



PHASE I: Letter of Intent

Last updated: 06/22/2015

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	Innovation Prep Charter School
Grades Served (K-5, .6-8, 9-12, etc.) During Initial Term	9-12
Number of Students During Initial Term	400

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	Sharon Stephens	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Public/Media Contact Person	Greg Lewin	914-378-6135	golewin@gmail.com

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

<http://innovationprepcharter.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	Not applicable
Partner Organization 1	Not applicable
Partner Organization 2	Not applicable

Proposed Board Chair Signature

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



Date

2015/06/22

Thank you for completing this form.

June 22, 2015

The Regents of The University of the State of New York
NYSED Charter School Office
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12234
(518) 474-1762
By electronic mail: charterschools@mail.nysed.gov

The founders of the Innovation Prep Charter School (IPCS) are pleased to inform the NYSED Charter School Office of our intention to submit a charter school application for review. IPCS will be seeking the approval of a charter that allows us to serve ninth through twelfth grade students who reside with their families and caregivers in Community School District 11 in the Northeast Bronx.

I. Applicant Group Information:

For responses to **a.** and **b.** please refer to *Table 1: Applicant Group Information* for details information about the members of the Innovation Prep Charter School applicant group, who are: Travis Brown, Greg Lewin, David Martin, Max Mitchell, Nicole Payne, Allegra Stennett, Sharon Stephens and Anthony Thompson.

c. Public contact: Greg Lewin, (914) 378-6135, info@innovationprepcharter.org

d. Application History: This applicant group previously applied to the NYSED Board of Regents during cycle one of this year. The applicant group withdrew their application with the intent of resubmitting in cycle two.

II. Proposed Charter School Information:

a. Proposed school name: Innovation Prep Charter School

b. Proposed school location: Community School District 11, Northeast Bronx

c. Planned grades and enrollment in each of the years of the proposed charter term;

Projected Enrollment Over the Charter Term					
Grades	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
9	100	100	100	100	100
10		100	100	100	100
11			100	100	100
12				100	100
Totals	100	200	300	400	400

d. Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s):

Innovation Prep Charter School does not intend to apply for a charter with a proposed management or partner organization. However, the founders are actively exploring a range of affiliations that will strengthen the school model and the academic and social supports we are committed to providing to our students. For example, David Martin has spoken with leaders at Binghamton University, Bronx Community College, Columbia University and Franklin University, who have all provided formal letters of support. Exploration is ongoing with these institutions, as well as Mercy College.

e. Proposed school mission;

Innovation Prep Charter School is cultivating the next generation of solution-oriented leaders and social entrepreneurs in the Northeast Bronx by engaging them in problem-based learning. We explicitly teach students the skills they need to be academically successful and emotionally intelligent.

f. School Overview:

Innovation Prep Charter School will provide a high-quality, rigorous high school experience for students who reside in Community School District 11 in the Northeast Bronx. IPCS will expect all students to be academically successful, emotionally intelligent and well prepared for great accomplishments in college and life.

Key Elements of Innovation Prep Charter School will be:

Academic Success for All Students

Innovation Prep Charter School will have an extended school year (185 days) and school day (8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., with enrichment from 3:30-5:00 p.m.) and a low student/teacher ratio (with two teachers in targeted classrooms). Small group and individualized supports for English language learners, students with special needs and others in need of remediation will be provided, and timely and intense interventions will occur daily (5th period) as well as at afterschool tutoring. Advanced learners will have opportunities for enrichment and intellectual stretch experiences, and literacy will be infused across all content areas. Innovation Prep will be a data-driven school community, broadly framed by diagnostic, ongoing and final assessments. Formative and summative assessments will be incorporated within content areas, at specific grade levels, on daily, weekly and unit schedules.

Empowering Students with Emotional Intelligence

Students, as well as staff members, will be taught to practice emotional intelligence, which is commonly defined as the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth.¹ Developing self-awareness, self-regulation, internal motivation, empathy and social skills will be prioritized at Innovation Prep. Each student will have an advisor who will not only target their specific academic, developmental and social needs, but also provide individualized guidance and reinforcement around emotional intelligence strategies, consistently building personal resiliency. A full-time social worker will provide social-emotional support to students, families and staff members, and established affiliations with well-regarded human service organizations will offer wrap-around prevention and intervention support.

