affirm that you are or will be at least eighteen years old at the time of your appointment/election to the board. I affirm.

3. Please affirm that you have read Article 56 of the New York State Education Law, and understand the relationship between a charter school and the authorized chartering entity as defined in that statute. I affirm.

4. Please indicate how you became aware of the charter school and the opportunity to serve as a member of its board.

I was approached to design the food service program after my involvement in restructuring the Health and Wellness Policy for the Warwick Valley Central School District.

5. Please explain why you wish to serve on the board.

I would like to see children learning about where their food comes from, developing an appreciation for it, and making healthier food choices for their bodies.

6. Please indicate whether you have previously served or are currently serving on a board of a school district, a non-public school or any not-for-profit corporation (to the extent not otherwise indicated in your response to Item 1, above). In addition, please describe any other experience, knowledge or skills you feel is relevant to service on the charter school board.

Yes. *I am on the board of the Jewish Federation*

7. Please indicate whether or not you have ever been convicted of a misdemeanor and/or felony in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

8. Please indicate if you currently have any criminal charge(s) pending against you in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

Conflict of Interest

9. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any of the other prospective or current board members.

Yes. *We have been working together to form the DIRT Charter School.*

10. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any person who is a prospective or current charter school employee.

I / we do not know any such persons.

11. Please indicate if you, your spouse, or other family member or any corporation, business or other entity in which you, your spouse or other family member serve as an employee, officer, or director or own a controlling interest in, contracts or does business with, or plans to contract or do business with, the charter school, including but not limited to, the lease of real or personal property to the charter school.

No.

12. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider (a management company, whether for-profit or not-for-profit), please indicate

whether you, your spouse, or any family member knows any employees, officers, owners, directors or agents of that provider. If your answer is in the affirmative, please describe any such relationship.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

13. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider, please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member has a direct or indirect ownership, employment, contractual or management interest in the provider. For any interest indicated, please provide a detailed description.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

14. If the charter school is partnered with an educational services provider, please indicate if you, your spouse or other family member anticipates conducting, or is conducting, any business with the provider. If so, please indicate the precise nature of the business that is being or will be conducted.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

15. Please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member is a director, officer, employee, partner or member of, or is otherwise associated with, any organization which filed an application in conjunction with the charter school, i.e., is partnered with the charter school. To the extent you have provided this information in response to items 9-12, you may so indicate.

This does not apply to me, my spouse or other family members.

16. Please indicate the potential ethical or legal conflicts of interests (if any) that would, or are likely to, exist should you be approved for service on the charter school's board.

None

17. Please explain how you would handle a situation in which you believe one or more members of the charter school's board are involved in working for their own benefit, or the benefit of their friends and family.

I would seek to have any board member working for their own benefit or the benefit of their friends or family removed from the board.

Educational Philosophy

18. Please explain your understanding of the charter school's mission and/or philosophy.

The school will foster an environment that encourages well rounded individuals that enjoy life long learning.

19. Please explain your understanding of the educational program of the charter school. The school will provide and integrated learning environment focusing on environmental sciences and the arts, utilizing hands on learning.

The school will provide and integrated learning environment focusing on environmental sciences and the arts, utilizing hands on learning.

20. Please indicate what you believe to be the characteristics of a successful charter school. In particular, please provide the specific steps you think the board of the charter school will need to take to ensure that this charter school is and remains successful.

I believe the secret to the school's success will be harnessing the community's passion to participate in educating the children using the agricultural landscape - both for the environmental science theme that will be integrated throughout all lessons and as a means to appreciate the flourishing arts community.

Other

21. Please explain your understanding of the appropriate role of a public charter school board member.

I see the responsibility of a public charter board member as helping keep the administrator's focused on following the mission of the school, being proactive to bring new programs to the school that will facilitate accomplishing the schools goals, and being able to resolve conflicts as they inevitably arise. It is also the charter board member's responsibility to be familiar with what topics are appropriate to discuss at a public meeting and what should be kept private.

22. Please affirm that you have read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies.

I do.

23. Please provide any other information that you feel is pertinent to the Department's review.

I have been attending the WVCSD Board of Education meetings for the last 2 years and am familiar with their overall perceived responsibilities of board members. I have had the opportunity to develop my own sense of what in my opinion they do well, and what they do less well and how I would like to do things differently. I am very excited to have the privilege to help guide and support what will be an amazing school in any way that I can.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

I, Allison Berman (name of proposed board member) state that I am the applicant for board member approval and I have read the questionnaire and any supporting documents and know the contents thereof; that the same is true to my knowledge except as to the matters therein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true and further acknowledge that I am aware of the fact that, pursuant to Penal Law §175.30, a person who knowingly offers a false instrument for filing to a public official or public servant is guilty of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the 2nd Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor.

Allison Berman

July 17, 2012

Signature

Date

Please note that this document is considered a public record and as such, may be made available to members of the public upon request under the Freedom of Information Law. Personal contact information provided below will be redacted.

Business Telephone: _____

Business Address: _____

E-Mail Address: [REDACTED] _____

Home Telephone: [REDACTED] _____

Home Address: [REDACTED] _____

ALLISON B. BERMAN

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

I have 15+ years experience revitalizing non-performing programs, exceeding sales targets, and developing new business streams in corporate America, not-for-profits (both as a paid professional and as a volunteer), and as an entrepreneur.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Marketing/Communications
- Corporate Branding
- Writing/Editing/Proofreading
- Creative Design
- Proven ability to size-up under-performing programs and implement solutions.
- Strong relationship building skills for acquiring new customers/retaining client base.
- Excellent team builder and leader.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

WITH LOVE, ALI B., Warwick, NY - *Artist* 1/2006 - Present

- Interior Design: Created eCommerce site selling custom painted home décor for nurseries and kid's rooms. Profitable 2nd year. Expanded product line/service now includes teen and adult accessories and interior decorating services.
- Developed Brand Strategy/Creative Execution: Managed creative development of ads, direct mail, stationary.
- Exceptional eMarketer/Social Networker/Blogger: Increased traffic to site 50% with creation of unique blog for parents written by parent experts in education, fashion, food, beauty, yoga, business. Edit staff of 7 parent bloggers' posts. Upload posts using Wordpress. Promote blog on parenting websites, LinkedIn, Facebook.

TIMES HERALD RECORD, Greater Hudson Valley, NY - *BlackBerry Mom - Business Columnist* 5/2008 - 2/2012

- Wrote weekly column documenting trials and tribulations of balancing career and family. Moved from Tuesday edition to higher circulation (90K) Sunday edition after 1 ½ years due to positive reader response.

ANTI-DE FAMATION LEAGUE, New York, NY - *Marketing Strategist* 5/2001 - 6/2003

- Exceptional Fundraiser: Identified, cultivated, and solicited prospects/donors exceeding \$10 mil+ fundraising goal.
- Business Results: Responsible for 125K in planned gifts. National ad campaign generated 50 new leads. Built targeted donor/prospect database. Oversaw donor recognition events and professional continuing education seminars.
- Brand Strategy: Centralized Endowments & Planned Giving marketing in NY supporting all regional staff/volunteers.
- Modernized Marketing Strategy: Established online presence. Expanded reach. Generated thousands in new gifts.
- Successful Budget Management: Ran profitable 500K marketing/advertising budget including print, radio, events.

MEDIA METRIX, INC., New York, NY, *Director of Sales Communication/Marketing* 11/1999 - 1/2001

- Management: Hired to establish a marketing department. Hired, trained, supervised bi-costal staff of six.
- Business Development: Doubled client base with a targeted modular sales kit.
- Product Launch: Orchestrated direct mailing, product specific collateral, giveaways. Secured speaking engagements.
- Global Brand Identity: Defined domestic strategy. Managed consistency abroad.
- Conference Program: Managed custom tradeshow booth design and construction. Supervised participation in 18 trade exhibitions, including sponsorships. Secured 75+ speaking engagements.
- Event Marketing: Spearheaded strategy. Managed coordination of all high-level client and press events.
- Budgeting: Ran a profitable media, agency, and production budget totaling 750K.

NIELSEN MEDIA RESEARCH, INC., New York, NY 6/1996 - 11/1999

- Initiated annual corporate participation in Lee Denim Day - national fund-raiser for Breast Cancer Research.

Marketing Research Specialist, National Television Index Division 7/1998 - 11/1999

- Updated Marketing Strategy: Steered department Internet and Intranet presence. Saved Nielsen 15K+ annually and cut reporting delay, transitioning 2000+ clients to electronic reporting. Wrote/designed new product guides.
- Client Relations/Event Marketing: Planned and oversaw execution for 400 person week-long client meeting at resort.

Communications Manager, Corporate Communications Division 7/1997 - 6/1998

- Amiable Community Liaison: Spokesperson for press inquiries, general public. Initial contact for prospective clients.
- Corporate Branding Team: Post corporate spin-off developed new logo, messaging, marketing materials.
- Documented Nielsen History: 20K copies of 50 page book circulated to libraries, colleges, financial institutions.

Marketing Research Analyst, National Television Index Division 6/1996 - 7/1997

- Researched and produced ratings analyses for networks, stations, agencies, advertisers, sport association clients.

ALLISON B. BERMAN, page 2

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

JEWISH FEDERATION, Orange County, NY, Board Member/Marketing & PR Committee Chair 6/2008 - Present

- Performed Sales Cycle Analysis: Pinpointed strategy to maximize donations and relationship building opportunities.
- Shaped Corporate Brand/Established e-Presence: Powerful messaging/recognizable creative for brochures, invites, ads. Instituted weekly email program to communicate with donors/drive traffic to new website. Wrote/organized content using easy-to-navigate design. Facebook primer enables staff to navigate social networking.
- Introduced Professional Business Practices: Privatized email accounts eliminating confusion/protecting confidentiality. Utilized computer network improving productivity/providing backup. Established ad submission guidelines facilitating newspaper layout and ad sales. Directed usage guidelines educating those receiving Federation's financial support how to recognize Federation and raise Federation's profile.

D.I.R.T. (Developing Innovative Rural Thinking) CHARTER SCHOOL, Warwick, NY 11/2011 - Present

- Member of 16 person committee applying to establish first rural charter school in New York State. It will use the environment as the classroom both for integrating interdisciplinary learning and feeding children local produce.

WARWICK VALLEY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, Warwick, NY 9/2009 - Present

- Appointed to district wide Wellness Committee. Researching/composing Nutrition Standards portion of new district policy.

CONGREGATION EITZ CHAIM, Monroe, NY, Co-chair School Program Reorganization Committee 2006 - 2008

- Restructured program so Hebrew school/pre-school fall under auspices of one administrator. Led search committee.

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER: Rochester, NY, B.A. 1996 - Major: Psychology, Minor: Fine Arts, Dean's List

- VP Panhellenic Association: Executive Board member of 600 person organization. President of General Board.
- Sigma Delta Tau Sorority: Historian
- Class Senator Student Association: Chair PR Committee. Liaison to President of University.

AWARDS

- Young Leadership 2011 - Given by Jewish Federation
- Rising Star 2008 - Given by Orange County Chamber of Commerce, Leadership Orange, Junior League
- Pace Setter 2007 - American Cancer Society Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk

Attachment 5a: Charter School Trustee Background Information: Christina Pahucki

School Trustee Background Information
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Each proposed or prospective charter school board member must provide the information requested below.

Name: Christina Pahucki

Charter School Name: DIRT Charter School

Charter School Address: PO Box 23, Pine Island NY 10969

To which charter school board position(s) and/or offices(s) are you asking to be appointed? (e.g., member, parent representative, vice-president, Finance committee, etc.): Board member

As you may know, serving on a public charter school board of trustees (“board”) is a position of great trust and responsibility. As a member of a public charter school’s board, you are charged with overseeing the education of all students enrolled in the school, as well as the expenditure of public monies directed to the charter school.

