

Founding Group of Greater Works Charter School
c/o Ted J. Morris, Jr. – Lead Applicant



June 21, 2012

New York State Education Dept. Charter School Of
89 Washington Avenue, Room 471 EBA
Albany, New York 12234



To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Founding Group of Greater Works Charter School (GWCS), I am honored to submit this letter, expressing our intent to submit an application to establish a New York State Charter School to the Charter School Office of the New York State Education Department.

We have spent the past three years, working together to develop a proposal for a high-quality charter school in the Rochester, NY area. Our work has included gaining support from the community, building a strong founding group of local professionals as well as a strong advisory group of national professionals, visiting successful public schools (some of which were charters) in Rochester, Buffalo and Lafayette as well as schools in other states and writing the application for our charter school. We feel confident in the work that we have completed and would like to participate in this Request for Proposals to Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents.

I. Applicant Information

- a. Lead applicant: Ted J. Morris, Jr.



Phone number: (585) 230-6168 or (585) 568-7833

E-mail address: tmorris10@gmail.com

Ted is life-long resident of Rochester, New York. He was born, raised and still resides in the city of Rochester, New York.

- b. Media contact: Ted J. Morris, Jr.

Phone number: (585) 230-6168 or (585) 568-7833

E-mail address: tmorris10@gmail.com and website is www.GWCharterSchool.org

- c. The applicant founding group of Greater Works Charter School is comprised of ten educators, administrators, leaders, parents and/or city residents with several years of experience in the fields of education, administration, accounting, education policy, reentry initiatives, marketing, and other areas. **Andrea Clarke** is a parent of 2 adult children. She is a city resident and is active in the community as a volunteer. Andrea will have no specific role with the school. **Roberta Favitta** is a Brand Consultant with the Cooley Group in Rochester, New York. Previously, she has worked as VP of Sales and Marketing and a Lending Officer for a local bank. She has over 30+ years of experience in sales, branding, and marketing. She is a volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters, Step by Step, Veteran's Outreach Center, the Henrietta Chamber of

Commerce, and will serve on the initial Board of Trustees. **Jennifer Hawryschuk** is an Assistant Vice President and Branch Manager at Northwest Savings Bank in Rochester, New York. Previously, she has worked as an Assistant VP and Business Banking Officer at Citizens Bank. Jennifer has over 13+ years of experience in banking and sales. She is a volunteer with Rudy's Rescue, Fairy Godmothers of Rochester, Camp Good Days & Special Times, and a member of the Brighton Chamber of Commerce. Jennifer will serve on the initial Board of Trustees. **Dr. Peter L. Kozik** is an Assistant Professor of Education at Keuka College, an Assistant Research Professor at Syracuse University and the Project Coordinator and Chairperson on the Task Force for Quality Inclusive Schooling. He has 25+ years of experience in the field of education. Peter is a certified teacher in N-6 and English 7-12 and is a certified School District Administrator. Peter will be on the initial Board of Trustees. **Ted J. Morris, Jr.** is the Lead Applicant for and Founder of Greater Works Charter School. Ted is the Assistant CEO at the Hickok Center for Brain Injury. He has 7+ years of experience in the fields of education, human services and administration. Ted will serve as the school's Chief Executive Officer (CEO). **Andrew Prinzing** is an Administrator at the Community Charter School in Buffalo, NY. Previously, Andrew was an Administrator with the NYC DOE Re-Start Program and has worked at the TST Community School as the Principal. Andrew also served on Governor Patterson's Dropout Prevention Workgroup as the Alternative Education Representative. He has 18+ years of experience in the field of education and administration. Andrew will serve as the school's Principal. **Kristin Rapp** is the Founder and Executive Director of ArtPeace, Inc. Previously, Kristin was a Primary Therapist at Unity Health. She has 27+ years of experience working in the Social Work field with high school dropouts, students with disabilities and chemical dependent adults and is a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW). Kristin will be on the initial Board of Trustees. **Orlando Rivera** is an Advertising Account Executive for the Catholic Courier/El Mensajero. Previously, he was a Regional Administrator with Pathstone Corporation. Throughout his career, Orlando has primarily worked as a Spanish teacher, English as a second language (ESL) instructor and an interpreter/translator. Orlando has 10+ years of experience in Spanish literature and teaching and is fluent in writing and speaking Spanish. Orlando will be on the initial Board of Trustees. **Nadly Thompson** is the Mental Health Director at the Monroe County Jail and has been for the past 2.5 years. She is a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) and a Certified Correctional Health Professional (CCHP). Nadly has 10+ years serving as a primary therapist and care manager. Nadly will serve on the initial Board of Trustees. **Nicole VanGorder-Pratt** is the Chief Talent Officer at Financial Architects/Mass Mutual, where she is responsible for recruitment and retention. She has over 5+ years of varying experience and has a B.A. degree in Political Science and Sociology. Nicole is a volunteer with the Al Sigl Center, St. Joseph's Villa, Partners in Restorative Justice and serves on St. John Fisher College's Alumni Board of Directors. Nicole will have no specific role at the school. In addition to the individuals named above, the GWCS founding group has received resumes and interest from 30 individuals who are interested in being on the founding group and possibly on the initial board of trustees. Additional members added to the founding group and/or the initial board of trustees will be included in the full application.

