



# PHASE I: Letter of Intent

Created: 06/20/2015

Last updated: 06/21/2015

## 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	Flagship Community Charter School
Grades Served (K-5, .6-8, 9-12, etc.) During Initial Term	6-8
Number of Students During Initial Term	375

### **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	Dennie Wilson	347-860-4090	<a href="mailto:dmjw17@yahoo.com">dmjw17@yahoo.com</a>
Public/Media Contact Person	Dennie Wilson	347-860-4090	<a href="mailto:dmjw17@yahoo.com">dmjw17@yahoo.com</a>

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

(No response)

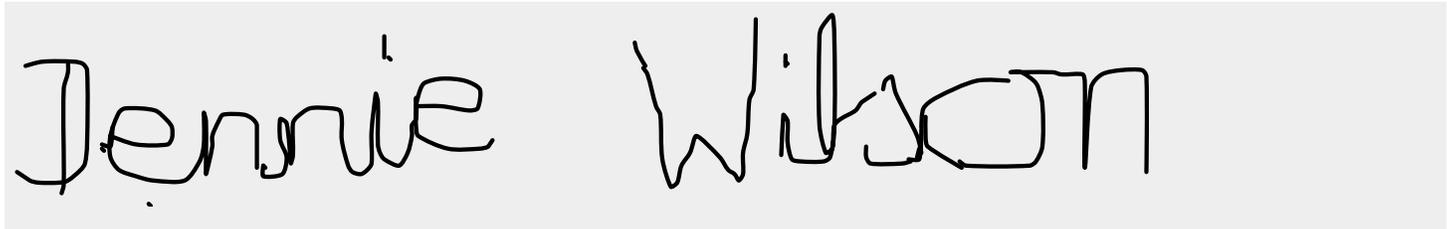
### **Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s), such as a charter or educational management company or a university, academic program partner, or whole school change partner.**

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

Proposed Management Company	N/A
Partner Organization 1	N/A
Partner Organization 2	N/A

**Proposed Board Chair Signature**

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

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light gray background. The signature reads "Jennie Wilson" in a cursive, slightly stylized font. The first name "Jennie" is on the left and the last name "Wilson" is on the right, with a small space between them.

**Date**

2015/06/20

**Thank you for completing this form.**

# Flagship Community Charter School

## I. APPLICANT GROUP INFORMATION

**a. Applicant Group:** The applicant group for Flagship Community Charter School consists of a diverse background of professionals in the disciplines of education, diplomacy, real estate, accounting, engineering, social work, school safety, fund development and philanthropy, school startup and operating experience. The applicant group is committed to: (i) designing and governing a school to meet the learning needs and raise the achievement of the highest-need students and students at risk of academic failure; (ii) using assessment data to serve, inform, and enhance teaching and learning.

**b. Current or Proposed Roles of Applicant Group:** See Table 1 for details.

**c. Public Contact:** Dennie Wilson: [Dmjw17@yahoo.com](mailto:Dmjw17@yahoo.com) 347-860-4090

**d. Application History:** The applicant group has previously applied through the NYSED in 2012, 2013 and 2014 as 'Rockaway Community Charter School'. Applications were not approved in all cases. Our 2014 application for Rockaway Community Charter School was withdrawn, while we attended to the recommendations made by your team of reviewers.

**New Applicant and Prospective School Trustee Background Information:** See Attachment 5a

## II. PROPOSED CHARTER SCHOOL INFORMATION

**a. Proposed School Name:** Flagship Community Charter School (FCCS).

**b. Proposed School Location:** The proposed location is NYC Community School District (CSD) 29. The founding team will submit a request to NYCDOE's Office of Portfolio for co-location. We are also exploring leased facility options.

### c. Planned grades/enrollment in each of the years of the proposed charter term

Grades	Ages	Number of Students				
		Year 1 2016-2017	Year 2 2017-2018	Year 3 2018-2019	Year 4 2019-2020	Year 5 2020-2021
6	11-12	125	124	126	125	124
7	12-13		125	124	126	125
8	13-14			125	124	126
Total Students		125	249	375	375	375
Classes Per Grade		5	5	5	5	5
Average Number of Students Per Class		25	25	25	25	25

We acknowledge we may have attrition; however, FCCS will aggressively replace any students lost through attrition. This operation will take place over the life of the charter for grades 6, 7, and 8.

