



# PHASE I: Letter of Intent

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## 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	Exalt Academy of Rochester Charter School
Grades Served (K-5, .6-8, 9-12, etc.) During Initial Term	K-8
Number of Students During Initial Term	420

### **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	Danner Hickman	██████████	██████████
Public/Media Contact Person	Dennis Tiede	646-408-3590	<a href="mailto:dennis.tiede@exaltdeducation.org">dennis.tiede@exaltdeducation.org</a>

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

<http://www.exaltdeducation.org/>

### **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	Exalt Education, Inc.
Partner Organization 1	E3 Rochester
Partner Organization 2	Home Leasing LLC

**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. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Mary D. Palmer Helman".

**Date**

2015/06/22

**Thank you for completing this form.**

**I. Applicant Group Information**

- a. Provide the name, contact information, and current employment for all members:  
[Included in Table 1](#)
  
- b. Specify the current or prospective role that each member has or will hold:  
[Included in Table 1](#)
  
- c. Public contact:  
[Dennis Tiede, Exalt Education, Inc.: 646-408-3590, dennis.tiede@exaltdeducation.org](#)
  
- d. Application History:  
[The applicant group has never applied to open a school in New York before. The following are other applications/schools in which members of the applicant team have been involved:](#)
  - [Dennis Tiede played a central role in submitting a charter application to the St. Helens School District to open the Yankton Arthur Academy in 2006, the Gresham-Barlow School District to open the Gresham Arthur Academy in 2006, and the Reynolds School District to open the KNOVA Learning Reynolds Public School in 2010. All three schools were approved, opened, and remain in good standing. In spring 2015, the KNOVA school was renewed for 5 additional years.](#)
  - [Freddie Scott played a central role in submitting a charter application to the Arkansas Department of Education Charter Authorizing Panel to open the Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock, which was approved in February 2014. The Exalt Academy opened in fall 2014. In the earlier years of Exalt Education’s launch, Mr. Scott led the effort to apply for charters in Memphis, Tennessee in 2012 \(Achievement School District\), Pine Bluff, AR \(Arkansas Department of Education\) in 2012, and in Springfield, Tennessee \(Robertson County School District\) in 2013 and 2014.](#)
  - [Benjamin Lindquist played a key role in opening two campuses of the Chicago International Charter School in 2001 and 2002 \(Chicago Board of Education\), the KNOVA Learning Public School in 2010 \(Reynolds School District\), the Academy of North Minneapolis in 2010 \(Volunteers of America\), and the Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock in 2014 \(Arkansas Department of Education\). The Chicago International Campuses opened and remain in good standing. The Exalt Academy opened in fall 2014.](#)

**II. Proposed Charter School Information**

- a. Proposed school name:  
[Exalt Academy of Rochester Charter School](#)
  
- b. Proposed school location:  
[Rochester City School District, Monroe County, NY. The applicant is seeking to locate into the Beechwood neighborhood in the Southeast quadrant of the City of Rochester. The applicant has not requested to be located in a district facility.](#)
  
- c. Planned grades and enrollment in each of the year of the proposed charter term:

Exalt Academy will open with 180 students in grades K-2 and will add one grade level per year until it reaches full capacity with 540 students in grades K-8 in year seven.

Grade Level	Number of Students						
	Year 1 2016	Year 2 2017	Year 3 2018	Year 4 2019	Year 5 2020	Year 6 2021	Year 7 2022
K	60	60	60	60	60	60	60
1	60	60	60	60	60	60	60
2	60	60	60	60	60	60	60
3		60	60	60	60	60	60
4			60	60	60	60	60
5				60	60	60	60
6					60	60	60
7						60	60
8							60
Total	180	240	300	360	420	480	540

