



PHASE I: Letter of Intent

Last updated: 06/23/2015

Basic Contact and Application Information

Page 1

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

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

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

Proposed Charter School Name

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

School Name	Rochester Charter School for Applied Technologies
Grades Served (K-5, .6-8, 9-12, etc.) During Initial Term	K-6
Number of Students During Initial Term	560

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	Sarah Armignacco	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Public/Media Contact Person			

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

<http://www.rochcsat.com/>

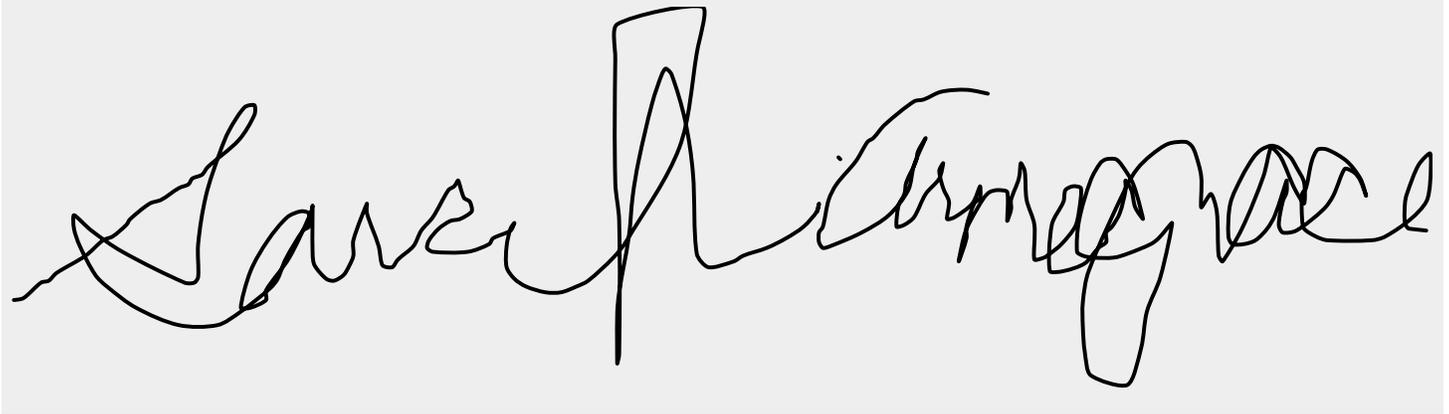
Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s), such as a charter or educational management company or a university, academic program partner, or whole school change partner.

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

Proposed Management Company	(No response)
Partner Organization 1	(No response)
Partner Organization 2	(No response)

Proposed Board Chair Signature

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

A large, handwritten signature in black ink on a light gray background. The signature is cursive and appears to read "David R. Thompson".

Date

2015/06/23

Thank you for completing this form.

I. Applicant Information

- a. **Applicant Group Information:** Please see Table 1 in Attachment A.
- b. **Applicant Group Roles and Experiences:** Please see Table 1 in Attachment A.
- c. **Public Contact:** Sarah Armignacco is the proposed Board Chair and can be reached by phone at 585.328.2550 (x6013) or by email at sarah.armignacco@wegmans.com.
- d. **Application History:** This is the first time that each member of the applicant group has applied to open a charter school, both in New York State and elsewhere.

II. Proposed Charter School Information

- a. **Proposed School Name:** Rochester Charter School for Applied Technologies (RCSAT).
- b. **Proposed School Location:** City of Rochester. We are considering several buildings, including 180 Raines Park, Rochester, New York 14613.
- c. **Planned Grades and Enrollment:** RCSAT will serve students in grades kindergarten through eight; however, RCSAT will grow to grades K-6 during the initial charter term. We will begin year one with 190 students: 66 in kindergarten, 62 in first grade, and 62 in second grade, with approximately 20-22 students per class. We will add an additional class of 65 or 100 kindergarten students each year thereafter until we reach capacity at grade six during the initial charter term. Following is our projected enrollment:

Projected Enrollment Table Over the Charter Term						
Grades	Ages	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
K	4-5	66	65	100	100	100
1st	5-6	62	64	75	100	100
2nd	6-7	62	60	65	75	100
3rd	7-8		60	60	65	75
4th	8-9			60	60	65
5th	9-10				60	60
6th	10-11					60
Totals		190	249	360	460	560