- d. The proposed members of the initial Board of Trustees are Roberta Favitta, Jennifer Hawryschuk, Dr. Peter L. Kozik, Ted J. Morris, Jr. (ex-offio), Kristin Rapp, Orlando

Rivera, and Nadly Thompson. Please see above for descriptions of relevant experience and skills.

- e. This request is not applicable.
- f. The founding group has previously applied to the SED Charter School Office in the January 2010 Charter School Application Cycle. We submitted a Letter of Intent and a Prospectus but were not asked to submit a full application. We also participated in the Charter School Institute's Special Call for Application in July 2011 but were not invited to submit a full application. We sent a Letter of Intent in January of 2012, which was accepted but we were unable to finalize our full application by the deadline.

II. Proposed Charter School Information

- a. Proposed school name: Greater Works Charter School
- b. Proposed school location: Rochester City School District
- c. Planned grades and enrollment:
 - Year 1: Grade 9 and 80 students
 - Year 2: Grades 9-10 and 160 students
 - Year 3: Grades 9-11 and 240 students
 - Year 4: Grades 9-12 and 320 students
 - Year 5: Grades 9-12 and 320 students
- d. This request is not applicable.
- e. The mission of Greater Works Charter School will be to provide a quality education in a safe and supportive environment that prepares our students for college and careers, with a focus on assisting students who are over-age, under-credited or at-risk of academic failure.
- f. Greater Works Charter School will combine the Circle of Courage philosophy, Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets, Individual Learning Plans, mentors, family involvement, service learning, career plans, and longer instructional time to create a "no-excuse" school that will improve student learning and achievement and increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure or who are over-age and under-credited. Our school will use Reclaiming Youth International's Circle of Courage philosophy for positive youth development, which helps youth get their needs for belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity in healthy, positive ways.
- g. Greater Works Charter School will recruit students from the City of Rochester. The Rochester City School District is the third largest urban school system in New York State.
The Rochester City School District serves approximately 32,000 students in pre-K through grade 12. The district's student enrollment based is comprised of 64 percent African-American/Black; 22 percent Hispanic; 11 percent White; 3 percent Native

American, Asian and other minorities. About 10 percent of the district's enrollment is made up of English Language Learners (ELL) and 18 percent of the district's enrollment is made up of students with disabilities or special needs, which is higher than the state's ratio of 13 percent. Rochester is ranked 11th in the nation's per capita for child poverty among medium/large US cities. The poverty rate is further attested to by the high percentages of students eligible for federal free or reduced price lunch. Approximately 88 percent of the Rochester City School District's (RCSD) students are eligible for federal free or reduced price lunch. This makes the RCSD the poorest big-city school district in the state.

III. Enrollment and retention of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program.

Greater Works Charter School (GWCS) will admit students without regard to race, creed, ethnicity, disability, or socio-economic background. We will enroll 80 students in grade 9 in our first year. To ensure that we reach our enrollment level and that we satisfy enrollment and retention targets of students with disabilities, English language learners and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program, our school will directly mail out an information packet to all 8th grade students residing in the City of Rochester. This packet will include information on our school's model and mission as well as an application. These materials will be provided in English and Spanish.