**d. Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s):** FCCS currently has no proposed Management/or Partner Organization. We will however, work with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) as well as colleges that will provide various forms of support, both academic and otherwise. We have engaged The New York City Charter School Center (NYCCSC) to help get our school started, to build community and political support so that we can flourish as a high quality charter school. NYCCSC offers everything from instructional seminars to workspace for startup teams so we can move steadily toward opening our doors in 2016. We have started working with this organization since 2009 and have been to several workshops they have sponsored over the years.

**e. Proposed School Mission:** Flagship Community Charter School (FCCS) is committed in preparing every student for the world of the future. All students will receive the necessary support and encouragement to meet high academic standards, lead ethical lives, and demonstrate responsible citizenship. FCCS is dedicated to serving the highest need students of Queens regardless of academic level or English language proficiency. Collaboratively, students, families and staff will work together as a learning community to establish the parameters needed to bring each student to his/her full potential by establishing the expectation of "Excellence Is The Only Option."

**f. School Overview:** FCCS, along with educational professionals, will promote excellence through academic rigor and high expectations. Students will be provided with opportunities to gain the high academic standards required for high school, college and a changing global society. FCCS strives to deliver quality instruction to a diverse community and recognizes that every individual comes with unique talents and learning styles. Recognizing the unique way individuals learn, FCCS adopts a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach as our educational framework. UDL calls for creating curriculum from the outset that provides: Multiple means of representation to give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge, Multiple means of expression to provide learners alternatives for demonstrating what they know, and Multiple means of engagement to tap into learners' interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn. Our UDL framework will increase access to learning by reducing physical, cognitive, intellectual, and organizational barriers to learning, as well as other obstacles. In addition, FCCS will incorporate project-based learning, which is a student-centered and teacher-guided approach that engages students in investigating real world questions that they choose within a broad thematic framework. Project based learning is supported by our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) curriculum, provided by the STEM Academy. STEM will be used only as an elective, with specific components for grades 6, 7, and 8. STEM is an educational program that is student centered, motivating, challenging, academically rigorous, and supports the Next Generation Science Standards and the Common Core State Standards. STEM provides hands-on, project based learning experiences in which students use 21st century skills collaboratively to solve real world problems. These strategies will be beneficial in addressing the needs of Ells, SWDs and Title I students. Our educational program utilizes various forms of assessments and benchmarks (e.g. standards based rubrics, teachers' designed assessment, Full Option Science System (FOSS), IMPACT Math, Terra Nova, and NYSESLAT, to assess student achievement and growth. Students will receive all mandated accommodations to enable them to meet and exceed State Standards.

**Key Elements:** Flagship Community Charter School strives for excellence, and is built around six core elements 1) The five Pillars, 2) High quality instruction, 3) Safe and supportive school culture, 4) Smart use of data, 5) Parental involvement, 6) Professional development and support.

**Component #1: The Five FCCS Pillars.** To achieve excellence and live up to our mission, each of the grades 6-8 at FCCS will incorporate the following Five Pillars, modeled after a successful KIPP Academy Charter School.

1) *High Expectations* – Students in all grades will follow a rigorous academic program that will have clearly defined and measurable high expectations. 2) *More Time to learn* – There are no shortcuts to success in academics and life. All students will participate in an extended school day and year; which is approximately 60% more time on focused instruction each year than their traditional public school peers. 3) *Focus on Results* – Using a wide variety of age and developmentally appropriate assessments, FCCS will focus on student achievement throughout all grades. 4) *Power to Lead* – The principal of FCCS will maintain control over the essential elements of the School budget as well as teachers and staff. 5) *Choice and Commitment* – Parents, students and teachers each sign the Commitment to Excellence form to affirm their choice to be a part of the FCCS Team and Family. This also indicates their commitment to ensuring the success of the students and the school. Although this form is not required as a prerequisite for admission, it provides a solid foundation of expectations and cooperation for all staff, families and students.

**Component #2: High-Quality Instruction-** Instruction is the core activity of all schools. While several important factors contribute to student achievement, research has demonstrated that the quality of classroom instruction has twice the impact on student achievement as school-wide policies regarding curriculum, assessment, staff collegiality, and community involvement. Our experience as educators has indicated that high quality instruction consists of two components: What is taught and how it is taught.

**What is Taught:** Research from E.D. Hirsch confirms what experiences have demonstrated; the development of skills is possible only after a solid base of fundamental academic skills and knowledge is attained. New York City intellectual achievement data suggests that historically such fundamental skills mastery has been lacking. **How it is Taught:** high quality instruction is the result of meticulous planning, varied and rigorous instructional techniques and methods that are relevant to students. FCCS will utilize a Project Based Learning (PBL) approach, where students will explore real-world problems and challenges in science, math, history and language arts. PBL will be complemented with our STEM component which has specifically designed units for grades 6, 7, and 8. Students will be programmed for 60 minutes of PBL a day, where they will receive complex tasks that will challenge their problem solving skills with their peers.