- d. **Proposed Management and/or Partner Organizations:** Not applicable.
- e. **Proposed School Mission:** The mission of RCSAT is to provide a world-class education to Rochester students so that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in both college and family sustaining careers.
- f. **School Overview:** RCSAT will be modeled upon the successful work of the Charter School for Applied Technologies in Buffalo, New York. In order to ensure successful implementation and fidelity to the CSAT model, we will continue to work closely with the CSAT team, particularly in our first charter term. Since we will operate as a separate entity with a separate board, we are currently engaged with CSAT in defining a relationship that will outline the specific ways in which our schools will work together to ensure success in Rochester. The goal of RCSAT will be to ensure that all students perform at or above grade level in all core subject areas when they enter high school, so that they are on track and prepared to graduate with a Regents diploma. We will expose and engage students of all ages with a rich variety of college and career opportunities that will ultimately land them in family sustaining careers and foster future leadership of the Western New York region. To do so, we will embrace the following key design elements, which are essential to our academic program:
 - 1. **A Focus on Learning and Standards Mastery:** RCSAT will not rely on compliance with a specific way of delivering instruction (a focus on teaching) and/or using only a specific set of

materials/programs in order to ensure progress. Instead, the school will rely on analyzing the outcomes (learning) to select a great variety of inputs (teaching). At the outset of each year, grade level teams will review the essential standards and build a curriculum. We will incorporate career and technology into the curriculum, by using them as a means to teach the content and grade level standards, as aligned to the NYSCCLS. The teams will then agree on how students will demonstrate mastery for each standard and ensure a common understanding of what evidence will be required. From there, individual teachers will be allowed a great deal of latitude in the delivery of instruction, provided that all techniques and methods are scrutinized once assessment data is available. In other words, the effective practices are not predetermined; rather, they become evident upon data analysis. Best practices are then shared amongst grade level teams and school wide, as appropriate. In order to glean these trends in an expedient manner, the entire school will use eDoctrina® software, which was developed at CSAT and is now used at schools throughout the country. This real time data software system builds the capacity of teaching teams to engage in deep analysis of achievement data on a daily basis. A “no zero policy” and mastery based approach to learning ensures that students are provided several opportunities throughout the year to demonstrate mastery of standards, and teachers are expected to reteach the material until students have done so.

2. **Professional Development in the Context of Teamwork:** The school will be comprised of highly effective same-grade level teams in grades K-6 and subject area teams in grades 7-8, who will meet daily and perform as professional learning teams. Following a focus on learning, teachers will be empowered to request professional development help at the moment they identify an area of need rather than being mandated to participate in imposed focus on teaching experiences. Teachers will receive the career development, resources, and opportunities that talented professionals deserve. As such, they are empowered to take ownership of student learning and their own development, delivering outcomes and solving problems as needed. Our most talented teachers will work with administrators to design and implement professional development and support the induction and development of new teachers.
3. **School to Career Focus:** We believe that every one of our students, regardless of his/her academic performance, socioeconomic standing, or personal goals, is headed for the “World of Work.” While RCSAT will be a K-8 program, the ultimate goal is for the school to serve students in grades K-12. To this end, we will build our K-8 programming in such a way that it prepares and supports students for the rigorous high school program implemented at CSAT. Some may enter the workplace after receiving a diploma from RCSAT, while others will do so after college. Either way, our students will need to be armed with the skills and knowledge that will allow them to succeed during high school and beyond. And, just like CSAT, our students will embrace the motto that “Every day is career day.” From day one, our students will be introduced to professionals from every field imaginable. For our students in grades kindergarten through two, this exposure may include class visits with area professionals or field trips highlighting various opportunities throughout the community. We will ensure that these touchpoints are not merely one off experiences for students; moreover, we will weave them into our curriculum and use them as another tool to engage students, in a way that is aligned to the NYSCCLS and curriculum.
- g. **Target Population/Community to be Served:** RCSAT will recruit and serve students from the RCSD, which has the highest poverty rate among the NYS Big 5 districts. Twenty-two percent of schools in the RCSD have a poverty rate of 90% or higher¹. The current student population in the RCSD² is as follows: 60.1% African American/Black, 25.6% Hispanic, 10.2% White, and 4.1% Asian/Native American/East Indian/Other; 84% eligible for free/reduced-price lunch; 16.5% with special needs, and

¹ <http://www.rcsdk12.org/domain/8>

² <http://www.rcsdk12.org/domain/8>

10% with limited English proficiency; and 87 different languages are spoken. The RCSD has a graduation rate of 43%, and of 54 schools, only nine are in good standing, 29 are focus schools, and 16 are priority schools. Furthermore, the 2013-2014 State tests³ for students in grades three through eight indicate that overall proficiency, or students who scored at levels three and four, is 5% in ELA and 7% in mathematics.

