



# PHASE I: Letter of Intent

Last updated: 06/23/2015

## Basic Contact and Application Information

### Page 1

**Applicant groups and Existing Education Corporations interested in submitting an application to establish Regents-authorized charter schools are asked to complete this brief information sheet. The Department will use this information to plan and coordinate peer review panels with appropriate expertise to evaluate all application materials.**

**Please indicate whether an Applicant Group or an Existing Education Corporation is submitting this Round 1 Letter of Intent.**

Applicant Group LOI to establish a single, brand new charter school

### **Proposed Charter School Name**

(Please write out the formal and full name for the school you proposed, and include the words "charter" and "school" in the proposed name(s)).

School Name	Edmund and Susan Gordon Charter School
Grades Served (K-5, .6-8, 9-12, etc.) During Initial Term	6 grade
Number of Students During Initial Term	120 students

### **Proposed or Current Board Chair and Public Contact information, including mailing address, phone number, and email address.**

(The entire chart may not be visible on your screen. Use the "tab" key to move from column to column. The first column will remain static as you do so).

	First and Last Name	Best Phone Number (###-###-####)	Email Address
Proposed/Current Board Chair	Grant Valentine	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Public/Media Contact Person	Eugee Whyte	845-826-2152	<a href="mailto:eugee1225@gmail.com">eugee1225@gmail.com</a>

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

(No response)

### **Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s), such as a charter or educational management company or a university, academic program partner, or whole school change partner.**

(See pages 45-46 of the application kit for definitions and guidance as only "substantial" partnerships should be listed here).

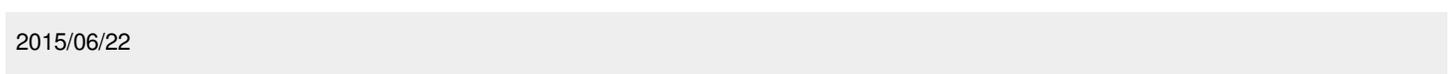
Proposed Management Company	Not Applicable
Partner Organization 1	Not Applicable
Partner Organization 2	(No response)

**Proposed Board Chair Signature**

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

A large, light gray rectangular area containing a handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. Valentine".

**Date**

A light gray rectangular area containing the date "2015/06/22".

**Thank you for completing this form.**

**Letter of Intent**  
**Edmund and Susan Gordon Charter School**

**I. Applicants Information**

- a. **Group Applicants:** Zulma E. Rivera, Retired School Administrator  
[REDACTED]  
Grant Valentine, Former candidate for State Senate  
[REDACTED]  
Carol Bonilla-Bowman, Assistant Professor of Education at Ramapo College  
[REDACTED]
- b. **Media Contact:** Eugee Whyte  
(845) 826-2152  
Email: [eugee1225@gmail.com](mailto:eugee1225@gmail.com)
- c. **The Members of the Founding Team and Prospective Board of Trustees (See Table I Qualifications and Credentials)**  
Zulma E. Rivera, M.S.Ed.  
Grant Valentine, JD  
Carol Bonilla-Bowman, Ed.D in Applied Linguistic  
Eugee Whyte, BA, MBA  
Steven Edwards, CPA.
- d. **Prospective Board of Trustees**  
Grant Valentine, JD  
Zulma E. Rivera, M.S.Ed.  
Eugee Whyte, BA, MBA  
Steven Edwards, CPA.  
Deborah M. Barnes, BA, MA.  
Dean Kernan, PhD.  
Beverly Paige, BA.  
Melvin Mungin, BA, DDiv.  
Laurence Holland, B.A.
- e. **Replication or Network Information: Not Applicable**
- f. **Application History:** The founding Team were named in the February 2013 application for the Charter of the Rockland Academy of Excellence Charter School.
- II. Proposed Charter School Information**
- a. **Proposed School Name:** Edmund and Susan Gordon Charter School
- b. **Proposed School Location:** East Ramapo Central School District
- c. **Planned grades and enrollment in each of the years of the proposed charter term**  
Grades 6th - 8th Grades
- d. **Proposed Management and/or Partner Organizations**  
Not Applicable

e. **Proposed School Mission:** The Edmund and Susan Gordon Charter School will provide an educational setting for students of all backgrounds and abilities that will ensure the acquisition of intellectual and social skills necessary for college and careers.

