



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	South Bronx Community Charter High School
Grades Served (K-5, .6-8, 9-12, etc.) During Initial Term	9-12
Number of Students During Initial Term	425

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	Alvarez Symonette	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Public/Media Contact Person	John Clemente	917-553-6372	southbronxcchs@gmail.com

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

<https://sbcchs.wordpress.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).



Date

2015/06/23

Thank you for completing this form.

Letter of Intent Draft 2.0

I. Applicant Group Information: *See Table 1*

c. Public Contact: John Clemente southbronxcchs@gmail.com

d. Application History: Letter of Intent submitted in the first round of 2015.

II. Proposed Charter School Information

a. Proposed School Name: South Bronx Community Charter High School (SBCCHS)

b. Proposed School Location: Community School District (CSD) 7. SBCCHS is working with appropriate NYCDOE offices to identify prospective space.

c. Planned Enrollment in Each Year of the Proposed Charter Term*:

Grade	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
9th	110	110	110	110	110
10th		110	110	110	110
11th			105	105	105
12th				100	100
TOTAL	110	220	325	425	425

*Accounting for typical trends of student attrition in CSD 7, SBCCHS will backfill through the 10th grade.

d. Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s): SBCCHS shares many of the same model elements as the EPIC Network, a set of three district high schools that focus on personalized learning, reflective professional practice, and student-centered culture. Staff of the proposed school would engage in shared professional learning with EPIC educators.

e. Proposed School Mission: SBCCHS promotes student excellence through an emphasis on academic, interpersonal and professional skills in a supportive and responsive learning environment. SBCCHS students graduate with a positive sense of self, ready to design and realize their futures in college, community, and career.

f. School Overview: Inspired by local and national movements to address disparities in student outcomes, like the New York City Young Men's Initiative and My Brother's Keeper, SBCCHS envisions a future where all young men and women are achieving high levels of academic success. SBCCHS' combination of competency-based learning, supportive staffing, cultural responsiveness, and adaptive operations promotes student excellence and empowerment.

Competency-Based Learning. SBCCHS's competency-based approach focuses on clear, actionable learning targets, such as the ability to read analytically and practice social responsibility. These competencies demonstrate academic, personal and professional readiness. Competencies are aligned to the Common Core and are assessed through students' fulfillment of performance tasks—rigorous and engaging projects. SBCCHS teachers use technology to personalize learning and support students' movement at their own pace. Through common planning time and a team approach to teaching and learning, teachers are able to share focus on a common set of competencies. This provides students multiple opportunities to practice and master core critical thinking, problem solving, writing and social skills across subjects. SBCCHS draws on the demonstrated success of established competency-based programs, such as Boston

Day and Evening Academy, in Massachusetts, which enrolls underserved students and achieves excellence as measured by state exams and college attendance.¹

Supportive Staffing. Recent and compelling research indicates that social and emotional learning complementing a rigorous academic program is critical for student success in college and beyond.² SBCCHS uses a robust staffing plan that provides two adults in each classroom and allows for an expanded school day. *Learning coaches* — staff with youth development expertise—work alongside teachers to provide one-on-one conferencing, small group tutoring and progress monitoring. Learning coaches support students’ social and emotional skill development through facilitation of SBCCHS’ advisory focused on college, career and leadership development. They impact total learning time in and out of the classroom through relationships with students that are positive and supportive beyond the four walls of a class. This staffing model also increases the collaborative planning time available to content teachers.

Cultural Responsiveness. Meaningful engagement is the key to student retention.³ SBCCHS uses culturally responsive education practices to promote students’ sense of belonging, positive school culture and attendance. Culturally responsive education is predicated on the notion that students achieve when they are valued and encouraged to express their identities. At SBCCHS, this includes incorporating student choice and voice in curriculum; examining personal identity through a weekly rites-of-passage program that is facilitated by learning coaches; holding students accountable through restorative practices as an alternative to zero-tolerance discipline; and hiring staff from, and reflective of the community.

Adaptive School Operations and Management. SBCCHS is designed to be an adaptive learning environment. SBCCHS adheres to the principles of innovative design: using data and feedback from students to continually refine our practices for improvement. At SBCCHS, staff will conduct improvement cycles—the regular testing of practices informed by data collection and analysis. Likewise, staff and leadership are expected to reflect on and improve their practices in intentional, collaborative and continuous ways. A growing network of high performing charter schools, including Summit Public Schools in California, employ this approach to ensure a culture of adult learning that is attuned to students’ needs.⁴

g. Target Population/Community Served: By targeting CSD 7, SBCCHS seeks to recruit, enroll and serve some of the highest needs students in NYC. Currently, only 50% of students in the district graduate from high school and nearly 50% of the population lives below the poverty line. Twenty-one percent of students are classified with disabilities and 17% are English Language Learners. The neighborhoods that make up CSD 7—Mott Haven and Melrose—are predominantly Latino (69.5%) and African American (27%). There are very limited high-quality high school options in the community as evidenced by local graduation rates. In CSD 7, only 6 of 32 high schools graduate 75% or more of their students and nearly two-thirds have college

