



PHASE I: Letter of Intent

Created: 06/10/2016

Last updated: 06/17/2016

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 (operates no charter schools to date) or an Existing Education Corporation (operates a least one charter school) is submitting this Round 1 Letter of Intent.

Applicant Group LOI to establish a single, new charter school

Proposed Charter School Name

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

School Name	Limestone Academy Charter School
Grades Served (K-5, .6-8, 9-12, etc.) During Initial Term	K-4
Max Number of Students During Initial Term	120

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
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		(###-###-####)	
Proposed/Current Board Chair	Shaena Brasz	██████████	██████████
Public/Media Contact Person	Shaena Brasz	██████████	██████████

List of Key Design Elements

(Integral to the school model, these elements should be reflected throughout the application)

1	Community Based Learning
2	Project Based Learning
3	Inquiry Based Learning
4	Flexible Seating/Meet Physical Needs of Students
5	Student interests are taken into consideration
6	Rely on Philosophy of Teaching vs. Curricular programs or materials
7	Customer Service for Families
8	(No response)
9	(No response)
10	(No response)

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

(No response)

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.

(Refer to 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 handwritten signature in black ink on a light gray background. The signature is cursive and appears to read "Paul Atrey".

Date

2016/06/16

Thank you for completing this form.

Limestone Academy Charter School
Letter of Intent
June 28, 2016 Submission

Shaena Brasz

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A. Mission and School Design

The mission of Limestone Academy Charter School will be to provide engaging, motivating, real life, and hands on learning to help students learn and grow in a community that adapts to the individual learner while learning to work with their peers.

Children have unique abilities to learn and grow in ways that incorporate their learning styles, personality, interests, and physical needs. It can be difficult for traditional schooling to meet the needs of individual learners when constrained by district policies, curricular materials, and a perceived notion of rigid expectations. Children learn in a variety of ways and all children are capable of growing but a one-size fits all approach will not reach the needs of individual students. Increasingly the focus of education has been for students to meet standards that require higher-level thinking. Due to the pressures of higher standards and test scores, schools in our area have been focusing on more paper/pencil traditional at your seat schoolwork. We know that students learn by doing, interacting with high quality materials, through discussion with peers and through highly engaging materials.

The Coalition for Community Based learning writes:

“As an intentional dimension of the curriculum, community-based learning helps students acquire, practice, and apply subject matter knowledge and skills. At the same time, students develop the knowledge, skills, and attributes of effective citizenship by identifying and acting on issues and concerns that affect their own communities. When implemented thoughtfully, these strategies create a pedagogy of engagement. Students invest time and attention and expend real effort because their learning has meaning and purpose.

Community-based learning represents a convergence of multiple theoretical frameworks and supporting research, all of which suggest that young people are more likely to be engaged in learning—to invest attention and expend energy—when the content has personal meaning and builds on what they already know. Moreover, students are more likely to retain and transfer knowledge when given opportunities to apply what they are learning to real world issues and to assess their performance in ways that suit their personal learning styles. If we follow this line of reasoning, the value of community-based learning is clear. Nevertheless, for too many students—particularly as they advance through school—learning behavior is characterized by a reduction in intrinsic interest, an increase in negative feelings about school, lower achievement, and negative reactions to failure. This decline is not developmentally inevitable. Instead, it is the result of personal and environmental factors, organizational features of schools, instructional methods, and the curriculum. Community-based learning offers educators tools with which to reverse this negative trend.”

(<http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/CBLFinal.pdf>)

The mission of our school, Limestone Academy Charter School, will be to combine the best and most engaging learning theories such as community based learning and project based learning to meet the needs of individual learners in a setting that is suited physically for children, allows for interaction with peers, builds community within the school as well as brings the community to the school, provides opportunities for students to engage with materials they are interested in, uses authentic literature and multiple approaches for children to develop a love for reading, and uses interdisciplinary project based learning.

The focus of this school will be to develop sound philosophical approaches to teaching instead of relying on programs and curricular resources. Teachers will be asked to use student interests, community resources, and projects to help students grow and learn through exploration of subjects and materials in the context of a child friendly space that suits the physical need of growing students (see Appendix A).

Some of the problems associated with students who are learning in the context of a traditional classroom revolves around the amount of time that students are required to sit still in chairs and at tables. Students are also often asked to work quietly without engaging in discussion with peers. Students learn best when discussing with peers. Only the most effective teachers are able to engage students in discussions that engage higher level thinking skills. The focus would be to help the learning be as child centered as possible. Teachers are not there to be the main teaching point but to help nurture the natural curiosity of the students by providing projects that allow for student choice. Teachers will document and help students learn and grow in the content areas as well as basic skills. The younger the grade the more teacher led the instruction of basic skills will be but students will be invited into a classroom where they are not expected to sit at a chair and desk for any extended period of time. The youngest students would explore and interact with materials in order to learn with rigorous choices built into their learning.

Districts are quick to adapt reading, writing and math programs but do not develop sound educational philosophies in each area that will meet the needs of more students. The key is to use prescriptive measures when finding the best approach instead of relying too heavily on phonics or whole language when teaching children to read. Learning to read takes a combination of personalized approaches that incorporate the interest of the individual child such as; language experience approach, multisensory approach, neurological impress technique, phonics, linguistic method, and/or reading comprehension support in combination with learning to love reading. In order to meet the needs of a variety of students it is necessary to use a carefully selected combination of these approaches and instill a love of reading authentic literature. It is the mission of this school to help meet students where they are instead of molding them to meet the expectations of the classroom or the school.

