

# Letter of Intent: Applicant and Media Contact Form

Created Wednesday, January 30, 2013

Updated Thursday, January 31, 2013

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Page 1

**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).

*Guardian Academy Charter School of Peekskill*

**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: Peekskill City School District*

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	Audrey Warn	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Co-Applicant

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

(Multiple responses permitted)

- Parent
- 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	Audrey Warn	914-494-1430	audreycwarn@gmail.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	50	50	50	50	50
1st	6-7	50	50	50	50	50
2nd	7-8	50	50	50	50	50
3rd	8-9	50	50	50	50	50
4th	9-10	50	50	50	50	50
5th	10-11	0	0	50	50	50
6th	11-12	0	0	0	50	50
7th	12-13	0	0	0	0	50
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		250	250	300	350	400

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	(No response)
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	(No response)
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	(No response)

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.

January 30, 2013

NYSED Charter School Office  
89 Washington Avenue, Room 471 EBA  
Albany, New York 12234

To the Board of Regents,

The purpose of this letter is to officially convey our intent to apply for a charter for the Guardian Academy Charter School of Peekskill. The information that follows is provided in response to your 2013 Request for Proposals.

**I. Applicant Information**

**a. Lead Applicant**

**Name:** Audrey Warn [REDACTED]

**Qualification:** Audrey is a parent and a native and resident of Peekskill.

**b. Media Contact**

**Name:** Audrey Warn

**E-mail:** guardianacademypeekskill@gmail.com

**Phone number:** 914.494.1430

**c. Applicant Founding Group**

- **Edward T. Beglane:** Ed has been a principal in the Yonkers Public Schools for the last 12 years. He led a building that grew from a PreK-5 to a PreK-8 school and is currently growing a PreK-8 school. Ed earned his doctorate in Administration and Supervision from St. John's University in 2001. Proposed role: board member.
- **John Higgins:** Reverend John J. Higgins is the Pastor of Assumption Church in Peekskill, N.Y. Passionate about education and community involvement, Reverend Higgins received his Bachelor's degree from Thomas Aquinas College and two masters degrees through Saint Joseph Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y. Ordained a priest in 1996, Reverend Higgins has been the bilingual (Spanish/English) spiritual leader for over two thousand families in the ethnically and culturally diverse Church of the Assumption in the heart of Peekskill since 2006. Proposed role: board member.
- **Audrey Warn:** A native of Peekskill, Audrey has an enthusiasm for her hometown and a great desire to offer educational choice to the community. She has a background in communications and media relations and skills as a facilitator and volunteer leadership coordinator. Mother of three, she has served children in a variety of ways, from cub scout den mother to pre-school aide. Warn serves as Advancement Director for Assumption School and Church. She has also served on Peekskill's Historical Preservation Advisory Committee and is a past president of Assumption School's Parent Association. Proposed role: board member.

**d. Initial Board of Trustees**

- **Ed Beglane:** See description above.
- **John Higgins:** See description above.

- **Audrey Warn:** See description above.
  - **Jamie Sanchez:** Jamie is the bilingual son of Ecuadorian immigrants and a native of Peekskill. Pursuing his goal of becoming a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), he is in the joint BBA/MBA Program in Public Accounting at Pace University, where he holds offices in the Association of Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting (ALPFA) and the Robert S. Pace Accounting Society. He is also an intern at Deloitte and Touche, LLP through the Stamford Mentor Program—a highly selective program offered to students who have demonstrated exceptional leadership skills and strong academic performance.
  - **Stefania Raschella:** Stefania worked for seven years in the business field, including the positions of Sales Analyst and Account Executive. She began her career in education as a teacher and is currently the Assistant Principal at a parochial school in the Bronx. She holds Master’s Degrees in Elementary Education and School Building Leadership.
  - **Natalie DiPaolo:** Natalie is a science teacher in the Yonkers Public School District. She received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology from The College of Mount Saint Vincent and obtained her Master of Science in Education from The University of Bridgeport in Connecticut. She began teaching Biology to 8th grade students in a small satellite school in New York City in 1997. She has experience teaching General Science and Biology/Living Environment to grades 7-12. Natalie is currently enrolled in a PhD program and expects to obtain her Ed.S in June 2013. Her focus is on teacher education and meeting the needs of students in a multicultural science classroom.
- e. **Replication or Network Information:** This is an application for a new school, not a replication or part of a network. No member of the applicant group sits on the board of trustees of an existing charter school, and the applicant group is not submitting other applications during this round
- f. **Application history:** The founding group came together to explore ways to expand educational options for children in the city of Peekskill, particularly the growing immigrant population. The closure of a private school and the availability of the historic Guardian Building provided the impetus for members of our community to submit this letter of intent and develop the application we plan to subsequently submit for your consideration.