**Component #3: Safe and Supportive School Culture:** FCCS culture will be based on Discipline, Respect, Enthusiasm, Accountability, and Maturity. FCCS will support social and emotional development for all students through the guidance and counseling program. Our program of guidance and counseling provides adolescent students with a range of academic and non-academic (physical, social, and emotional) supports and encourages broader college and career readiness. The goal is to motivate and empower students, and ensure that they have multiple opportunities to lead and succeed. Guidance counselors and the social worker will work in concert to provide support and guidance to students and their families. Additional support services will be provided through the Committee for Special Education (CSE). The school will also implement the required sections of the Dignity for All Students Act. All instructors and counselors will be provided with ongoing training sessions throughout the year on how to effectively use student data, and how to deal with day to day problems those students may encounter. The goal is to provide each student, the support they need to achieve excellence and indicated in our mission.

**Component #4: Smart Use of Data.** FCCS will use a variety of assessment systems to measure student progress and inform instruction. These include absolute measures (the NY State ELA and Math tests, Regents exams, etc.), value-added measures (such as the Measure of Academic Progress), and internally developed, externally-validated trimester and comprehensive exams. FCCS instructional framework includes the regular and coordinated use of diagnostic formative and summative assessment data, to understand the content and skills students have mastered and help with instructional placement. Assessment begins during the summer of 2016, before school begins. Students take the Terra Nova reading, comprehension, writing and math diagnostic assessments to determine their baseline performance levels. By starting with student diagnostics, teachers will be able to accurately determine students need. Teachers will be prepared from the very first day of school with support plans and student groupings. These assessments also allow administrators to establish measurable goals for teachers, and to provide professional development to those teachers, to ensure that they are supported in meeting their goals. Administrators will provide checks and balances for assessment via frequent instructional walkthroughs and frequent feedback to teachers. Additionally, administrators will analyze data and make appropriate adjustments to the instructional program.

**Component #5: Parent Involvement:** Education impacts the student and the student's parents/guardians. Conversely, parents/guardians impact each child's educational progress. FCCS recognizes the value of parents/guardians, and will work to actively involve them in their child's learning experience. Instruction will focus on including our community members' cultural experience as part of the driving force in our curriculum. In compliance with Education Law 2851(2) (c), FCCS will be a school in which the voices of families are valued and have an impact on the policies of the school. FCCS's counselors and social worker will be knowledgeable about the community resources available to help parents. Parents will be provided with opportunities to be involved in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and to participate in various school activities. The school building will be used to host activities aimed at empowering parents, in partnerships with financial institutions, community based organizations, and elected officials. The parent coordinator will help parents navigate their students' middle school experience. Parents, as part of our learning community will have access to student performance data through our data management system. Students at FCCS will celebrate their learning successes with their parents and the community at large.

**Component #6: Teacher Professional Development and Support:** Teachers at FCCS are committed to student success and to insure they are on the right path to high school and college, and are engaged in their communities as active democratic citizens. This ambitious goal can only be attained through exemplary teaching by every member of the faculty. The leadership team will model best-practices and stay connected with teachers through regular daily visits to every classroom. Teachers at FCCS will be treated as professionals, provided with all necessary technology (computer, phone, voicemail, email, etc.), appropriate classroom supplies, a personal professional development budget, and essential support at all times. Teachers will receive a minimum of two hours of preparation time daily, Monday through Thursday. One of the two hours will be used for common planning by department or grade level. Common planning is dedicated exclusively to lesson planning, grading and looking at student work. Subject area colleagues will use the common planning time to ensure the opportunity to collaborate, discuss pertinent student issues, and to be used for peer observation. Every summer, prior to the first day of school, teachers will receive two weeks of uninterrupted professional development that will include but not limited to: Introduction to Character Counts, Building a Positive Climate and Culture (Bullying Prevention), Curriculum Integration, Classroom Management and STEM training. During the school year, teachers are given additional professional development for at least three hours every Friday. We believe strongly in the importance of school visits, and have built at least four school visits to

our professional development schedule.