Classroom management is another key aspect of a child's education and is multifaceted. Successful classroom management is complex and requires a combination of academic rigor, classroom community building, structure, and direct instruction in social nuances that young children do not understand. The focus of classroom management is all about helping students learn to work together with their peers in an appropriate way that is conducive to the learning activity whether it is whole group, partner work, small group work, or individual work. All of which are needed in order to have a successful learning environment and help children learn to be successful in the current college and workplace environment. The mission of our school is to help identify what is causing problem behavior in the classroom and develop supports to help the individual child be successful using the expertise and point of view of multiple professionals within the school, looking to those with knowledge of root cause of behavior instead of relying on punitive measures.

One of the difficulties that families are facing with regard to suburban public education is the lack of regard for parent concerns and adequate service for all students, especially students with special needs. This is clearly indicated when families of students with

special needs are left no recourse but to file lawsuits in order to ensure that the needs of their children are met or they receive adequate services (<http://www.syracuse.com/schools/index.ssf/2015/05/f-m-violated-state-law-in-the-way-it-handled-some-special-education-students.html>).

The attached article represents why there is a clear need for this charter school in this area. Families of students without special needs, who are unsatisfied with the service they are receiving from the local suburban schools do not have the same legal recourse when attempting to address concerns regarding their children with the school. This leaves parents and families frustrated and isolated. Students with concerns or requests for modifications that do not meet the threshold for an IEP or Section 504 plan may have needs that will go unmet for a number of years, which will significantly impact their success in school.

Charter schools are under greater scrutiny and therefore held to a higher standard than the local districts in order to meet enrollment. This is why a customer service orientation to education is necessary. When entering their child into the school, parents will be asked to fill out a detailed questionnaire that will help the teacher and other support personnel understand the needs of the student before entering school. Parent teacher conferences will be held before school begins as a way to introduce the school setting to the students as well as develop the first point of contact between students and their teacher. These will be individually scheduled meetings. Student personality will be taken into consideration when deciding appropriate curricular programming and the best fit teacher to work with the student. We will aim to keep parent and student concerns as a priority and work together with the parents to make sure that each student is reaching their potential. Parents will be offered quarterly anonymous surveys in order to be sure that the school is meeting their needs and they are satisfied to the highest extent.

B. Description of Proposed Student Population:

Families in the community have identified the following needs in relation to a school for their children:

1. Challenging and engaging learning experiences
2. Meeting the needs of children with special needs beyond students with learning disabilities
3. Meeting the needs of children who are gifted

Target student population would include students with disabilities, gifted students, and students whose individual needs are not being addressed according to the family's expectations within traditional public school. Students who are cognitively in the normal range but have underlying disabilities that require Section 504 plans or may not qualify but have specific needs will also be a focus student population. This would include students who have a difficult time adapting socially to the school setting, students with anxiety or other mental health concerns, students who need physical movement and/or social interaction built into the school day. Students who have specific needs in regard to social development or other areas that are sometimes hard to identify will be addressed within the classroom through extensive home-school communication. Students who are gifted or at the high end of the cognitive spectrum that need to be challenged would also be a focus population. Families will be able to identify why they would like their child to attend a charter school and what they hope to see as needed supports for their child. Students who are not identified as having special

needs but have different learning styles would also be a target population. Gifted students would also be a main focus and would be provided opportunities for project-based learning that will help hit their needs and interest while allowing them to think at a higher level.

Retention goals will be met through extensive home-school communication involving the needs of the student and areas that families deem as important. The school will keep quality customer service as a main focus through surveys, personality inventories of teachers and students, parent conferences, and detailed questionnaires regarding student and parental concerns.

The chart in Appendix B outlines the planned enrollment per year from 2017 through 2020.

C. Proposed Location and/or Facility

The school will be located in the area east of Syracuse to target districts in the Eastern suburbs of Syracuse. New developments are being built in Manlius which is creating an influx of students into the Fayetteville-Manlius school district. Charter schools in the Syracuse area have focused on the urban population and there has been community input that a charter school would be a beneficial alternative to the traditional public schools in Fayetteville-Manlius School District, Chittenango School District, Jamesville-DeWitt School District, Cazenovia School District and East Syracuse Minoa School District. In order to have a location that would be convenient for parents, the charter school would be located in the Fayetteville Area.

D. Background Information about the Applicant Group

Main Applicant and Director of School Quality

Shaena Brasz

Shaena Brasz is an educator and parent who would like to see reform in terms of meeting the vast array of social, emotional, and academic needs of individual students in districts in the East Suburbs of Syracuse. Shaena Brasz has taught 5th grade, 3rd grade, and students with disabilities from Kindergarten to Grade 8 at Southside Academy Charter School. She is currently a peer observer in the Syracuse City School District evaluating Special Education Teacher effectiveness using the district developed Teaching and Learning Framework as well as the Danielson Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument. Ms. Brasz has created a Facebook group to gauge interest in a charter school in the east suburbs and currently has 75 members. Ms. Brasz plans to continue community outreach efforts using various local forums including East Side Moms Facebook group and AP/Natural Parenting of CNY Facebook group as well as connections within the community in order to engage community members in the process of starting a charter school that meets the needs of the community. Ms. Brasz would plan to develop relationships with local preschools in order to encourage families to enroll as well as meet retention goals. Parents from the AP/Natural Parenting Facebook group have expressed interest in a school that continues the educational philosophy of Jowonio, a local preschool that emphasizes inclusion.