Explicit Teaching and Application of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and Design Thinking

Students will develop Problem-Based Learning expertise in problem-deconstruction, research, analysis and presentation and communication,² and put design thinking³ into real world practice as social entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurship is a form of leadership that “maximizes the social return on efforts to change the world while fundamentally and permanently changing the way problems are addressed on a global scale. Social entrepreneurs employ a wide variety of creative approaches and practices from diverse academic disciplines and professional sectors.”⁴ Students will employ PBL and design thinking everyday at school: in class across all content areas, in groups and clubs and at school-wide events, and in summer programs, which may include links to college programs, and at internship placements, and with mentors, from a variety of industries.

Concrete Paths to College

IPCS will provide robust college articulation and matriculation supports to ensure students not only enroll in college, but also remain enrolled, engaged and successful. Partnerships with higher education institutions and programs, such as Binghamton University, Bronx Community College, BUILD, Franklin University and iMentor will allow students to develop a familiarity with and ties to college while still in high school, and gain opportunities to earn early college credits.

g. Target Population/Community Served:

The founders of IPCS seek to site the school in the Northeast Bronx, targeting Community School District 11. This Community School District (CSD) overlaps most neighborhoods in Community Districts (CD) 11 and 12, and a few neighborhoods in Community Districts 9 and 10:

Neighborhoods within Community School District 11:

- CD 12: Woodlawn/Wakefield, Williamsbridge/Olinville, Eastchester/Edenwald/Baychester
- CD 11: Bronxsdale, Allerton/Pelham Gardens, Pelham Parkway, Van Nest/Morris Park/Westchester Square
- CD 10: Co-Op City, Pelham Bay/City Island
- CD 9: Parkchester

¹ Mayer & Salovey, 1997

² Problem-deconstruction – the ability to perceive a complex issue and separate/categorize the various parts and begin the process of creating/prioritizing a plan to solve it; Research – diligent and systematic investigation (“inquiry”) to collect and establish facts and information from a variety of sources on a subject or problem; Analysis – comparing (“synthesize”) information with the intent of making a conclusion about a problem; Presentation and communication – the process of exchanging ideas and information between individuals in universally accepted modes (e.g. verbal, written); accomplished through a group-inquiry/collaborative process

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Design_thinking: Design thinking combines *empathy* for the context of a problem, *creativity* in the generation of insights and solutions, and *rationality* in analyzing and fitting various solutions to the problem context. The premise of teaching Design Thinking is that by knowing about how to successfully approach and solve difficult, multi-dimensional problems - more specifically, effective methods to ideate, select and execute solutions - individuals and businesses will be able to improve their own problem solving processes and skills.

⁴ <http://www.nyu.edu/reynolds/social>

These communities are rather diverse economically. As one indicator, percentages of individuals receiving some sort of income assistance (TANF, SSI, Medicaid) are noted below:⁵

- CD 12: 35.9%
- CD 11: 34.7%
- CD 10: 21.5% (including Throgs Neck, etc.)
- CD 9: 43.6% (including Soundview, Castle Hill, etc.)



There are a number of safe and stable elementary schools in the district, although they tend to be rather large. Five elementary charter schools (K-5), which have smaller enrollments, are demonstrating strong academic performance. Four of these five are Icahn Charter Schools, and the fifth is Bronx Charter School for Better Learning. Bronx Charter School for Excellence, long recognized as a successful school, serves grades K-8, and Equality Charter School, which is located in Co-op City, serves primarily middle school students. Equality's NYS assessment performance has not been particularly strong over the years, and ELA continues to be particularly weak, with only 14.1% achieving proficiency (compared to 17.6% in CSD 11) in 2014. However, its 2014 math results were stronger, with 32.5% achieving proficiency (vs. CSD 11: 18.3%). Equality has just begun to serve the high school grades.

