

Letter of Intent: Applicant and Media Contact Form

Created Friday, February 01, 2013

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All applicants seeking to establish a charter school authorized by the Board of Regents to open in 2014 must submit a Letter of Intent to Apply, which requires completion of this applicant and media contact form, and an upload of your 5 page Letter of Intent to Apply as outlined on pages 14 of the 2013 RFP and Application Kit. Please submit these tasks by 5:00 PM on February 1, 2013. Applicants who do not submit a complete Letter of Intent to Apply by this deadline will not be permitted to submit a Full Application.

a. 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).

Rosalyn Yalow Academy Charter School

Whether submitting an application in Round 1 or Round 2, all new charter school applicants seeking public space in New York City must fill out a "Request for DOE Space" by January 31, 2013. The Request Form can be found at <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dHNTYVFueWd4RWhmLW5CNHBqV>

b. Preferred school location.

Select the preferred geographical area on the left and then select the preferred school district or community school district on the right.

NYC CSD-Bronx: CSD 10

Select a second geographical area on left and then select the school district or community school district on right.

None

If necessary, select a third geographical area on left and then select the school district or community school district on right.

None

c. Applicant(s) information, including mailing address, phone number, and email address, and information establishing that the applicant(s) is a parent, teacher, school administrator or community resident.

(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 | Street Address, City, State, Zip |
|----------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Lead Applicant | Alec H. Diacou | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |

Co-Applicant

As the Lead Applicant(s), I (we) can best be described as a:

(Multiple responses permitted)

- Community Resident

d. Media Contact: please provide a phone number and/or email address to which public inquires about the proposed charter school may be addressed.

| | First and Last Name | Best Phone Number (###-###-####) | Email Address | URL (type web address or the word "none") |
|---------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Media Contact | Alec H. Diacou | 718-796-9895 | alecdiacou@me.com | none |

e. Planned grades and enrollment in each year of the proposed charter term.

| | Ages (or age ranges) | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | 2017-2018 | 2018-2019 |
|----------|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| K | 5-6 | 112 | 52 | 84 | 84 | 84 |
| 1st | 6-7 | 84 | 112 | 84 | 84 | 84 |
| 2nd | 7-8 | 0 | 84 | 112 | 84 | 84 |
| 3rd | 8-9 | 0 | 0 | 84 | 112 | 84 |
| 4th | 9-10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 84 | 112 |
| 5th | 10-11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 84 |
| 6th | 11-12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7th | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8th | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9th | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10th | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11th | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12th | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ungraded | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | | 196 | 248 | 364 | 448 | 532 |

f. 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 36-39 of the application kit for definitions and guidance as only "significant" partnerships should be listed here).

| | |
|--|------|
| f. 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. Proposed Management Company | none |
| f. 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. Partner Organization 1 | none |
| f. 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. Partner Organization 2 | none |

Thank you for completing the Applicant and Media Contact Form which will be duplicative of some information contained in your letter of intent. Having information in this form allows the Department to merge applicant contact information into our existing data system. Please proceed to upload your signed and dated 5 page Letter of Intent to Apply.

New York State Education Department
Charter School Office
89 Washington Avenue, Room 471 EBA
Albany, New York 12234

Letter of Intent: Rosalyn Yalow Academy Charter School

This letter of intent (LOI) is being submitted in response to the Request for Proposals to Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents (RFP) contained in the 2013 Charter Application Kit, which was issued in final form by the New York State Education Department in January 2013. As required by the RFP, this LOI includes certain requested information relating to (i) applicant information, (ii) proposed charter school information, (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, and (iv) Public Outreach and Community Support. All are set out under the related headings below.

I. Applicant Information

- a. Applicant information: The lead applicant is Alec Diacou, a resident of Community School District 10, Bronx, NY (District 10) and a parent of children who went through the District 10 public school system. His mailing address is [REDACTED], his telephone number is 718-796-9895, and his email address is alecdiacou@me.com. Additional applicants include parents Robert Brewster, [REDACTED], telephone [REDACTED], and Donna Demetri Friedman, [REDACTED].
- b. Media contact: Mr. Diacou by email at alecdiacou@me.com or telephone, 718-796-9895.
- c. Applicant group and relevant experience and skills: The application is being submitted by Mr. Diacou, Mr. Brewster, and Ms. Friedman.