f. **School Overview:** The Edmund and Susan Gordon Charter School will be structured as an inclusive model that will enroll students who are diverse in learning styles, levels of English language skills, socio/economic backgrounds and in their readiness for college and career. The utilization of School Wide Enrichment Model (SEM) as presented by Joseph S. Renzulli presents the foundation for the development of the school's curriculum, culture and the provision of New York State mandated services for students with disabilities and English language learners. The curriculum of the school will be developed in line with the N.Y.S. Common Core and College and Career Standards. It will outline and integrate distributive and formative assessments that provide real time feedback, differentiated teaching and learning transactions. It will also outline the provisions of comprehensive in school and out of school interventions. The key elements for the school are **1) Inclusive classrooms** that will follow a program of studies where the regular curriculum, enrichment activities and the continuum of special services will be provided by licensed content area teachers and English as a Second Language Teachers and Special Education Teachers. Scheduling will be based on student needs, with emphasis on Co-teaching as direct or indirect services and Special Education Teacher as a supplementary service. **2) Experiential Based Learning** using technology as a complementary tool for the learning process. Instructional methods will emphasize hands-on learning. Students will have the opportunity to learn work related skills and responsible citizenship through internships and volunteer service opportunities. **3) Optimal Use of Time** by developing schedules with modifications to include enrichment periods, time for teachers to collaborate and plan, the the inter-visitation of teachers. **4) Data Driven Instruction and Portfolio Assessment**, students will be periodically assessed using both formative and interim summative assessment tools. The teachers and school leader will evaluate students products to determine the progress and make curriculum and program adjustments based on data. The Testing Coordinator/Data Specialist will synthesize the result of the assessments and prepare a measurable data analysis report for the teachers and administrators. The report will provide the basis for the enrichment strategies and academic intervention activities. Portfolios will be used to document and assess student products and progress, identify students' strengths and deficiencies. **5) Community Integration and Mentorship Program**, Instructional strategies and curriculum content will embrace the cultural background of the community. The school will engage the cultural entities and agencies in the community to partner with the school in order to fulfill the mission of educating our children. The school will provide each student with a mentor from the community who models character and career success. **6) Democratic School Governance** will be implemented with protocols that include appropriate decision making opportunities for students, parents, teachers and the administration. **7) Program of Supplementary Education**, that includes before and after school programs, weekend programs and Summer programs. The school will act as an educational resource center and offer enrichment experiences. **In addition to the seven key elements, a Summer Bridge Program** for incoming students will be implemented to prepare students for the new setting. **An Advisory Program** with focus on building a safe and supportive environment for all and to implement the NYS Dignity For ALL Student Act. This will address the Discipline Code and protocols for dis-

ciplinary outcomes for general education students and for students with disabilities. There will be a **Summer Professional Development Week** for teachers and administrators. This will enable them to make projections, outline curricular objectives, develop collaborative strategies, create interdisciplinary units, and assess the needs for future professional development.

**g. Target Populations**

East Ramapo is a community that is economically, racially and culturally diverse. Black/African American (30% Haitian descent) 59%, Hispanic 22%, White/Non Hispanic 11%, Asian 8%, English Language Learners 23%, Students with Disabilities 25%, Students eligible for free or reduced school lunch 65%.

**III. Enrollment and retention of students with disabilities, English language learners and students eligible for free and reduced price lunch programs.**