**II. Proposed Charter School Information**

- a. **Proposed School Name:** Guardian Academy Charter School of Peekskill
- b. **Proposed School Location:** The Guardian Building at 920 First Street, Peekskill, New York. We do not intend to request to be sited in school district facilities.
- c. **Planned Grades and Enrollment:**

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>K</b>	50	50	50	50	50
<b>1</b>	50	50	50	50	50
<b>2</b>	50	50	50	50	50
<b>3</b>	50	50	50	50	50
<b>4</b>		50	50	50	50
<b>5</b>			50	50	50
<b>6</b>				50	50
<b>7</b>					50
<b>Total</b>	200	250	300	350	400

- g. Target population and the community:** Guardian Academy is proposing to serve the Peekskill area. Peekskill is a historic American river city approximately 50 miles north of New York City. The decline of manufacturing led to a slowing economy and diminishing population; nevertheless, Peekskill has seen a growing Latino and immigrant population. Census data indicate that Peekskill is now 37% Hispanic or Latino, 36% White (non-Hispanic) and 24% Black. Moreover, 31% of Peekskill residents are foreign born and 40% speak a language other than English. More than two-thirds of Peekskill students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. Guardian Academy intends to serve this diverse community and anticipates a higher percentage of its student population will be English language learners and low-income than that of the district schools.

**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**

**Strategies to Attract and Recruit and Retain Students:** Without Guardian Academy there will be no elementary school options for students in Peekskill other than the traditional district schools. For this reason, we believe many parents will be interested in an alternative and filling seats at the Guardian Academy Charter School will not be a challenge. Our mission signals our desire to serve any family that wants a rigorous, college preparatory curriculum in a structured and nurturing learning environment that emphasizes both academic and character development.

- **Recruitment:** Guardian Academy Charter School will undertake an energetic recruitment plan to attract a diverse student body. Our first step will be to inform families of the option to attend Guardian Academy; as the first charter school in Peekskill we are cognizant of the need to educate the community about charter schools, i.e., they are free public schools open to all students. We will explain our school's program, expectations for teaching and learning and school culture, and services for at-risk students, including English language learners and students with disabilities. We will disseminate information and applications in English and Spanish through local youth and social service organizations and agencies, day-care and pre-school programs, businesses and churches, including the Peekskill Field Library Children's Room, Peekskill Parks and Recreation Department, Aunt Bessie Open Door Day Care Center, Hudson River Community Healthcare, LaPolla Little League and Peekskill Titans Football League. We will also use local media. As the Guardian Building should be available during our recruitment phase, we will also host open houses to meet with interested families and discuss our program.
- **Lottery:** If we have more applicants than seats, we will hold a random lottery to enroll our students. There will be no restrictions to enter the lottery other than eligibility for the particular grade. After our seats are filled, we will put the remaining students on a waiting list and draw from it should seats become available. As a public school we intend to fill open seats in all grades at any time during the school year.
- **Admissions preference:** Guardian Academy Charter School will have an admissions preference for already enrolled students and siblings. Given our strategic recruitment plan, we do not anticipate requiring admissions preferences for other types of students to meet our enrollment and retention targets.

**Strategies to Retain Students:** We believe a strong education program that results in demonstrable academic progress will inspire parents to keep their children enrolled at

We will have two classes per grade. Guardian Academy will open with grades K-3 and add one grade per year until it is ultimately a K-8 school. We feel an obligation to serve as many students as possible and will backfill all open seats in all grades.