Mr. Diacou's relevant experience and skills include: (i) his training in the economics of education; (ii) his work serving as financial advisor to the State of Connecticut for alternative student loans and developing financing programs for various public entities; (iii) his work as head of the not-for-profit organization "Yes the Bronx, Inc," which runs a campaign to provide a unifying, iconic rallying point that will replace outmoded negative stereotypes of the Bronx with a universally understood positive image and message; and (iv) his experience as a parent of three children who grew up and attended New York City public schools, including one in District 10. Mr. Diacou also trained under Nobel Laureates Milton Friedman, the father of the charter school movement, and James Heckman, the leading researcher on early childhood education.

Robert M. Brewster, LCSW, has been the Executive Director of Riverdale Mental Health Association (RMHA), Bronx, NY since 2006. He has four children, ages 12 to 26, the eldest of whom is a special education teacher and guidance counselor at the Celia Cruz High School of Music in the Bronx. Since 1986, Mr. Brewster has served in various capacities at RMHA, including the primary therapist for child, adolescent, and adult patients.

Donna Demetri Friedman, PhD, LCSW-R, is a researcher and visiting faculty member at the

N.Y. State Psychiatric Institute, Columbia University, and a Director/Principal Investigator at the Riverdale Mental Health Association, Chances for Children Institute, which provides an evidence-based video intervention to at-risk families and their young children. Her 14-year-old daughter attends the Horace Mann School in the Bronx District 10. Her clinical experience includes work as a therapist at Columbia University, RMHA, and in private practice.

d. Proposed members the school's initial Board of Trustees: In addition to Alec Diacou, the initial Board of Trustees will include the following individuals:

John W. Carr, a Manhattan resident and recently retired partner from the prominent New York law firm Simpson Thatcher & Bartlett LLP. Mr. Carr is a product of the Chicago inner city public schools before attending high school at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools. He has two daughters, age 8 and 12, attending the Brearley School, and he has been a member of the Board of Trustees of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY, for over a decade. For several years he served on the board of the New York City Outward Bound Center.

Dr. Sandra Hayes is Professor of Mathematics at The City College of the City University of New York and Visiting Scholar at the Graduate Center of CUNY. She received a German Fulbright and has held positions as Professor of Mathematics at the Technical University of Munich, in Germany, as well as Visiting Professorships at the University of Angers, in France, and the University of Bologna, in Italy. Dr. Hayes actively promotes women's issues, including as a delegate to the U.N. Sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2007 and 2008.

Michael Rosen is an international finance and technology executive, having worked at a variety of financial service and consulting firms throughout the world, including as director of Customer Delivery Services for the Americas at Murex, a derivatives software firm, as well as positions at Barclays, Accenture, and Procter & Gamble. He provides business acumen, a global worldview, and a passion for improving education. Mr. Rosen has a BS in Computer Science from Indiana University, and an MBA in Economics and Finance from the University of Chicago.

Shirley Saunders is a Bronx resident and former senior staff assistant for Bronx Congressman Engel. Ms. Saunders now serves as Deputy City Clerk for the Borough of the Bronx. She has also been Parent Association President for P.S. 153, a founding mother of Jack & Jill of America Inc., Bronx Chapter, and an active member of Sister to Sister: One in The Spirit, which focuses on empowering women.

William Scribner, a resident of District 10 and founder of Bronx Arts Ensemble in 1972, is a bassoonist who performs with the New York Philharmonic, Metropolitan Opera, Brooklyn Philharmonic, New Jersey Symphony, American Symphony Orchestra, and on Broadway. The Ensemble has arts, dance, drama, and music programs in 65 Bronx schools. Mr. Scribner has been a faculty member at the University of Connecticut, Queens College, Rutgers University, and the Blooming House of Music. He was a board member of the Bronx Council of the Arts and is now a director of the Hostos Community College Foundation, CUNY.

Benjamin Yalow, a Bronx resident of District 10, is the son of Rosalyn Yalow and currently serves as Comptroller, Chicon 7 Conference. As Vice President of the Rosalyn S. Yalow Foundation, he was responsible for grant decisions, fund solicitations, and IT management. He has served on the Board of Directors of three non-profit organizations.

e. Replication or Network Information: The proposed charter school is not a replication of another school model and is not intended to be part of a network. No member of the applicant

group sits on the Board of Trustees of an existing charter school, and none are participating in the submission of other applications during the current application round.

f. Application History: A letter of intent for the Yalow Academy was submitted by the lead applicant in January 2012, but Mr. Diacou decided to delay proceeding with the full application for one year. No member of the founding group has ever applied to Board of Regents or any other charter entity to open this school or any other school, in or outside of New York State.