- d. Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s),  
Exalt Education, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation
- e. Proposed school mission:  
The mission of the Exalt Academy of Rochester Charter School (the “Academy”) is to prepare students from Rochester for competitive colleges and advanced careers by enabling them to master the core subjects and learn the key behaviors required for success, citizenship and leadership in their communities and beyond.
- f. School Overview:  
The Academy will be started and managed in a manner that incorporates many elements selected as part of Exalt Education’s commitment to integrating best practices from high-performing schools that serve student populations similar to the one that we seek to serve in Rochester. In the 2014-15 year, students in Exalt Academies gained an average of 5.5 national percentile rank (NPR) in Reading and Mathematics between fall and spring test administrations on the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). The following is a brief description of these proven elements:
- Carver Policy Governance: The Exalt Academy will implement the Policy Governance Model, an integrated board leadership paradigm developed by John and Miriam Carver, which enables the board to: focus on the larger issues of setting institutional vision; delegate with rigor and clarity; oversee management with one voice; rigorously evaluate the organization’s accomplishments; and truly lead the organization (<http://www.carvergovernance.com/model.htm>).
  - Team Based Management: The Academy’s success will be driven by the complementary efforts of several proven administrators operating within a well delineated leadership structure. We have already assembled a pool of proven Rochester administrators in conjunction with Dr. Leroy Nunery, a school leadership coach, and E3 Rochester, a non-profit organization that exists to transform the opportunities for learning in the City.
  - More Learning Time: The Academy will operate from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm daily for 200 days a year with the intent of providing students an average of over 35

- percent more learning time than the Rochester City School District.
- Team Teaching: In grades K-5, the Academy will have two teachers for every classroom of 30 students. The co-teachers will work a staggered shift. One would start his or her contact hours at 7:00 and finish at 3:30 pm, and the other would start his or her contact hours at 8:30 and finish at 5:00 pm. This shift allows students to receive the benefits of increased student-teacher interaction and an extended day without overtaxing teachers.
  - Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS): The Academy will implement PBIS school-wide with the dedicated leadership of a full-time Dean of Students. PBIS provides an effective framework of practice for engaging with students by explicitly teaching and reinforcing positive behavior.
  - CHAMPS Classroom Management: Every teacher would utilize Doug Lemov's strategies as described in *Teach Like a Champion 2.0*. This approach will ensure that students are fully engaged from bell-to-bell and learn at their highest levels.
  - Frequent Interim Assessment Relative to Standards: The Academy will utilize the Illuminate Formative Tests to assess student growth between 6 and 8 times annually relative to grade-level Common Core Standards. Analysis from the testing would be used to monitor student achievement levels and make instructional adjustments to enhance daily learning.
  - Close Monitoring of Achievement Growth Relative to National Norms: The Academy will utilize the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) to assess student growth 3 times annually. Analysis from the testing would be used to monitor student gains relative to individual annual goals and national norms.
  - Intensive Summer Manager & Teacher Preparation: All administrators will receive one week of dedicated training through a weeklong Management Institute. All first-year teachers would receive 4 weeks of dedicated training prior to the start-of-year and at least 2 weeks of training every year thereafter.
  - High Quality Weekly Professional Development: One day per week, the Academy will close at 1:30 pm so that teachers receive at least 3 hours of professional development, lesson planning, and professional learning communities.

Through these and other elements, the Academy will provide programs, systems and procedures conducive to rigor, high standards of practice, and excellence.

g. Target Population/Community Served:

The Exalt Academy plans to locate into a Purpose Built Community (a local community revitalization initiative) in the Beechwood neighborhood of Rochester by partnering with Home Leasing LLC, a company with a focus on affordable housing that was started by Norman and Nelson Leenhouts. While the Academy will be open to any child eligible under the laws of New York for admission to a public school, it will have a particular emphasis on serving students from Beechwood in the Southeast Quadrant, which has approximately 8,780 residents. Beechwood is a largely low-income neighborhood with an average household income of \$25,600. According to the U.S. Census, 57 percent of residents are black, 16 percent are Hispanic, 18 percent are White, and 10 percent are of other ethnicities. We expect that at least 12

percent of students will have diagnosed disabilities and at least 10 percent of students will be English Language Learners consistent with surrounding district schools. The community needs and performance of existing schools compelled Exalt to select this location. Additional analysis based on Census data is available at:

<http://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/New-York/Rochester/Beechwood/Race-and-Ethnicity>

h. Replication of High Quality School Models:

Exalt Education is expanding a growing network of mission-driven educators and civic leaders who are committed to opening and managing exemplary community public schools. These schools share rigorous systems and best practices related to school development, community engagement, governance, management, performance evaluation, professional development, human resources, compliance, special education and other areas. Exalt schools rely heavily on attracting and empowering proven local leadership (school board of directors, management and faculty) to adapt their identity, cultural values and academic programs to the unique needs of the communities that they serve. In this way, Exalt supports the development of exemplary community public schools versus replicating a model that is not, in fact, community-based. Exalt has been selected by E3 and positioned for the Purpose Built Community in Beechwood because of this unique approach. The founding board and management of the Exalt Academy are committed to opening a flagship community public school in Rochester to instill pride, build capacity, and generate resources for the community.

III. Enrollment and retention:

Over the past month, representatives of the Exalt Academy of Rochester Charter School have conducted outreach, including distributing information sheets, answering questions, and soliciting feedback, at the following locations and dates:

- Thomas P. Ryan Community Center, Saturday, May 30, Saturday, June 4, 2015
- Sully Branch Library located in the Ryan Community Center, Thursday, May 28 and Thursday, June 4, 2015
- Northeast Family Fitness Walk At El Camino, June 6, 2015
- Boys and Girls Club of Rochester, June 10, 2015
- Head Start, Family Fun Day, June 11, 2015
- Action for a Better Community Head Start, May 27, 2015
- PUC Achieve Charter School, June 10, 2015
- Department of Social Services
- Hungerford Building, June 5, 2015
- Colvin Street Neighborhood

Information sheets to solicit feedback were publicized through a series of community calendar notices and Facebook for parents and the community at the following locations:

- Lyell Branch Library, June 15, 2015
- Sully Branch Library, June 17, 2015
- Central Library of Rochester, June 20, 2015

The Academy will continue to engage in a variety of outreach activities, including door-to-door canvassing, advertising on ethnic radio stations in English and Spanish, distributing materials in English and Spanish, holding town hall meetings, and setting up a “sales center” in Beechwood where residents can drop in. In order to enroll and retain students with disabilities, we are initiating relations with organizations that serve these students such as Head Start, The Children’s Institute, the Children’s Agenda and RCSD’s Department of Special Services. Marketing and application materials will be available in languages other than English with an emphasis on Spanish. Spanish speaking personnel will be hired and available to families seeking language assistance. Translation will be offered during open houses and meetings.

Describe the school’s strategies to retain its students:

In order to maximize retention, the Academy will engage in a variety of activities, including: setting clear expectations with parents upfront through the use of a Student-Parent-Teacher Covenant and Student & Family Handbook; building strong daily relationships and communication channels; closely monitoring student retention rates, attendance and tardiness rates; and taking proactive steps to mitigate such risk factors as transitions in residence, primary caregiver and transportation. Once a child becomes a student, the entire family will become a valued member of the Academy community. We will use ongoing qualitative and quantitative data to gather timely information about each individual child’s success to identify areas that need scaffolding and support.

**IV. Public Outreach and Community Support**

a. Describe the public outreach conducted to date:

The applicant team is engaged in an intensive, multi-phase process that includes conducting outreach to arts, higher education, cultural and civic organizations, businesses, philanthropists, government officials, and members of the education sector. In addition to local organizations, we have worked to engage parents and family members directly in the development of this proposal and will continue to solicit their valuable feedback.

b. Describe your initial assessment of parent interest in your proposed charter school:

Our outreach efforts have led us to believe that there will be plenty of interest in the Exalt Academy to allow us to reach our targeted enrollment. The initial response from parents and the community is that additional educational options are very much welcome and needed. During the past several months, our outreach and contacts with parents have proven to be very successful in identifying proponents of the school and a willingness to support the Academy’s development. Additionally, our initial assessment tells us that charter schools have been extremely popular with parents in the community who seek an educational program with a community orientation and a college-preparatory focus.