**Recruitment**

The recruitment efforts will be conducted by the Outreach committee for the targeted populations (Students with disabilities, English language learners and students who qualified for reduced or free school lunch) of the East Ramapo Central School District. The school opened a website to disseminate information, as well as use social media to inform the community. Using the mission statement as a guide, recruitment efforts will take place in community centers, houses of worship, health clinics and other community agencies and organizations. The Board of ESGCS has build a relationship with the Kurtz Community Center, Martin Luther King Community Center, Kobot Neg Kakay and other local and state legislators along with the County Ministerial Alliance. The outreach have extended to community leaders in the NAACP, JAMCAR, AKA's, ZETA's, DELTA's , American Association of University Women. Church clergy and parishioners at St. Paul's Zion and First Baptist Church, the largest church in the district, elected officials including the County Executive, State Assemblymen and woman and all the County legislators. We have spoken with nonprofit administrators, directors and others who serve non-English speaking and/or economically disadvantaged students as well as Students with Disabilities. Strategic and rigorous on-going outreach to inform and solicit input include community forums and events, distribution of brochures throughout the district, presentations to community based organizations. One of these events took place September 12, 2014 at the Kurtz Civic Center with JAMCAR members and other community leaders. There was a presentation of the Proposed Charter School by the Lead Applicants, Zulma Rivera and Grant Valentine. Questions were answered in regards to the proposed school model, fiscal impact on the home school district and curriculum framework. The audience was pleased with the informative meeting and supported the Charter School Proposal. During some of the informational sessions, we are making outreach to middle school counselors, and parents of students with IEP's and with organizations identified as servicing students with disabilities in order to assure that these students become part of the application pool. The public has been invited to address further feedback in the school design. Flyers will be also be available in Spanish and Haitian Creole so that parents of ELL's and students with disabilities are also informed of the proposed charter school in the ERCSD. Parents of students with disabilities will have the same opportunities as general education students to have their children participate in the selection lottery of the Charter School. After the selection process have concluded, any student selected that is identified as having an IEP will be screened and their IEP's mandates will be discussed with the parents. Recruitment of ELL's will

be targeted in community centers and social services entities that will disseminate the information of the proposed charter school to its members. The application will be available in Spanish and Haitian Creole to allow for the parents of ELL's to understand the process of application and selection. The school will also recruit children that qualify for free or reduced lunch programs. The data for this population can be obtained from the local school district and ESGSC will ensure to provide access to the process of the application and selection lottery to these students.

### **Retention**

The ESGCS will exist in a diverse community, but there are areas of disenfranchised students that will be attending the school. The retention level for these students can present a challenge but we have planned strategies to attract and retain these students. The connection with social agencies and entities to help us meet the needs of these students as far as housing, medical and other areas, will help us keep them from becoming transitory students and keep the enrollment stabled. The internship and mentoring element of the proposed school, will have a positive impact on the target populations and at-risk students and help them remain in the school. The mentoring program will benefit students with IEP's by providing an advisor for each student and 1-on-1 attention. By focusing on building character through mentoring and internships, we will help students with disabilities improve their problem solving skills and higher level thinking skills. One of the priorities of the ESGCS is to have an open communication with the parents of the students. A close monitoring of the IEP goals and related service mandates will help us keep the student's educational progress current and viable and in this way, keep the parents informed. The retention of ELL's will be through a common thread of communication between the school and the parents/caregivers. The instructional methods for ELL's will also affect the retention rate, because students and parents will experience success with the school. We are planning on the utilization of the SIOP Model (Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocols) for teaching ELL's in an environment with mixed abilities learners. To address attrition of enrollment, ESGCS will develop strategies that will include a wait list to back fill vacancies and in this manner keep the enrollment levels close to full capacity or projected goals.

### **IV. Public Outreach**

The proposed school has opened a website announcing the project to the community. A prospective board member with experience in media landscape, has been assigned as the public relations chairperson. There has been an overwhelming interest from surveys conducted in churches and community organizations, inquiries from posted and distributed flyers, from informational sessions throughout the district and in the local libraries. The Facebook page and website have provided visibility and valuable updates and encouraging posting of questions and comments. The applicants have engaged in rigorous and on-going efforts of outreach to inform and solicit input from the community. The applicants have held a substantial number of community forums and events (See the lists in the attachment) distributed informational brochures in various locations throughout the community, made presentations to community based organizations and local public schools officials, met with members of State and Local legislatures and invited the public to comment via the proposed school's website, email address or phone. The applicants solicited and considered community feedback of the school design, from surveys (Survey Monkey) and from the parents and community stakeholders present forums. There is a very high parental interest in

the proposed charter school because it will address the educational deficiencies in the East Ramapo Central School District. Some of the prospective trustees have indicated that outreach efforts and data gathering for the prospective students should begin with students at the 4th and 5th grade in order to inform their parents of the educational alternative that the charter school will offer. The connection with these targeted parents will be through the Spring Valley NAACP, Haitian American Cultural Alliance, Konbit Neg Lakeay, JAMCAR and through local access cable TV (especially to the Haitian community.). The applicants have determined that agencies such as Coalition for the Homeless, Catholic Charities, The Salvation Army, The Immigrant Coalition, Spring Valley Rotary, and the local Chamber of Commerce will give us access to disseminate to the community the establishment of the proposed charter school specifically to the intended target population in our school proposal. Our outreach committee and the members of the facilities/building committee have secured a possible site for the proposed charter school. The proposed site is at Green Meadow Schools.