The Department’s consent is required **before** any new member may serve on the board. Accordingly, and in order to properly evaluate proposed board members, we ask that you please provide full and complete answers to each of the items below and provide the required assurance indicated. Note that providing false, misleading, and/or incomplete information may lead to a withdrawal of the Department’s approval, nullifying your appointment to the board.

Background

1. Please provide your educational and employment history. You may do so by attaching a résumé. Resume Attached
2. Please affirm that you are or will be at least eighteen years old at the time of your appointment/election to the board. I affirm.
3. Please affirm that you have read Article 56 of the New York State Education Law, and understand the relationship between a charter school and the authorized chartering entity as defined in that statute. I affirm.

4. Please indicate how you became aware of the charter school and the opportunity to serve as a member of its board.

I was part of the group that first began talking about the need for school options in Orange County.

5. Please explain why you wish to serve on the board.

I wish to use my teaching experience and commitment to help create a great new school option.

6. Please indicate whether you have previously served or are currently serving on a board of a school district, a non-public school or any not-for-profit corporation (to the extent not otherwise indicated in your response to Item 1, above). In addition, please describe any other experience, knowledge or skills you feel is relevant to service on the charter school board. This does not apply to me.

7. Please indicate whether or not you have ever been convicted of a misdemeanor and/or felony in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

8. Please indicate if you currently have any criminal charge(s) pending against you in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

Conflict of Interest

9. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any of the other prospective or current board members.

Yes. *Our Board is made up of people who are active in the community and so many of us know each other and many of our children go to school together.*

10. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any person who is a prospective or current charter school employee.

I / we do not know any such persons.

11. Please indicate if you, your spouse, or other family member or any corporation, business or other entity in which you, your spouse or other family member serve as an employee, officer, or director or own a controlling interest in, contracts or does business with, or plans to contract or do business with, the charter school, including but not limited to, the lease of real or personal property to the charter school.

No.

12. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider (a management company, whether for-profit or not-for-profit), please indicate whether you, your spouse, or any family member knows any employees, officers, owners, directors or agents of that provider. If your answer is in the affirmative, please describe any such relationship.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

13. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider, please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member has a direct or indirect ownership, employment, contractual or management interest in the provider. For any interest indicated, please provide a detailed description.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

14. If the charter school is partnered with an educational services provider, please indicate if you, your spouse or other family member anticipates conducting, or is conducting, any business with the provider. If so, please indicate the precise nature of the business that is being or will be conducted.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

15. Please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member is a director, officer, employee, partner or member of, or is otherwise associated with, any organization which filed an application in conjunction with the charter school, i.e., is partnered with the charter school. To the extent you have provided this information in response to items 9-12, you may so indicate. This does not apply to me, my spouse or other family members.

16. Please indicate the potential ethical or legal conflicts of interests (if any) that would, or are likely to, exist should you be approved for service on the charter school's board.

None

17. Please explain how you would handle a situation in which you believe one or more members of the charter school's board are involved in working for their own benefit, or the benefit of their friends and family.

The procedures laid out in the charter school's Conflict of Interest Policy would guide my actions. If there is good cause to believe a member of the board has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, I would inform that member of the basis for my belief and afford him/her an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing board determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, we would take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

Educational Philosophy

18. Please explain your understanding of the charter school's mission and/or philosophy.

The DIRT Charter School will provide children with the opportunity to reach their full academic and developmental potential and become lifelong learners by fostering interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking skills, and a deep understanding of the interdependence of our local and global existence.

19. Please explain your understanding of the educational program of the charter school.

DIRT Charter School will be dedicated to the stewardship of the environment and the interdisciplinary study of the science of sustainability. The school's educators will use local natural and community surroundings as a context for standards-based instruction. Our proposed location in Orange County would be close to regions of agriculture. There must be ecosystems of water, soil, natural resources, and the possibilities of alternative energy exploration located nearby. The agriculture center which becomes the DIRT environment will be a learning laboratory where students will be able to experiment, farm, garden, and hike daily.

20. Please indicate what you believe to be the characteristics of a successful charter school. In particular, please provide the specific steps you think the board of the charter school will need to take to ensure that this charter school is and remains successful.

A successful charter school provides every student with a strong academic and character-building education, will comply with all government and other regulations, and will be fiscally sound. The board of the charter school must:

- *Monitor effective implementation of key design elements.*
- *Monitor and report on progress towards meeting accountability goals.*
- *Facilitate communication with the school leader and authorizer.*
- *Evaluate the performance of the school leader.*
- *Evaluate school policies and procedures and revise to ensure achievement of mission and accountability goals.*
- *Review budget to determine optimum allocation of resources.*
- *Be prepared to spend substantial time on school related matters*

Other

21. Please explain your understanding of the appropriate role of a public charter school board member.

The Board will have all the powers and duties permitted by law to oversee the business, property, and affairs of the charter school; will maintain sole fiduciary responsibility and will exercise hiring and firing authority of the school leader.

Board members have a responsibility to solicit input from, and opinions of, the parents of students, and the faculty and staff, regarding issues of significance and to weigh the input and opinions carefully before taking action.

22. Please affirm that you have read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies.

I affirm that I have read, understand and support the charter school application.

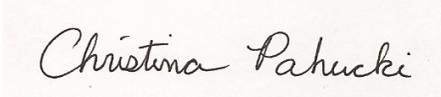
23. Please provide any other information that you feel is pertinent to the Department's review.

The DIRT Charter School prospective Board members and advisers have a personal commitment to provide an excellent charter school option for Orange County.

A Statement of Assurance must be signed by and submitted for each proposed Board Member.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

I, Christina Pahucki (name of proposed board member) state that I am the applicant for board member approval and I have read the questionnaire and any supporting documents and know the contents thereof; that the same is true to my knowledge except as to the matters therein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true and further acknowledge that I am aware of the fact that, pursuant to Penal Law §175.30, a person who knowingly offers a false instrument for filing to a public official or public servant is guilty of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the 2nd Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor.



July 9, 2012

Signature

Date

Please note that this document is considered a public record and as such, may be made available to members of the public upon request under the Freedom of Information Law. Personal contact information provided below will be redacted.

Business Telephone: _____

Business Address: _____

E-Mail Address: [REDACTED] _____

Home Telephone: [REDACTED] _____

Home Address: [REDACTED] _____

CHRISTINA PAHUCKI

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

September 2002 – Present Goshen Middle School Goshen, NY

Art Teacher

- Taught art grades 6 – 8.
- Created curriculum for three art enrichment classes.
- Began helping students to renovate the courtyard into an outdoor classroom.

June 2001 – June 2002 and

June 1997 – June 1998

Goshen Central Schools

Goshen, NY

Substitute Teacher

- Taught art grades 6 - 8 for seven weeks using own lesson plans.
- Substitute taught various grade levels and subjects.

9/2001 – 6/2002

Krieger Elementary School

Poughkeepsie, NY

Art Teacher (0.4)

- Taught art in an urban setting to grades 1 – 5.
- Collaborated with classroom teachers to create innovative displays for academic fair.
- Worked with special needs students to paint huge wall murals.

9/1999 – 6/2001

Pine Bush Central Schools

Pine Bush, NY

Art Teacher (0.7)

- Taught Studio Art classes for grades 9 and 10 and art from a cart for grades K-5.
- Created displays for hallways and the Galleria Mall.

STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE

3/1997 – 5/1997

Waterfront Elementary School

Buffalo, NY

- Developed and taught a variety of art lessons to grades K – 8 in an urban setting.

1/1997 – 3/1997

Lakeshore High School

Angola, NY

- Constructed and followed lesson plans for several diverse art courses grades 9 - 12.
- Assisted in creating billboards and advertisements for the school play.

RELATED EXPERIENCE

12/1997 - Present

Footings Inc.

Monroe, NY

Education Support Specialist

- Developed transition plans for students with developmental disabilities by meeting with students, parents, teachers and administrators.
- Trained school staff and students in Person-Centered Planning and transition.
- Supervised all after school programs for elementary students.

EDUCATION

State University of New York at New Paltz

Masters in Art Education, May 2004, 3.8/4.0

State University College at Buffalo, NY

Bachelor of Art Education, May 1997, 3.2/4.0

Orange County Community College, Middletown, NY

Associate of Liberal Arts, May 1995, 3.2/4.0



Attachment 5a: Charter School Trustee Background Information: Marlene Carabalo

School Trustee Background Information
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Each proposed or prospective charter school board member must provide the information requested below.

Name: Marlene Caraballo

Charter School Name: D.I.R.T. (Developing Innovative Rural Thinking) Charter School

Charter School Address: PO Box 23, Pine Island, NY 10969

To which charter school board position(s) and/or offices(s) are you asking to be appointed? (e.g., member, parent representative, vice-president, Finance committee, etc.): Board member

As you may know, serving on a public charter school board of trustees (“board”) is a position of great trust and responsibility. As a member of a public charter school’s board, you are charged with overseeing the education of all students enrolled in the school, as well as the expenditure of public monies directed to the charter school.

The Department’s consent is required **before** any new member may serve on the board. Accordingly, and in order to properly evaluate proposed board members, we ask that you please provide full and complete answers to each of the items below and provide the required assurance indicated. Note that providing false, misleading, and/or incomplete information may lead to a withdrawal of the Department’s approval, nullifying your appointment to the board.

Background

1. Please provide your educational and employment history. You may do so by attaching a résumé. Resume Attached

2. Please affirm that you are or will be at least eighteen years old at the time of your appointment/election to the board. I affirm.

3. Please affirm that you have read Article 56 of the New York State Education Law, and understand the relationship between a charter school and the authorized chartering entity as defined in that statute. I affirm.

4. Please indicate how you became aware of the charter school and the opportunity to serve as a member of its board.

I was part of the original group who began exploring the options that might be possible for children in and around our community - especially an option that could provide an innovative approach to curriculum and to incorporate a more hands-on learning experience that embraces our rural, agricultural community.

5. Please explain why you wish to serve on the board.

To use my experience as an involved community member, business owner, and parent of three school-aged children (one in elementary, one in middle school, one in high school) to help make this charter school an educational option in this area.

6. Please indicate whether you have previously served or are currently serving on a board of a school district, a non-public school or any not-for-profit corporation (to the extent not otherwise indicated in your response to Item 1, above). In addition, please describe any other experience, knowledge or skills you feel is relevant to service on the charter school board.

Yes: *I am currently serving a two-year term as President of the Board of Directors of the Pine Island Chamber of Commerce, Pine Island, NY – a non-profit community organization. I have also served as an active member and board officer on Warwick Valley Central School District Parent-Teacher Association, have served on the Board of the Warwick Valley Humane Society, and have volunteered for service with other local non-profit community organizations including the Orange County Youth Football League, Warwick Little League, Boy Scouts of America, and Warwick Valley Varsity Football League.*

7. Please indicate whether or not you have ever been convicted of a misdemeanor and/or felony in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

8. Please indicate if you currently have any criminal charge(s) pending against you in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

Conflict of Interest

9. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any of the other prospective or current board members.

Yes. *We met through our children attending school in the local district.*

10. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any person who is a prospective or current charter school employee.

I / we do not know any such persons.

11. Please indicate if you, your spouse, or other family member or any corporation, business or other entity in which you, your spouse or other family member serve as an employee, officer, or director or own a controlling interest in, contracts or does business with, or plans to contract or do business with, the charter school, including but not limited to, the lease of real or personal property to the charter school.

No.

12. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider (a management company, whether for-profit or not-for-profit), please indicate whether you, your spouse, or any family member knows any employees, officers, owners, directors or agents of that provider. If your answer is in the affirmative, please describe any such relationship.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

13. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider, please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member has a direct or indirect ownership, employment, contractual or management interest in the provider. For any interest indicated, please provide a detailed description.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

14. If the charter school is partnered with an educational services provider, please indicate if you, your spouse or other family member anticipates conducting, or is conducting, any business with the provider. If so, please indicate the precise nature of the business that is being or will be conducted.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

15. Please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member is a director, officer, employee, partner or member of, or is otherwise associated with, any organization which filed an application in conjunction with the charter school, i.e., is partnered with the charter school. To the extent you have provided this information in response to items 9-12, you may so indicate.

This does not apply to me, my spouse or other family members.

16. Please indicate the potential ethical or legal conflicts of interests (if any) that would, or are likely to, exist should you be approved for service on the charter school's board.

None

17. Please explain how you would handle a situation in which you believe one or more members of the charter school's board are involved in working for their own benefit, or the benefit of their friends and family.

There is no place for self-interest and benefits for one's self or friends on the board of any organization that represents and serves others. Board members hold the trust of others to serve its mission, not their own. Immediate investigation of the situation and appropriate action should be conducted and discussed by the Board and resolved as quickly as possible to avoid further conflict of interest.

Educational Philosophy

18. Please explain your understanding of the charter school's mission and/or philosophy. *The D.I.R.T. Charter School mission is to provide children with the opportunity to reach their full academic and developmental potential through a creative, hands-on curriculum that incorporates their rural community and will prepare them for, and provide the skills for, lifelong learning success.*

19. Please explain your understanding of the educational program of the charter school. *The D.I.R.T. Charter School educational program will meet and exceed the standard curriculum goals as set by the NYS education guidelines. The program is designed to provide a learning experience that extends beyond textbooks, tests and the traditional classroom. The educational program will often include outdoor learning in our rural agricultural community, where there are numerous opportunities to bring lessons to the fresh air and literally, to the local dirt. The educational program will also include the children's involvement with food and nutrition as it relates to themselves and their world, and from the local farms to the school's tables. In our rural community, there are boundless opportunities for learning lessons through an on-going relationship with the local and global community, including opportunities for students to experience community service. The D.I.R.T. program will integrate environmental science throughout the curriculum. Students will regularly use the Orange County environment as their classroom for hands-on, interdisciplinary projects that apply to lessons in subjects such as English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Foreign Language, Art, Music and the use of technology. The program also incorporates rich human and land resources for learning with the integration of relationships with the local historical societies, music and art organizations, chambers of commerce, town parks, wildlife refuge, local natural mines, local National Park-Appalachian Trail, etc. All of these enriching, learning experiences and lessons shall be designed with the goal of how it relates to helping each student excel academically.*

20. Please indicate what you believe to be the characteristics of a successful charter school. In particular, please provide the specific steps you think the board of the charter school will need to take to ensure that this charter school is and remains successful. *The D.I.R.T. Charter School Board needs to keep the school's mission and goals in their mind and in their actions, throughout all steps it takes - and as it helps lead the growth of the school in the future. The Board shall carry out the mission through encouraging and maintaining Board and staff characteristics including determination, integrity, honesty, transparency, diligence, and accountability of performance in order to successfully achieve educational excellence. The Board should also take a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to its policies, responsibilities, and goals, and should keep a regular means of open communication with staff and parents. Furthermore, a successful charter school's Board needs to monitor the allocation of resources and adherence to*

budgets and procedures to ensure the school remains fiscally healthy while meeting the expectations of the authorizer and maintaining a standard of educational excellence.

Other

21. Please explain your understanding of the appropriate role of a public charter school board member.

The role of a public charter school board member is to ensure that the school operates efficiently, effectively and in accordance with the school's charter, mission, vision and performance goals and that its actions are in the best interest of the children it serves. Board members are responsible for taking into account the opinions of students, staff and parents to carefully take sound and appropriate actions within the guidelines of its authorizer. Board members are also responsible for monitoring the performance of the school leader(s), overseeing the school's finances, properties and public relations.

22. Please affirm that you have read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies.

I have read and understand the charter school application, proposed by-laws and proposed policies to date.

23. Please provide any other information that you feel is pertinent to the Department's review.

A Statement of Assurance must be signed by and submitted for each proposed Board Member.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

I, Marlene A. Caraballo, state that I am the applicant for board member approval and I have read the questionnaire and any supporting documents and know the contents thereof; that the same is true to my knowledge except as to the matters therein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true and further acknowledge that I am aware of the fact that, pursuant to Penal Law §175.30, a person who knowingly offers a false instrument for filing to a public official or public servant is guilty of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the 2nd Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor.

Marlene Caraballo

7/3/12

Signature

Date

Please note that this document is considered a public record and as such, may be made available to members of the public upon request under the Freedom of Information Law. Personal contact information provided below will be redacted.

Business Telephone: [REDACTED]

Business Address: [REDACTED]

E-Mail Address: [REDACTED]

Home Telephone: [REDACTED]

Home Address: [REDACTED]

marlene caraballo

experience

MPDesigns

Owner, Freelance Design Business - 1998 to present

Freelance design company providing all aspects of marketing, public relations, advertising, promotion, branding, logo and artwork design, print and web, for profit and non-profits clients in various industries and of various company sizes.

St. Anthony Community Hospital, Warwick, NY

Development/Fundraising/Marketing – 1997 - 1999

Responsible for organizing fundraising events such as golf tournaments, assisting with capital campaign, annual appeals, public relations, marketing, design of related print materials – as well as tracking of donations and expenses.

Arden Hill Hospital, Goshen, NY

Public Relations/Marketing – 1991 - 1997

Responsible for public relations, marketing, and design of all print materials – advertising campaigns, annual reports, print ads, posters, flyers, mailers, internal marketing, newsletters

IBM Corporation

Marketing Representative, Graphics/Design Software & Hardware – 1987 to 1991

Finished first in class as sales trainee

education

Kean University, Union, NJ – 1987

Bachelor of Science, Industrial Technology, Specialization: Design

community service

Pine Island Chamber of Commerce, Pine Island, NY

President, Board of Directors, 2010 - present

Served as an active member and board officer on Warwick Valley Central School District Parent-Teacher Association, served on the Board of the Warwick Valley Humane Society, and have volunteered for service with the Orange County Youth Football League, Warwick Little League, Boy Scouts of America, Warwick Valley Varsity Football.

skills

Proficient with computers and digital media, graphic and web design, spreadsheets, powerpoint

Fluent in Italian, comfortable in basic Spanish

Attachment 5a: Charter School Trustee Background Information: Janine Bloom

School Trustee Background Information
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Each proposed or prospective charter school board member must provide the information requested below.

Name: Janine Bloom

Charter School Name: DIRT Charter School

Charter School Address: PO Box 23, Pine Island NY 10969

To which charter school board position(s) and/or offices(s) are you asking to be appointed? (e.g., member, parent representative, vice-president, Finance committee, etc.): Board Member

As you may know, serving on a public charter school board of trustees (“board”) is a position of great trust and responsibility. As a member of a public charter school’s board, you are charged with overseeing the education of all students enrolled in the school, as well as the expenditure of public monies directed to the charter school.

The Department’s consent is required **before** any new member may serve on the board. Accordingly, and in order to properly evaluate proposed board members, we ask that you please provide full and complete answers to each of the items below and provide the required assurance indicated. Note that providing false, misleading, and/or incomplete information may lead to a withdrawal of the Department’s approval, nullifying your appointment to the board.

Background

1. Please provide your educational and employment history. You may do so by attaching a résumé. **X** Resume Attached
2. Please affirm that you are or will be at least eighteen years old at the time of your appointment/election to the board. **X** I affirm.
3. Please affirm that you have read Article 56 of the New York State Education Law, and understand the relationship between a charter school and the authorized chartering entity as defined in that statute. **X** I affirm.
4. Please indicate how you became aware of the charter school and the opportunity to serve as a member of its board.

In January 2012 I was hearing a lot of talk about the possible start up of the charter school in our community. At the time, I had no knowledge of what a charter school was and how it was different from regular public schools. I then did what any proactive parent would do, I Googled "what is a charter school?" The more I read about it the more excited I became to have this awesome opportunity of choice for our children. I went onto DIRT Charters website and signed up all my children on the perspective list and wrote an email stating my excitement in support of the charter and my wish to help out and be involved in any way that I can! I then was ecstatic to hear of an informational meeting on the new proposed charter school being held in our community. I showed up to the meeting one hour early to ensure a good seat and to gather more information and get my list of questions answered.

My excitement continues to grow as our mission, dream and vision of the charter grows. Possibly because of my enthusiastic support and loyal involvement, I was approached and asked if I would like to be a prospective board member. After researching what it meant to be a board member, I concluded it would be ideal for me because the dreams and visions this DIRT Charter school aspires to provide for the children are the same that I aspire for mine.

5. Please explain why you wish to serve on the board.

A well-rounded anything proves to be more successful. As there are many prospective board members who are certified educators with years of experience in their field, I feel that my life skills as a parent of four children will prove to be a great asset. I want the best for my children and my community's children. I strongly feel that all children are our greatest assets and that they deserve the best education we can offer them. By being involved in becoming a board member I would aspire to see to it that this vision is met and executed. Having reviewed the mission of the dirt charter school, I wholeheartedly feel that it is exemplary and that it will address important and essential criteria that are or may be otherwise missing in our children's education.

6. Please indicate whether you have previously served or are currently serving on a board of a school district, a non-public school or any not-for-profit corporation (to the extent not otherwise indicated in your response to Item 1, above). In addition, please describe any other experience, knowledge or skills you feel is relevant to service on the charter school board. This does not apply to me.

As a parent with two special-needs children I have had four years experience in advocating for my children within our school district. Therefore, I feel it would be comforting for such parents to know there is someone on the board with experience in this area and I could, if needed, advocate for other children as I have done for my own.

Besides having four young children I have been a New York State certified EMT working and volunteering for my community. And with this, I have added experience in the field of safety and first aid which I could incorporate where applicable into any plans for the charter school.

I have as a Girl Scout leader, PTA parent, 4-H parent, drama club group leader, Little League coach and head cheerleading coach, employed organizational skills and psychology to make activities and performances by and for the children fun and rewarding as well as successful.

In addition, I have implemented and organized successful fund-raising events with various missions to improve and benefit the community, to support community members in need, and, to ensure the ongoing success of various organizations (e.g., Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Warwick Little League, Pine Island Community Public Park and the Pulaski Fire Department's Ladies Auxiliary).

7. Please indicate whether or not you have ever been convicted of a misdemeanor and/or felony in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

X This does not apply to me.

8. Please indicate if you currently have any criminal charge(s) pending against you in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

X This does not apply to me.

Conflict of Interest

9. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any of the other prospective or current board members.

X Yes. *Both my family and I have known Christina Pahucki, Marlene Caraballo, Tracy Pietrzak, Shannon Hockswender and their families for a few years now. We are all part of a small community and our children of similar ages all attended the same school. Upon becoming more involved in the DIRT charter school, I grew to know them on a more professional level. I also have known Allison Berman for a few years as an acquaintance due to our children attending the same pre-K program. As of recently, my husband just became aware that he knows of Paul Ruszkiewicz from our community, but not in a familiar sense.*

10. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any person who is a prospective or current charter school employee.

X I / we do not know any such persons.

11. Please indicate if you, your spouse, or other family member or any corporation, business or other entity in which you, your spouse or other family member serve as an employee, officer, or director or own a controlling interest in, contracts or does business with, or plans to contract or do business with, the charter school, including but not limited to, the lease of real or personal property to the charter school.

X No.

12. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider (a management company, whether for-profit or not-for-profit), please indicate whether you, your spouse, or any family member knows any employees, officers, owners, directors or

agents of that provider. If your answer is in the affirmative, please describe any such relationship.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

13. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider, please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member has a direct or indirect ownership, employment, contractual or management interest in the provider. For any interest indicated, please provide a detailed description.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

14. If the charter school is partnered with an educational services provider, please indicate if you, your spouse or other family member anticipates conducting, or is conducting, any business with the provider. If so, please indicate the precise nature of the business that is being or will be conducted.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

15. Please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member is a director, officer, employee, partner or member of, or is otherwise associated with, any organization which filed an application in conjunction with the charter school, i.e., is partnered with the charter school. To the extent you have provided this information in response to items 9-12, you may so indicate.

This does not apply to me, my spouse or other family members.

16. Please indicate the potential ethical or legal conflicts of interests (if any) that would, or are likely to, exist should you be approved for service on the charter school's board.

None

17. Please explain how you would handle a situation in which you believe one or more members of the charter school's board are involved in working for their own benefit, or the benefit of their friends and family.

The procedures laid out in the charter school's Conflict of Interest Policy would guide my actions. If there is good cause to believe a member of the board has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, I would inform that member of the basis for my belief and afford him/her an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing board determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, we would take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

Educational Philosophy

18. Please explain your understanding of the charter school's mission and/or philosophy.

DIRT Charter's mission is to educate children by integrating sciences, ecology, health, arts, music and foreign language into a "hands on" educational environment utilizing our local surroundings as tools as a learning lab for the children. By integrating what

they are learning into all areas of study, we want to create educated, responsible, eco-friendly, respectful members of the community, with the opportunity to soar as high, if not higher than their dreams and aspirations can take them!

19. Please explain your understanding of the educational program of the charter school.
DIRT Charter will be using the environmental science as a basis to educate and prepare its students to meet and/or supersede the New York State Common Core Learning Standards. I had an excitingly eye-opening opportunity to experience the execution of this kind of program first hand in a visit to a charter school in Pennsylvania with a similar mission to ours. It was such an awesome learning experience to see how each and every student there just sucked in all the information being put out to them, understood it, were excited about it and eager to learn more!

20. Please indicate what you believe to be the characteristics of a successful charter school. In particular, please provide the specific steps you think the board of the charter school will need to take to ensure that this charter school is and remains successful.

I believe, that in order for dirt charters success, there needs to be diversity among the board members, a very strong vision for the present and future of the charter and members of the board who are passionate in and for the success of the school.

In order to achieve the above, I feel that the board members need to have a line of communication open to the parents with the opportunity to allow for change (in the structure) where improvements are needed and or desired for the benefit of the students.

There should be a plan in place to ensure that all board members serve with the utmost integrity, honesty, and selflessness. There should be scheduled, anonymous evaluations of board members, teachers and all school staff.

There should be someone qualified and appointed for the sole purpose of grant writing and fundraising, with certain and specific expectations that must be met.

There should also be the opportunity to add/terminate board members if, and, as needed.

The board needs to provide the flexibility within the charters mission to evolve as new concepts, technology and curriculums become evident.

Other

21. Please explain your understanding of the appropriate role of a public charter school board member.

As a public charter school board member, we are always in the eyes of the public. Anything we say or do will be seen as a reflection of our character and of the charter. There is a level of professionalism that should always be adhered to and upheld.

Private and personal information which board members may be made privy to, in connection with the charter school, should at no time be brought up with anyone other than a current board member and then, only if such information is pertinent to that member of the board.

Charter school board members are there to oversee and ensure the mission is being upheld in the following ways:

- *Finances are being used and awarded efficiently and appropriately.*
- *The curriculum is properly and effectively being implemented.*
- *Students are performing to the expectations of their grade level and if they are not, why, what changes need to be made, and, execute them.*
- *The teachers are effectively and appropriately meeting the goals set by the board.*
- *Provide a nonbiased vote/opinion on all matters pertaining to the school.*
- *The Charter Schools bylaws are being implemented/upheld.*

Furthermore, everyone involved in the school should have and uphold, as their primary concern and motivation, the best interest for the education and welfare of the students in the forefront of all matters relevant to the school that come before them.

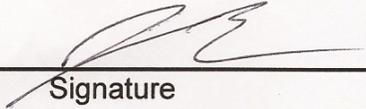
22. Please affirm that you have read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies. **X** I affirm.

23. Please provide any other information that you feel is pertinent to the Department's review.

A Statement of Assurance must be signed by and submitted for each proposed Board Member.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

I, Janine Bloom (name of proposed board member) state that I am the applicant for board member approval and I have read the questionnaire and any supporting documents and know the contents thereof; that the same is true to my knowledge except as to the matters therein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true and further acknowledge that I am aware of the fact that, pursuant to Penal Law §175.30, a person who knowingly offers a false instrument for filing to a public official or public servant is guilty of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the 2nd Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor.


Signature

7-10-12
Date

Please note that this document is considered a public record and as such, may be made available to members of the public upon request under the Freedom of Information Law. Personal contact information provided below will be redacted.

Business Telephone: _____

Business Address: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Home Telephone: _____

Home Address: _____

RESUME

Janine Bloom

EDUCATION

1993-1997 HS Diploma, Monroe Woodbury HS
2001 Certified in First Aid and CPR with the Chester Volunteer Ambulance Corps
2002 New York State Certified EMT-B
2006 Medical Billing Certificate from Orange County Community College
2006 Medical Terminology Certificate from Orange County Community College

QUALIFICATIONS

2003-PRESENT Stay-at-home mother, birthing and raising four children (two with special needs) and managing the logistics of the household, including: budget, diet, medical care, management, upkeep, caretaking, and much more

AWARDS AND LEADERSHIP

St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital Lifesaver Award (2002). Girl Scout Leader; PTA Member; 4-H Parent; Head Cheerleading Coach; Drama Club Group Leader; Special-Needs advocate (for my two children); fund-raising (including: Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Warwick Little League, Pine Island Community Public Park and the Pulaski Fire Department's Ladies Auxiliary).

EMPLOYMENT

2002-Feb.—2002-May Mobile Life Support Services, Inc.
EMT-B and Ambulance Driver
Basic Life Support, responsible for ambulance & documentation

2001 — 2001-July Highland Ophthalmology Associates, LLC
Ophthalmic Medical Assistant and Front Desk Receptionist
Transcription, patient consults, assisting Dr. with minor surgical procedures

1999 — 2000 ZALES Diamond Outlet
Full time sales associate & key holder
Open and close the store, inventory, register, bank deposits, etc...

1998 — 1999 Maximum Pet'Tential
Manager
Open and close the store, daily budget, bookkeeping, banking, writing checks, researching products and advising salespersons

Full employer details in attached References sheet.

Attachment 5a: Charter School Trustee Background Information: Paul Ruszkiewicz

School Trustee Background Information

Each proposed or prospective charter school board member must provide the information requested below.

Name: Paul Ruszkiewicz

Charter School Name: D.I.R.T. Charter School

Charter School Address: PO Box 23, Pine Island, NY 10969

To which charter school board position(s) and/or offices(s) are you asking to be appointed? (e.g., member, parent representative, vice-president, Finance committee, etc.): Board Member

As you may know, serving on a public charter school board of trustees (“board”) is a position of great trust and responsibility. As a member of a public charter school’s board, you are charged with overseeing the education of all students enrolled in the school, as well as the expenditure of public monies directed to the charter school.

The Department’s consent is required **before** any new member may serve on the board. Accordingly, and in order to properly evaluate proposed board members, we ask that you please provide full and complete answers to each of the items below and provide the required assurance indicated. Note that providing false, misleading, and/or incomplete information may lead to a withdrawal of the Department’s approval, nullifying your appointment to the board.

Background

1. Please provide your educational and employment history. You may do so by attaching a résumé. **X** Resume Attached
2. Please affirm that you are or will be at least eighteen years old at the time of your appointment/election to the board. **X** I affirm.
3. Please affirm that you have read Article 56 of the New York State Education Law, and understand the relationship between a charter school and the authorized chartering entity as defined in that statute. **X** I affirm.
4. Please indicate how you became aware of the charter school and the opportunity to serve as a member of its board.

I learned about the DIRT Charter School when a group of community members interested in starting a charter school asked me to become involved. As an active

member of the local agricultural industry I was asked to become involved since the school will have a strong focus on agriculture and environmental science.

5. Please explain why you wish to serve on the board.

I would like to serve on the board of the DIRT Charter School because I strongly believe in and support the mission and vision of the school. This is a strong agricultural area and I feel that it is important that our young people have a strong understanding and appreciation for our agricultural industry and the environment. I also feel that it is important for a school of this nature to have a member of the agricultural community on it's board.

6. Please indicate whether you have previously served or are currently serving on a board of a school district, a non-public school or any not-for-profit corporation (to the extent not otherwise indicated in your response to Item 1, above). In addition, please describe any other experience, knowledge or skills you feel is relevant to service on the charter school board. **X** This does not apply to me.

7. Please indicate whether or not you have ever been convicted of a misdemeanor and/or felony in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

X This does not apply to me.

8. Please indicate if you currently have any criminal charge(s) pending against you in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

X This does not apply to me.

Conflict of Interest

9. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any of the other prospective or current board members.

X Yes. *I have gotten to know the other prospective board members as we have worked together on the DIRT Charter School committee. Some of the prospective members I knew previously since our children attended the same school.*

10. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any person who is a prospective or current charter school employee.

X I / we do not know any such persons.

11. Please indicate if you, your spouse, or other family member or any corporation, business or other entity in which you, your spouse or other family member serve as an employee, officer, or director or own a controlling interest in, contracts or does business with, or plans to contract or do business with, the charter school, including but not limited to, the lease of real or personal property to the charter school.

X No.

12. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider (a management company, whether for-profit or not-for-profit), please indicate whether you, your spouse, or any family member knows any employees, officers, owners, directors or agents of that provider. If your answer is in the affirmative, please describe any such relationship.

X Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

13. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider, please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member has a direct or indirect ownership, employment, contractual or management interest in the provider. For any interest indicated, please provide a detailed description.

X Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

14. If the charter school is partnered with an educational services provider, please indicate if you, your spouse or other family member anticipates conducting, or is conducting, any business with the provider. If so, please indicate the precise nature of the business that is being or will be conducted.

X Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

15. Please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member is a director, officer, employee, partner or member of, or is otherwise associated with, any organization which filed an application in conjunction with the charter school, i.e., is partnered with the charter school. To the extent you have provided this information in response to items 9-12, you may so indicate.

X This does not apply to me, my spouse or other family members.

16. Please indicate the potential ethical or legal conflicts of interests (if any) that would, or are likely to, exist should you be approved for service on the charter school's board.

X None

17. Please explain how you would handle a situation in which you believe one or more members of the charter school's board are involved in working for their own benefit, or the benefit of their friends and family.

If I believed that any other board members were working for their own benefit or the benefit of their friends or family I would bring it up at a board meeting to make the entire board aware of any potential conflict of interest. That way the entire board could discuss any conflict of interest and take appropriate actions to eliminate any such conflict.

Educational Philosophy

18. Please explain your understanding of the charter school's mission and/or philosophy.

I believe that the mission and philosophy of DIRT Charter school is to develop students with strong critical thinking skills who have an appreciation and awareness of their local and global environment. Students who possess and develop these skills will become active, life-long learners. I believe that this philosophy is particularly important for elementary students as it will give them a solid foundation for a successful educational career.