Innovation Prep High School expects to recruit, enroll and aggressively address the learning needs of students who are lacking foundational academic skills and knowledge, based on a review of the performance of middle schools in the area. Middle schools in CSD 11 are not faring well, with over 40% of students not meeting grade level standards (earning a Level 1) and the percent of students meeting standards hovering around 20% in both English language arts and mathematics. Below are the NYS results for the past two years.

CSD 11: Grades 3-8, NYS ELA 2013 and 2014

Year	# Tested	Mean Scale Score	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 3+4	
			#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2013	18726	290	7935	42.4	7349	39.2	2768	14.8	674	3.6	3442	18.4
2014	18777	289	7794	41.5	7329	39.0	2902	15.5	752	4.0	3654	19.5

CSD 11: Grades 3-8, NYS Math 2013 and 2014

Year	# Tested	Mean Scale Score	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 3+4	
			#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2013	18992	290	8363	44.0	6834	36.0	2718	14.3	1077	5.7	3795	20.0
2014	18542	294	7427	40.1	6620	35.7	3112	16.8	1383	7.5	4495	24.2

NYC DOE 2013-14 School Quality Review Snapshot data⁶ provides further evidence of challenged middle school performance by presenting the Grade 8 proficiency rates of students who attend high school in the district. English proficiency is 2.26 and mathematics is 2.14, both on the low end of approaching the standard (3.00).

As with the middle schools, there is significant room for improvement in the public high schools currently located in the district. With the average enrollment of approximately 500, and a few schools, like Harry S. Truman High School, serving well over 1000 students, Innovation Prep will provide a smaller, more individualized experience for students. We expect our population to mirror that at high schools in CSD 11, which currently has over 70% of students receiving free and reduced lunch, and a majority self-identifying as Black or Hispanic (88.3%). As noted in the next section, we are deeply committed to recruiting, enrolling and serving English language learners and students with disabilities at rates comparable to CSD 11, and achieving a much higher daily attendance rate (CSD 11 attendance rates are lower than the city average, at 86%).

⁵ http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/neighborhood_info/bx12_info.shtml; http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/neighborhood_info/bx11_info.shtml; http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/neighborhood_info/bx10_info.shtml; http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/neighborhood_info/bx09_info.shtml;

⁶ <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.ht>

Although the four-year average high school graduation rate in CSD 11 is a bit higher than NYC and 10 percentage points higher than the Bronx (69.4%, vs. 59% and 68%), four of these seventeen schools have rates that are much lower than that average; Bronx High School for the Visual Arts (56.9%), Bronx Aerospace High School (58.6%), Christopher Columbus High School (41.2%) and Global Enterprise High School (51.1%). In fact, there are a total of seven high schools (out of seventeen, 41% of the total number of high schools) in CSD 11 with graduation rates that are lower than the city average (68%). Particularly alarming is the four-year college readiness index, which is only 20.1% (20% borough-wide, 33% city-wide), indicating that the majority of CSD 11 high school graduates are ill prepared for college level academic work. College enrollment rates are strikingly low; only 45.9% of students residing in Community School District 11 (41% in the Bronx) enroll in post-secondary programs within 6 months of graduation.

h. Replication of High Quality School Models: Innovation Prep Charter School will not be a replication model school.

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.

The founders of Innovation Prep Charter School have begun an extensive outreach campaign, across a number of social media platforms and in person throughout the community, to inform a diverse cross section of families about the school and the academic and social support it will provide to all of its students. Innovation Prep will meet or exceed enrollment targets for students with disabilities (17.5%, as of 2013-14) and English language learners (9.5%). In 2013-14, 87.2% of CSD 11 students received free or reduced lunch⁷, and Innovation Prep is targeting this population for enrollment as well. We have already begun to partner with, and will continue to reach out to, community-based organizations that serve immigrant populations, advocate for students with disabilities and offer support to low-income families. More specifically, founders have outreached to the New York Language Center, the NYC Special Education Collaborative at the NYC Charter Center, Resources for Children with Special Needs, and Advocates for Children of New York to seek further guidance about connecting to and recruiting these students in particular. Finally, several dates continue to be scheduled at New York Public Libraries in the area, many of which offer English language courses.