Shaena has graduated from the Fayetteville-Manlius School District, is a long time resident of the area and has settled here with her family. Shaena is the mother of two children who attend the Fayetteville-Manlius school district who are ages 7 and 4.

E. Anticipated Members of the Board of Trustees

Ursula Wefers

Ursula Wefers is an Adjunct Business Professor at Plymouth State University, College of Business Administration (COBA) as well as at Southern New Hampshire University, College of Online and Continuing Education. She is an international faculty who brings to the classroom a global vision of the world. Over the last eight years, I have taught a variety of Marketing, Business, and General Education classes.

Before joining the Academic world in the US, she worked as an Import Supervisor for a multinational company in Peru, South America. There she ran the import logistics department as well as supervised overseas vendors for major international purchases of a broad line of products. She has also worked at the International Department of several banks in Peru.

She is very passionate about educating and mentoring future professionals. This is why she pays special attention to the importance of creating and developing an ongoing safe environment to adequately educate the kids of our community. Being the mother of two toddlers, she understands the challenges that kids face and realizes that those challenges should be channeled in different ways; with the expectation that in the long run a kid can develop to his or her maximum potential. The vision and mission of the school matches her values of hands on learning.

Audrey Kissel

Audrey Kissel is a licensed clinical psychologist who has been working for SUNY Upstate's Department of Pediatric's Developmental Evaluation Center providing assessments of children for the last five years. In this position, she has had the opportunity to connect with teacher and therapists around issues related to special education services for children with developmental disabilities, with a particular expertise in the area of autism spectrum disorders. She also has a part-time private practice providing individual and family therapy to children, adolescents, and adults. Audrey completed her bachelor of arts degree, conferred with Distinction in all Subjects, from Cornell University in 1992 and has a doctorate from American University in 2000. She did her clinical internship at Georgetown University's Child Development Center and received post-doctoral training at Children's National Medical Center and SUNY Upstate's Department of Child Psychiatry.

Michael Sarofeen

Michal Sarofeen has over 30 years of experience in business, tax and estate planning law. Mr. Sarofeen is a principal and attorney at law at the Sarofeen & Arbon, PLLC law firm. He plans to be involved in all stages of the creation of the Limestone Academy Charter School with experience and expertise pertaining to the legal/business start up of the charter school. Sarofeen & Arbon, PLLC was founded by Michael Sarofeen, Esq. and Mark Arbon, Esq., former partners at Gilberti Stinziano Heintz & Smith, P.C. where Michael Sarofeen was the Chairman of the Tax and Estate Planning Department.

Glafira Pytlak

Glafira Pytlak is an active member of the community and has over 15 years experience working with children with a wide range of abilities. Glafira spent 10 years at Jowonio School as a teachers aid, her last four years there at the Bernice Wright Laboratory School at Syracuse University supporting toddlers with special needs in an inclusive setting. Prior to joining the team at Jowonio, Glafira was a daycare teacher at Elmcrest Children's center in one of their inclusive classrooms at SPICE and the first classroom in Onondaga County that began to implement Applied Behavioral Analysis with their students. Ms. Pytlak also spent three years doing the respite, afterschool and summer programs at North Side CYO through Catholic Charities. Ms. Pytlak is also involved with a community group called Art Music People that has held art and has donated funds such places as local families of the Crouse Hinds Hospital NICU and the North Side CYO Refugee Center.

Glafira is a mother and step-mother to four beautiful children ranging from ages five years old to ten years old. She is very much looking forward to seeing this school through and to see it thrive. She believes that children of all needs and abilities should have their needs met.

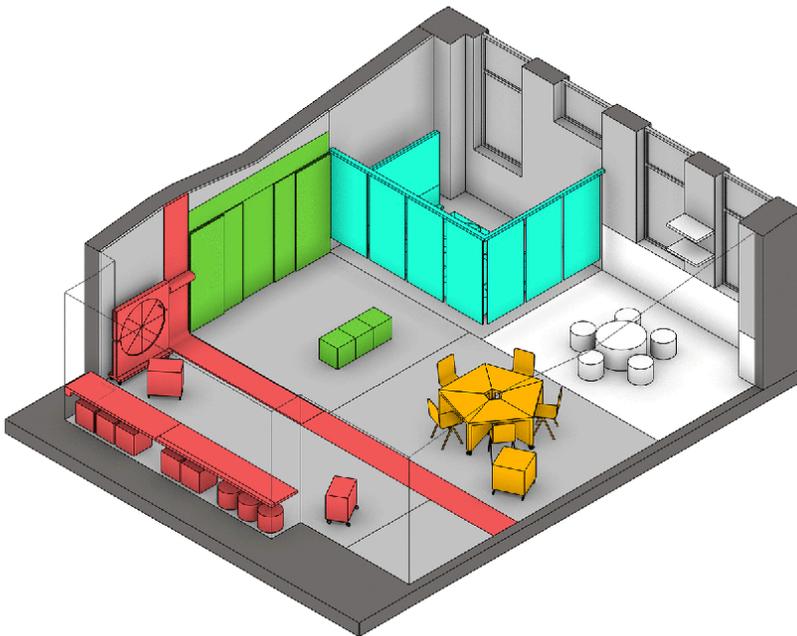
designing spaces for learning

kurani

High Tech Elementary

[« Previous](#) [Next »](#)

By [Danish Kurani](#) / [May 17, 2015](#) / [Learning Spaces](#)



© Danish Kurani

During a recent city-wide campaign to personalize learning, Denver Public Schools asked us to develop a prototype classroom that could support 21st century learning. With the help of teachers and students at High Tech Elementary, Kurani re-designed a generic square classroom to demonstrate how schools with limited resources can create empowering environments.