19. Please explain your understanding of the educational program of the charter school.
The educational program of the DIRT Charter School will meet or exceed core curriculum standards set by the state and will also give students opportunities for hands on learning experiences. Students will learn how skills in core subjects such as english, mathematics, science, and social studies relate to real-world problem solving skills. DIRT Charter School will also provide extensive after school programs to meet students interests.

20. Please indicate what you believe to be the characteristics of a successful charter school. In particular, please provide the specific steps you think the board of the charter school will need to take to ensure that this charter school is and remains successful.
I believe that in order for a charter school to be successful it needs to have a strong curriculum based on a good educational philosophy. It is also important that all of the board members, teachers, and staff have a strong understanding of the vision and mission of the charter school. In order for the DIRT Charter School to be successful the board will have to:

- 1. Develop SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely) goals to ensure that the curriculum is meeting the needs of the students.*
- 2. Develop an evaluation system so that the board can annually evaluate it's goals as well as develop new goals.*
- 3. Develop a decision making process that incorporates input and feedback from teachers, staff, parents and students so that decisions made by the board will be in the best interests of everyone affected by those decisions.*
- 4. Develop an annual evaluation system so that:*
 - a. The board can evaluate the performance of teachers and staff.*
 - b. Teachers, staff, and parents can evaluate the performance of the board and it's members*

Other

21. Please explain your understanding of the appropriate role of a public charter school board member.

The role of a public charter school board member is to work with the other board members to ensure that the school is providing the best possible education for it's students and that public funds are being spent responsibly. Charter school board members also need to be familiar with the open meetings law and be aware of what circumstances do or do not justify going into executive session as well as what topics can be discussed during an executive session.

22. Please affirm that you have read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies.

I affirm that I have read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies.

23. Please provide any other information that you feel is pertinent to the Department's review.

A Statement of Assurance must be signed by and submitted for each proposed Board Member.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

I, Paul Ruszkiewicz (name of proposed board member) state that I am the applicant for board member approval and I have read the questionnaire and any supporting documents and know the contents thereof; that the same is true to my knowledge except as to the matters therein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true and further acknowledge that I am aware of the fact that, pursuant to Penal Law §175.30, a person who knowingly offers a false instrument for filing to a public official or public servant is guilty of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the 2nd Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor.



July 3, 2012

Signature

Date

Please note that this document is considered a public record and as such, may be made available to members of the public upon request under the Freedom of Information Law. Personal contact information provided below will be redacted.

Business Telephone: [REDACTED]

Business Address: [REDACTED]

E-Mail Address: [REDACTED]

Home Telephone: [REDACTED]

Home Address: [REDACTED]

Paul Ruszkiewicz



Education

Warwick Valley High School 1994

SUNY Cobleskill 1996 AAS Agricultural Engineering

Cornell University 1998 BS Plant Science

Cornell University 2000 MPS Farm Management and Production Economics

Work

Ruszkiewicz Farms: In partnership with my father I own and manage a two hundred acre vegetable farm, producing mainly onions as well as five varieties of winter squash, pumpkins, gourds, Indian corn, field corn and soybeans. We employ five seasonal employees. I have been farming full-time since completing my master's degree in 2000. Prior to that I farmed part-time through high school and college.

Professional Development

2005 Graduate of LEAD NY Class X: A two year leadership and professional development program for professionals in the agricultural and food industry in New York.

Boards and Organizations

Orange County Vegetable Improvement Cooperative Association: President

Wallkill Valley Drainage Improvement Association: Chairman

Orange County Farm Bureau: Board of Directors

Town of Warwick Planning Board

New York State Vegetable Growers Association: Board of Directors

New York State Onion Industry Council: Chairman

Attachment 5a: Charter School Trustee Background Information: Olivia Keeler

School Trustee Background Information
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Each proposed or prospective charter school board member must provide the information requested below.

Name: Olivia Keeler

Charter School Name: Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School

Charter School Address: PO Box 23, Pine Island, NY 10969

To which charter school board position(s) and/or offices(s) are you asking to be appointed? (e.g., member, parent representative, vice-president, Finance committee, etc.): Member /Curriculum Team

As you may know, serving on a public charter school board of trustees (“board”) is a position of great trust and responsibility. As a member of a public charter school’s board, you are charged with overseeing the education of all students enrolled in the school, as well as the expenditure of public monies directed to the charter school.

The Department’s consent is required **before** any new member may serve on the board. Accordingly, and in order to properly evaluate proposed board members, we ask that you please provide full and complete answers to each of the items below and provide the required assurance indicated. Note that providing false, misleading, and/or incomplete information may lead to a withdrawal of the Department’s approval, nullifying your appointment to the board.

Background

1. Please provide your educational and employment history. You may do so by attaching a résumé. **X** Resume Attached
2. Please affirm that you are or will be at least eighteen years old at the time of your appointment/election to the board. **X** I affirm.
3. Please affirm that you have read Article 56 of the New York State Education Law, and understand the relationship between a charter school and the authorized chartering entity as defined in that statute. **X** I affirm.
4. Please indicate how you became aware of the charter school and the opportunity to serve as a member of its board.

I became aware of the charter school through an informational meeting on the school and became aware of the opportunity to serve as a member from an inquiry of another member.

5. Please explain why you wish to serve on the board.

I would like to serve on the board because I believe in the initiative of the school. I would love to help create an opportunity for children in these rural areas to be able to receive an enriched educational experience. I would like to help bring mindful in education into the curriculum for DIRT charter school.

6. Please indicate whether you have previously served or are currently serving on a board of a school district, a non-public school or any not-for-profit corporation (to the extent not otherwise indicated in your response to Item 1, above). In addition, please describe any other experience, knowledge or skills you feel is relevant to service on the charter school board. This does not apply to me.

7. Please indicate whether or not you have ever been convicted of a misdemeanor and/or felony in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

8. Please indicate if you currently have any criminal charge(s) pending against you in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

Conflict of Interest

9. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any of the other prospective or current board members.

I / we do not know any such persons.

10. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any person who is a prospective or current charter school employee.

I / we do not know any such persons.

11. Please indicate if you, your spouse, or other family member or any corporation, business or other entity in which you, your spouse or other family member serve as an employee, officer, or director or own a controlling interest in, contracts or does business with, or plans to contract or do business with, the charter school, including but not limited to, the lease of real or personal property to the charter school.

No.

12. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider (a management company, whether for-profit or not-for-profit), please indicate whether you, your spouse, or any family member knows any employees, officers, owners, directors or agents of that provider. If your answer is in the affirmative, please describe any such

relationship.

X Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

13. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider, please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member has a direct or indirect ownership, employment, contractual or management interest in the provider. For any interest indicated, please provide a detailed description.

X Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

14. If the charter school is partnered with an educational services provider, please indicate if you, your spouse or other family member anticipates conducting, or is conducting, any business with the provider. If so, please indicate the precise nature of the business that is being or will be conducted.

X Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

15. Please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member is a director, officer, employee, partner or member of, or is otherwise associated with, any organization which filed an application in conjunction with the charter school, i.e., is partnered with the charter school. To the extent you have provided this information in response to items 9-12, you may so indicate.

X This does not apply to me, my spouse or other family members.

16. Please indicate the potential ethical or legal conflicts of interests (if any) that would, or are likely to, exist should you be approved for service on the charter school's board.

X None

17. Please explain how you would handle a situation in which you believe one or more members of the charter school's board are involved in working for their own benefit, or the benefit of their friends and family.

If a situation arose in which I believed one or more members of the charter school's board are involved in working for their own benefit, or the benefit of their friends or family, I would do my part to the best of my power prevent such things from happening and alert others of the situation so that it may be handled professionally and fairly.

Educational Philosophy

18. Please explain your understanding of the charter school's mission and/or philosophy.

The DIRT Charter School's mission is to provide children with the opportunity to reach their full academic and developmental potential and become lifelong learners by fostering interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking skills, and a deep understanding of the interdependence of our local and global existence.

19. Please explain your understanding of the educational program of the charter school.

DIRT will integrate environmental science throughout its curriculum. DIRT will use local, natural and community surroundings, natural and social systems, community-based investigations, integrated and interdisciplinary instruction, service-learning, collaborative instruction, learner-centered constructivist approaches, and cooperative and independent learning.

20. Please indicate what you believe to be the characteristics of a successful charter school. In particular, please provide the specific steps you think the board of the charter school will need to take to ensure that this charter school is and remains successful.

I believe characteristics of a successful charter school are solid planning, sound curriculum, dedicated and knowledgeable faculty and staff, positive communication and relationships with parents and community members and clear reachable goals. I believe the board of the charter school needs to ensure that these goals are being consistently met, in order to achieve and maintain success.

Other

21. Please explain your understanding of the appropriate role of a public charter school board member.

I believe the appropriate role of a public charter school board member is to facilitate in the optimal performance of the school. The board member must be objective and fair in decision making. The board member must be knowledgeable in his or her area of expertise, lending that knowledge to the development and maintenance of the school. The school board member must maintain positive relationships and be a person who is of sound judgment and character.

22. Please affirm that you have read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies.

I affirm that I have read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies.

23. Please provide any other information that you feel is pertinent to the Department's review.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

I, Olivia Keeler (name of proposed board member) state that I am the applicant for board member approval and I have read the questionnaire and any supporting documents and know the contents thereof; that the same is true to my knowledge except as to the matters therein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true and further acknowledge that I am aware of the fact that, pursuant to Penal Law §175.30, a person who knowingly offers a false instrument for filing to a public official or public servant is guilty of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the 2nd Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor.



Jul 13, 2012

Signature

Date

Please note that this document is considered a public record and as such, may be made available to members of the public upon request under the Freedom of Information Law. Personal contact information provided below will be redacted.

Business Telephone: _____

Business Address: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Home Telephone: _____

Home Address: _____

Olivia Zino-Keeler



Profile

Professional and positive, intelligent and success driven individual seeking teaching position; My educational philosophy is to facilitate the success of children through a "whole child" focus. Considering the social, cultural and emotional backgrounds, I draw personally from a grounded spiritual center and creativity in lesson planning. My instruction techniques are engaging and fun. They are usually a mix of hands on involvement, discussion and scaffolding.

New York State Certification in Childhood Education 1-6
New York State Certification in Art Education K-12
2012, School Board Member, Curriculum Planning, DIRT Charter School

Personal Skills/ Interests/ Character Summary

Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Photoshop, Access
Mac and PC proficient
Smart Board Certified
Personal Interest in Nutrition and Diet

Education

Long Island University- Rockland Graduate Campus
June 2010

- o Ms. Ed
- o Cumulative G.P.A 3.9

SUNY New Paltz
August 2003

- o BA
- o Major: Interpersonal and Intercultural Communication, Minor: Studio Art

Employment-Teaching Experience

Monroe-Woodbury Middle School-Central Valley, NY March 2010-
May 2010
Student Teacher, Grade 6

- Developed and Implemented a social studies unit and ELA lessons; Coordinated with Mentor teacher for precision in planning
- Assessed students in all subjects
- Performed research on history subject matter to enhance depth of lessons
- Established positive relationships with students and colleagues, fostering an environment of open communication.
- Established positive modeling of character and morality for students

Sapphire Elementary School- Harriman, NY January 2010-
March 2010
Student Teacher, Grade 1

- Developed and Implemented a science unit, reading, writing and math lessons; Coordinated with Library/Media Specialist for accompanying material.
- Assessed students in all subjects
- Performed research on scientific subject matter to enhance depth of lessons
- Established positive relationships with students and colleagues, fostering an environment of open communication.
- Established positive modeling of character and morality for students

- Instructed whole class, small group and individual students

Tutor Time- Congers, NY
Head Teacher

March 2005-June 2005

Toddler Classroom
Managed a classroom of 8-10 children ages 1.5 to 2.
Directed and co-taught with assistant teacher.
Developed lesson plans and daily schedule.
Wrote daily reports to parents on each child.