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

Recruitment and Enrollment

Our recruitment efforts will be directed towards students who reside in the RCSD and will meet or exceed the proportions of target populations in the district, which are 10% ELL, 16.5% special education, and 84% FRPL. To apply, families will need to complete an application, which will be identical to the one used at CSAT, with a few minor changes to align with the Rochester community. Student enrollment will be determined through a lottery to the extent that the number of applicants exceeds the number of seats.

- a. **Strategies to attract and recruit students identified in the school's mission:** We have, and will continue, to communicate information about our program to a broad cross-section of the community in accessible formats and languages with local media outlets, including radio stations, news organizations, and local parent websites, and social media. We will continue to partner with local religious groups, community centers, and early childhood centers, as well as state and local officials to notify them of our program and means for obtaining further information for interested families.
- b. **Strategies to attract and recruit students with disabilities:** In order to attract and recruit students with disabilities, we will continue to reach out to organizations and agencies serving children with special needs and their families, such as Hillside Children's Center and EnCompass: Resources for Learning, to let them know we will have staff and resources available to meet the needs of students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans (504 Plans).
- c. **Strategies to attract and recruit English language learners:** To reach families with limited English proficiency, we will translate materials into the most commonly spoken languages by immigrant and refugee families in the area and reach out to local refugee organizations, such as Catholic Family Center's Refuge and the Somali Center to ensure linguistic diversity.
- d. **Strategies to attract and recruit students eligible for the FRPL program:** In order to ensure that we reach students who qualify for the FRPL program or whose families may be less informed about available school options, we will conduct direct outreach efforts, including going to door-to-door in high poverty neighborhoods throughout Rochester, such as the Upper Falls, Marketview Heights, Edgerton, Brown Square, and JOSANA neighborhoods, to notify parents about our program. We will continue to partner with early childhood centers that serve students in high poverty neighborhoods as well.

Please see the Public Outreach section below for further details around our outreach and engagement efforts to date.

Student Retention

The crux of our retention plan will be effective family engagement and communication, as we know that effective communication with parents will be essential to assessing their satisfaction with our school, addressing any concerns, and keeping them abreast of student progress.

- a. **Strategies to retain students identified in the school's mission:** We will use the following strategies to increase family engagement and retention: parent association membership and meetings; social events, such as breakfasts, spaghetti dinners, potlucks, and ice cream socials; choosing an accessible

³ <http://data.nysed.gov/reportcard.php?instid=80000050065&year=2013&createreport=1&38ELA=1&38MATH=1&48SCI=1>

location for the school, and assisting with transportation concerns where necessary; and parent satisfaction surveys, inquiring about "intent to return," and reasons behind a parent's decision to do so (both positive and negative). We will use the following strategies to ensure effective, personalized, and strategic parent communication: parent orientation at the outset of the year that explains our handbook, student and family expectations, and introduces families to the staff and each other; contracts with parents at the outset of each year, explaining what families are expected to assist students with in order to yield greatest outcomes for performance (i.e. homework help, reading with child for 20 minutes, etc.); ongoing communication from our principal, notifying parents about upcoming important events and school expectations; and regular calls home to the parent, informing them of student progress (both positive and areas of growth).

- b. **Strategies to retain students with disabilities:** We will make a particular effort to communicate regularly with families of our students with IEPs, so that they are aware of the programming and services that the student receives and feel comfortable addressing any student needs and progress inside and outside of school.
- c. **Strategies to retain English language learners:** In order to retain ELL students, RCSAT will engage an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teacher who will work with staff to provide appropriate instruction to students, as well as work one-on-one or in small groups to help students acquire English. To the extent possible, communications with families will be in the home language. We will have translators available for parent conferences and school events, so that ELL students and families can be full participants in the RCSAT experience.
- d. **Strategies to retain students eligible for the FRPL program:** In order to retain students who qualify for the FRPL program, or whose families may be less informed about available school options, we will provide wraparound services to address student needs, including a full time nurse and a social worker. We will also hire a family liaison that will monitor school communication with parents and families to make sure that parents are informed about all available opportunities and resources for their child at the school and within the greater community.