In addition to the 6 key elements, FCCS will also implement the following:

- **Character Development:** We believe more than academic and intellectual skills are needed to maximize a student's potential in high school, college and the world beyond. Academics without character are insufficient. Together, academics plus character has the power to transform lives. **Character Counts**, a national character education program, will serve as a foundation for responsible citizenship at FCCS. The program is based on six character pillars: **Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship**. FCCS character education is modeled after successful use in the **Hinsdale Central High School in Illinois**. Character Counts will be further developed in the full application.
- FCCS will implement (PBIS) as the umbrella philosophy encompassing the tone, spirit, culture, and environment of a rigorous learning community. PBIS includes a broad range of systemic and individualized strategies, promoting social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behavior.
- **Civics:** FCCS believes that public schools have a primary responsibility both to educate students for college and to improve the democratic infrastructure of our community. Our goal is to ensure that all graduates are able to participate and take leadership roles in civic institutions. Our graduates must be poised public speakers, respectful debaters, skilled negotiators of conflicting information, engaged community members, critical thinkers, and confident leaders. The measurement of these goals includes standardized testing (NAEP Civics), community service data, interscholastic competition results, and metrics of school behavior obtained from (PBIS).

**g. Target Population and Community to be served:** Students will be recruited from the District 29Q community. District 29Q has a diverse student population: 66% Black, 12% Hispanic, 8% Asian, and 7% White. The district's school population reflects the demographic trends of the general population. FCCS will welcome all students including students at-risk of academic failure, ELLs and SWD and Title I students. According to the 2012 New York State Report Card, there are 164,908 Special Education students in the borough of Queens. Overall, students in this district score poorly on both the ELA and Math Standardized tests. In the latest student data, the overall ELA score for 2013 was 21.65 percent proficient. The math score was 20.16 percent. These scores were the lowest throughout the borough. Academically, children have struggled in CSD 29Q. The New York State Report Card also shows that for 2011-12, 50%, 48% and 48% of all 3rd, 4th and 5th graders respectively scored below proficiency standards on the NYS ELA exam and 50%, 43%, and 40% of all 3rd, 4th and 5th graders respectively scored below proficiency standards on the NYS Math exam. Among middle school students in the 2012-2013 school year, 17% of ELA and 15% Math scored 3 or 4. This is below the city wide average of 25% ELA and 27% Math. The percentage of Blacks and Hispanic students scoring at Levels 3 and 4 were 25 to 35 percentage points lower than their White and Asian counterparts in both these exams. According to the 2012 New York State Report Card, 63% of the students in this district were eligible for the free or reduced price lunch (FRPL) program and 8% of students were classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP).

**h. Replication of high quality school models:** Not Applicable.

### **III. Enrollment and retention of students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students who are eligible applicants for free and reduced price lunch program.**

**Strategies to attract and recruit students:** Flagship Community Charter School will open with the intent of recruiting and serving an equal or higher proportion of students with disabilities than the surrounding district. FCCS shall enroll each eligible student who submits a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the grade level. In this case, a lottery system will determine applicants selected. We will make a specific effort to recruit into the lottery applicant pool, approximately 20% of students who have disabilities. We will serve all students qualified to attend public school in New York State admitted through the lottery process, including those with disabilities. FCCS's IEP team and Special Educational Coordinator will work in collaboration with the District's IEP team to design, review and revise all IEP's protocols. Students will be extensively recruited from CSD29. The Applicant group has met with elected officials, parent organizations, and other community stakeholders in CSD29 to disseminate information about its educational programs and progress toward meeting its educational goals. Once the charter is granted, our startup team members along with parent volunteers will initiate ongoing recruitment campaigns, targeting subway stations, community centers, churches, barbershops/beauty salons, public and private housing complexes. FCCS will mail applications to every 5th grade

family in the district and recruit through elementary school guidance counselors. As FCCS builds and grows, we will continue to aggressively publicize lotteries and school openings. Information will be available on our website once established. Before school begins during the summer of 2016, FCCS will embark upon a pre-transition outreach to feeder schools. FCCS student support services described under key elements, our rigorous standards-based instruction that utilizes UDL, Differentiation and project-based learning, our ability to encourage awareness and appreciation for a culturally diverse environment are all factors that enhance our recruitment and retention strategy. Enrollment applications and recruitment materials will be done in multiple languages and will show that we welcome students with disabilities; ELLs and those who qualify for free and reduced priced lunch. Specific strategies to attract and recruit students with disabilities, ELLs, and students who are eligible for free and reduced priced lunch are detailed in our full application.