Bardonia Elementary School- Bardonia, NY
Math Teaching Assistant-short term leave replacement

October 2005-December 2005

- Provided individual and small group mathematics instruction to children with individualized education plans and those that needed extra support.

Facilitated mathematics instruction in classrooms
Prepared students for state testing

Non-Teaching Experience

Chestnut Ridge Waldorf School- Chestnut Ridge, NY

February 2011-June 2011

Managing Editor Alumni Magazine, Development Assistant, Administrators Assistant

- Independently maintained and tracked detailed development and funding for the school. Gained expertise in accurate database and spreadsheet management.
- Chosen to create important documents, correspondences and other various tasks for the Administrator (Principal) of the school.
- Managing Editor of the spring 2011 Alumni Magazine.
- Outreach and management of Alumni Relations, regular update of websites, news and events.

KPMG- Montvale NJ
2007- 2009

Coordinator, HR Partner Services

- Responsible for scheduling interviews, calendar management
- Independently administered written and verbal correspondences related to Direct Entry Partner Admissions process and the New Partner/Managing Director process.
- Worked on a team to track progress for current admissions, gain feedback and correspond with recruiting department, current partners and various offices across the country.
- High level Inter-department responsibilities
- Analytical and organization skills used and sharpened daily.
- Strong writing and communication skills utilized.
- Independent lead on project to create Instructional guide uses by Partner Service Team
- Exchanged information through online database and spreadsheet management for audit, tax and advisory partner admissions
- Received Encore Recognition Award for work completed with team administering new partner admissions

Attachment 5b: Proposed By-Laws (as of July 1, 2012)

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of the Corporation is Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School (the “School”).

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The School has been organized as set forth in the Articles of Incorporation. The School will take no action that is inconsistent with the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws.

ARTICLE III: BOARD OF TRUSTEES

A. Powers: The Board shall conduct or direct the affairs of the School and exercise its powers, subject to the provisions of applicable law (including the Education Law and Not for Profit Corporation Law), as well as the requirements of the School’s Charter and these Bylaws. The Board may delegate the management of the activities of the School to others, so long as the affairs of the School are managed, and its powers are exercised, under the Board’s ultimate jurisdiction.

Without limiting the generality of the powers hereby granted to the Board, but subject to the same limitations, the Board shall have all the powers enumerated in these Bylaws, and the following specific powers:

1. To elect and remove Trustees;
2. To select and remove Officers, agents and employees of the School; to prescribe powers and duties for them and to fix their compensation;
3. To conduct, manage and control the affairs and activities of the School, and to make rules and regulations;
4. To enter into contracts, leases and other agreements which are, in the Board’s judgment, necessary or desirable in obtaining the purposes of promoting the interests of the School;
5. To carry on the business of operating the School and apply any surplus that results from the business activity to any activity in which the School may engage;
6. To act as trustee under any trust incidental to the School’s purposes, and to receive, hold, administer, exchange and expend funds and property subject to such a trust;
7. To acquire real or personal property, by purchase, exchange, lease, gift, devise, bequest, or otherwise, and to hold, improve, lease, sublease, mortgage, transfer in trust, encumber, convey or otherwise dispose of such property;
8. To borrow money, incur debt, and to execute and deliver promissory notes, bonds, debentures, deeds of trust, mortgages, pledges, and other evidences of debt and securities, subject to the provisions of the Not for Profit Corporation Law and any limitations noted in the by-laws;
9. To indemnify and maintain insurance on behalf of any of its Trustees, Officers, employees or agents for liability asserted against or incurred by such person in such capacity or arising out of such person’s status as such, subject to the applicable provisions of the New York Not for Profit Corporation Law and the limitations noted in these Bylaws.

B. Number of Board of Trustees: The number of the Board of Trustees of the School shall be not fewer than five (5) and shall not exceed fifteen (15). The Board shall fix the exact number of Trustees, within these limits, by Board resolution or amendment of the Bylaws.

C. Election of Board of Trustees: The Board shall elect the Trustees by the

vote of a majority of the Board Trustees then in office or, in the event that only one Trustee remains, then by the sole remaining Trustee.

D. Eligibility: The Board may elect any person who is:

1. At least 18 years of age.
2. Able to read and write English.
3. A U.S. citizen.
4. NOT an employee of the charter school
5. Does NOT reside with an employee of the charter school
6. Does NOT have a member of his/her immediate family on the Board
7. Does NOT simultaneously hold another incompatible office (e.g., town supervisor)
8. Has NOT have been removed from a school district office within one year of election

E. Term of Office: Each director shall be elected for a term of 3 years and shall hold office until a successor has been elected and qualified. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the first 3 years of its existence, at least 2 Board members shall serve a 1-year term, and at least 2 Board members shall serve a 2-year term. New Board members may be elected at any time to fill vacancies. If a Board member is elected at a time other than the annual meeting, his or her 3-year term shall be calculated starting from the date of the most recent annual meeting.

F. Elections: The Board shall elect Trustees whose terms begin on July 1st of a given year at the Annual Meeting for that year, or at a Regular Meeting designated for that purpose, or at a Special Meeting called for that purpose.

G. Resignation: A Board member may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Chair of the Board or the Secretary. Any resignation shall take effect upon receipt of notice or at any later time specified in that notice. Unless otherwise specified in the notice of resignation, affirmative acceptance of the resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. If the resignation specifies a later effective date, a successor may be elected prior to such effective date to take office when the resignation becomes effective.

H. Removal: A Board member may be removed from office at any time by a vote of a majority of the directors then in office, in a manner consistent with the laws of New York.

I. Vacancies: A vacancy in the Board shall be deemed to exist in the event that the actual number of directors is less than the authorized number for any reason. The Board may declare vacant the office of any Board member who has been declared of unsound mind by a final order of court or has been convicted of a felony. Vacancies on the Board may be filled by approval of the Board of Trustees or, if the number of Trustees then in office is less than a quorum, by (1) unanimous written consent of the Trustees then in office, (2) a vote of a majority of the Trustees then in office or (3) a sole remaining Trustee. Each Trustee elected or appointed to fill a vacancy, whether by the Board of Trustees, shall hold office for the unexpired portion of the term, or until his or her death, resignation, or removal from office.

J. Compensation of Trustees: Trustees shall serve without compensation. However, the Board may approve reimbursement of a Trustee's actual and necessary expenses while conducting School business.

ARTICLE IV: MEETINGS OF THE BOARD

A. Place of Meetings: Board Meetings shall be held at the School Facility or at any other reasonably convenient place as the Board may designate; provided that Board meetings shall be scheduled at least monthly.

B. Annual Meeting: An Annual Meeting shall be held in the month of June of each year for the purpose of electing Trustees, making and receiving reports on corporate affairs, and transacting such other business as comes before the meeting.

C. Frequency of Meetings: A minimum of twelve (12) meetings (inclusive of the June Annual Meeting and any Special Meetings) shall be scheduled each year on dates determined by the Board.

D. Special Meetings: A Special Meeting shall be held at any time called by any Trustee upon written demand of not less than one half of the entire Board.

E. Adjournment: A majority of the Trustees present at a meeting, whether or not a quorum, may adjourn the meeting to another time and place.

F. Notice to Trustees: Notices to Trustees of Board Meetings shall be given as follows:

1. If the Board fixes the dates of regular meetings (which may include the Annual Meeting) for the year, then such meetings may be held without further notice of time and place. In the event that the date of an Annual Meeting or regular meeting is changed (or a regular meeting is added), written notice of the new meeting date (or the date of the new regular meeting) will be provided at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting.
2. Special Meetings shall be held upon reasonable notice (at least 48 hours, if practicable).

G. Quorum and Voting: A majority of the total number of authorized Trustees shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The vote of a majority of the directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board. No business shall be considered by the Board at any meeting at which a quorum is not present, and the only motion which the Chair of the Board shall entertain at such meeting is a motion to adjourn.

H. Video Participation in Meetings: Trustees may participate in a meeting through use of video screen communication. Participation in a meeting through use of video screen communication constitutes presence in person at that meeting so long as all members participating in the meeting are able to see and hear one another.

I. Public Notice: Public notice of all Board meetings and of all meetings of Committees shall be given in accordance with the requirements of the Article 7 of the Public Officers Law (the Open Meetings Law).

ARTICLE V: ACTION BY THE BOARD

A. Board Approved Policies: The Board may adopt additional governance and management policies as it deems appropriate.

B. Compensation Review: The Board shall review any compensation packages (including all benefits) of the Principal and other employees. The Board shall approve such compensation only after determining that the compensation is just and reasonable. This review and approval shall occur annually, as well as when an employee is hired, when the term of employment of such officer is renewed or extended, and when the

compensation of an employee is modified.

C. Standing Committees: The Board may create standing committees of no less than 2 Trustees, elected by the Board, to focus on particular aspects of the operation of the School. These committees may include a finance committee to focus on accounting for revenues and expenditures, an audit committee to ensure a proper audit of the School's finances on an annual basis, and a compensation committee to focus on the salaries and benefits received by employees to ensure competitiveness, reasonableness, and fairness.

D. Advisory Committees: The Board may create one or more Advisory Committees, each consisting of no less than 3 Trustees, non-Trustees or a combination of Trustees and non-Trustees. Appointments to any Advisory Committee shall be by approval of the Board of Trustees. Advisory Committees may not exercise the authority of the Board to make decisions on behalf of the School. Advisory Committees shall be restricted to making recommendations to the Board.

ARTICLE VI: OFFICERS OF THE BOARD

A. Officers: The officers of the School shall be a Chair of the Board, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The School may also have such other officers as may be determined by the Board. One person may hold two or more offices, except that neither the Secretary nor the Treasurer may serve concurrently as the Chair of the Board.

1. Chair of the Board: The Chair of the Board shall, if present, preside at all meetings of the Board, and shall exercise and perform such other powers and duties as may be prescribed by these Bylaws or the Board.

2. Secretary: The Secretary shall keep a full and complete record of the proceedings of the Board and its committees, shall give notice of all Board meetings as required by law, and in general shall exercise and perform such other powers and duties as may be prescribed by these Bylaws or the Board.

3. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall be the chief financial officer of the School. The Treasurer shall keep and maintain, adequate and correct books and records of account. The Treasurer shall send the Trustees such financial statements and reports as are required to be given by law, and as may be prescribed by these Bylaws or the Board. The books of account shall be open to inspection by any Trustee upon request at all reasonable times. The Treasurer shall deposit, all money and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the School with such depositories as designated by the Board, shall disburse or cause to be disbursed the School's funds as ordered by the Board, shall render to the Board, upon request, an account of the Treasurer's transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of the School, and shall exercise and perform such other powers and duties as may be prescribed by the Board.

B: Election and Term: The officers of the Board of Trustees shall be elected by the Board at an annual meeting and shall serve at the pleasure of the Board.

C. Resignation: An officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the School. Any resignation shall take effect upon receipt of notice or at any later time specified in that notice. Unless otherwise specified in the notice of resignation, affirmative acceptance of the resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. Any resignation is without prejudice to the contract or other rights, if any, of the School in respect of the officer.

D. Removal: Officers may be removed from office by the Board, consistent with the voting procedures in the bylaws.

E. Vacancies: A vacancy in any office for any reason shall be filled by the Board.

ARTICLE VII: NO LIABILITY OF TRUSTEES; INDEMNIFICATION; INSURANCE

A. No Liability of Trustees: The Trustees shall not be personally liable for the School's debts, liabilities or other obligations.