All Innovation Prep students will have access to the general education curriculum, and be afforded a range of academic and social supports to comprehensively meet their needs. Teachers will receive training, and ongoing coaching and support, to develop lessons that reflect appropriate instructional modifications and differentiation. Unless otherwise mandated by their IEPs, students with disabilities will receive instruction in an integrated co-teaching environment; one general education content-area teacher and one licensed special education teacher will co-plan and co-teach particular core courses.

Innovation Prep will implement an approach to English language acquisition in which all students are provided an opportunity to experience the content fully while being supported. Similar to the approach to students with disabilities, English language learners will receive instruction in a co-teaching environment (general education teacher with English as a Second Language teacher) for all language intensive content areas (e.g. English, Science and Social Studies).

To serve the needs of both subgroups, as well as any other student academically at risk, instructional schedules will be adapted accordingly. Students may receive additional supports in the co-taught classrooms described above, in teacher directed small groups or through individualized work. This will include the integration of adaptive technology programs, such as Achieve 3000 and Newsela that closely track student progress and provide specifically targeted learning opportunities. Cycles of tiered grade level interventions, focused on specific skills and strategies, will be created and adjusted based on evidence of mastery.

For all students who may have identified learning needs, such as a disability or second language, or have any other academic or non-academic risk factor (such as being categorized as receiving free and reduced lunch, demonstrating social, developmental or behavioral challenges, or experiencing life stressors), Innovation Prep will establish systems of data tracking, prevention and intervention protocols that frame the work of teachers, specialists and leaders at the school, and clearly defined processes of communicating and partnering with families to prevent and overcome challenges.

IV. Public Outreach and Community Support

a. Describe the public outreach conducted to date to solicit community input regarding the proposed school. This may include public meetings held, discussions with community parents, stakeholders or organizations, public awareness campaigns, media coverage or results from surveys conducted.

The founders of Innovation Prep Charter School have already done considerable community outreach, soliciting and

⁷ <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/data/default.htm>

considering input and feedback received from a range of stakeholders. We intend to continue these efforts, in order to develop trusting and mutually supportive relationships with local families, agencies and organizations. Our long-term goal is not only to ensure robust student enrollment and family engagement for IPCS, but also to become intricately threaded into the fabric of the neighborhood. We have utilized social media in a variety of ways to inform the community and solicit input. This includes an active website⁸, with the community survey available online in English⁹ and Spanish¹⁰, a Facebook page¹¹ and a Twitter¹² account, and flyers that are being widely distributed in both English¹³ and Spanish¹⁴. Over 14 church communities have been contacted. Information sessions were held, and feedback surveys were completed, at Shalom S.D.A. Church, Westchester U.M.C. and Butler Memorial U.M.C. A number of additional sessions are in the process of being scheduled. Outreach is ongoing to community-based organizations and programs that serve our targeted population of students and families. IPCS founders have outreached to/met with leaders at NYC Mission Society, Bronxworks, BUILD, Mentoring USA, iMentor, Andrew Freedman Home, BAAD, Bronx Dance Theater, Bronx House, Bronxnet, East Side House Settlement, Highbridge Voices, Riverdale Teen Theater, Mind-Builders Creative Arts Co., Inc., Bronx Part East Community Association, Allerton Co-ops Tenants Association, and Eastchester Gardens Resident Council. IPCS founders have spent considerable time near over thirty public middle schools, and at five different shopping plazas, distributing IPCS flyers, speaking to students and parents/caregivers and collecting completed feedback surveys. IPCS founders have attended open houses, presented at various community meetings with affiliations to political and community leaders, and met formally with Council Members Cohen and Palma. Additional meetings are in the process of scheduling meetings with Council Member King, Assembly Member Gjonaj and Assembly Speaker Heastie.

b. Describe your initial assessment of parent interest in your proposed charter school to allow the school to reach its anticipated enrollment. Include in your response a description/analysis of any data you have collected to support the initial assessment of interest.