II. Proposed Charter School Information

a. Proposed school name: Rosalyn Yalow Academy, after Dr. Yalow (1921-2011), a nuclear physicist and second woman to win the Nobel Prize in Medicine (1977). Dr. Yalow was a lifelong resident of the Bronx, raising two children in District 10, where at the Bronx VA hospital she crafted her Nobel award-winning research in radioimmunoassay, a method initially used to measure insulin in the blood and expanded to cover many substances of biologic interest.

b. Proposed school location: District 10 at a location to be identified once the charter is awarded. The lead applicant has made a request to have the school sited in a school facility, although other sites are being explored.

c. Planned grades and enrollment in each of the years of the proposed charter term: It is anticipated that the charter school would initially open for students in grades K-1, with at least one additional grade to be added during each of the charter school’s initial 5-year term. Planned enrollment for the 5-year term, with approximately 28 students per class, would be as follows:

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Kindergarten Classes | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Student Sub-Total | 112 | 52 | 84 | 84 | 84 |
| 1 st Grade Classes | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Student Sub-Total | 84 | 112 | 84 | 84 | 84 |
| 2 nd Grade Classes | 0 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Student Sub-Total | 0 | 84 | 112 | 84 | 84 |
| 3 rd Grade Classes | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| Student Sub-Total | 0 | 0 | 84 | 112 | 84 |
| 4 th Grade Classes | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| Student Sub-Total | 0 | 0 | 0 | 84 | 112 |
| 5 th Grade Classes | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Student Sub-Total | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 84 |
| Total Classes | 7 | 9 | 13 | 16 | 19 |
| Total Students | 196 | 248 | 364 | 448 | 532 |

In the event of attrition, students in upper grades may be back-filled to keep desired class sizes.

d. Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s): The day-to-day business management of the proposed charter school would initially be handled by Mr. Diacou, as executive director, under the direction of the Board of Trustees. A principal, along with directors of finance and operations, would report to the executive director. Teachers, social workers, and a director of assessment will report to the principal.

e. Proposed school mission: To create a K-8 school in the Bronx, integrating classical education and demanding enrichment activities in a structured environment—where kids will be challenged to learn and grow through disciplined and rigorous instruction—dramatically improving local educational results. We want children to see Yalow Academy as an oasis, a

refuge from the often fractious Bronx neighborhoods around them.

f. School overview: In addition to academic subjects, the proposed charter school would foster a collaborative learning environment, using art, music, and disciplined activities such as chess and fencing to engage the children and their families in the education process. The school will use a longer school day, 8 a.m.-6 p.m., and integrate academic teaching with arts, chess, and fencing throughout the day (no after-school programs). Yalow Academy will be data-driven, using the NWEA and STEP assessment programs to guide teachers, administrators, and board members in making professional development decisions. In addition to classroom teachers, there will be a Response to Intervention team, initially staffed with four special education and English language learning teachers reporting to the director of assessment.

Students will be taught to read using scientifically validated approaches as outlined by the National Reading Panel—strategies stressing phonics and phonemic awareness, as implemented by successful charter schools, including UChicago’s Urban Education Institute charter schools.

The curriculum will be aligned with the new Common Core standards being implemented in 2014. Except as described immediately below, Yalow will use the Core Knowledge curriculum developed by Dr. E.D. Hirsch, Jr., designed to give students, beginning in kindergarten, the type of basic knowledge one needs as the basis of a sound and comprehensive education.

Students will be taught mathematics using the well-regarded Singapore Math program, based on the methods used in Singapore (with the highest 4th grade and second highest 8th grade TIMSS math scores in the world) and now being implemented in the successful Scarsdale school system.

Science will be inquiry-based. The American Museum of Natural history has agreed to partner with the Yalow Academy to help identify high-quality, inquiry-based materials to be used to form the foundation of the school’s science curriculum. These science instructional materials will follow and go beyond the requirements of the new Common Core State Standards in ELA and math as well as the soon to be released Next Generation Science Standards.

