

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).

Excel Academy Charter School of Math, Medical Science and Technology

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.

Upstate School Districts: Yonkers Public Schools

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

Upstate School Districts: Yonkers Public Schools

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	Dr. Ahunna Margaux Akoma	914-979-1345	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Co-Applicant

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

(Multiple responses permitted)

- Parent
- Current or former Teacher
- Current or former School Administrator
- 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	A. Margaux Akoma	914-979-1345	excelmmst@gmail.com	none - under construction

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	0	0	0	0	0	0
1st	0	0	0	0	0	0
2nd	0	0	0	0	0	0
3rd	0	0	0	0	0	0
4th	0	0	0	0	0	0
5th	0	0	0	0	0	0
6th	11-12	40	40	40	40	60
7th	12-13	40	40	40	40	40
8th	13-14	40	40	40	40	40
9th	14-15	0	40	40	40	40
10th	15-16	0	0	40	40	40
11th	16-17	0	0	0	40	40
12th	17-18	0	0	0	0	40
Ungraded	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		120	160	200	240	300

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	N/A
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	N/A
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	N/A

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.

Excel Academy - Charter School of Math, Medical Science and Technology (MMST)
LETTER OF INTENT

I. Applicant Information

- a. *Lead Applicant:* Dr. Ahunna Margaux Akoma, School Administrator
Address: [REDACTED]
Telephone: 914-979-1345
Email: [REDACTED]
- b. *Media contact:* Dr. Ahunna Margaux Akoma; excelmmst@gmail.com; 914-979-1345.
- c. *Applicant Founding Group:*

Name and Relevant Experience/Skills	Prospective Role
<p>Dr. Ahunna Margaux Akoma is an experienced math and computer science teacher with over 15 years' experience in educational leadership. Her roles included chief technology officer in Yonkers Public Schools, director of technology and information systems in Nyack Schools and currently administrator for data and assessment in NYS. She is adept in curricula design, instructional delivery and using student data to inform instructional decision-making. She also worked as a technology consultant for YES College Preparatory Charter School, an exemplary charter school in Texas, where she gained knowledge of operating a successful charter school.</p>	School Director
<p>Dr. Charles Planz is a retired school superintendent who currently works as an educational consultant and serves as interim superintendent or assistant superintendent in NYS school districts. He brings expertise in curricula design, instructional delivery, teacher recruitment and retention, supervision and evaluation, financial management, facilities planning, labor relations and contract management, and more.</p>	Chief of Operations
<p>Anna Silverman worked as an English language arts (ELA) teacher, literacy coach, reading specialist and lead teacher in New York City and Nyack Public Schools. She is currently retired and works as a consultant literacy coach in k-12 schools. Her other skills include the use of technology and analysis of performance data to inform instruction and professional development.</p>	ELA Lead Teacher and Literacy Coach
<p>Dr. Rosemary Uzzo is a retired school administrator from Yonkers Public Schools who currently works as an educational consultant and instructor for Southern Westchester BOCES in English as a second language (ESL) and citizenship education. She also serves on the Board of Directors of the Lower Hudson Council of Administrative Women in Education. Other skills include the development of parent leadership through school and family engagement projects. She instituted a parent leadership program for an academy in Quingdao, China.</p>	Family Engagement and ELL Coordinator
<p>Phyllis Aliberto is a retired High School Principal from Nyack Public Schools and currently works as an educational consultant. She was recognized for closing achievement gap in Nyack High School between low-income/at-risk students and non-low-income students. She is also well versed in assessment, data analysis, data-driven instruction, teacher evaluation and professional development.</p>	Curriculum & Instruction Coordinator
<p>Collette Tiktin is currently a teacher in Nyack School District. Her teaching skills include English Language Arts, French and Creole. She writes original plays each year, along with the music scores, and produces musicals for the Nyack community in which her students perform as actors. She will bring performance arts skills and</p>	French Instructor, Playwright and Concert

foreign language acquisition skills for the students of Excel Academy.	Producer
Boma Jack is a school administrator who worked in NYC as an instructional specialist for math and science and a principal. He has expertise in school restructuring and proven school leadership in schools with at-risk populations.	School Leader, Student Support

d. Proposed Board of Trustees:

Trustees	Relevant Experience and Skills
Dr. Alexis Johnson	A renowned medical doctor who saves lives at the Westchester Medical Center, Emergency. His experience and skill in the medical field will help Excel Academy by bringing knowledge of skills our students' need for medical careers, along with providing internship and career exposition opportunities.
Dr. Koyejo Oyerinde	Clinical Professor, Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health. Dr. Oyerinde brings a wealth of knowledge of the medical field to Excel Academy. He conducted medical research in South Africa and leads medical research teams on projects here in the U.S.A. His experience in the medical field, research and training of future medical professionals at Columbia University School of Health will help Excel students achieve and the organization reach its mission. He is also a parent of twin boys who will be future students of Excel Academy.
Dr. Martin Friedmutter	A psychologist who works in NYC schools is experienced in psychological and emotional evaluations of students, counseling, IQ testing and diagnosis of student cognitive abilities. His perception and advice will help school leadership in developing systems that will support all students' psychological and emotional needs to be successful in school.
Peter Nance, AIA	Architect Engineer with experience in school building design, facilities planning and assessments, project management, and many areas related to school facilities improvements. His expertise will help the school in designing facilities that are educationally safe and sound.
Gary Hammond,	Professor of Music Hunter College in New York City and concert pianist. He also works with Tennessee University and brings knowledge of music and the skill to help develop the school's music program.
Gina Rosa	A Yonkers Public Schools parent whose daughter will be a future student. She is a long-time resident of Yonkers and is fluent in Spanish and English. She will support the school by facilitating parental involvement and outreach in the Latino community.

Advisory Board – An advisory board, comprised of industry experts, publishers and software developers, is being assembled and its list of members will be included in the main application.

e. *Replication or Network Information:* The school is not a replication or part of a network.

f. *Application History:* Summer 2010 – Application did not advance to the 3rd round.

II. Proposed Charter School Information

a. *Proposed School Name:* Excel Academy Charter School of Math, Medical Science and Technology.

b. *Proposed school location:* The City of Yonkers in the Yonkers City School District area.

c. *Planned grades and enrollment in each year of the proposed charter term:*

Grades	Ages	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
6	11-12	40	40	40	40	60
7th	12-13	40	40	40	40	40
8th	13-14	40	40	40	40	40
9th	14-15		40	40	40	40
10th	15-16			40	40	40
11th	16-17				40	40
12th	17-18					40
Ungraded						
Totals		120	160	200	240	300

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

e. *Proposed school mission:* The Excel Academy Charter School of Math, Medical Science and Technology (MMST) exists to prepare students for success in a four-year college while developing employability skills for careers in medical fields, information communication technologies, business, engineering and other professions through practical learning.

f. *School overview.*

To achieve our mission, Excel Academy Charter School of MMST’s will embody a philosophy of high expectation and academic standards, robust instructional delivery through skilled content-area teachers, ongoing assessment of student learning and teacher’s instruction, development of each student’s performance profile and individual growth plan, teacher evaluation and development, reward and support systems for students, parents and staff.

While our focus is on mathematics, medical science and technology, development of skills in English language arts will be embedded in every subject area in alignment with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). We will use innovative instructional approaches to provide opportunities for our students to prepare for their careers of interest in the health industry, mathematics, and technology. In addition, our students’ personal and intellectual growth, and fulfillment will be actively promoted along with the social and economic interests of the larger community. Our students will become doctors, technologists, software developers, business owners and scientists, having mastered the skills required to succeed in a diverse global economy.

To that end, we will employ approaches that include the following:

Integrated classroom instruction – We will provide differentiated instructional delivery in a technology-enabled environment that integrates virtual learning, classroom instruction and practical learning experiences. Students will learn in an integrated classroom environment where technology tools will be used to deliver a wide array of differentiated learning based on each student’s academic profile. Regular education, ELL, advanced and special education students will receive instruction in a fully integrated collaborative setting. Teachers will work collaboratively, engaging in inquiry about student work and sharing best practices. Instructional strategies will include direct instruction, collaborative team teaching, co-teaching, small-group instruction, project-based learning, computer-based instruction, and practical learning by working in the field with professionals under teacher’s supervision. Students will receive credit for field work activities. All students will graduate with advanced placement and college credit-earning courses.

Extended School Days and Year – Our school day will be from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm. We will have year-round schedules with shorter, more frequent breaks for vacations so that our students will retain the knowledge they’ve gained and remain connected with the school. New cohort of students will attend a mandatory four-week summer school in which we will administer diagnostic assessments to determine student’s readiness and obtain baseline achievement data for instructional decision-making. Based on the data, we will provide intensive instruction in reading and mathematics for students in need, and also instill in all students the school’s culture of hard work and academic rigor. We plan to schedule students for double periods of literacy and math during the first two years, double periods of math and science during 8th and 9th grade, and double periods of computer programming and medical sciences in the upper grades, interdisciplinary classes, small group instruction, and extended day homework and intensive college preparatory learning time.