The additional methods for recruitment of students will include:

- Utilization of local print and electronic media widely available at community libraries and recreation centers (i.e. Minority Reporter, City Newspaper, La Voz, etc.);
- Appearances on local radio shows (including stations whose audience includes those speaking a language other than English) whose target audience closely aligns with our target population;
- Collaboration with the County and City to provide applications and information to neighborhood organizations, clubs, agencies (Center for Youth, Boys and Girls Club, Threshold, ArtPeace, etc.) and churches. This will provide awareness of GWCS and availability of applications at their officers;
- Identification of speakers cognizant of GWCS design, vision and mission to present at meetings, media events, etc;
- Participation in the 2013 School Choice Fair, facilitated by the Rochester City School District in January 2013; and
- Development of a website and other social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.).

In addition to general recruitment efforts, GWCS will employ strategies and techniques to recruit students with disabilities at a rate comparable to or greater than the percentage of the Rochester City School District. Recruitment efforts will include: (a)

distribution of brochures highlighting information about GWCS' special education program, (b) outreach to community programs and agencies (ACCES-VR, Lifetime Assistance Program, Learning Disabilities Association and Youth Advocacy Programs) where we will request opportunities to provide GWCS information during meetings hosted by these community agencies and service coordinators. During the application process and meetings, we will clearly identify the special education services that will be available at GWCS, (c) provide meetings with members of special education staff and/or Board of Trustees with parents of students with disabilities who express interest in learning more about how GWCS will meet the needs of their child. It is our goal to retain a comparable number of enrolled students with disabilities to that of the Rochester City School District. To reach English Language Learners (ELLs), GWCS will work with the Rochester community and the Rochester City School District to identify the major languages spoken other than English. Once this information has been compiled, GWCS will target areas of highest ELL concentration and provide information about GWCS to the people in those areas in their languages. Also, we will distribute information to local clergy whose congregations are non-English speakers. We will display and provide GWCS materials in different cultural centers, including but not limited to Puerto Rican Youth Development Center, American Action League and Urban League, etc. We also will invite families and students to our recruitment events which will include open houses prior to and during the enrollment process. Native speakers or translators will be available to facilitate these events. We will emphasize the availability of resources for ELL students. More detailed information about our school's recruitment and retention strategies will be provided in our full application.

IV. Public Outreach and Community Support

The founding group of Greater Works Charter School has been working aggressively to do public outreach about our school and to solicit community input regarding our school. To date, we have had approximately 6 public meetings/events which were held on 12/8/10, 9/19/11, 10/24/11, 12/1/11, 01/19/12, and 05/19/12 and we have plans to have more in the near future; several discussions with community parents, stakeholders and organizations including, but not limited to Mary Doyle (Chief of Staff of the Rochester City School District), Roderick Cox-Cooper (CEO of Wilson Commencement Park), Senator Joseph Robach, Dr. Gregory R. Wells (Senior Pastor of Victory Living Christian Faith Center), Thomas Pappas (Principal, School Without Walls), Stacey Shells (Principal, Rochester Prep Charter School), Dr. Bolgen Vargas (Superintendent, Rochester City School District), and many more. We have also facilitated presentations at Aquinas Institute on 2/15/10, Hillside Family of Agencies on 10/22/10, Allendale Columbia School on 11/09/10 and Victory Living Christian Faith Center on 12/08/10. We have received several letters of support from various individuals/agencies and have been featured on Your News Now (YNN) Rochester and 13 WHAM News. In addition, we have set up a voicemail and question line (585-568-7833), an information website (www.GWCharterSchool.org), and a Facebook page (www.FB.com/GWCharterSchool) so the community can access information about the school and provide comments/feedback about the school.

We have received nothing but positive comments and feedback about the school and we are confident that the community is excited about GWCS and is ready to apply for admission once our charter school is approved. We look forward to submitting a full application. We welcome your comments and feedback.

Sincerely,

Ted J. Morris, Jr.
Founder/Lead Applicant