¹ http://www.studentsatthecenter.org/sites/scl.dl-dev.com/files/field_attach_file/AligningCompetencies_112812.pdf

² <http://mindsetonline.com/>

³ http://www.studentsatthecenter.org/sites/scl.dl-dev.com/files/Motivation%20Engagement%20Student%20Voice_0.pdf

⁴ <http://www.summitps.org/approach/culture-of-innovation>

readiness rates of 30% or less, based on student performance on Regents exams. We will target incoming 9th graders from local neighborhood schools and ensure that supports are in place for students who are below grade level as well as English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities.

h. Replication of High Quality School Models SBCCHS is not a replication, but draws on many elements of the EPIC Network, a set of public district high schools.

III. Enrollment and Retention

Recruitment Strategies

SBCCHS plans to meet or exceed CSD 7 enrollment targets for English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, and Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Price Lunch (16.4%, 15.4%, and 90.4% respectively, based on school size). Our competency-based, personalized model is designed to serve high-needs students with robust staffing supports, tutoring, social emotional learning, extended learning opportunities, and individualized pacing. Our community engagement will continue to target feeder middle schools. To date, we have developed relationships with school leaders at PS 5, Girls Prep, Mott Haven Academy and MS 301. We will employ a multi-pronged strategy to welcome families to SBCCHS including family-friendly info sessions (with child-care provided); student-led sessions (utilizing junior board members); and direct door-to-door outreach in public housing developments. SBCCHS will continue to work with community-based organizations (CBOs), public housing tenant associations, faith-based organizations and other youth and family-serving providers to support these efforts. A detailed outline of our recruitment strategy for each student population follows below.

English Language Learners (ELLs): We have engaged in significant, dedicated outreach to ELLs with a particular emphasis on high needs sub-populations including students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) and recently arrived, undocumented students. Safe Passage and the Unaccompanied Minors Program at Catholic Charities, which serve undocumented youth in the South Bronx, have already committed to referring students to our school. We will continue to conduct multilingual outreach in feeder middle schools with marketing materials translated into Spanish and hold bilingual information sessions at different times and in various accessible public locations in the community.

Students with Disabilities (SWDs): SBCCHS will continue to engage with middle school guidance counselors and special education teachers in CSD 7 to explain our robust support model for SWDs. To date, both Mott Haven Academy, a charter elementary in CSD 7, and St. Dominic's Home which serves foster children, many of whom require special education services, have agreed to refer students. We will also hold advertised information sessions directly with parents, similar to sessions we have already conducted with Mott Haven Academy alumni and the PS 5 parent community. We will also work with the Committee on Special Education in CSD 7 to inform them of our capacity to meet the needs of SWDs.

Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL): Because over 90% of students in CSD 7 qualify for free or reduced price lunch, the majority of community engagement will be focused in the district. We will reach out to local homeless shelters and food pantries, and build

on connections made to community organizers working with local tenant associations through Bronx Defenders. We will conduct door-to-door canvassing with student ambassadors from our junior board and continue to engage in community events like Family Day at PS 5.

Retention Strategies

SBCCHS's student-centered approach will serve those who are traditionally considered at-risk of academic failure, including ELLs, SWDs and students from low-income households. In SBCCHS' competency-based environment, students will have multiple opportunities to encounter, demonstrate and master target skills with support from teachers and learning coaches. Flexible, personalized schedules ensure that students receive support through individual and group direct instruction, academic intervention software and extended learning opportunities. Each learning coach, supported by a social worker, will work alongside a teacher to advise a small group of students, build close relationships, monitor progress and engage in ongoing family communication. Our rites of passage program will increase belonging and ultimately academic achievement for students.

English Language Learners (ELLs): SBCCHS' project-based approach provides both cooperative learning and individualized support to boost academic achievement for ELLs. We will hire bilingual learning coaches and an ELL learning specialist to support general education teachers to employ successful ELL strategies including home language support and sheltered content instruction (SIOP). Additionally, all SBCCHS teachers will integrate literacy across the curriculum.

Students with Disabilities (SWDs): Our personalized, competency-based model provides all students with personalized learning plans so SWDs will not feel singled out or segregated. SBCCHS uses a rigorous Response To Intervention (RTI) model and all students have access to differentiated supports including assistive technology, learning coaches, targeted support and tutoring. In addition to these robust supports, students with disabilities will receive services from certified special education teachers. We will prioritize building trust with families of SWDs and educating them on the benefits of these supports.

Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Price Lunch: SBCCHS will provide early college and workplace learning opportunities that will dramatically increase first generation college-going students' exposure to college and career rigor. Learning coaches, supervised by a social worker, will develop close connections to students who may be facing challenging personal circumstances (i.e., shelters, living with relatives, interim housing situations, etc.) and connect them with local services. After-school programs will support additional learning time and opportunities for all students while meeting the needs of working families.

IV. Public Outreach and Community Support

Outreach

The SBCCHS applicant group has conducted broad public outreach to students, families, and other stakeholders in CSD 7.

Parents: Between March 2015 and June 2015, members of the SBCCHS applicant group engaged with and collected over 100 surveys from parents and families of South Bronx middle

school students. Applicant group members attended local parent teacher conference nights and family day and alumni events to meet, engage and consult prospective SBCCHS families about their wants and needs. Applicant group members conducted information sessions and created awareness at area schools, including PS 5, MS 301, Mott Haven Academy, and Girls Prep Charter Middle School, as well as with local residents from Governor Morris Public Housing to discuss SBCCHS.

Students: Between March and June of 2015, over 100 students and youth provided feedback on SBCCHS's model through focus groups, school design sessions and surveys at Montefiore Clinic, Mott Haven Library, Haven Academy, PS 5 and Girl's Prep Middle School. In summary, students unanimously agreed that a new school option is needed in the South Bronx. More than half of students surveyed responded that it was "very important" for students to be able to move at their own pace, have a clear understanding of their progress and access to an advisor who can provide personalized support. In addition, students in focus groups and design sessions emphasized the importance of caring and competent adult staff.

Community Based Organizations (CBOs): Members of the SBCCHS applicant group have collaborated with CBOs in capacities ranging from "thought partner" to co-convenor of community engagement events. Organizations include: Hunts Point Alliance, the Children's Defense Fund, Bronx Defenders, Mercy Center, East Side Settlement House, SoBRO, Catholic Charities, Montefiore Clinic, St. Dominic's Home, the Safe Passage Project, and others. Collectively, they have provided access to their respective clients and contacts. Representatives advised attending to the unmet needs of ELLs and other students who are at significant risk of dropping out.

Elected Officials: Members of the applicant group have engaged local elected officials and their staff including: Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., Councilman Fernando Cabrera, Assemblyman Marcos Crespo, and Councilman Ritchie Torres. Councilman Torres and Assemblyman Crespo have written letters of support.

Web Outreach: SBCCHS maintains a website and Facebook page that openly invites parent, student and community stakeholder feedback.

Initial Assessment of Parent Interest: An analysis of data from 110 parent and family surveys reveals that: 100% of parents believe that South Bronx (CSD 7) needs a new high school option; and more than 97% consider the distinctive elements of the SBCCHS model (its student supports, attention to social-emotional needs; alternatives to suspension; and unique staffing approach) as "important" to "very important." Many parents indicated that culturally competent, bilingual staff was a high priority. Consequently, the overwhelming support from prospective families for key elements of the SBCCHS suggests strong backing for our school.

V. Proposed Board Chair Signature and Date

Proposed Board Chair: Alvarez Symonette

 _____ Signature	 6/23/15 _____ Date
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TABLE 1: APPLICANT GROUP INFORM

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

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)
Michael Busch	[REDACTED]	The City University of New York	development and retention Institutional Partnerships (Education Plan + Community Engagement)	Trustee
Harvey Chism	[REDACTED]	NYC Department of Education	leadership and youth workforce development programs (Education Plan)	Advisory
John Clemente	[REDACTED]	NYC Department of Education	technology, teacher development, curriculum and assessment (Education Plan)	Prospective Employee
Kate del Priore	[REDACTED]	Schools That Can	collaboration, Nonprofit management (Fiscal and Organizational Management)	Trustee
Natalie Ferrell	[REDACTED]	NYC Department of Education	New school design, youth development, teacher development (Education Plan)	Prospective Employee
Melanie Hartzog	[REDACTED]	Children's Defense Fund	Nonprofit Mgt. and Government (Fiscal and Organizational Management)	Trustee

Jane Higgins	[REDACTED]	New York City Writing Project	Curriculum development, teacher development (Education Plan)	Trustee
Paul Ortiz	[REDACTED]	JASA (Jewish Association Serving the Aging)	family/personal social services (Community Relations and Institutional Partnerships)	Trustee
Alvarez Symonette	[REDACTED]	The Continental Grain Company	profit leadership, finance, asset mangement (Fiscal and Organizational Management)	Trustee

ATION**Trustees**

PROPOSED POSITION ON THE BOARD (e.g., officer, trustee, or constituent representative)	LENGTH OF INITIAL TERM	VOTING MEMBER (YES OR NO)
Trustee	3 years	Y
N/A		N
N/A		N
Trustee	3 years	Y
N/A		N
Trustee	3 years	Y

Trustee	3 years	Y
Trustee	3 years	Y
President/Chair	3 years	Y