School Culture – We will model in our own practices and operations, the values the school seeks to have graduates transfer to their future universities, work places, families, and communities. Our culture will embrace a love of learning, hard work, integrity, civic responsibility, respect, caring and academic success. We will combine a rigorous and integrated academic curriculum with a performance-based culture emphasizing a passion for life-long learning, a desire for hard work and a commitment to community service. Cultural immersion activities will include field trips to four-year colleges, area teaching hospitals, businesses, technology data warehouse centers, and international travel in upper grades to sister/brother schools in North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America.

Data Inquiry and Continuous Improvement Culture – We will develop a culture of data inquiry and will use student performance data to inform decisions on instructional practices, curricula design, professional development and resource allocations. Each student’s academic performance profile will include data from all forms of assessments and will guide all instructional planning and delivery.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention – We will aggressively recruit and retain highly skilled teachers for the core subjects and will develop a team of professional instructors from industry including physicians, nurses, other medical professionals, mathematicians, engineers, business leaders, technology experts, and more. Teachers will be supported, continuously trained, and rewarded for hard work and improved results through bonuses and leadership development.

- g. *Target population and the community that the school intends to serve* – Excel Academy Charter School of MMST plans to serve students in grades 6 – 12 who reside in the City of Yonkers. Data from New York State Education website show that in the 2010-2011 school year, 61% of the students were on free lunch, 8% on reduced price lunch and 13% were English language learners. The racial and ethnic makeup of the students in Yonkers is: 23% Black, 53% Hispanic, 6% Asian, 18% White, and 1% multiracial. Many parents in Yonkers send their children to private schools, including Catholic schools, when they reach middle school age. Unfortunately, two Catholic schools recently closed in Yonkers, leaving these parents with less choice. Excel Academy will offer another choice to Yonkers families for educating their children in a safe, nurturing, structured and academically enriching environment.

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

Enrollment: We will use several strategies to ensure enrollment of students with disabilities, are ELLs, and on FRPL. Though our enrollment system is open, we will reserve a set number of seats for ELL students. We anticipate that our students will be representative of the Yonkers school community which has approximately 69% of students on FRPL. Our enrollment policy is open and we aim to recruit students from diverse backgrounds and abilities who have interest in our academic programs and are willing to work hard

and achieve, regardless of socio-economic status or physical limitations. To create awareness of our school in the community, our team has visited churches, and attended events both political and cultural in all areas of the city. Our recruitment flyers are in both English and Spanish. Our admission forms and parent/student contracts will be written in both languages. We will continue to recruit students by hosting events at community centers and distributing our flyers at public libraries, parks, community centers, housing complexes, shopping centers, community events, train stations, ads in local newspapers our website (under construction), and social media such as Facebook.

Retention: We plan to retain our students by delivering a holistic learning environment in which all members of our school community—parents, teachers, students, staff and governing board—are accountable for success and our students significantly exceed State performance standards. ELLs, special needs students, and FRPL whose individual academic profiles identify skill gaps will receive additional support and intervention services. We will provide workshops for our ELL parents so that they become partners and learn to navigate the educational landscape. All students will be immersed in an integrated learning environment that is differentiated based on student’s individual academic profile and growth plan. Our students will be retained when they feel safe, experience academic success, cared for by teachers and staff, and can see a clear path towards a successful career and college experience.

IV. Public Outreach and Community Support

Over the past three years, our team has engaged the community through visits at churches, libraries, and political rallies and neighborhood events. Three years ago, we started collecting signatures from interested parents around the Yonkers community. Some founding members attended a recent inauguration of our State Assembly Representative Shelley Mayer and spoke with several community leaders, trade organizations representatives, civic association members, the Mayor of Yonkers and the Yonkers City Council President, Chuck Lesnick. In one of Chuck Lesnick’s *Spotlight on Yonkers* newsletters (Dec 6, 2012), he lamented the impending closure of some of the Catholic schools in the Westchester community. One of his recommendations was, “. . .there might be another option. . .the replacement of these parochial schools with charter schools, open to all. . .” He felt that this option would help keep the teachers and staff employed who would otherwise be losing their jobs at the parochial schools. We plan to contact the Arch-Diocese in the next few days to build a relationship and tap this resource of teachers who may be losing their jobs and also to seek the use of their facilities. We have tested the community’s interest in having another charter school in Yonkers and found overwhelming interest and excitement particularly among parents and grassroots community groups. We recently attended an event at the Yonkers River Front Library hosted by Yonkers Parents United. Parents at this even came from diverse backgrounds, showed interest in our school and can’t wait to visit our web site when it is published for public viewing. We will continue to reach out to the community to create awareness of our school and its programs through open houses at various neighborhood centers, newspaper ads, web publications and more.

V. Lead Applicant(s) Signature and Date Signed



Dr. Ahunna Margaux Akoma

Date 1/31/2013