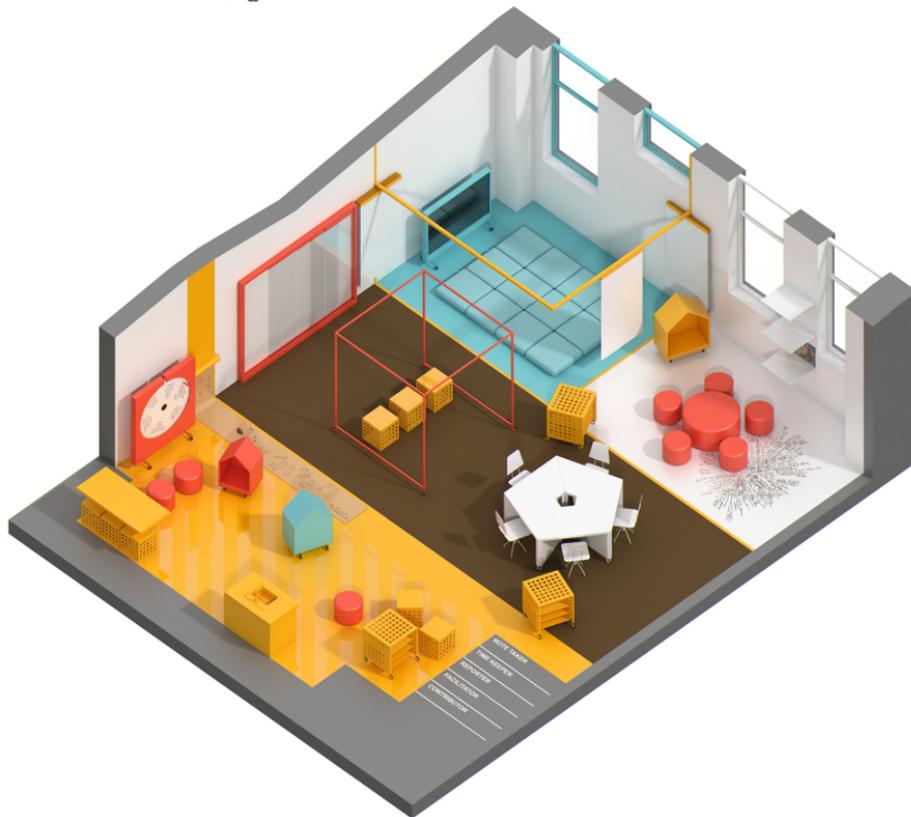
The new space at High Tech Elementary is designed to support the collaborative moments in the school's project based curriculum. The reconfigurable furniture,

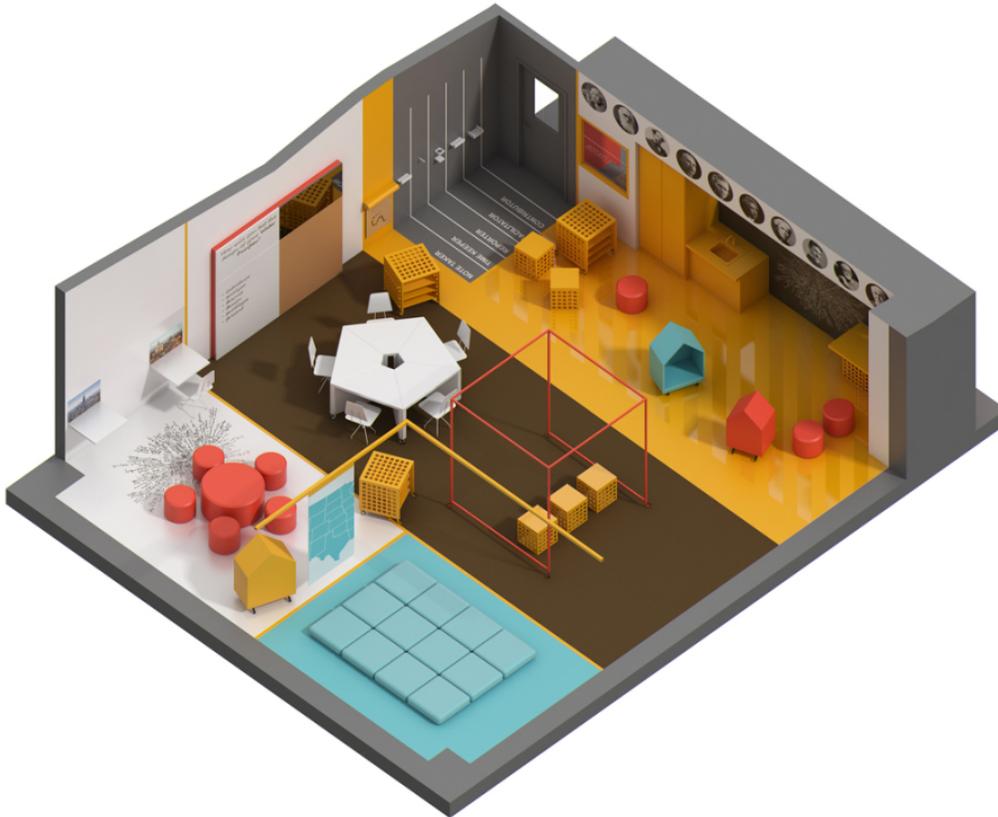
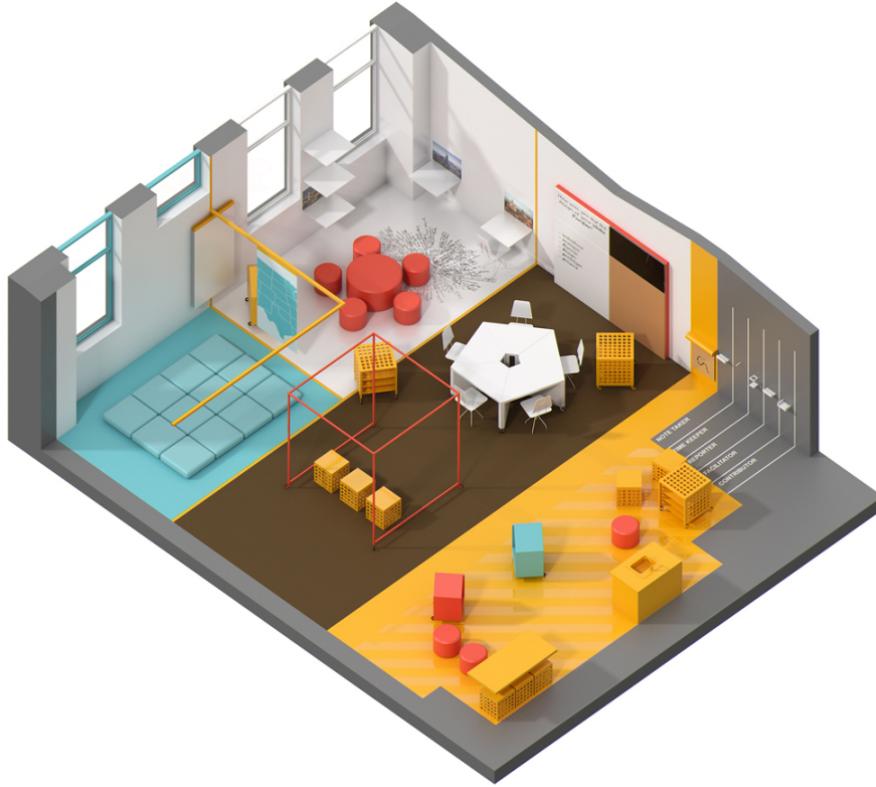
interactive learning tools, and even branding (teachers named the room “The Collaboratory”) all encourage students to collaborate and learn from their peers.