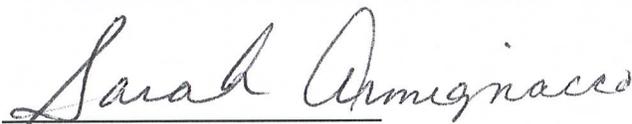
IV. Public Outreach

- a. The RCSAT applicant group has conducted community outreach in order to understand the needs of the community, gauge support for the school proposal, and elicit feedback to enhance school design. Specifically, the RCSAT team has held information sessions, attended community events, visited community organizations and met with various community and business leaders. A detailed list of the outreach efforts is included below, and several of the outreach efforts were conducted in collaboration with other proposed charter elementary schools (Exploration and Exalt):
 - i. **May - June 2015:** Information about RCSAT and upcoming information sessions was posted on the following websites: Craigslist.com, RochesterHomePage.net, Eventbrite, Eventful, Catholiccourier.com, WHEC, RocParent.com, and Facebook.com. The following program websites were also created: <http://e3rochester.org/CSAT> and <http://www.rochestercsat.org/>. A detailed list of website links and sample postings are available upon request.
 - ii. **June 8, 2015:** The RCSAT team distributed a letter and a detailed flyer, which described the proposed school model and upcoming community outreach events, to 20 Rochester news outlets, 10 different City and State officials, 29 community organizations, seven local colleges and universities, five faith based organizations, and 12 existing charter schools and asked them to share the information with their constituents and solicit feedback. The letter and a detailed list of recipients are available upon request.
 - iii. **June 2015:** The RCSAT team held seven information sessions, open to the public, at the

following dates and locations: (1) Monday, June 8, 2015, 5:30 pm – 6:45 pm, Phillis Wheatley Community Library, 33 Dr. Samuel McCree Way, Rochester, NY; (2) Wednesday, June 10, 2015, 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm, Monroe Branch Library, 809 Monroe Avenue, Rochester, NY; (3) Monday, June 15, 2015, 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm, Lincoln Branch Library, Community Room, 851 Joseph Avenue Rochester, NY; (4) Monday, June 15, 2015, 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm, Lyell Branch Library, Community Room, 956 Lyell Avenue Rochester, NY; (5) Wednesday, June 17, 2015, 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm, Maplewood Community Library, Community Room, 1111 Dewey Avenue, Rochester, NY; (6) Wednesday, June 17, 2015, 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm, Sully Branch Library, Community Room, 530 Webster Avenue, Rochester, NY; (7) Saturday, June 20, 2015, 1:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m., Kate Gleason Auditorium, Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County, 115 South Avenue, Rochester, NY. Notice of these meetings was provided to the public on June 8, 2015. Separate notice⁴ was provided for the meeting at the Central Library on June 20, 2015.

- iv. **May – June 2015:** The RCSAT outreach team visited various locations throughout the community to speak with parents of Rochester school-aged children, gather input on their educational interests, share a synopsis of the proposed charter school, and answer questions about the school, on the following dates: (1) May 27, 2015: R Community Bikes, 226 Hudson Avenue, Rochester, NY; (2) May 27, 2015: ABC Head Start Recruitment Fair, 1150 Hudson Avenue, Rochester, NY; (3) May 30, 2015: The Show on Monroe, a community gathering on Monroe Avenue in Rochester, NY; (4) June 5, 2015: Discovery Charter School's Community Circle, 133 Hoover Drive, Rochester, NY; (5) June 5, 2015: Monroe County Department of Human Services, 111 Westfall Road, Rochester, NY; (6) June 6, 2015: The Conkey Park Community Walk and surrounding areas; (7) June 10, 2015: R Community Bikes at 226 Hudson Avenue, Rochester, NY; (8) June 11, 2015: Monroe County Department of Human Services, 691 St. Paul Boulevard, Rochester, NY; (9) June 11, 2015: ABC Head Start Fun Day at 1150 Hudson Avenue, Rochester, NY; (10) June 13, 2015: The Juneteenth Celebration at Susan B. Anthony Park; (11) June 18, 2015: The Discovery Charter School Spring Exhibition, 133 Hoover Drive, Rochester, NY.
- b. To assess parent interest for RCSAT, the applicant group shared an overview document and a petition, which outlined program and timeline details, with parents residing in our target community. Out of 408 signatures in total, all signatures indicated support for our program; 210 of the signatures were from parents of school-aged children; and 348 represent those who reside in the target community. 183 signatures represented parents who are both supportive of our program and reside in the target community, and these parents have a total of 323 school-aged children. During our community outreach efforts, families voiced overwhelming support for more high performing charter schools in Rochester and were very interested in the career focus provided at RCSAT. In addition to our ongoing outreach efforts, we are planning to distribute parent surveys and hold parent focus groups throughout July and August of 2015, in order to continue to solicit more specific feedback on our program.

V. Proposed Board Chair Signature and Date

 6/22/15

⁴<http://www.rochestercitynewspaper.com/rochester/LocationEvents?type=past&oid=2134271>