B. Indemnification: The School shall (in the case of Trustees and Officers) and may (in the case of employees and agents), to the fullest extent permitted by law, indemnify any person made, or threatened to be made, a party or witness to any action, investigation or proceeding by reason of the fact that he or she (or his or her testator) is or was a Trustee, officer, employee or agent of the School, against judgments, fines, amounts paid in settlement and reasonable expenses, including attorneys' fees. No indemnification may be made to or on behalf of any person if (a) his or her acts were committed in bad faith, or were the result of his or her deliberate dishonesty and were material to such action or proceeding, or (b) he or she personally gained a financial profit or other advantage to which he or she was not legally entitled in the transaction or matter in which indemnification is sought.

C. Insurance: The School shall have the power to purchase and maintain all insurance policies deemed to be in the best interest of the School, including insurance to indemnify the School for any obligation which it incurs as a result of its indemnification of Trustees, Officers, employees or agents, or to indemnify such persons in instances in which they may be so indemnified.

ARTICLE VIII: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

A. Code of Ethics: The Board shall approve a Code of Ethics applicable to Trustees, officers and employees of the School, compliant with the General Municipal Law, which may be amended from time to time by the Board.

B. Conflict of Interest. Any Trustee, Officer, or Committee member having an interest in a contract, other transaction or program presented to or discussed by the Board or Committee for authorization, approval, or ratification shall make a prompt, full and frank disclosure of his or her interest to the Board or Committee prior to its acting on such contract or transaction. Such disclosure shall include all relevant and material facts known to such person about the contract or transaction that may reasonably be construed to be adverse to the School's interest. The body to which such disclosure is made shall thereupon determine, by majority vote, whether the disclosure shows that a conflict of interest exists or can reasonably be construed to exist. If a conflict is deemed to exist, such person shall not vote on, nor use his or her personal influence on, nor be present during the discussion or deliberations with respect to, such contract or transaction (other than to present factual information or to respond to questions prior to the discussion). The minutes of the meeting shall reflect proceedings, including the disclosure made, the vote thereon and, where applicable, the abstention from voting and participation.

C. Contracts: For the purpose of this section, a person shall be deemed to have an "interest" in a contract or other transaction if he or she is the party (or one of the parties) contracting or dealing with the School, or is a director, trustee or officer of, or has a significant financial or influential interest in the entity contracting or dealing with the School. These provisions will be consistent with the General Municipal Law.

D. Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy:

(1) If the Board of Trustees has reasonable cause to believe that a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

(2) If, after hearing the response of the member and making such further investigation as may be warranted in the circumstances, the Board of Trustees determines that the member has in fact failed to disclose an actual or possible

conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

ARTICLE IX: OTHER PROVISIONS

A. Fiscal Year: The fiscal year of the School begins on July 1 of each year and ends June 30.

B. Execution of Instruments: Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, the Board may adopt a resolution authorizing any Officer or agent of the School to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of or on behalf of the School. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized, no officer, agent or employee shall have any power to bind the School by any contract or engagement, to pledge the School's credit, or to render it liable monetarily for any purpose or any amount.

C. Checks and Notes: Except as otherwise specifically provided by Board resolution, checks, drafts, promissory notes, orders for the payment of money, and other evidence of indebtedness of the School may be signed by the Chair of the Board, the Head of School, or Treasurer. Check requests for amounts of \$5,000.00 or greater must be signed by two (2) of these individuals.

D. Gifts: The Board may accept on behalf of the School any contribution, gift, bequest or devise for the general purposes or for any specific purpose of the School. The School shall retain complete control and discretion over the use of all contributions it receives.

E. Grants: The Board shall exercise itself, or delegate, subject to its supervision, control over grants, contributions, and other financial assistance provided by the School, including, without limitation, fiscal sponsorship relationships.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS

Except as otherwise provided by law, these Bylaws may be amended or repealed and new bylaws may be adopted by approval of the Board.

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY

The undersigned does hereby certify that the undersigned is the Secretary of the School, an education School duly organized and existing under the laws of the State of New York; that the foregoing Bylaws of said School were duly and regularly adopted as such by the Board of Trustees of said School; and that the above and foregoing Bylaws are now in full force and effect.

Secretary of the School

Attachment 5c: Proposed Code of Ethics

DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE RURAL THINKING CHARTER SCHOOL CODE OF ETHICS FOR SCHOOL TRUSTEES, OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

The Board of Trustees recognizes that sound ethical standards of conduct serve to increase the effectiveness of school board trustees and their staff as educational leaders in their community. Actions based on an ethical code of conduct promote public confidence and the attainment of school goals. The Board also recognizes its obligation under the General Municipal Law to adopt a code of ethics consistent with the provisions of the General Municipal Law, setting forth the standards of conduct required of all school trustees, officers and employees.

Therefore, every officer and employee of the school, whether paid or unpaid, including Board Trustees, shall adhere to the following code of conduct:

1. Gifts: An officer or employee shall not directly or indirectly solicit any gifts; nor shall an officer or employee accept or receive any single gift having a value of \$75 or more, or gifts from the same source having a cumulative value of \$75 or more over a twelve-month period, whether in the form of money, services, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, thing or promise, or any other form, if it could reasonably be inferred that the gift was intended to influence him or her in the performance of his or her official duties or was intended as a reward for any official action on his or her part.

However, the Board welcomes and encourages the writing of letters or notes expressing gratitude or appreciation to staff members. Gifts from children that are principally sentimental in nature and of insignificant financial value may be accepted in the spirit in which they are given.

2. Confidential information: An officer or employee shall not disclose confidential information acquired by him or her in the course of his or her official duties or use such information to further his or her own personal interest. In addition, he/she shall not disclose information regarding any matters discussed in an executive session of the Board, whether such information is deemed confidential or not.

3. Representation before the Board: An officer or employee shall not receive or enter into any agreement, express or implied, for compensation for services to be rendered in relation to any matter before the school board.

4. Representation before the Board for a contingent fee: An officer or employee shall not receive or enter into any agreement, express or implied, for compensation for services to be rendered in relation to any matter before the school board, whereby the compensation is to be dependent or contingent upon any action by the school with respect to such matter, provided that this paragraph shall not prohibit the fixing at any time of fees based upon the reasonable value of the services rendered.

5. Disclosure of interest in matters before the Board: A member of the Board of Trustees and any officer or employee of the school, whether paid or unpaid, who participates in the discussion or gives official opinion to the Board on any matter before the Board shall publicly disclose on the official record the nature and extent of any direct or indirect financial or other private interest he or she has in such matter. The term — "interest"

means a pecuniary or material benefit accruing to an officer or employee.

6. Investments in conflict with official duties: An officer or employee shall not invest or hold any investment directly in any financial, business, commercial or other private transaction that creates a conflict with his or her official duties.

7. Private employment: An officer or employee shall not engage in, solicit, negotiate for or promise to accept private employment when that employment or service creates a conflict with or impairs the proper discharge of his or her official duties.

8. Future employment: An officer or employee shall not, after the termination of service or employment with the Board, appear before the Board or any panel or committee of the Board, in relation to any case, proceeding, or application in which he or she personally participated during the period of his or her service or employment or that was under his or her active consideration. This shall not bar or prevent the timely filing by a present or former officer or employee of any claim, account, demand or suit against the district on his or her own behalf or on behalf of any member of his or her family arising out of any personal injury or property damage or for any lawful benefit authorized or permitted by law.

Distribution of Code of Ethics

The Chief Executive Officer shall cause a copy of this Code of Ethics to be distributed annually to every officer and employee of the school. Each officer and employee elected or appointed thereafter shall be furnished a copy before entering upon the duties of his or her office or employment.

Penalties

In addition to any penalty contained in any other provision of law, any person who shall knowingly and intentionally violate any of the provisions of the Board's code of ethics may be fined, suspended or removed from office or employment, as the case may be, in the manner provided by law.

Attachment 6a: CMO Information

Not applicable: DIRT Charter School is an independent charter school and not affiliated with a CMO.

Attachment 6b: Proposed Management Contract with CMO

Not applicable: DIRT Charter School is an independent charter school and not affiliated with a CMO.

Attachment 7: Partnership Information

Not applicable: DIRT Charter School is not affiliated with a partner organization.

Attachment 8a: Hiring and Personnel Policies and Procedures

Equal Opportunity Employer: It is the policy of DIRT Charter School to seek and employ the best qualified personnel without regard to sex, race, religion, color, creed, national origin, citizenship, sexual orientation, veteran status age, marital status, or disability. It is further this organization's policy to ensure equal opportunity for the advancement of staff members and equal treatment in the areas of upgrading, training, promotion, transfer, layoff, and termination.

DIRT Charter School will comply with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and welcomes applications from people with disabilities. The school does not discriminate against qualified, disabled individuals solely for reasons of their disability. Consistent with this policy, DIRT is committed to:

- Recruit, hire and promote on the basis of an individual's qualifications and competence for the job;
- Make the necessary, reasonable accommodations to enable a qualified person with a disability to perform the essential functions of a job;
- Protect the disabled individual's right to privacy and confidentiality to the extent possible; and
- Full compliance with all requirements of applicable law, including those relating to employee benefits.

Qualifications: DIRT Charter School will search for the best teachers and staff. Below are the responsibilities and qualifications for key personnel:

Principal

Responsibilities:

- Provide leadership and direction to all school staff
- Hire, evaluate and terminate staff members
- Implement the school program with fidelity to the charter
- Implement all school policies and procedures as directed by the Board of Trustees
- Facilitate and encourage parent involvement
- Make formal reports to the Board of Trustees, State Education Department and others
- Establish a strong school culture and provide a safe learning environment
- Ensure proper budgeting and financial oversight
- Provide guidance and support to teachers to improve instruction and raise student achievement
- Evaluate school programs and recommend policy changes and resource allocation
- Manage student data collection and information updates
- Respond to grievances by parents and staff
- Handle serious discipline issues
- Conduct long-term strategic planning
- Provide staff development training
- Regularly observe teachers and provide critical feedback to improve instruction
- Evaluate teachers and make recommendations for placement and retention
- Facilitate development of curriculum, instruction and assessment

Qualifications:

- Commitment to DIRT's mission
- High expectations for themselves, staff and students
- Teaching and leadership experience
- Experience hiring, managing and evaluating employees
- High level of organization and resourcefulness necessary for start-up environment
- Exemplary communication skills
- Strong recommendations from prior employers, colleagues and employees
- Bachelor's degree
- Experience with elementary grades

Director of Business & Operations

Responsibilities:

- Oversee all day-to-day operational activities of the school in collaboration with Principal
- Manage a team of custodians, office staff and food service staff
- Manage academic-related systems and activities, including student recruitment and enrollment lottery, student information systems
- Coordinate HR functions
- Oversee procurement and building maintenance, renovations and upgrades
- Coordinate food services and transportation
- Plan logistics for school-wide events for students, staff and families
- Prepare an annual budget and support the annual auditing process
- Manage the day-to-day finances to ensure overall financial health of the school
- Conduct accurate and timely billing to ensure adequate cash flow
- Manage payroll and benefits
- Ensure school-wide compliance with health and safety laws, teacher certification, city and state education mandates, and all federal and state workplace regulations.
- Maintain inventory of all assets in the school building, including computers, equipment, furniture, uniforms, etc.
- Provide regular reporting of financial status to the Principal and the Board

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree
- At least five years in an administrative or management role
- At least 1 year direct experience successfully managing staff
- Team-player capable of working both collaboratively and independently
- Organized planner and project manager with proven ability to multi-task, take initiative, prioritize effectively, and deliver for multiple stakeholders on deadlines
- Proactive and creative problem-solver
- Quantitative skills and experience with accounting, budgets, and financial management.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, ability to interact with various stakeholders from parents, students, vendors, teachers, etc.