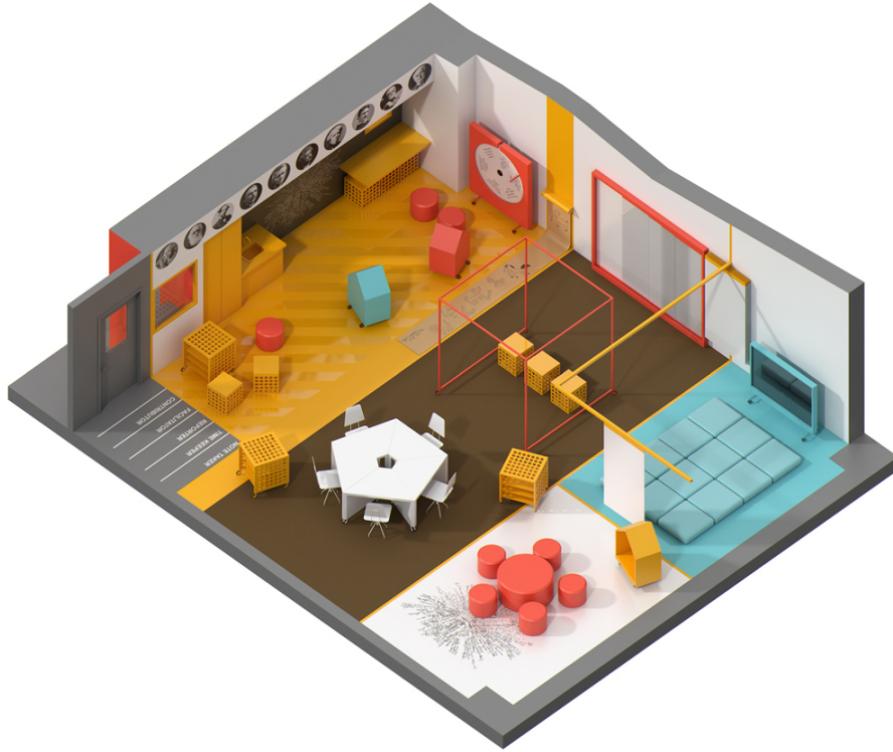
Classroom features include:

- 5 unique learning spaces, each supporting different learning and teaching styles
- Ability to reconfigure layout for fluid group sizes, from individual work up to group of 30 kids
- Multimedia panels for interactive collaboration, engagement and learning
- Skype setup to connect kids with experts around the world
- Messy zone for kids who want to learn by making and doing
- Locally fabricated furniture and learning tools

The Kurani prototype is currently under construction and opens Spring 2016. For more information, get in touch at info@kurani.us.