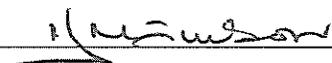
**Retention:** FCCS will provide a highly qualified staff, a comprehensive educational program that is organized, inclusive, and differentiated to meet the needs of all students. Each student will receive baseline assessments upon entering FCCS, along with ongoing summative and formative assessments to measure progress in core subjects and to provide academic intervention and modifications to the instructional program as deemed necessary. FCCS will establish a positive school culture that embraces and respect student's diversity. Parents will be kept abreast of student progress via quarterly progress reports as well as quarterly teacher conferences. FCCS will monitor all special education and ELL students, to ensure they are receiving all accommodations as outlined in their IEPs, and other appropriate support and resources. In addition, our bilingual, culturally competent staff, our ability to maintain board oversight on enrollment and retention in line with targets, a responsive, engaging program, national science competitions, are all factors that will allow FCCS to retain all its students each year.

#### IV. PUBLIC OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

**a. Public Outreach Conducted to Date:** The founding group recognizes the unique strengths and resources that families and community partners can bring to the school and have worked to actively involve family members and community organizations. The Applicant group has met with various community based organizations, newspapers and stakeholders to inform and solicit input from the community. We have had very productive and encouraging discussions with the Superintendent of School District 29, local public school officials, State Senator Leroy Comrie, Councilman Daneek Miller, Community Board 13, Heads of Religious Organization. We have solicited and considered community feedback regarding our school design through surveys from forum attendees. Some parent volunteers have already agreed to support our outreach in filling all classroom seats. A proposal for the Flagship Community Charter School was presented to the Youth Education Council of Community District 13 on 9th June 2015. A complete version will be presented to Community Board 13 in early July 2015. We have reached out to community organizations such as Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CACCI) and Universal Emergency Care Training. The key applicants along with the planning team have compiled a schedule of events and continue to speak with community groups in continuation of our outreach. Because of the founding team's efforts in making presentations at community centers, tenant association meetings, one on one with parents on the streets, and talking to key community leaders, the aforementioned individuals and organizations have agreed to endorse our effort to establish a charter school in the CSD29, South Jamaica. The above strategies allowed the founding members to reach families that are traditionally less informed about educational choice options.

**b. Initial Assessment of Sufficient Interest:** The applicant group has had conversations and meetings with families of local elementary school students, organization partners, and elected officials. During our meetings with various community organizations, we have determined that there is an overwhelming demand for an alternative middle school that incorporates some form of the STEM curriculum, while addressing the needs of ELL's, students with special needs, and those who qualify for free and reduced priced lunch. The STEM component for grades 6, 7, 8, and the extended day are direct results of community input. As of June 2015 we have obtained approximately two hundred signatures from parents who support our mission to provide a rigorous curriculum to accommodate their middle school students' needs.

#### V. PROPOSED BOARD CHAIR SIGNATURE AND DATE



Date: 06/21/2015

Dennie Wilson

# Table 1: Applicant Group Information

Table 1 is not counted toward the page limits

\*Minimum of 5 members must be designated as Trustees

Applicant Group Member Name/Email Address	Current Employment	Relevant experience/skills and role on applicant group (Key Words)	Proposed role (s) if any (Trustee, Employee, or None)	Proposed Position on the board (e.g., officer, trustee, or constituent representative)	Length of initial term	Voting Member Y/N
Dennie Wilson [REDACTED]	NYC Department of Education Teacher	Education, Diplomacy, Fund raising, Community outreach and real estate. Lead Applicant	Trustee	Board Chair	3	Y
Francis Lewis [REDACTED]	NYC Department of Education Teacher	Education, Business & Finance, Accounting, Real Estate, Data Analysis Lead Applicant	Trustee	Officer	3	Y
Dr. Owen Brown [REDACTED]	CUNY Professor	Education, Business, Grant Writing, Leadership and Organizational Development	Trustee	Officer	2	Y
Lilbert Ephraim [REDACTED]	NYC Department of Education Special Education Teacher	Curriculum Development	Trustee	Trustee	2	Y
Thomas Russack [REDACTED]	Director of Historic Preservation Engineer	Facilities Operations	Trustee	Trustee	2	Y
Dr. Rao Addagada [REDACTED]	President of Spartan Medical College	Fund Raising	Trustee	Trustee	1	Y

Dr. Basil E. McPherson [REDACTED]	Sr. DMin Bushwick Family Ministries	Community Outreach, Fundraising	Trustee	Trustee	1	Y	
Principal TBD	TBD	Day-to-day School Operation	Employee	Ex-officio	N/A	N	