Teachers

Responsibilities:

- Prepare joyful, rigorous and engaging lessons for students
- Regularly assess student learning against measurable benchmarks
- Use data to identify students in need of remediation or enrichment

- Contribute to the professional community by identifying needs and developing solutions
- Demonstrate the school's virtues and integrate character education into instruction
- Actively participate in staff development activities and staff meetings

Qualifications:

- Certification in appropriate field(s) (preferred)
- High expectations for learning and behavior
- Demonstrated success in teaching
- Strong classroom management skills
- Reflective and open to feedback with the desire to continuously improve
- A team player who is not deterred by a fast-paced, constantly changing environment
- Eagerness to go above and beyond the requirements of the job to innovate and improve the organization

Hiring Process: While the school principal has final authority to hire staff members, he or she may form a committee to assist with the process. All job applicants must fill out completely and sign an application for employment. In addition, all job applicants must:

- Provide an up-to-date resume;
- Supply proof of teaching certification and qualification pursuant to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (such as college matriculation, copies of school transcripts); and
- Be interviewed by the Principal.

As part of the interview process, prospective teachers will be observed teaching, either at DIRT Charter School, their current school, or in a setting similar to a classroom. The hiring process will include the following additional mandatory steps:

- At least two references checked, credentials verified, qualifications confirmed;
- Documentation of employment eligibility, i.e., proof of identity and legal authority to work in the United States;
- Fingerprinting and a criminal background check and clearance.

Full-Time and Part-Time Employment: Employees shall receive annual letters of employment that state the terms of their employment. Employees may be hired as regular full-time employees, and as such will be eligible for all benefits provided by the school. The organization also may hire part-time staff. Part-time staff is those who are employed for less than 40 hours per work week. Part-time employees are not eligible for benefits. Time off work without pay for part-time employees may be granted by the Principal or his or her designee. DIRT Charter School will verify that all of our employees are authorized for employment in the United States. All employees will complete an I-9 form.

Fingerprinting and Criminal Background Check: DIRT Charter School faculty (including substitute teachers), staff (including temporary staff) and consultants working in the school must pass a fingerprint and criminal background check as a condition of employment. Consultants who are either independent contractors or agents of a company who have unsupervised access to students and whose work involves spending time in the school also must be fingerprinted and have a criminal background check. Classroom volunteers who have a consistent, regular presence in the school and who work with children in an unsupervised capacity must undergo fingerprinting and criminal

background checks. It is not the policy of DIRT Charter School to require fingerprinting and background checks on parent classroom volunteers for general community activities with children, as they do not have consistent, regular unsupervised access to students. No employee may start working until clearance is received. All employees are required to notify the Principal within five days of any criminal conviction if it occurred either in or out of the workplace.

Drug-Free Workplace: Employees will be notified that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession or uses of controlled substances are prohibited in the workplace.

Smoking: All facilities of DIRT Charter School will be smoke-free.

Performance Evaluation: Performance evaluations are conducted for all staff and provide an opportunity to discuss plans for professional growth and development. The Principal is responsible for employees' performance evaluations. Each year each staff member will undergo a thorough summative performance review with the Principal. At this time, the employee will receive formal feedback on his or her performance. The performance evaluation will consider evidence gathered throughout the school year. A performance evaluation consists of a written review and assessment of job performance followed by an in-depth discussion. The written performance evaluation and any written comments become part of the staff member's personal file. Teacher evaluations will be used to determine retention, placement and performance bonuses.

The school may use the following mechanisms to inform teachers and other staff if their performance is below expectations: oral and written warnings, improvement plans and suspension. Employees may also be terminated for misconduct and/or poor job performance (see termination section below). All teachers will receive ongoing staff development through trainings, coaching and mentoring. Teachers who demonstrate a deficiency in any aspect of their responsibilities will receive additional assistance. If the deficiency continues, the teacher will be dismissed. The Principal is directly responsible to the Board of Directors. In the event of failure in the performance of his/her duties, he/she will be dismissed. Evaluations are among the factors considered in determining salary increases. Other factors include, but are not limited to, competitive data, the financial resources of DIRT Charter School and the general state of the economy.

Termination: Each employee will be employed on an "at will" basis. The Board of Trustees has the authority to terminate an employee with or without cause, unless such termination would violate applicable law. Offenses which can result in immediate dismissal include, but are not limited to:

1. Possession, use, sale, purchase, or distribution on school property, or reporting to work under the influence, of a drug and/or alcohol.
2. Falsifying or altering records.
3. Theft of school property.
4. Sabotaging or willfully damaging school equipment or the property of other employees.
5. Insubordination involving, but not limited to, defaming, assaulting, or threatening to assault a supervisor, and refusing to carry out the order of a supervisor.
6. Fighting or provoking a fight on school premises.
7. Absence for three days without notice, in which event the employee will be deemed to have quit voluntarily.

8. Working for another employer while on leave without consent of the school.
9. Carrying concealed weapons on school property or during any school-sponsored event.
10. Treating a student in a cruel or inappropriate way.
11. Failure to perform professional duties.
12. Poor job performance.
13. Undermining the code of ethics of DIRT Charter School.

Final Pay: Employees who leave the service of DIRT Charter School for any reason shall be entitled to all pay that may be due them, with the following qualifications:

1. Employees will be advised of their rights under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (COBRA) to continue health care coverage for themselves and their dependents at group rates at their own expense for up to 18 months.
2. An employee who is terminated or who resigns must return all office keys, identification, security cards and codes, any borrowed school property, including personal laptop and office materials and supplies, in such employee's possession to the Principal. Failure to return DIRT's items will result in delay in payment of final pay until all of DIRT's property is returned.
3. No information or copies of information, including but in no way limited to files, memos, computer-stored items, lists, or other similar information, may be taken by such employee without the express permission of the Principal.
4. 4. The final date of employment is the final date on which the employee serves his or her duties at DIRT. It shall never be construed as the date upon which the employee receives his or her final pay.

Severance Pay: Employees shall not be entitled to severance pay.

Faculty Responsibilities: The first day of school, for students, for the 2013-14 academic year is September 3, 2013 and the last day for students and teachers is June 20, 2014, unless DIRT has to make up an excess of snow days. Teachers are required to attend the Summer Professional Development week from August 26 to August 30. Faculty should expect to be at school from 7:55 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Faculty will attend one weekly meeting after school for one hour. Faculty members are required to be present at all classes or other scheduled responsibilities. When not in the classroom or performing scheduled duties, faculty members are expected to be at school to attend all school meetings and assemblies, and to be available to students.

Leave and Absences: DIRT Charter School does not distinguish between Personal Leave, Bereavement Leave or Sick Leave. All staff members must request of the Principal the use of leave, giving advance notice whenever possible, and all instructional staff should make every reasonable attempt to use leave so as to disrupt classroom instructional time as little as possible. All employees should use their best judgment in determining what constitutes "reasonable" leavetaking. As a general guideline, the school shall consider three days in the case of bereavement, ten days for illness, and three personal days annually "reasonable." Additional days may be considered reasonable with sufficient explanation.

All absences and lateness must be reported directly to the Director of Business and Operations by telephone by 6:30 a.m. The Director of Business and Operations will retain substitutes as necessary. Teachers are expected to keep up-to-date lesson plans

on file, which can be referred to in case of an absence. When an absence is planned faculty members should communicate, in writing, to the Principal, the day(s) he/she will be absent. In-class and homework assignments should be carefully communicated to the class and to the substitute teacher and the Director of Business and Operations should be informed of the arrangements that have been made. Faculty must call the Director of Business and Operations each day they are absent, unless the staff member is on an approved leave of absence. Employees who are absent for three (3) or more days and have not contacted the Director of Business and Operations will be considered to have abandoned their employment, and school records will reflect that the individual voluntarily terminated his or her employment with DIRT. Faculty with excessive absenteeism and/or tardiness cannot perform their jobs effectively and disrupt the operation of the school. Therefore, excessive absenteeism or lateness may be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination. Failure to notify the Director of Business and Operations before the start of school will be considered an unexcused absence and will be subject to disciplinary action. Teachers who must be absent for reasons other than illness must communicate, in writing, and arrange for their absence in advance with the Director of Business and Operations and Principal.

Handling Emergencies: All staff members are urged to familiarize themselves with the building facilities and the location of fire-fighting equipment; they are also encouraged to take the Red Cross training for first aid and child CPR. In emergency situations staff shall use their best judgment in following these procedures. If anyone needs immediate medical attention, contact the nurse, the Principal and possibly 911. Do not allow the person/student to be left unattended by an adult. Designate a staff person to wait outside the facility for the ambulance and emergency officials to arrive at the school entrance and escort them to the classroom. Office staff or the nurse will notify the student's family as soon as possible.

Reporting Responsibilities: As school personnel staff members are MANDATED to report SUSPECTED child abuse or neglect. We need not be certain that a child is being abused; we need only to suspect abuse or neglect in order to report it. The following examples of "Red Flags" should be reported to the counselor immediately:

- A child who talks about wanting to hurt or kill him or herself.
- Any injury, mark or bruise that looks concerning and for which there is no viable explanation.
- A child who complains that he/she cannot sit down because they have been spanked.
- Inappropriate sexualized behavior, either acting out or knowledge that is not age appropriate.
- A child who expresses fear or concern about going home, or about someone in his / her home or about something happening at home.

If you suspect that a child is being abused or maltreated you should contact the social worker or Principal in person as well as provide them with written documentation by using the Confidential Report of an Allegation of Child Abuse. Once this is completed it is every teacher's responsibility to report the suspicion to the Association of Children's Services (ASC) with consultation of the Principal. Do not let a child that you suspect may be a victim of abuse leave school at the end of the day without first talking to the Principal. In addition, all employees are REQUIRED to report any allegations of child abuse in an educational setting to the Principal. The term educational setting means the building and grounds of any school as well as vehicles used to transport students to

and from school, field trips and extracurricular activities as well as the sites where those activities take place. The Principal should be notified of any such concerns and complete a Confidential Report of an Allegation of Child Abuse in an Educational Setting.

Confidentiality Policy: School employees are required to preserve the confidentiality of any and all records containing personally identifiable information of students. Student records are confidential by virtue of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), state privacy laws and other laws and regulations. School employees may not disclose personally identifiable information about school students unless they have been given clearance by the Principal and are certain that the disclosure is permitted by law. All student records maintained in the central school office as well as in individual teacher's classrooms must be secured at all times. Only those employees with a legitimate need for access to a student's records may access such records absent written parental permission. Therefore, absent a special reason, only faculty members who provide instruction or other services to a student should have access to his/her records. In addition, school employees who have access to social security numbers of school personnel are required to preserve the confidentiality of such information and only disclose the information for legitimate or necessary business purposes.

School Calendar and Holidays: Each year the school will establish a school calendar that complies with the New York State Education Law relating to compulsory attendance. DIRT Charter School has discretion with regard to the dates of attendance. Unless exempted by the Principal, all staff are expected to be in attendance on all days indicated by the school calendar, including Summer Professional Development.

Weather Days and Other Closings: The School may be closed due to inclement weather or other situations. An orderly process for notification of public media outlets shall be developed and implemented when necessary. At the discretion of the Principal, any days lost to closure due to inclement weather or other reasons may be made up during or at the end of the school year.

Military Leave: Members of the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine, Coast Guard, National Guard, Reserves or Public Health Service will be granted an unpaid leave of absence for military service, training or related obligations in accordance with the Unified Services Employment and Re-employment Act of 1995 (USERRA).

Attachment 8b: Resume for Proposed School Leader

Not applicable: DIRT Charter School has not yet identified a proposed school leader.

Attachment 10: If applicable: Replication Strategic/Business Growth Plan

Not applicable: DIRT Charter School is a new independent charter school and does not have a replication strategic/business growth plan.