<https://kurani.us/2015/05/17/high-tech-elementary/>

Flexible Seating and Student-Centered Classroom Redesign

APRIL 22, 2016



Photo credit: Kayla Delzer

I remember exactly where I was when I had a watershed moment that changed me as a teacher forever. In fact, it inspired my EdSurge column, [Why the 21st-Century Classroom May Remind You of Starbucks](#). I was working on [my TEDx presentation](#) at my local Starbucks and, looking around, I realized that everyone seemed to be happy, engaged in their work, and relaxed. Some people chose the traditional chairs and tables while I opted for a big, comfy chair with my MacBook on my lap. The quiet music, perfect lighting, and overall aesthetics of the coffee shop were favorable for a variety of learners. And if I wanted to switch up my seat during my stay, I was free to do just that. That's when I decided that our classroom in 2015-2016 was going to look radically different than anything I'd ever done before.

Problem Solvers Now = Problem Solvers Later

I'm a firm believer in keeping the focus on what's really important: the students. If student motivation and higher engagement is truly the desired end game, then we as teachers must adapt right along with our students in our classrooms. To see that some classrooms look the same now as they did 70 years ago is shameful. The students we share our classrooms with don't know life without constant connectivity, wi-fi, and a global audience. Outside the windows of our classroom is a dynamic, fast-paced, and ever-changing world full of choices. How can we expect our students to solve problems and make choices independently if we constantly solve their problems and make their choices for them? Our classroom environments should be conducive to open collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. This simply cannot be done when kids are sitting in rows of desks all day. Consider involving your students in a classroom redesign project with the LAUNCH cycle design thinking mentioned on [A.J. Juliani's blog](#).

What the Research Says

Everything I do in my classroom is based on research and best practices for kids. Redesigning my classroom was not any different. I've found that some of the [immediate benefits](#) (PDF) of flexible seating include burning more calories, using up excess energy, improving metabolism, increased motivation and engagement, creating a better oxygen flow to the brain, and improving core strength and overall posture. It's no surprise that physical activity is linked to higher academic performance, better health, and improved behavior. In fact, [a paper by Matthew T. Mahar, et al](#) (PDF) finds that:

Simple in-class activities can boost performance. Studies suggest that children who participate in short bouts of physical activity within the classroom have more on-task behavior, with the best improvement seen in students who are least on-task initially.

Additionally, if you're looking to convince your administrators that flexible seating is right for your students or even your entire school, my principal [Jason Markusen has some interesting thoughts on this subject](#). Finally, Erin Klein, with her [brain-based classroom redesigns](#), was my original inspiration. She encouraged me to "ditch the desks."

Classroom Redesign on a Budget

Redesigning an entire classroom doesn't have to be expensive, especially with the help of [Donors Choose](#). Sure, the Hokki stools in my classroom cost about \$100 each, but other items range from free to about \$30. If you want to redesign your classroom on a budget, begin by purchasing some bath rugs or yoga mats, and raising a table to appropriate standing height using bed risers. Or simply take the legs off of a table and add some pillows or core discs for students to sit on. The crates pictured in my classroom cost around three dollars each. Most of the wall hangings and lamps were taken from my house, with the exception of frames from The Dollar Store. Parents are also a great resource for classroom donations. They often have money to help, but not time to give, so don't be afraid to ask.

Up Your Classroom Management

I have a strong conviction that simply swapping out desks for tables doesn't ensure higher motivation, engagement, or accountability. Redesigning a classroom or implementing unassigned flexible seating is a shift in both structure and teaching philosophy -- an entire mindset shift. In fact, teachers need a keen intuition about where the students are working and their level of engagement at all times. We must be willing to give up the power of the seating chart and truly hand over the responsibility of seating choices to our students. I've found that the more power I give up in our classroom, the more power I get back. I've also noticed that it helps my students become more self-aware of what types of seating and environment help them learn best. And they're empowered by the opportunity to have choices.

Other Considerations

- We follow the [Responsive Classroom approach](#). The supplies that the students contribute at Open House are put into a community supply crate and used throughout the year.
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- Each student's personal learning materials (math journals, notebooks, etc.) are housed in bins in the corner of our room. If you don't have this option, three-drawer stackers or crates of materials would be a solid substitute.

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- Be open to removing much of the furniture in your classroom. At the beginning of the year, I got rid of four tables, my huge teacher desk, a file cabinet, and 20 traditional chairs.
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- Our whole-group instruction still happens on the big rug in the middle of our classroom. This is where we spend much of our day.
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- Before allowing your students to self-select seats, I strongly suggest having them try all of the seating options for an entire day. They probably won't know where they learn best until they try all the options.
-
- Students know that I reserve the right to move them at any time if they aren't fully engaged and able to work in their self-selected spot.
-
- It's a good idea to have more seating combinations than students in your classroom. I never have disagreements between students about seating because I have far more options than students. However, if I did, I would settle it the same way that I'd settle an argument over any other material in our classroom.

Best Practice Starts Now

I'm often asked, "Why should I do flexible seating this year if next year's teacher won't be doing it?" Here's my response: Teachers can never base what happens in our classroom this year on what next year's teacher may or may not do. If it's best practice for our kids, do it now. Remember, our classrooms should be student-centered, not teacher-centered.

http://www.edutopia.org/blog/flexible-seating-student-centered-classroom-kayla-delzer?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=cpc

Breaking the Teacher-Student Conflict Cycle: 5 Steps You Can Take Now

by Dana Truby

Look to the grown-ups first! The key to improving student behavior is changing the way teachers and administrators react. This is the second in a three-part series on Building Positive School Culture, sponsored by [Boys Town](#). To read the first article, click [here](#).

Devon enters your classroom with his head down and his stride slow. You look at him and say, "Good afternoon, Devon." He responds by dropping his head even lower and walking faster to his desk. He says nothing.