As of June 22nd, 441 individuals have completed the community feedback survey. The founders routinely review the survey data and respond to individuals who ask questions or offer suggestions. The team analyzes trends in responses and considers this feedback as it develops the school model. One hundred and ninety-two (192, 44% of total) were parents of potential students (who will be 13, 14, or 15 years old in 2016), while one hundred and ninety (190, 43%) were potential students. Almost all (92%) respondents agreed that the Northeast Bronx (Community School District 11) needs a new, high-quality public high school, one that teaches students to be independent thinkers who are able to consider all aspects of a problem so they can make the best possible decision (93%). Over 88% of respondents rated all aspects of school design, along with key elements, as important or very important. Most encouraging was the great interest in problem-based learning, social entrepreneurship and design thinking (92%, 89% and 91% respectively), high expectations (not surprisingly at 96%), literacy across the curriculum (95%) and the desire for academic supports (91%) and non-academic supports (89%). The team considered the less enthusiastic response (75%) to the initial extended school day plan of 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and plans to target this area with even more specificity in future forums with families. So far, subsequent conversations have yielded positive feedback about a modified, yet still extended school day of 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. with enrichment opportunities from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. We will continue to disaggregate the survey data by prospective students vs. parents to understand and address potential challenges. A few respondents expressed interest in parent involvement and adult learning opportunities. This motivates us to further enrich our approach in this realm. Student real-world and career-connected experiences were also interests expressed in the survey, which are closely aligned to our existing focus on social entrepreneurship, mentoring and internships. All of these issues, as well as the interest in having guidance counselors, arts, sports and technology, will be prioritized within the charter application.

V. Proposed Board Chair Signature and Date

The founders of Innovation Prep Charter School thank the New York State Education Department Charter School Office for its consideration. We look forward to submitting a full application in August.

Sincerely,



Sharon Stephens

Proposed Board Chair, Innovation Prep Charter School

Date: June 22, 2015

⁸ www.innovationprepcharter.org

⁹ <http://innovationprepcharter.org/community-feedback-survey/>

¹⁰ <http://innovationprepcharter.org/community-feedback-survey-spanish/>

¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/innovationprep>

¹² <https://twitter.com/innovationprep>

¹³ http://innovationprepcharter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016-Informational-Flyer_IPCS.png

¹⁴ http://innovationprepcharter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016-Informational-Flyer_Spanish_IPCS.png

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)
Sharon Stephens	[REDACTED]	Founding Principal, Madiba Prep, NYC DOE	Instruction, management, leadership, fundraising, charter schools, community relations	Trustee	Board Chair	3 years	Yes
Travis Brown	[REDACTED]	School Turnaround Specialist, Turnaround for Children	Instruction, management, leadership, special programs, community relations	Trustee	Trustee	2 years	Yes
Greg Lewin	[REDACTED]	Clinical System Engineer, New York-Presbyterian	Management, leaders and community relations	Trustee	Trustee	3 years	Yes
David Martin	[REDACTED] co	Assistant Principal, NYC DOE	Curriculum, instruction, Standards, Assessment, Management, Leadership, Community, Public Relations, Family Relations, Organizational Development, Specific	Employee	N/A	N/A	No
Anthony Thompson	[REDACTED]	Program Director for the New York Health Plan	Financial management, management, leadership	Trustee	Trustee	2 years	Yes
Max Mitchell	[REDACTED]	Senior Counsel, JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s Legal Discovery Management Group	Legal, financial management, real estate, fundraising, leadership, community relations	Trustee	Trustee	3 years	Yes
Nicole Payne	[REDACTED]	Senior Manager, Digital Partnerships for American Express	Management, leadership, financial management, community, public relations, family relations, specific school program focus	Trustee	Trustee	2 years	Yes
Allegra Sennett	[REDACTED] m	Corporate & Investment Bank Analyst for J.P. Morgan	Financial management, community, public relations, family relations, specific school program focus	Trustee	Trustee	3 years	Yes