Riverdale Mental Health Association (RMHA) has agreed to partner with the school to develop a holistic model for delivering education to all of the students. In particular, the school will address the special needs of students with disabilities, limited English proficiency, and economic disadvantage (the last being 85% of District 10 students), reducing impediments to improved academic performance. Our model will begin with regular classroom observation by LMSW-licensed social workers, assessment and screening, an expedited referral process to District 10 CSE to secure treatment, and in-school treatment whenever possible. Yalow will run a weekly evening family support group, replicating RMHA’s successful evening program for families.

Other partners will include the Bronx Arts Ensemble (BAE) and the Kasparov Chess Foundation (KCF). The BAE runs art and music programs in 65 Bronx public and one charter school, and is committed to enriching the lives of students through performance programs and curriculum-related arts projects. Working with Michael Khodarkovsky, president of the KCF, the Yalow Academy would incorporate the highly successful 2-day per week chess program implemented for the Harlem Children Zone (HCZ) schools in 2004-05. The program has been successfully used by the Promise Academy I and II charter schools under the HCZ umbrella in its K to 3 curriculum, and Yalow will follow that model. The goal: teaching students the commitment, discipline, and training required to succeed, and encouraging these ideals for general academic and lifetime personal achievement.

Fencing is an activity that is equal parts physical activity and mental agility. The charter school would establish a 5-day fencing program staffed with accomplished fencers to ensure students developing their bodies as well as their minds. The mental aspect of fencing is critical to success. New York City remains the center of United States fencing, with an abundance of talented Olympic hopefuls and college fencers who will be recruited to teach our students.

g. Target population and community: District 10, located in the northwest section of the Bronx, is a densely populated community with a large percentage of students defined as “at-risk.” Of the 55,680 students enrolled in District 10 public schools, 67% are Hispanic, 19% black, 8% Asian, 6% white, and 1% American Indian. Students are economically disadvantaged: 78% are eligible for free lunch, 7% for reduced-price lunch. 22% are classified as limited English proficient, and 5% were suspended during the 2010-11 year.

The New York State District 10 Report Card for lower school students is grim. With one exception—math—only Asians, American Indians, and whites are making “Adequate Yearly Progress.” In English Language Arts, 59.7% of students test below grade level in the fourth grade—the grade in which test results are best—while 74.6% test below grade level by the time they reach the eighth grade. The math results are not much better and show that that 46.6% of students test below grade level in the fifth grade—the grade in which test results are best—while 52.2% test below grade level by the time they are eighth graders.

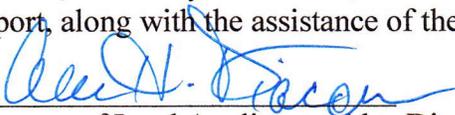
III. Enrollment and retention of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced-price lunch program

As noted above, 22% of District 10 students are English language learners and 85% are eligible for the free and reduced-price lunch program. RMHA works with many Head Start programs in the district and will actively recruit those children. Every outreach effort will be made to recruit, and retain students with special needs, including visits to community boards, nursery schools, and churches. Enrollment will be determined by lottery. With the school’s staffing model, no effort will be made to winnow out low-performing students. From the lotteries conducted in 2012, the NYC Charter School Center estimates there were approximately 1,900 applicants for 515 seats at the 5 charter schools in District 10. Fencing is a sport with national competitions specifically structured for disabled athletes, and the school will encourage participation.

IV Public Outreach and Community Support

Public outreach to the residents of District 10 began in August 2011 with a press release announcing efforts to open a new charter school in the northwest Bronx. Additional articles have appeared periodically in the *Riverdale Press* and the *Riverdale Review* highlighting these efforts.

In early 2011, Mr. Diacou met with the education committees of Community Boards 7 and 8—representing about 90% of District 10. On January 29, 2013, he updated Board 8 and is scheduled at Board 7 on February 14, 2013. Community Board 7 members recognized the need for a new grade school and suggested a number of potential sites. Both boards have expressed their intent to assist with community outreach once the proposed charter is awarded. Senator Espaillat, Assemblyman Castro, Council Members Cabrera and Rodriguez have offered letters of support, along with the assistance of their offices for community outreach.


Signature of Lead Applicant - Alec Diacou

Signed: February 1, 2013