You're disappointed by his behavior. Devon doesn't usually greet people, but it's a skill you've been working on with him. You wonder if something happened to Devon in the hallway or earlier in the day that may have upset him. You approach him at his desk and ask, "Devon, why didn't you greet me when you came into class?" He looks straight ahead and tersely mumbles, "'Cause I don't feel like talking to you!"

How do you respond? Whether you're an administrator or a teacher, it can be a tough call. Will you:

- Walk away.
- Ask him softly, "Why don't you feel like talking to me today?"
- Tell him sternly, "I expect a greeting whenever you enter my classroom."
- Pat him on the shoulder and say, "That's OK."
- Laugh it off and tell him he'll be happier when the class period is over.
- Roll your eyes, mutter "Typical!" and ignore him for the rest of the period.

This situation, like any difficult or less-than-pleasant interaction with students, illustrates the many behavioral choices grown-ups have when responding to students' problem behaviors. How the adults in a school react can determine whether a situation or behavior worsens, improves or simply never changes. As educators, when we learn to manage our own responses, we can become positive agents for change.

Recognizing the Conflict Cycle

If you react to Devon by rolling your eyes and turning your back on him, you simply mirror the same disrespectful behaviors he demonstrated. Now Devon might feel you "dissed" him and become even more defiant. Suddenly, what began as a seemingly innocuous incident escalates into an all-out confrontation. This back-and-forth, or action-reaction cycle, is a process that researchers Nicholas Long and Mary Wood refer to as the conflict cycle, and it goes on every day in classrooms and schools across the country.

According to Long and Wood, crisis is the product of a student's stress that is kept alive by the actions and reactions of others. When a child's or teen's feelings are aroused by stress, he or she learns to behave in ways that shield him or her from painful feelings. These behaviors (aggression, avoidance) may be undesirable, but they protect the child from distressing feelings. Others (parents, teachers, peers) perceive the behavior as negative, and they respond in a negative fashion. This negative response produces additional stress, and the youth again reacts in an inappropriate manner. The spiraling of behaviors causes a minor incident to escalate into a crisis.

The conflict cycle follows a pattern: First, there is a stressful event (a failed test, rejection by a peer) that triggers a negative or irrational belief ("That teacher hates me!" or "Everyone at this school is against me!"). These negative thoughts trigger negative feelings and anxieties, which drive inappropriate behavior (talking back, cursing, being sarcastic, etc.), provoking adults, who may then mirror those negative behaviors. The adult reaction increases a student's stress, triggers more intense feelings and drives more negative behavior. This cycle continues until it escalates into a no-win power struggle.

Addressing the Cycle

For most administrators and teachers, the biggest challenge to correcting inappropriate behavior is staying out of or breaking the conflict cycle. When a student is in your office and yells, "I don't have to listen to you!" the natural urge is to yell right back, "Oh, yes you do!" But matching the student's inappropriate actions only starts the cycle spinning. Then, the goal becomes winning the argument rather than teaching an alternate behavior or correcting the problem. And that's a lose-lose proposition.

Avoiding the natural instinct to respond aggressively when faced with an aggressive student, however, can be difficult. That's why it's important to recognize your triggers. Be aware of your emotional hot buttons. What can a student say or do to send you shooting straight over the edge? When a student violates a value that you hold dear—being kind to younger children or being honest, for example—it can provoke a strong response. Prepare for those situations by practicing

self-control strategies that calm your nerves—deep breathing, counting to 10, positive self-talk, etc. Consider having teachers share their own strategies in a group conversation. This is a frustration every educator encounters.

What Educators Can Do

With so many factors potentially influencing a student's behavior and reactions, there is only one thing that is certain: You have the power to control your own behavior. The better able the adults in the building are to stay calm, maintain a professional demeanor and remember that students' behavioral mistakes are teaching opportunities, the better your school environment will be. Here are a few tips to share with other educators and to use yourself:

1. ***Control Your Voice***
2. Using a soft but firm voice is less inflammatory than a raised voice or sarcastic tone. Speak slowly and calmly.
3. ***Relax Your Body Language***
4. Keeping a relaxed posture and using non-aggressive body language can also defuse escalating tensions. No pointed fingers, swinging arms or invading personal space.
5. ***Avoid Making Judgmental Statements***
6. This may be the most important thing. Don't attack the student personally, ever. Keep your comments brief and focused on the inappropriate behavior rather than arguing about who is at fault or what should have happened. Stay focused.
7. ***Allow Cool-Down Time***
8. This can help *you* as much as it helps the student. With this strategy, you give the student a couple of minutes to reflect and think about how to turn his or her behavior around. You're not forcing a conversation. This is time you can use to calm yourself or to make sure other students are doing what they need to do.<
9. ***Use Praise and Empathy***
10. Even when a student has misbehaved, there is always some positive you can acknowledge. To take the Devon example above: Yes, Devon refused a greeting and was surly, but he got to class on time and has all his books. Start there. You might also choose to start your interaction with an empathy statement that shows a student you understand his or her perspective.

It makes a tremendous difference. When a teacher skips over this step, students are likely to perceive him or her as quick to criticize and slow to recognize accomplishments. In short, if students see teachers as "not on their side," their authority and effectiveness are already diminished.

When the adults in a school begin to shift their perspective on negative student behavior and work to break the conflict cycle, it opens up a world of possibilities for your school. Mistakes become teaching opportunities, and student consequences are less a punishment than an opportunity to learn, a chance to improve. And along the way, your school becomes a more positive place for students and teachers to learn and work.