- d. **Proposed management/partner organizations:** Not applicable.
- e. **Proposed school mission:** The mission of Guardian Academy Charter School is to provide the Peekskill community with an educational option that teaches a values-infused, content-rich curriculum in a structured and nurturing learning environment in order to build character and prepare students for success in high school, college and careers.
- f. **School overview:** The school will be built on the following pillars:
- **High Expectations:** We believe that with a rigorous curriculum and tailored supports all students can learn at high levels. We will establish high expectations for both academics and behavior and hold every staff member accountable for helping students to attain them. We will instill in our students the belief that dedicated effort and practice will enable them to follow the academic, career and personal paths of their choice. This academic climate will foster a love and joy of learning, self-discipline, analytical thinking, and creativity in our students.
  - **Content is Essential:** We believe that not only is a deep knowledge base essential for individual success, a common knowledge base is also critical to a democratic society. Our curriculum will teach students the vocabulary, literature, facts, theories, art works, and history they need to develop their skills in reading, writing, critical analysis and speaking. The curriculum will provide students with the knowledge they need to pursue higher education and careers and participate constructively in their community.
  - **Focus on Literacy:** We expect a large percentage of our student body to be Latino and immigrant children, many of whom may come from families with limited English proficiency. By starting in the elementary grades with a robust and structured English language arts program using a combination of explicit phonics and the Readers and Writers Project methods we will build a strong literacy foundation that supports student learning in all other subjects.
  - **Character Development:** Teaching academic skills and knowledge are not enough; students must also develop the character necessary to succeed in a complex and diverse world. Guardian Academy will integrate a values-based character education program into its curriculum and culture to help students reflect on their choices and actions and establish a community of mutual respect, interdependence, and perseverance.
  - **Community:** Guardian Academy will succeed as a result of school staff, families, local community members and organizations all working together to meet our students' needs. Frequent communication, academic and social events, an inclusive board, opportunities to volunteer and community partnerships will all contribute to a school deeply rooted in and responsive to the needs of our community.
  - **Extended Time for Learning:** We believe the traditional school model must adapt to meet the needs of today's youth. A longer school day and school year will provide the time necessary to adequately teach and support our students.

Guardian Academy. We will have special programs and services to meet the needs of all types of students.

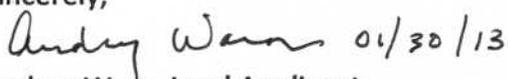
- **English Language Learners:** We will use the state's procedure for identifying ELL students, including Home Language Surveys and the LAB-R exam. We intend to implement a robust early childhood literacy program that uses small group instruction to enhance reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Specialists on staff will provide supplemental targeted intervention programs to students who enter with no English speaking ability or pre-literacy skills. We also believe parent involvement is important and will hire Spanish speaking staff who can communicate with families. Through regular benchmarking of reading levels and the NYSESLAT exam we will monitor and evaluate student progress and ELL status.
- **Special Education:** We will use a Response to Intervention model to identify and monitor students at risk of not attaining grade level standards. Multiple strategies will be attempted by classroom teachers and specialists before any student is referred for evaluation for special education. Once a student is determined to have a disability by the district CSE, the school will commit to implementing each student's IEP with fidelity. Goals and strategies will be shared with classroom teachers and staff certified in special education will provide additional support both within and outside the classroom. In addition, we will contract with specialists to provide services such as speech for those who require it.
- **Students Eligible for the Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program:** Many low-income students have suffered from low expectations by the very schools meant to give them the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. A key tenet of our school is high expectations for all students. We will instill in our students and their families the belief that college and careers of their choice are attainable with the right habits and hard work.

#### IV. Public Outreach and Community Support

- Public Outreach Conducted to Date:** The founding team has extensive ties to relevant individuals and organizations in the community; founding team members have already reached out to a number of prominent leaders in the Peekskill community, including the Superintendent of Peekskill City School District, Mayor of Peekskill and Common Council members as well as the business community. In announcing the closure of the Assumption School, a private Catholic school that will cease operation after this school year, staff and parents were also informed of the possibility of a new charter school coming to Peekskill.
- Initial Assessment of Interest:** The founding team has close ties to parents in the community and has spent considerable time exploring local interest in a charter school. The closure of the only alternative to district schools suggests there will be considerable demand for another option. In addition, we believe many parents who could not afford a private education will consider enrolling in a free public charter school.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

 01/30/13  
Audrey Warn, Lead Applicant