Grant Valentine  
Proposed Board of Trustee Chairperson

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**TABLE 1: APPLICANT GROUP INFORMATION**

**\*Minimum of 5 members must be designated as Trustees**

NAME OF APPLICANT GROUP MEMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS	CURRENT EMPLOYMENT	RELEVANT EXPERIENCE, SKILLS, AND ROLE ON APPLICANT GROUP (Key Words)	PROPOSED ROLE (if any) (Trustee, Employee, Consultant, or No Continuing Role)	PROPOSED POSITION ON THE BOARD (e.g., officer, trustee, or constituent representative)	LENGTH OF INITIAL TERM	VOTING MEMBER (YES OR NO)
Hon. Grant Valentine, E.J.D.	[REDACTED]	Retired - NYS Div. of Parole	Leader in reentry criminal justice and juvenile justice science. He has been a member of the New York State Division of Parole for over 30 years.	Trustee, member of Founding Group	Chairperson	5 yrs.	Yes
Carol Bowman, Ed.D.	[REDACTED]	Asst. Professor of Education at Ramapo College of NJ	Former public elementary ESL teacher and former director of Pacific Ackworth Quaker Elementary School. Her areas of research include portfolio assessment, bilingual education curriculum design and mindful education.	Trustee, member of Founding Group	Vice-chairperson	5 yrs.	Yes
Zulma E. Rivera, M.S.Ed.	[REDACTED]	Retired School Administrator, currently employed as an Applied Behavior Analysis Therapist for children under the Autism Spectrum	Special Education Teacher and School Administrator. Experience in bridging the achievement gap for students with disabilities and English language learners. Implemented school wide reform to include collaborative teaching and constructivism in teaching.	Trustee, member of Founding Group	Education Committee Chair	5 yrs.	Yes

**TABLE 1: APPLICANT GROUP INFORMATION**

**\*Minimum of 5 members must be designated as Trustees**

Eugee Whyte, M.B.A.	[REDACTED]	Private Investment Insurance Agent	Has worked in management capacity in all facets of banking and finance. Areas of expertise include investment and financial services, mortgages, small business services, marketing and promotional activities. She is well versed in training, mentoring, motivating staff, students and business professionals.	Trustee, member of Founding Group	Secretary	5 yrs.	Yes
Steven Edwards, C.P.A.	[REDACTED]	Private practice CPA	Accounting	Trustee, member of Founding Group	Treasurer	5 yrs.	Yes
Deborah Barnes, M.A.	[REDACTED]	Educator within the Nyack Public School System.	Holds teaching certifications in NY and NJ.	Trustee	Member	5 yrs.	Yes
Dean Kernan, Ph.D.	[REDACTED]	Construction manager at RJL Development in Rockland County	Worked as a Network Analyst for the University of Washington.	Trustee	Member	5 yrs.	Yes
Beverly Paige, B.A.	[REDACTED]	Public Relations Manager	Expertise in press material development, fundraising and marketing plans.	Trustee	Public Outreach Committee Chair	5 yrs.	Yes

**TABLE 1: APPLICANT GROUP INFORMATION****\*Minimum of 5 members must be designated as Trustees**

Melvin Mungin, M.Div.	[REDACTED]	Pastor of church within the community and website developer	Experience with various facets of computer programming. Provided training within corporate and religious environments.	Trustee	Member	5 yrs.	Yes
Debra DeFour-Pierce, Psy.D.	[REDACTED]	School psychologist within the East Ramapo Central School District	Servicing general education and K-12 students with disabilities.	Trustee	Member	5 yrs.	Yes
Laurence Holland, B.A.	[REDACTED]	President and owner of real estate appraisal and consulting firm	Real Estate property appraisals	Trustee	Member	5 yrs.	Yes