This article was adapted from Well-Managed Schools: Strategies to Create a Productive and Cooperative Social Climate in Your Learning Community (Boys Town Press, 2011).

This blog series is sponsored by Boys Town. [Learn more](#) about the Boys Town model.

<http://www.weareteachers.com/blogs/post/2014/08/10/breaking-the-conflict-cycle-at-school>

Appendix B

Planned Enrollment Per Year

Grade Level	2017/18	2018/2019	2019/2020
Kindergarten	2 classes of 20 students	3 classes of 20 students	4 classes of 20 students
1st Grade	1 class of 20 students	2 classes of 20 students	3 classes of 20 students
2nd Grade	1 class of 20 students	2 classes of 20 students	3 classes of 20 students
3rd Grade	1 class of 20 students	2 classes of 20 students	3 classes of 20 students
4th Grade	1 class of 20 students	2 classes of 20 students	3 classes of 20 students

APPLICANT GROUP MEMBER NAME	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS
	Ian Abramson	[REDACTED]
Shaena Brasz	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Michael Sarofeen	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Audrey Van Voolen Kissel, Ph.D.	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Ursulua Wefers	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Glafira Pytlak	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

TABLE 1: APPLICANT GROUP INFORMATION***Minimum of 5 members must be designated as Trustees**

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT	RELEVANT EXPERIENCE, SKILLS, AND ROLE ON APPLICANT GROUP (Key Words)	PROPOSED ROLE (if any) (Trustee, Employee, Consultant, or None)	PROPOSED POSITION ON THE BOARD (e.g., officer, trustee, or constituent representative)
NYU Law School Professor	Legal - Real Estate	Trustee	President
Syracuse City School District	Teacher and Evaluator of	Director of School Quality	President
Lawyer	Business Law	None	Constituent Representative
Psychologist	Psychologist with Expertis	None	Constituent Representative
Business Professor	Higher Education/Parent	None	Constituent Representative
Hiscock Legal Aid Program Co	Teacher/Parent	None	Constituent Representative

LENGTH OF INITIAL TERM	VOTING MEMBER (YES OR NO)
1 year	Yes
2 years	yes

Table 2: Public Outreach Information

(Table 2 is not counted towards the page limits. Add more rows as necessary)

Dates of Outreach (month/date/year)	Description of Outreach	Location of Outreach	Target Stakeholder Group	Feedback Obtained	Action Taken on Feedback	Number of Attendees
01/16/2016 meeting date	Sent flyers to community based organizations serving children and families with special needs. Hosted a meet/greet to introduce team and solicit feedback on application.	ABC Community Center 1000 Avenue A NYC CSD 5	Families of students with disabilities, community members	Need for family partners	Add a family liaison to the staff who is bi-lingual	22 families of students in grades Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten
2/21/16	Created Facebook group for community members interested in a charter school serving eastern suburbs of Syracuse.	Facebook Group	Families who are part of the Facebook group Eastside Moms of Syracuse	Interest shown in creation of charter school	Add information regarding philosophy of charter school, asked for input regarding what parents are looking for in a charter school.	79 Families became members of the Facebook Group
2/22/16	Facebook group member posts description of charter school being formed at Orenda Springs	Facebook Group	Families interested in charter school formation.	Share information regarding creation of other local charter schools	Posted information regarding high tech elementary by Kurani.us	Information seen by 63 families.
3/10/16	Facebook group post with article about physical layout of Columbine	Facebook Group	Families interested in physical layout of charter school	Member pointed interest to the Flipped Classroom	Researched Flipped Classroom	Seen by 43 Families

	Elementary					
3/18/16	Member posted article "Here's Why I Said No to Homework for my Elementary-aged Kids"	Facebook Group	Families interested in alternative methods of educating students	Member posted comment regarding the effect of homework on her 3 rd grade student.	Posted another related article from We Are Teachers	Seen by 47 Families
5/8/16	Posted Blurb with overall mission/vision of charter school	Facebook Group	Families interested in progressive education	Members have an overall view of the charter school	Post differences between tradition and progressive education	Seen by 55 families
5/27/16	Posted asking for volunteers for board members	Facebook Group	Families interested in becoming involved in charter school formation	Members volunteered to become board members of proposed charter school	Submission of letter of intent	Seen by 50 families

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Shaena Home 20+

Shaena Brasz

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Files

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Write something...

RECENT ACTIVITY

Shaena Brasz May 27 · Fayetteville

I am currently looking for 2-3 people who would like to serve on the board of trustees for the proposed charter school. Please let me know if you are interested in helping out.

Like Comment

Karyn Elizabeth, Amy Kruse and Ursula Moreno Seen by 50

View 1 more comment

Stevi Suib Wilson I am interested
Like · Reply · May 27 at 1:36pm

Shaena Brasz replied · 1 Reply

Shaena Brasz If possible, please write and send the paragraph about yourself by the 31st because I am handing in the letter of intent on June 1.
Like · Reply · May 29 at 9:38pm

Shaena Brasz replied · 2 Replies

Write a comment...

Shaena Brasz May 27 · Fayetteville

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Chat (7)



Jenna Marie
Jamesville, New York
Joined
Added by Shaena Brasz about 4 months ago



Jackie Terribile
Founder at The Small Town Stylist
Added by Amy Kruse about 4 months ago



Sharon DiFusco
Joined
Added by Shaena Brasz about 4 months ago



Danica Schaeffer
Bridgeport, New York
Joined
Added by Shaena Brasz about 4 months ago



Molly Tiff Egan
Joined
Added by Amy Kruse about 4 months ago