**V. Proposed Board Chair Signature and Date**



6/23/15

NAME OF APPLICANT GROUP MEMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS	CURRENT EMPLOYMENT
Dennis Tiede		Exalt Education

Freddie Scott		Exalt Education
Benjamin Lindquist		Exalt Education

Leroy Nunery		Plus Ulte, LLC
John Butrill		Retired (Formerly The American Red Cross)
Andy Germanow		Germanow - Simon Corporation

Jim Costanza		Costanza Enterprises Inc.
Danner Hickman		Broadstone Real Estate
Bonnie Johnson		Williams and Anderson PLC
Warren Hern		Retired (Formerly of Unity Health System)

Gerald DiMarco		Gerard D. DiMarco Attorney at Law

**TABLE 1: APPLICANT GROUP INFORMATION**

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

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)
<p><b>Experience:</b> Created 3 New Charter Schools in Portland, OR, Principal, Managing Director, Business Manager, Financial Coordinator</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> School Creation, School Administration, Facilities Management, All aspects of Human Resources, Teacher Support, Supervision and Evaluation, Budgeting</p> <p><b>Role in Founding Group:</b> Community Outreach, Assimilation of Community Input, Proposal Development</p>	Employee	N/A	N/A	No

<p><b>Experience:</b> Director of Regional Development, Managing Partner, President &amp; CEO, Senior Account Executive</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> Community Outreach, Resource Procurement, Facilities Management</p> <p><b>Role in Founding Group:</b> Community Outreach, Proposal Development</p>	<p>Consultant</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Experience: CEO &amp; Founder of Charter Management Organization, Partner &amp; Vice President at a National Charter School Funding Foundation, Co-Director of Charter School Network, Teacher</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> Creation of Schools and Charter School Management Organization, Leadership, Fundraising, School Finance,</p> <p><b>Role in Founding Group:</b> Fundraising, Community Outreach, Proposal Development</p>	<p>Consultant</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>No</p>

<p><b>Experience:</b>  Founder/Principal, Acting Superintendent and CEO - School District of Philadelphia, Deputy Superintendent and Deputy CEO, President of School Management, President, Vice President of Business Services - University of Pennsylvania</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> Curriculum Development, Budgeting, Strategic Alliances, Leadership, Outreach</p> <p><b>Role in Founding Group:</b>  Board Governance</p>	<p>Trustee</p>	<p>Officer</p>	<p>3 years</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Experience:</b> CEO and Regional CEO of the American Red Cross, Managing Director, Executive VP and CFO</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> Financial Management, Leadership, Budgeting</p> <p><b>Role in Founding Group:</b>  Board Governance</p>	<p>Trustee</p>	<p>Officer</p>	<p>3 years</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Experience:</b> CEO and Owner</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> Operations, Marketing, Financial Analysis, Staff Development, School Governance</p> <p><b>Role in Founding Group:</b>  Board Governance</p>	<p>Trustee</p>	<p>Officer</p>	<p>3 years</p>	<p>Yes</p>

<p><b>Experience:</b> President &amp; Managing Partner, Partner, Founder  <b>Skills:</b> Real Estate Acquisition and Development, Outreach, Resource Procurement  <b>Role in Founding Group:</b> Board Governance</p>	Trustee	Officer	3 years	Yes
<p><b>Experience:</b> Director of Research &amp; Analysis, Senior Analyst, Senior Associate  <b>Skills:</b> Financial Modeling, Budgeting, Financial Forecasting  <b>Role in Founding Group:</b> Board Governance</p>	Trustee	Chair	3 years	Yes
<p><b>Experience:</b> Attorney, Law Clerk, Executive Director, Director of Development, Teacher  <b>Skills:</b> Legal Expertise, Non-Profit Management, Charter School Governance  <b>Role in Founding Group:</b> Board Governance</p>	Trustee	Officer	3 years	Yes
<p><b>Experience:</b> President &amp; Chief Executive Officer, Executive Vice President, CFO, Vice President, Controller  <b>Skills:</b> Finance, Budgeting, Outreach  <b>Role in Founding Group:</b> Board Governance</p>	Trustee	Officer	3 years	Yes

<b>Experience:</b> Attorney, Partner, Sole Practitioner, CEO, Associate <b>Skills:</b> Legal Expertise, Real Estate Development <b>Role in Founding Group:</b> Board Governance	Trustee	Officer	3 years	Yes